

Department of Development Studies

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Thematic Focus: Development as Discourse

Pakistan as a Socio-Cultural and Political Space and Location of Minorities Within: Locus Rawalpindi-Islamabad- Farhan Tahir Nawab (2014-2016)

This research aimed at studying the political legal rights granted to religious minorities in Pakistan by the Pakistani State. It also tried to figure out any gaps in these statutory rights. Furthermore, it also tried to capture the perceptual and experiential reality of their existence on part of the religious minorities and see how the everyday cultural practices and the domain of education contributes towards their present status.

Key Findings

1. The study identifies that there is a major contestation between Muslim religious scholars and minority religious scholars on the issue of true religion.
2. There is a schism in the opinion of liberal politicians and politicians from religious party. The former wish to see Pakistan as a secular State while the latter believed that Pakistan was created to be a theocratic State.
3. There is discrimination against religious minorities when it comes to the issue of political participation and representation of the minority groups in national politics.
4. There are some laws to include to 295 C that endangers religious minorities and put them at severe disadvantage.
5. There is massive everyday socio-cultural discrimination against and maltreatment of religious minorities by Muslims.
6. It is also revealed in the study that Pakistani textbooks refer to religious minorities in derogatory manner and contributions of religious minorities are omitted. In this way, the education system also helps the dominant community to exert its power and control the educational discourse while marginalizing and isolating the religious minorities.

Policy Implications

1. 295 C should be reviewed and amended so as to ensure that it protects the sanctity of the Holy Scriptures, Holy Personages and worship places of all religions existing in Pakistan without any qualification.
2. High school curricula should be reviewed by the text book boards to ensure that no religious group existing in the country is projected in the texts in a derogatory fashion.
3. The text book boards must also ensure that the contributions of all Pakistani citizens who have made Pakistan proud should be included in the books taught in schools.
4. Citizens of Pakistan need to become more tolerant of religions and belief systems other than their own. The State needs to make laws that would stop clergy of all religions existing in Pakistan from delivering hate speech against other religions from the pulpit.
5. Media should produce more programmes on inter-faith harmony and a spirit of religious co-existence.