

Hinduism in Pakistan: Analyzing inter-faith relation

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.7428002

* Dr. Zenab Khurram



Abstract

Hindu Muslim relations have always been a debated issue in the Sub-continent. It becomes more important when discussed in context with the religious and political situation of Pakistan. The article discusses current and futuristic religious and social relations between Hindus and Muslims living in Pakistan. The study is analytic in nature as it aims to analyze the contemporary and upcoming relations between the followers of two religions while living together in Pakistan. It includes a brief introduction to the history of Hindu community in different regions of Pakistan along with a short description of problems they are facing in Pakistani society. It also consists of a review of literature in relation to this research. The discussion comprises of a detailed description of significance of religion in Pakistan and that how deeply religion is rooted in Pakistani society. It also talks about the participation of Hindus in different departments of social life and their positive contributions in the development of the country. The article describes importance of inter-religious dialogue between Hindus and Muslims for living together with peace and harmony to improve the inter-relating of two communities in Pakistan. In the end there is a conclusion by describing the problems and difficulties being faced by the Hindus of Pakistan and that how they can be resolved through solid and fruitful dialogue.

Key Words: *Hindu Muslim relations, inclusive view for study of religion, contemporary Pakistani society, inter-religious dialogue*

* Research scholar Department of Comparative Religions Faculty of Islamic Studies (Usuluddin) Islamic International University Islamabad Pakistan email: zenab.khurram@gmail.com

Introduction

The purpose behind the creation of Pakistan was not only to build a welfare Islamic state for the Muslims of sub-continent, but also to provide a peaceful and equitable social environment for everyone where non-Muslims could also live peacefully with equal opportunities and equal participation in the society. The white color in the Pakistani flag represents the non-Muslim communities of Pakistan, notable among these is also, Hindu community of Pakistan. This research presents a brief history of Pakistani Hindus to strengthen the significance and the need for fruitful inter-faith dialogue for the development of better religious relationship.

It is a historical fact that certain areas located alongside the river Sindh that became part of Pakistan later, are known to be hub of Indus civilization, for example Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa.¹ The remains of this civilization are still known as famous archeological sites in the cities of Sukkar in Punjab and Larkana in Sindh. Some researchers have discussed that the religion followed by the people of Indus civilization is the form that developed after the migrating Aryan tribes mixed with the local Darvidians. Certain desert ²tribes are still there in the border areas of India and Pakistan carrying the legacy of Indus valley civilization. Prominent among these are the *Bhills* mostly residing in lower Sindh (*Mirpur Khas & Hayderabad*), Upper Sindh (*Khairpur district*) and in Southern Punjab (*District Bahawalpur*).³ Although they were categorized as one among the scheduled castes⁴ according to the constitution of 1957 of Pakistan but very few know, that they constitute majority of Hindu population of Pakistan. This Hindu population is not limited to desert areas only now, as it is observed that Hindus are there in different areas and sections of Pakistani society. First Hindu cadet, *Danish*, a resident of Sindh, joined the Pakistan Military Academy Kakul in 2006. In 2008 two Hindus were promoted to the rank of Major in Army Medical Core.⁵ Recently two others *Kailash Kumar*, from Thar and *Aneel Kumar*, from Badeen are promoted to the rank of Lt. Col which considered as an achievement for the whole community.⁶ *Mahesh Kumar Malani* is the first Hindu who became member of the parliament by winning general elections from Tharparker in 2018. Rana Bhgwan Das served as the Chief Justice of Sindh High Court and then a judge of the Supreme Court of Pakistan as acting Chief justice as well in 2007. He was also appointed as CFPSC (Chairman Federal Public Service Commission) of Pakistan after retirement. *Suman Kumari* from Qambar Shahdadt has been appointed as first female Hindu Civil Judge in Hayderabad.⁷ Hindu community is also focusing on getting higher education in reputed educational institutions of the country. Recently a researcher interviewed a scheduled caste member from Meghwar community, who had completed his master's degree in

business administration. Another person who is a lawyer from *Bhil* tribe and works with 'Human Rights Commission of Pakistan' as well in Sindh, mentioned how their community is trying to change themselves by promoting education.⁸

The desert area between India and Pakistan did not experience mass migration like other big cities of the Sub-Continent. Majority of the natives of *Thar* desert did not leave their land including the scheduled castes following the partition of 1947. As described earlier, this Hindu population is not limited to desert areas and Sindh only. They travel to other parts of country as well to get better jobs and education. The number of Hindus is far less in Punjab as compared to Sindh but still their presence is notable here. Most of Hindus live in *Mirpur Khas* and *Rahim Yar Khan* in Punjab region. The capital city Lahore has always been an important city of the Sub-Continent and a popular trading hub even before partition. Many Hindu merchants had their shops at *Lakshmi Chowk*, (name of a leading female Hindu deity) majority of whom migrated to India in 1947. The city is the capital of Pakistani Punjab and one of the biggest cities of the country now. There are 16 Hindu Temples in Lahore. Among these *Karishna Mandir* and *Valmiki Mandir* are two active worship places for Hindus now.⁹ A small population also made their existence notable when *Karishna Mandir* at *Purana Qila'a* in Rawalpindi was restored and handed over to Hindus for worship in 2021.¹⁰ Almost 3000 Hindus are living in Rawalpindi and Islamabad, as noted till June 2022. Majority are the immigrants from Sindh and Karachi, but they have now settled in Islamabad and Rawalpindi as active citizens of the society.¹¹

Hindu population in Balochistan is larger as compared to Punjab. Historical records tell that a large Hindu population lived in Balochistan before 1947 but changed into minority after partition.¹² Now Balochistan has a scattered Hindu population comprising natives and immigrants from Sindh. Hindus are still the largest minority religion of Balochistan but among the popular four Hindu castes¹³ only *weish* exists here now. They are mostly associated to trade and small businesses. Jhal Magsi, Naseerabad, Jafarabad, Mastung and Qallat are the Hindu populated areas of Balochistan today.¹⁴

Review of Literature:

This research aims to study the religious and social relations of Hindus and Muslims living in Pakistan. The research references related to the relationship of Islam and Hinduism is available mostly in the books and articles written about partition of the Sub-Continent and migration of Muslims and Hindus from both sides. Historical researches about different castes of Hindus also provide information about Hindus in different areas of the Sub-Continent including Pakistan. Religious scholars are writing about this community now which shows that their importance has been recognized as the citizens of Pakistan. Some most relevant compilations are mentioned in this literature review. The book

“*The Hindus: An alternative History*” by Wendy Doniger is important in this regard. The book is one among the latest compilations produced about Hindu culture and history. Chapter 19 and 20 specifically discuss the development of religious relations between Islam and Hinduism. The author describes how religious dialogue took place between the two religions in the times of Muslim rulers and what was the level of tolerance between them.

A notable book is “*Tamaddun-e-Hind*” by Dr. Gastawli Bon, which was written originally in French and translated in Urdu by Maulvi Syed Ali Bilgrami. The relation of Islam and Hinduism is discussed in detail in this research in the light of the influence of the followers of two different religions, traditionally and culturally, on each other. It has been discussed in detail that Muslim rulers translated *Sanskrit* scriptures into Arabic and Persian that helped Muslims to get better interaction with Hindus and to understand Hinduism.

A very interesting book from the contemporary period is “*Barr-e-Şagheer mein Şahab karam*” by Akbar Ali Khan Qadri. He is one of the contemporary Muslim researchers, who have discussed the historical relations between Arabs and Hindus before and after Islam. The author identifies that the two lands had deep trading, literary and religious relations since pre-Islamic era and Muslims had introduced Islam in Hindustan before Muslim conquerors. The names of many companions of the Prophet have been mentioned in the book who came to Sub-continent and settled here for the purpose of preaching.

The religious relations of Hindus and Muslims have been discussed in the book “*A’zmat-e-Islam Vedic dharam ky Muţala’a ki roshni mein*” by Shams Naveed Ūthmani. It is important to mention that it discusses detailed deep religious relations between Islam and Hinduism. In the light of certain Qur’anic and Hindu religious texts, the writer tries to build a narrative that Hinduism may also be a revealed religion which has lost its revealed teachings. A careful study inside Vedas, helps to uncover this reality and through the fact Muslims can understand Hinduism in a better way and develop good relations with Hindus of Pakistan and the Sub-continent.

Among the research articles “*From Untouchables to Dalit: Narratives and strategies of Assertion among the Scheduled Castes of Pakistan*” by Sadia Mahmood is one of the latest works available on Hindus of Pakistan. The study is important in this regard that the author herself visited those areas of Sindh where different Hindu castes live in Pakistan. It is a survey research where researcher collects direct information from people of Hindu community. The research is relevant to this research article as it also discusses the problems faced by Hindus of Pakistan.

A research article “*Hinduism in Balochistan: Literary and cultural impacts of Pashtoos and Balochs on Hindus of Balochistan*” is written by Dr. Sahibzada Baaz Muhammad and Fahmida Baloch. The research

scholars are the faculty members of two universities in Balochistan and have described on ground situation about Hindu population in different big and small cities of Balochistan before and after partition. The article also talks about different professions of Hindus and their problems.

Research Methodology:

The research is qualitative and descriptive in nature. Author aims to analyze the status of Hindu Muslim relations in Pakistan. This study aims to analyze and explore the status, livelihood, and contribution of Hindu community to the development of Pakistani society along with the difficulties and problems being faced by them. A brief history of Hindus of Pakistan is also given in the beginning which makes it a historical study as well. This study discusses the similarities between Hinduism and Islam, based on the opinions given by classical and contemporary Muslim scholars because a description by Muslim scholars makes it easy for common Muslims to accept the inclusive status of Hinduism. Muslim scholars differ over the issue of whether Hinduism is a revealed religion or not which is described in discussion as well. The opinions of scholars regarding Hinduism as a revealed religion is not the personal opinion of the researcher. This discussion has been made a part of the discussion to provide a foundation and justification for the previous and contemporary academic dialogue between Islam and Hinduism in the sub-continent.

Discussion

It is considered that Islam and Hinduism knew each other when Islam entered the Sub-Continent with Arab conquerors, but recent research works have described that because of trading and travelling relations from pre-Islamic era between Hindustan and Arab, Islam had reached Hindustan years before Muslim invasion. Prominent among these research works is the book of Syed Suleiman Nadvi, *Arab Hind Ta'alluqat*. He has explained different levels of relationships between Arab and the land of Hind even before the Prophethood of Muhammad (P.B.U.H). It included trade, literary and religious relationships which is also the relevant area of this research article. An important compilation in this regard is the book of Akbar Ali Khan Qadri, *Barr-e-Sagheer mein Sahaba kraam (R.A)*. The author describes that Arabs and Hindus not only visited the lands of each other, but many Hindu traders also got settled in Makkah as the city was a trading hub at that time. Hindus were well familiar with the religious status of *Ka'aba* and accepted it as a religious place because Arabs from the period before Islam had many religious practices and beliefs common between them and Hindus such as idol worshipping, declaring Sun, Moon and other stars as sacred objects, belief in spirits and demons etc. Arab traders used to travel to the coastal areas of Bombay, Kalikat, Sarandeeep (now Srilanka), the gulf of Bengal till China. 'Hind¹⁵' was also a popular name among Arabs because they considered Hindustan a beautiful place. Many Hindi names and words also appear in ancient Arabic

poetry. Drinking was a popular practice among Arabs before Islam and vine from Hindustan was considered the best.¹⁶ Names of many companions who came to Hindustan as invaders or preachers are also mentioned in the book. Prominent among these are Ūthman bin Abi Al-āaṣ his brothers Hakam bin Abi Al-āaṣ and Mugheera bin Abi Al-āaṣ¹⁷. Rabie' bin Zayad Madhhaji is known for his conquests in Makran and Kirman. Hakam bin A'mr Tha'alabi Ghaffari, A'bdullah bin A'bdullah Anṣari, Sahal bin A'di Khizraji Anṣari, Shar bin A'bas A'badi, A'ṣim bin A'mr Tamimi, A'bdullah bin Ūmair Ashja'i and others are also considered among those companions of the Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H) who travelled to Hindustan and spent their lives here in preaching the message of Allah.

These and many other writings show that Hindustan had become familiar with Islam since the advent of the Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H). This close inter-relation left a deep social and cultural effect on the people of both sides. The development of literary relations between Muslims and Hindus gave a chance to the Muslim scholars to study Hinduism closely and Muslim scholars started writing about Hinduism. Most important among these compilations is the book of Abu Rehan Al-Beiruni, *Al-Beiruni's India*, popularly known as *Kitab-ul-Hind*. The book is famous as one of the most authentic and direct source of information, compiled among Muslims about Indian culture and civilization. *Al-Beiruni* used almost thirty-five those direct *Sanskrit* sources to collect information that are known now only through his book. The book is also important that it provides a comparison between Islamic and Hindu beliefs/concepts through which a first literary relationship between Islam and Hinduism developed. *Al-Beiruni* is the first Muslim scholar who presented the idea of belief in monotheism in Hinduism and said that it believes in one God like Islam as both religions believe in human creation on God's *fitra*.¹⁸ *Shahristani* is another prominent Muslim scholar who gave judgmental statements about Hinduism and discussed their believes. Interestingly *Shahristani* does not declare them as idol worshippers because they are the followers of incarnations and Spiritual Beings according to him. Similarly he declares that those who worshipped idols in the name of natural objects like the Sun God, Moon God and the Fire God are from the group of Sabians and not idol worshippers. He also describes *Brahima* (Brahmans) as *Muwahhida* (those who believe in one God).¹⁹ In simple words, according to classical Muslim writings, Hindus are Polytheists²⁰ but not *Mushrikeen*²¹ or *Kuffar*²². Here it is also important to know that Muslims and Hindus developed their best religious and literary relations during Mughal period in Sub-continent. *Majma'ul Bahra'in* by Prince Muhammad Dara Shikuh²³ is important in this regard. The prince wrote this book after studying different religions prevailing around him. Because of having inclination towards spirituality, he had a detailed discussion with Lal Dayal,²⁴ which is

recorded in *Mukalima-i-Dara Shikuh and Baba Lal*. Dara Shikuh concludes in *Majma'ul Bahra'in* that "Truth was not the exclusive property of any particular or chosen race but could be found in all religions and at all times".²⁵ Recently, a Muslim author from contemporary period, Maulana Shams Naveed Uthmani, published his book *A'zmat-e-Islam vedic dharam ky muṭala'e ki Roshni mein*. This compilation gives astonishing facts regarding religious relations between Islam and Hinduism. In the light of Qur'anic and Vedic texts the researcher builds the narrative that nations of different prophets are known to us except the nation of Prophet *Nuh* (A.S). It is believed by Hindus that Vedas are the words of God. The author explains with reference to a French historian J.A. Dubois, who had studied Hindu religion and civilization for forty years and then concluded that Vedas tell the story of a religious personality known as *Manu* or *Mahanuī*. It is a story of a great flood. The ship of *Manu* survived from this flood which destroyed the whole humanity. According to Dubois the land where human life started again was the land of Hindustan and the natives of Hindustan are the nation of Prophet *Nuh* (A.S). He also mentions that the name of Prophet *Nuh* (A.S) comes at seventy-five places in Vedas. To make his argument stronger he further says that Hindu calendar counts the happening of their important events from the time of Prophet *Nuh* (A.S). A *yog* that started from an unforgettable flood is famous in Hindu literature with the name of *Jal parliyavan* (the flood of water).²⁶ The author continues presenting facts by describing that human nations are divided into two major categories; semitic and non-semitic²⁷ and Aryans are among the non-semitics. Here he also presents a verse of Holy Qur'an:

"Those were some of the Prophets who Allah has blessed from among the descendants of Adam, and those We carried with Noah in the Ark, and from the descendants of Abraham and Israel, and of those We rightly guided and chose. Whenever the revelations of the Most Compassionate were recited to them, they fell down, prostrating and weeping". (Al-Maryam V. 58)

According to the interpreters the generation of Prophet *Nuh* (A.S)'s companions is a separate generation among the generations of Adam (A.S). The offspring of Prophet *Ibrahim* (A.S) and Prophet *Ya'qūb* (A.S)²⁸ are semitic races. Thus, the offspring of Prophet *Nuh* (A.S)'s companions should be non-semitic or Aryans, the inhabitants of Hindustan.²⁹ This author then says further that Qur'an mentions the nation of Prophet *Nuh* (A.S) with the name of *Ṣa'ebīn*. It is recorded in *Tafsir ibn-e-Kathir* that *Ṣa'ebīn* claimed to be the followers of the religion of *Nuh* (A.S).³⁰

Monotheism in Hinduism?

Pantheism (Omnipresence of God), Polytheism (Belief in more than one God) and Monotheism (Belief in only one God) are three different categories where a religion is categorized according to its concept of

God. Different religions present different concepts regarding their belief about God. Hinduism captures a unique place among different faiths of the world as it is listed in all these three categories at the same time. It is polytheistic as there are many gods and goddesses along with their separate temples in Hinduism apparently. It is also Pantheistic religion because it believes in the omnipresence of the Supreme reality. It presents the idea of *Brahman Atman*. It is said:

“*Brahman is Absolute Reality*, which transcends time, space, and causality. Brahman pervades the whole universe and yet remains beyond it. Moreover, *Brahman* is all that is objective as well as subjective. *Brahman* is the whole external world as well as the whole inner being---the self, or soul---of an individual, a beast, a bird, a fish, or a rock.”³¹

Important for us here is to know that Hinduism is monotheistic as well because this is that unique concept which can bring Islam and Hinduism closer. There is a famous verse of Rig Veda:

“They call it Indra, Mitra, Varuna, Agni; or it is the heavenly Sunbird. That which is One, the seers speak of in various terms”³²

An Indian scholar of religions and a preacher Dr. Zakir Naik refers to certain verses from Hindu scriptures in his book which carry carry the concept of one God. According to him.

Chandogya Upanishad says: “He is One only without a second”

Svetasavatara Upanishad says: “Of Him there are neither parents nor Lord”

Yajurveda says: “There is no image of Him”

“He is bodyless and pure”

A prayer is also mentioned:

“Lead us to the good path and remove the sin that makes us stray and wander”

The oldest among all Vedas is the *Rig Veda*:

“O friends, do not worship anybody but Him, the Divine One”³³

These are only a few among many others with similar concept. A deep study of these texts shows that they are quite closer to certain Qur’anic verses in their meaning and concept. To study the Holy texts of two religions with highlighting the similarities is important for both sides. Some Qur’anic texts with similar concept are also given here.

Verse no: 4 of *Surah Al-Ikhlāṣ* says: “And there is none like unto Him”

Verse no: 11 of *Surah Al-Shura* says: “There is nothing whatever like unto Him”

Verse no: 6 of *Surah Al-An’aām* says: “No vision can grasp Him, but His grasp is over all vision: He is above all comprehension Yet is acquainted with all things”.

Verse no: 9 of *Surah Al-Ra’ād* says: “He is the Great, the most High”³⁴

Through this work Dr. Zakir Naik propagates that Hinduism originally believed in one God and the original concept is not known now.

Other contemporary researchers have also given the same opinion that Hinduism in its original form has the concept of oneness (*Tawhid*). Dr. Ali Abd-ul-Wahid Wafi is a famous Muslim scholar of religions and human history. He has proposed the same idea in his book about the sacred books of ancient religions before Islam. Important is to note that he mentions Hindu scripture along with Torah, Gospels, and sacred books of Zoroastrianism. He believes that Hinduism was also once a revealed religion as appears from the code of *Manu*, which consists of instructions, rules, regulations, laws, ethics, and all types of religious commandments that are necessary to establish a disciplined and progressive human society. This is the quality of a revealed *Shariah* that it provides complete guidance for life to its followers. Man-made religions are never that much organized or complete. He also believes that Hinduism was revealed in pre-historic era but lost its original teachings. While describing his research he gives reference from the book *Tehqiq ma lil-Hind.....* by Abu-Rehan Al-Beiruni and quotes Al-Beiruni that Hind and Brahmans believe in One Supreme God as The Only One with no beginning and no end, free in all His actions, The One who gives life and death, *Al-Qadir*, *Al-Hakeem*, nothing is like Him in the whole universe. Today there are three major gods *Brahma*, *Vishnu*, and *Shiva*. Among these the creator is *Brahma* while other two provide support to run the worldly affairs. Similarly, all other gods and goddesses are manifestations of many attributes of One Supreme Reality.³⁵

Some other beliefs:

Other than Oneness, some other beliefs can also bring Islam and Hinduism closer. Important among these are:

● **Karma or Reward and Punishment:**

Islam believes in the concept of reward and punishment for good and bad deeds. The belief is presented in Qur'an and Hadith (traditions of the Holy Prophet P.B.U.H) many times. Such as

“He who does good deeds, does it for his own soul; and he who commits evil, does so at his own peril: Your Rabb is never unjust to His servants”. (Al-Qur'an 41: 46)

Clear words in Qur'anic verses say

“Whatever affliction befalls you, is the result of what your own hands have done, even though for many of your misdeeds He grants forgiveness”. (Al-Qur'an 42: 30)

In the same Surah it is said:

“Man is such that when We give him a taste of Our Mercy, he is very happy about it; but when, through his own fault, an evil afflicts him, he becomes utterly ungrateful”. (Al-Qur'an 42: 48)

These are only three verses with the clear meaning that everyone is himself responsible for his actions and he will be judged according to whatever he used to do in his life. The researcher has presented them as a sample from Qur'an as it is not possible to mention all the verses

here. Sacred texts from Hindu scripture with the same meaning are also presented here to show the similarity with Islamic concept. Such as: “Accordingly, as one behaves so does he become. The doer of good becomes good, the doer of evil becomes evil. One becomes virtuous by virtuous actions. Others become bad by bad actions”. (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 4: 5)

Famous Vedic theologian Yajnavalkiya described the belief by saying: “A man turns into something good by good action and into something bad by bad action”.³⁶

According to the Vedas if an individual sows goodness, he or she will reap goodness; if one sows evil, he or she will reap evil.³⁷

The apparent meaning of these Qur’anic and Hindu texts is same. Difference lies only in their further explanations and interpretations of these concepts. Muslim belief is associated with the results in the hereafter and the life after death while Hindu karma is described along with another belief ‘reincarnation’.

● **Heaven and Hell:**

The way Qur’an describes Heaven and Hell, may not require a detailed explanation here. There are several verses in the Holy Quran that cover this subject. Chapter *Al-Rehman*, *Al-Waqi’ah*, *Al-Haqqah*, *Al-Qayamah*. *Al-Nabā* are the whole chapters about Heaven and Hells. A lot of other verses are there at different places accordingly. It may be of interest for the academic researchers of the religious studies that the belief in Heaven and Hell is also there in Hindu sacred texts and they are mentioned at different places in Rig Veda, Athaār Veda and Bhagvata Purana. They also create similarity between Islamic and Hindu belief in the life after death according to one’s actions.³⁸

● **Few verses from Qur’an and Vedas**

Some notable commandments recorded in Rig Veda also seem to be somewhat closer to the Islamic commandments such as gambling, drinking and usuary are prohibited according to the texts of Rig Veda. Islamic stance about these issues is quite clear in terms of their prohibition.³⁹ There is a discussion in Rig Veda about belief in Hereafter and Resurrection which is one among the fundamental beliefs of Islam as well. This concept is present in chapter ten of Rig Veda in clear words.⁴⁰

Prayers of Vedas also seem carrying similar meaning to Islam at some places such as the verses of chapter *Al-Fateha* are:

1. All praise for Allah----Lords of all worlds (Al-Fateha: 1)
2. The Most Compassionate---Most merciful (Al-Fateha: 2)
3. Guide us along the straight path (Al-Fateha: 5)

The verses of Vedas with the same meanings are:

1. All praise for He Who is the Creator of all worlds (Rig Veda: 1, 81)
2. He is The Giver and the merciful (Rig Veda: 1, 34)
3. Show us the Right path which is the best for us (Yajur Veda 40: 16)⁴¹

These verses are presented here just to show the similarities in Qur'an and Vedas which are believed by majority Hindus to be the Revelation or the word of God. Several other verses are also recorded by Maulana Shams Naveed Ūthmani in his book *A'zmat-e-Islam vedic dharam ky muṭala'e ki Roshni mein* which can be taken as the foundation for good relation between the two religions.

Hinduism, Islam, and Pakistan:

The discussion in this research provides a strong base to study the historical, cultural, traditional, and religious relations between Hinduism and Islam in the Sub-continent generally and in Pakistan specifically. Historical records prove that Hindus living in the areas of Pakistan are the natives of this land and are living here even before the partition of Sub-continent and the creation of Pakistan in 1947. Although their presence in Pakistani society has been recognized in the recent years and their participation in different areas of life, as mentioned above, is a sign that Pakistani society is generally flexible towards accepting followers of different faiths and providing them equal opportunities towards a progressive and prosperous life. But on the other hand, Hindu community of Pakistan is also facing problems at certain levels in their struggle towards better lives. The need of the time is to realize these problems. Some of them are given below:

1. One of the major problems for them is being called "Hindu". It may appear to be a harsh reality that many Hindus hesitate to disclose their identity while living in Pakistan. It is partially because of the years back environment of hatred between Hindus and Muslims of Sub-Continent even before the partition. A Hindu woman *Raj Kumari*, who lives in Lahore said that although Pakistani constitution grants religious freedom to them, but Hindus are still facing "extreme obstacles in being able to practice their faith".⁴²

2. The persistent tense political situation between India and Pakistan also creates problems for local Hindus. Muslims consider India an enemy of Pakistan and Hindus are considered the supporters of India not Pakistan. The academic texts in educational institutions report that Hindus were responsible in mass killings of Muslims at the time of partition in 1947 and the history of Pakistan is full of such painful incidents. This history is being taught in educational institutions because of which hate for Hindus continues to shift from one generation to next.

3. The religious element is dominating in different areas of Pakistani society. Although necessary protection is granted in the constitution of Pakistan to the religious minorities in accordance with the *Shariah* law, yet there have been certain incidents by some individuals/groups that require even a stronger commitment from the society and institutions of law to protect the lives and properties of the minorities of Pakistan, including Hindu.

4. There is a need to make people realize that Hindu community is also a part of Pakistani society because majority Muslim population of Pakistan does not even realize the existence of Hindus in Pakistani society. It seems that general perception about the Hindus of Sindh, is limited tribes of desert, famous with their castes such as *Bheels*, *Meghwars* and *Kohlis*. Very few know that they are the Hindu community of Pakistan.

Inter faith Dialogue with Hinduism:

In the light of above discussion, it can be stated that Hinduism, although in the form of small and scattered groups, exists in Pakistani society holding considerable position. Opinions of scholars from classical and contemporary period have been analyzed and discussed here as a historical record, depending upon which a logical religious dialogue in the academia can be conducted for the development of harmonious relationship at different levels. Some points that can be taken as the basis of this dialogue are:

1. Muslims and Hindus have been living together for centuries in the subcontinent. This centuries old historical relation can flourish in a better environment only when both will accept the existence of each other with proper realization of rights and responsibilities of each group.

2. Islam provides a comprehensive framework for minorities living in a Muslim state. Islamic history is full of such examples where non-Muslims enjoyed their rights freely and participated in social and economic activities without facing any problem because of their faith.

3. A comprehensive principle of inter-faith dialogue is presented in Qur'an when it says:

“Come to the word common between us and you”. (Al-Imran 3: 64)

A dialogue should start from where there are similarities between Islam and Hinduism.

Conclusion:

This research concludes that Hindus, although a minority, but a notable community of Pakistani society. Hinduism is a living reality like many other faiths of Pakistan. The historical records and contemporary studies conducted about this ancient belief categorize it among those religions for which a Muslim researcher can have an inclusive view. It also has a deep relation with the ancient civilizations of Pakistan. It is mentioned in the section above, under the title of “Research methodology” that the researcher intends to discuss and reiterate, once again that the discussion on the opinions of classical and contemporary scholars regarding Hinduism, as likely to be considered for carrying truth, somewhere does not necessarily mean, that it should be categorized as a revealed religion. The opinions and writings produced by these authentic and reliable Muslim scholars provide us at least, an academic ground to initiate inter-faith dialogue with Hinduism. Practical and applicable results cannot be derived nor better relations

be developed until the presence of Hindus and Hinduism is considered as a reality and an existing fact in Pakistani society. This needs to be accepted at social and community level. To create a peaceful society and harmonious environment, it is necessary to accept and tolerate minorities and to realize their presence in every area of the society. Only a peaceful environment between religious communities can bring them at the level of dialogue and an academic and fruitful dialogue is the only way towards a peaceful and prosperous society. Such a dialogue is the need for Pakistani society as well to develop a healthy relationship between Muslims and Hindus of Pakistan.

8. References:

Jacques, Wardenburg ed., *Muslim perceptions of other religions: A historical survey*. Oxford university press. 1999

Qadri, Akbar Ali Khan. *Barr-e-Şagheer mein Şahaba karram*: Taha publications. 2003

Ūthmani, A'llama Shams Navid., *A'zmat-e-Islam vedic dharam ky muţala'e ki Roshni mein*. Ţayyab publishers. 2002

Negosian, S.A., *World Religions: A Historical approach*. Bedford/St. Martin's publishers. 2000

Naik, Dr. Zakir., *Concept of God in Major Religions*. Beacon Books publishers. 2007

Wafi, Dr. Abd-ul-Wahid., *Al-Asfaar al-Muqaddasa fil-adyan al-sabiqa lil-Islam*. Dar nahđah maşr liţaba' wa al-nashr

Mahmood, Sadia, "From Untouchables to Dalit: Narratives and strategies of Assertion among the scheduled Castes of Pakistan", *Journal of Sindhi Studies* 2 (2022) Quaid-e-Azam University Islamabad

Dr. Sahibzada Baz Muhammad & Fehmida Baloch, "Hinduism in Balochistan: Literally and Cultural impacts of Pashtoons and Balochs on Hindus of Balochistan", <http://web.uob.edu.pk/uob/journals/takatoo/data/2016/Jan-June/English/38-46.pdf>.

Takatoo 5:8

Mohenjo-Daro Archeological site, Pakistan. Accessed on July 14, 2022.

<https://www.britannica.com/place/Mohenjo-daro>

Hussain Ghulam., 'Bhil of Pakistan', <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/343611243> Accessed on July 14, 2022

Temples in Lahore'

https://ipfs.fleek.co/ipfs/QmXoypizjW3WknFiJnKLwHCnL72vedxjQkDDP1mXWo6uco/wiki/Temples_in_Lahore.html.
Accessed on July 22, 2022

‘Temples bells ring after 74 years in Rawalpindi’
<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2291523/temple-bells-ring-after-74-years-in-rawalpindi>. Accessed on July 22, 2022

‘Rawalpindi’s Hindu community celebrates Holi’
<https://www.dawn.com/news/1680841>. Accessed on July 22, 2022

Indian Culture by Dara Shikuh.
<https://indianculture.gov.in/stories/dara-shikoh>. Accessed on August 5, 2022

Karma: Indian philosophy. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/karma>.
Accessed on August 14, 2022

Karma: Vedic knowledge online. <http://veda.wikidot.com/karma>.
Accessed on August 14, 2022

Prism: The Spatial politics of Lahore’s Hindu Temples
<https://www.dawn.com/news/1503671>. Accessed on August 18, 2022

ENDNODES

¹ Mohenjo-Daro Archeological site, Pakistan. Accessed on July 14, 2022.

<https://www.britannica.com/place/Mohenjo-daro>

²

³ Hussain Ghulam., ‘Bhil of Pakistan’, <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/343611243>
August: 2020, Accessed on July 14, 2022

⁴ In the constitution of 1956 about 32 castes and tribes were declared as ‘scheduled castes.’ Most of them are the lower caste Hindus of Sindh including *Kolhi, Meghwar, Bhil, Bagri, Balmaki, Jogi* and *Oad*.

⁵ Curious case of Hindus in Pakistan Army <https://www.dailypioneer.com/2020/sunday-edition/curious-case-of-hindus-in-pakistan-army.html>. The Sunday Magazine August 23, 2020. Report published by *Prem Anand Mishra* and *Divya Malhotra*. Accessed on July 14, 2022.

⁶ ‘We all Bleed Green’ ----- Pakistan hail Army’s ‘first ever’ Hindu Lt Colonels
<https://theprint.in/go-to-pakistan/we-all-bleed-green-pakistanis-hail-armys-first-ever-hindu-lt-colonels/848871/>. The Print February 26, 2022. Raghav Bhikhchandani. Accessed on July 15, 2022

⁷ Hindu woman appointed Civil judge <https://www.dawn.com/news/1460482>. Dawn January 29, 2019. Muhammad Hussain Khan. Accessed on July 15, 2022

⁸ Sadia Mahmood, “From Untouchables to Dalit: Narratives and strategies of Assertion among the Scheduled Castes of Pakistan”, *Journal of Sindhi Studies* 2 (2022) p. 13

⁹ ‘Temples in Lahore’

https://ipfs.fleek.co/ipfs/QmXoypizjW3WknFiJnKLwHCnL72vedxjQkDDP1mXWo6uco/wiki/Temples_in_Lahore.html. Accessed on July 22, 2022

¹⁰ ‘Temples bells ring after 74 years in Rawalpindi’
<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2291523/temple-bells-ring-after-74-years-in-rawalpindi>.
Express Tribune March 26, 2021. Accessed on July 22, 2022

- ¹¹ 'Rawalpindi's Hindu community celebrates Holi' <https://www.dawn.com/news/1680841>. Dawn March 20, 2022. Accessed on July 22, 2022
- ¹² Dr. Sahibzada Baz Muhammad & Fehmida Baloch, "Hinduism in Balochistan: Literally and Cultural impacts of Pashtoons and Balochs on Hindus of Balochistan", *Takatoo issue:5, v.8*, P. 3-4, <http://web.uob.edu.pk/uob/journals/takatoo/data/2016/Jan-June/English/38-46.pdf>. Accessed on July 22, 2022
- ¹³ Brahman, weish, kashatriya and Sudras are the commonly known Hindu castes
- ¹⁴ Dr. Sahibzada Baz Muhammad & Fehmida Baloch, "Hinduism in Balochistan: Literally and Cultural impacts of Pashtoons and Balochs on Hindus of Balochistan", *Takatoo issue:5, v.8*, P. 5, <http://web.uob.edu.pk/uob/journals/takatoo/data/2016/Jan-June/English/38-46.pdf>. Accessed on July 28, 2022
- ¹⁵ Such as Hinda (wife of Abu Sufyan and mother of Ameer Mu'āwiyah) and Hind bin Abi Hala (R.A)
- ¹⁶ Barr-e-Śagheer mein Śahaba karram by Akbar Ali Khan Qadri, Lahore: 2003, Taha publications. P. 11,12,18
- ¹⁷ The three brothers belonged to the tribe of *Banu Thaqif*. They lead military expeditions in the times of second caliph *Haḍrat Ūmar bin Khaḍab (R.A)* along with preaching
- ¹⁸ Muslim perceptions of other religions: A historical survey edited by Jacques Wardenburg, New York, 1999, Oxford university press. P. 27-28
- ¹⁹ Muslim perceptions of other religions: A historical survey edited by Jacques Wardenburg, New York, 1999, Oxford university press. P. 34
- ²⁰ Belief in more than one God
- ²¹ Those who associate partners with Allah
- ²² Those who deny the truth of Islam
- ²³ Prince Dara Shikuh was the eldest son of emperor Shah Jahan. He is known as a Sufi prince and an admirer of spiritual personalities.
- ²⁴ Known as Baba Lal and a famous Hindu Sufi saint of Punjab.
- ²⁵ Indian Culture by Dara Shikuh. <https://indianculture.gov.in/stories/dara-shikoh>. Accessed on August 5, 2022
- ²⁶ A'zmat-e-Islam vedic dharam ky muḥāla'e ki Roshni mein by A'llama Shams Navid Ūthmani, 2002, Lahore: Ṭayyab publishers. P. 29-33
- ²⁷ Jews, Christians and Bani-Isma'il from Arab are considered as semitic while all others are non-semitics
- ²⁸ Bani-Isma'il and Bani-Isra'el respectively
- ²⁹ A'zmat-e-Islam vedic dharam ky muḥāla'e ki Roshni mein by A'llama Shams Navid Ūthmani, 2002, Lahore: Ṭayyab publishers P. 34-35
- ³⁰ Ibid P. 39
- ³¹ World Religions: A Historical approach by S.A. Negosian, 2000, New York/Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's publishers. P. 32-33
- ³² Ibid
- ³³ Concept of God in Major Religions by Dr. Zakir Naik, 2007, Lahore: Beacon Books publishers. Copyright 2007. Abd-ul-Jabbar. P. 11-16
- ³⁴ Concept of God in Major Religions by Dr. Zakir Naik, 2007, Lahore: Beacon Books publishers. Copyright 2007. Abd-ul-Jabbar. P. 11-16

- ³⁵ Al-Asfaar al-Muqaddasa fil-adyan al-sabiqa lil-Islam by Dr. Abd-ul-Wahid Wafi, Cairo: Dar nahḍah maṣr liṭaba' wa al-nashr. P. 180-182
- ³⁶ Karma: Indian philosophy. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/karma>. Accessed on August 14, 2022
- ³⁷ Karma: Vedic knowledge online. <http://veda.wikidot.com/karma>. Accessed on August 14, 2022
- ³⁸ A'zmat-e-Islam vedic dharam ky muṭala'e ki Roshni mein by A'llama Shams Navid Ūthmani, 2002, Lahore: Ṭayyab publishers. P. 137-140
- ³⁹ Ibid P. 148-149
- ⁴⁰ Ibid P. 136
- ⁴¹ A'zmat-e-Islam vedic dharam ky muṭala'e ki Roshni mein by A'llama Shams Navid Ūthmani, 2002, Lahore: Ṭayyab publishers. P. 74
- ⁴² Prism: The Spatial politics of Lahore's Hindu Temples <https://www.dawn.com/news/1503671>. Accessed on August 18, 2022