

Religious Practices, Intolerance, and Societal Challenges in Pakistani Society

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Abstract

This study explores the role of religion in shaping Pakistani society and evaluates how religious norms and obligations are adopted and implemented, influencing the country's social structure. It aims to identify the factors that led to the development of this mindset and examine how individual behaviors have collectively shaped a national societal attitude. The study employs a quantitative approach using content analysis of crime news stories in the Daily Jang for three months. A survey gathers fundamental and first-hand data from different age groups to identify that the practicality and intrinsic impacts of religion have been altered and turned society into intolerant religious believers who are more concerned with ritual practices than the development of positive and essential teachings of Islam, which emphasizes character building and tolerance towards indifference and differences of opinion. The study suggests that the practicality and intrinsic impacts of religion have been altered, leading to intolerant religious believers who are more concerned with ritual practices than the development of positive and essential teachings of Islam. It also highlights the need for a more practical and essential approach towards religious teachings that emphasize character building and tolerance towards indifference and differences of opinion.

Keywords: Islamisation, identity, character, tolerance, ritual practices.

Introduction

Religion plays a fundamental role in shaping Pakistan's identity and politics. Before the advent of Islam on the Indian subcontinent, various religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, and Sikhism were concurrently practiced. Relationships among individuals remained amicable and tolerant during Muslim governance and subsequent British administration.

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The partition transformed not only the demographic and religious composition of the region but also the beliefs of its inhabitants.

Pakistan being an ideological state has always been dominated and influenced by the religious mindset and Islamic approach. Its constitution, policies and decisions all were facilitated by the Islamic teachings and provisions.^{1,2&3} Various regimes have governed Pakistan, although the prevailing pattern has stayed unchanged; during numerous administrations, Islamic ideology has consistently held supremacy, as people in Pakistan is accustomed to Islamic rites and rituals, reflecting the intrinsic nature of Pakistani society. Although Pakistan's constitutions included Islamic principles, they did not completely conform to General Zia's vision of an Islamic state and governance system. Pakistan has never been a clergy regime but more like a liberal and moderate kind of society with the vision and practice of Islam where minorities and foreigners were not mocked and discriminate for their religion and culture.⁴ Although there were different experiments with the Islamic provisions in various constitutions and their implementation but the matter of fact is, whether they were not of any substantial benefits for the society.

After Zia's regime introduced the notion of Islamization, along with multiple national and international factors, it significantly changed the fabric of Pakistani society. The ultimate aim of the reform is to establish justice in the society through social, political and economic means. The reforms brought after the end of Z.A Bhutto's era accelerated the Islamist cultural nationalism which was the amalgamation of Sharia and Pakistani legislature or it can be said that it was an attempt to constitutionalize the sharia Laws and implement them across the country. Being an ideological country, it was somehow appreciated by the religious

¹ Saied R. Ameli, S.M. Marandi, S. Ahmed, S. Kara, and A. Merali, *The British Media and Muslim Representation: The Ideology of Demonisation* (London: IHRC, 2007).

² Lawrence Pintak, and Syed Javed Nazir, 'Pakistani Journalism: At the Crossroads of Muslim Identity, National Priorities, and Journalistic Culture', *Media, Culture & Society* 35:5 (2013), 640–665.

³ Alix Philippon, 'A Sublime, Yet Disputed, Object of Political Ideology? Sufism in Pakistan at the Crossroads', *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics* 52:2 (2014), 271–292.

⁴ Ishtiaq Ahmed, 'The Pakistan Islamic State Project: A Secular Critique', *State and Secularism: Perspectives from Asia*, 2010, 185-211; K. Mukherjee, 'Islamic Revivalism and Politics in Contemporary Pakistan', *Journal of Developing Societies*, 26:3 (2010), 329-353; and Sobia Jabeen and Waseem Shehzad, 'Interface between National Ideologies and the Constitution of Pakistan', *International Journal of English Linguistics*, 8:5 (2018), 106-116.

faction of the society. Increased Islamic trends and practices after Zia's Islamisation were evidently proved to give rise to the more extremist and violent approach. Islamisation was limited to the implementation of Shariah law in its original form. That's why this was perceived as a movement to make Islam a related power source and a means of social control. Clifford Geertz observed this trend as an effort to make Islam as a universal norm theoretically and a well-integrated system of beliefs and rituals.⁵

The idea of an Islamic state of Mr. Jinnah was purely a liberal Islamic state where religion would not be a criterion of people's character and morality; he himself was a highly liberal person, and his vision for Pakistan was not establishing a staunch religious regime but a state where every nationality and ethnicity could not be judged by their religious ideas; rather, their existence ensured national integrity and religious harmony. At a time when General Zia was consolidating his power in Pakistan, various international events gave rise to the religious notions. For instance, in 1979, the Islamic revolution in Iran influenced the Middle East and Muslim world as the Shah of Iran, who was considered modern and pro-American, was overthrown by Ayatollah Khomeini. The Afghan War was also started, and the concept of jihad and mujahedeen was exploited for the sake of the proxy war between the USA and USSR. Pakistan functioned as a frontline state, reaping significant advantages as a US ally; in exchange, the Pakistani state accommodated Afghan refugees and adopted a novel interpretation of jihad, which manifested post-9/11 as an extremist fundamentalist ideology among Muslims. It was the extreme point of radical trends in Pakistani society. The policy of Islamization had two aspects. Firstly, Zia was trying to have the support of religious factions of society. Secondly, he aimed to dispel Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's portrayal of Pakistani society as a liberal, modern, and Islamic socialist republic. General Zia achieved significant success in this regard, yet the country fell victim to religious discrimination and communal violence.

Pakistan is mainly a Muslim majority state with 95% Muslim population but with many ethnic and sectarian variations, Pakistani

⁵ Saadia Toor, 'The Political Economy of Moral Regulation in Pakistan: Religion, Gender and Class in a Postcolonial Context', *Gender in South Asia*, handbook Routledge, 2014, 145; Marco Mezzera, and Sadaf Sial, *Media and Governance in Pakistan: A Controversial Yet Essential Relationship*, Initiative for Peace Building, European union, 2010; and Benjamin Schonthal, Tamir Moustafa, Mark Nelson, and Sital Shankar, 'Is the Rule of Law an Antidote for Religious Tension? The Promise and Peril of Judicializing Religious Freedom', *American Behavioral Scientist*, 60:8 (2016), 970.

constitution allow every citizen to practice his or her beliefs independently. Regrettably, Islamic culture has transformed into a predominantly intolerant group characterised by a narrow and rigid interpretation of Islam, wherein those who do not conform to its established criteria are labelled and treated as infidels. A notable instance of escalating intolerance in Pakistani culture is the exploitation of the Blasphemy law; it poses a threat not only to individuals but also facilitates political advantages through this law. Another trend that was completely exploited by national and international actors was Jihad. It depicted a substantial segment of Muslims as fundamentalists and religious extremists. In Pakistani society, the presence of Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan and Daesh components was both prominent and widely recognised, with a significant portion of the population expressing support for them.

In recent years, there has been a perceptible transformation in Pakistan's religious setting, with an emphasis on religious conservatism. Violent religious behavior has exploded in popularity. Pakistani society is transitioning from a spiritual form of Islam to a violent version preached by militant organizations and individuals. Intolerant religious behavior is on the rise as religious tolerance declines. With a few exceptions, many interpretations of Islam have become increasingly orthodox, making religious conduct more dogmatic and radical.

This study investigates the following research questions:

1. How effective are the religious practices of Pakistani Muslims in promoting and maintaining a harmonious society?
2. To what extent do people avoid malpractices during the religious month of Ramzan?

Literature Review

There is enormous data published and aired that define the idea of Islamic mindset in Pakistani society with the growing intolerance and less character building. Rahman said that People's relationships remained tolerant and friendly during Muslim control and after Muslim dominance under British administration.⁶ Hussain identified that partition altered not only the region's demographic and religious makeup, but also the people's beliefs. The 'two-nation idea' of Muhammad Ali Jinnah is regarded as a symbol of Islam as well as a common identity for Indian Muslims who

⁶ Tariq Rahman, *Denizens of Alien Worlds: A Study of Education, Inequality and Polarization in Pakistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2012).

share distinct ethnic, geographical, and social boundaries.⁷ Islamisation, also known as Islamification, is the process of a society's conversion to Islam, as shown in Sudan, Pakistan, Iran, Malaysia, and Algeria.⁸ According to different scholars' perspective, for the Ulema and their political parties, Islamisation largely entails the reintroduction of historical institutions and practices with no substantial change;⁹ hence, 'Islamisation has been limited to the execution of Sharia rules in their original form'.¹⁰

Lubna Kanwal critically examined Zia's political regime, concluding that he was intended to broaden his power base and extend the duration of his rule by focusing on the Islamisation of the state system. During the 1977 movement, one of the most famous slogans for the introduction of Nizam-e-Mustafa gained widespread public support. He kept this renowned slogan and proclaimed that he would reform the state's political, social, and governmental framework according to Islamic values and beliefs, which became his foundation for appealing and garnering popular support. General Zia shifted his focus away from education, cultural values, and other economic sectors in order to pursue his Islamisation strategy.¹¹

Tauqir Hussain opined that General Zia began to provide new definitions to war, battle, and Jihad during his reign. Jihad was regarded as an offensive war as opposed to a defensive one. Thus, Pakistani Jihadist Islam was founded during the Zia government, spawning a generation of militants. Many specific motivations arose to place focus on it.¹² Nasim Ashraf had a different take on Zia's presidency. General Zia ul-Haq used religion as a justification for his dictatorial rule, which lasted more than 11 years. With the total transformation of Pakistan's educational system, sectarian and geopolitical disputes marked the Islamisation reforms. Religious schools, or madrasas, grew in popularity and were eligible for government support and foreign funding. Following the Soviet invasion

⁷ Tariq Hussain, 'Post-1979 Pakistan: What Went Wrong?' In *The Islamization of Pakistan, 1979-2009* (Washington, DC: Middle East Institute, 2009).

⁸ Charles Kennedy, *Islamization of Laws and Economy: Case Studies on Pakistan* (Islamabad: Institute of Policy Studies, 1996).

⁹ Muhammad Munir, *Report of the Court of Inquiry Constituted under Punjab Act II of 1954 to Enquire into the Punjab Disturbances of 1953* (Lahore: Government of Punjab, 1954). Retrieved from http://www.thepersecution.org/dl/report_1953.pdf.

¹⁰ M.I. Chawla, 'Islamization in Pakistan: An Overview', *Journal of Research Society of Pakistan*, 52:1 (2015), 265–281.

¹¹ Lubna Kanwal, 'Zia, Islam, and Politics of Legitimacy', *Al-Adwa* 39 (2015), 30-43.

¹² Tariq Hussain, *op.cit.*

of Afghanistan in 1979, the US encouraged Afghanistan and Pakistan to fight the Soviets in a 'holy war' or jihad.¹³ When it comes to people's beliefs and tolerance, in Indian Sub-continent, people's relationships remained tolerant and friendly during Muslim control and after Muslim dominance under British administration.¹⁴ Hussain identified that partition altered not only the region's demographic and religious makeup, but also the people's beliefs. The 'two-nation idea' of Muhammad Ali Jinnah is regarded as a symbol of Islam as well as a common identity for Indian Muslims who share distinct ethnic, geographical, and social boundaries.¹⁵

After the inclusion of Afghan Jihad and refugees inside Pakistan, Pakistani society started getting religious fanatic approach. Hoodbhoy examined how Saudi Arabia legitimized its claim to be the Islamic world's leader by establishing a global network of charities, preachers, and professors to spread Wahabism in Pakistan.¹⁶ Monique's European Parliament investigation looked into the involvement of Wahabi networks in supporting and arming rebel groups around the world, especially in Pakistan.¹⁷ The Parsi community had migrated abroad as a result of rising religious intolerance in their region as a result of 'Talibanisation'. According to Rahman's research, minorities in Pakistan are oppressed not just by the Muslim majority, but also by different castes within the Hindu population.¹⁸

After the Afghan war and 9/11 incident, Pakistani society was enormously affected and influenced by religious schools and madrassas. It is a proven fact that one of the reasons for increased violence and intolerance among the members of the society was the religious education,

¹³ N. Ashraf, 'The Islamization of Pakistan's Educational System: 1979-1989', *The Islamization of Pakistan, 1979-2009* (Washington DC: The Middle East Institute, 2009).

¹⁴ Tariq Rahman, *op.cit.*

¹⁵ Tariq Hussain, *op.cit.*

¹⁶ Pervez, Hoodbhoy, 'The Saudization of Pakistan', *Newsline* (Karachi), 2017. <https://eacpe.org/content/uploads/2017/05/Saudization-of-Pakistan-updated.pdf>.

¹⁷ Monique Claude, 'The Involvement of Salafism/Wahhabism in the Support and Supply of Arms to Rebel Groups around the World | Think Tank | European Parliament', Last modified 6 November 2013. [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/EXPO-AFET_ET\(2013\)457137](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/EXPO-AFET_ET(2013)457137).

¹⁸ Tariq Rahman, *Denizens of Alien Worlds: A Study of Education, Inequality and Polarization in Pakistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2004).

Fair identified that the most prominent key cause of extremism in Pakistan has been related to religious education.¹⁹

Rehman and Bano²⁰ agreed that religious schools, which existed in the region prior to Pakistan's establishment, have played a significant role in serving society and the state, dividing scholars into two camps. By offering free education, promoting literacy, and teaching religious beliefs and human values, religious education in Pakistan has arguably had a good impact on society.²¹ Religious education, on the other hand, has been blamed for spreading conservative extremist views and training students in a specific worldview that leads to political indoctrination, with some institutions even being characterised as breeding grounds for Muslim terrorists.²² Fair further elaborated that the 9/11 attacks on the United States and the US-Afghan war brought attention to the role of Islamic schools in educating students for Jihad in Afghanistan and Pakistan, as well as encouraging adherence to Sharia law.²³

According to the cognitive dissonance theory, when a person's action conflicts with his or her opinions and beliefs, an underlying psychological tension results. An individual is thus motivated to adjust their attitude in order to achieve consistency between their beliefs and behaviors as a result of this underlying tension. According to research, when a person exhibits actions that are at odds with their attitudes or beliefs, their attitudes alter to reflect the activity they are doing.²⁴

Research Methodology

The aim of this study is to explore the complexities of the phenomenon under investigation. Therefore, a qualitative research method is deemed appropriate, as it facilitates a comprehensive understanding and detailed analysis of the subject. For primary data collection, the widely circulated newspaper in Karachi, 'Daily Jang', has been selected for the purpose of

¹⁹ Christine C. Fair, *The Madrassah Challenge: Militancy and Religious Education in Pakistan* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2008).

²⁰ Tariq Rahman, *op.cit.*; Masooda Bano, 'Beyond Politics: The Reality of a Deobandi Madrasa in Pakistan', *Journal of Islamic Studies* 18:1 (2007) 43-68.

²¹ Tariq Rahman, *op.cit.*; Masooda Bano, 'Beyond Politics: The Reality of a Deobandi Madrasa in Pakistan', *Journal of Islamic Studies* 18 (2007), 43-68.

²² Peter W. Singer, 'Pakistan's Madrassahs: Ensuring a System of Education Not Jihad', *Analysis Paper* 14 (2001), 1-9.

²³ Christine C. Fair, *op.cit.*

²⁴ Leon Festinger, *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance*, Vol. 2. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1957).

content analysis. The news stories that are crime oriented were collected from the Front, back and city pages and national page of the newspaper. Three months have been selected to analyze the situation of the Pakistani society and the effects of people's general religious practices. The selected three months include a month before the holy month of Ramzan, the month of Ramzan and the month after Ramzan.

A survey with general public has been conducted with the help of simple random sampling. A structured questionnaire was used to gather survey responses from 200 respondents. A survey with general public has been conducted with the help of simple random sampling.

Results

The news related with the study are discussed as following:

Table 1: Daily Jang 2021

Month	Robbery	Street Crimes	Fraud/ traffic rules' violation/ bribery	Rape	Murder	Family Affairs	Firing	Kidnapping	Total
Pre-Ramzan	4	1	0	11	15	4	1	3	39
Ramzan	12	5	12	3	6	0	5	4	47
Post Ramzan	12	5	7	5	7	8	8	2	54

Crime rates before and during Ramzan: During the month before Ramzan, a total 39 crime news were reported; that includes four incidents of robbery, one incident of street crime, eleven rape cases, 15 murders, four family affairs, one incident of firing, and three cases of kidnapping.

During the holy month of Ramzan, it can clearly be seen that an increased number of cases are reported, including 12 robberies, five street crimes, 12 cases of fraud, three rape cases, six incidents of murder, five incidents of firing, and four cases of kidnapping were reported. The incidents of robberies were minimal before Ramzan, but we see an increased number of robbery incidents in the month of Ramzan and the following month. The similar pattern is observed in the cases of street crimes that they increased in the month of Ramzan and the rate remained unchanged in the month of post-Ramzan. The results require attention showing a sudden huge increase in the news stories reporting fraud/traffic rules violation/bribery during the month of Ramzan and the number sustained in the subsequent month. Majority of the rape cases were reported before Ramzan but the number of cases decreased to three during the Holy month but then increased to five in the month after Ramzan.

Murder incidents were at peak before Ramzan, decreased during the month of Ramzan but then the numbers started increasing.

The results show that the issues of family affairs were not reported during the month of Ramzan, but the increasing trend can be seen before and after Ramzan. On the contrary, the incidents of firing and kidnapping increased during the month of Ramzan while fewer cases were reported in the pre- and post-Ramzan months.

Table 2: Daily Jang 2022

Month	Robbery	Street Crimes	Fraud/ traffic rules' violation/ bribery	Rape	Murder	Family Affairs	Firing	Kidnapping	Total
Pre-Ramzan	11	4	13	4	10	8	10	3	63
Ramzan	14	2	11	1	12	8	13	7	68
Post Ramzan	3	1	5	3	6	10	14	7	49

The results in Table 2 depict an increasing trend of crime rate during the holy month of Ramzan. The 11 incidents of robbery were reported in pre-Ramzan that increased to 14 during Ramzan and decreased to three in the post-Ramzan time period.

The cases of street crimes decreased during the holy month of Ramzan and decreased further in the month after Ramzan. A decreasing trend is seen for the cases of fraud/traffic rules' violation/bribery during Ramzan and the post-Ramzan month. Similarly, the rape cases appeared less during Ramzan while the murder incidents were maximum during Ramzan but then decreased in the post-Ramzan month. The issues of family affairs were reported in high numbers during the pre-Ramzan and Ramzan periods, but they increased further after Ramzan, indicating an increasing trend. The incidents of firing and kidnapping continued to increase during the month of Ramzan and post-Ramzan months. Overall, an increased crime rate is observed during the holy month of Ramzan.

The increased trend of crime rate during the holy month of Ramzan denotes that the results disapprove our hypothesis that states, 'People tend to avoid malpractices during the religious month of Ramzan'. Overall, the total reported crime incidents are maximum during the holy month of Ramzan.

Consequently, the results of the content analysis on the crime news stories during the pre-Ramzan, Ramzan and post Ramzan reveal that, people have shown indifferent attitude towards the holy month and religious practices in contrast to their deeds.

Furthermore, the responses of the survey are discussed below:

Perception of a Pakistani Muslim: The perception of the respondents was interesting and of mixed opinion. A majority of 40% post graduate degree holders think that a Pakistani Muslim is conservative. 25% see a Pakistani Muslim as an arrogant person. A minority of 18% and 17% of the girls have opined that a Pakistani Muslim is liberal and humble, respectively. The respondents holding the degree of graduation have opined differently as an absolute majority of 35% of respondents consider a Pakistani Muslim a humble person. The second majority of 26% of the graduated respondents said that a Pakistani Muslim is generally conservative. 22% respondents that a Pakistani Muslim is arrogant while a minority of 17% graduated respondents think that a Pakistani Muslim is liberal.

Perception of a Practicing Muslim: The findings indicate what people think about a practicing Muslim. According to a majority of 39% of graduated people, a practicing Muslim is 'humble'. 31% of the graduated people think otherwise, saying that a practicing Muslim is 'arrogant'. 13% of the graduated respondents opined about a practicing Muslim that he/she is devout/pious and conservative. A minority of 4% said that a practicing Muslim is liberal. Commenting on what people think about a practicing Muslim, the second category of the respondents that are Masters/M.Phil. PhD and highly educated; an overwhelming majority of 50% think that a practicing Muslim is found to be humble. A minority of 17% think that a practicing Muslim is conservative. Another minority of 13%, 11%, and 9% think that a practicing Muslim is arrogant, liberal, and devout/pious, respectively.

Religion as an Individual or Collective Matter: The results indicate that the majority of the graduated people think the religion is an individual matter, while a minority of 26% think it can be both, either a collective matter or an individual matter. On the other hand, a majority of Masters/M.Phil. PhDs hold the opinion that religion is an individual matter, while 29% of them think that religion is a collective matter. A minority of 23% of the same group think that the religion can be a collective as well as an individual matter.

Effects of Practicing Islam: The results indicates that 57% post-graduates believe increased Islamic practice leads to rigidity, while 43% disagree, stating it does not make a Muslim more rigid. Among graduates, 56% believe that practicing Islam does not lead to rigidity, whereas 44% think it does.

Regular Performance of Islamic Duties: According to the survey results, a majority of 89% of the postgraduates think that regular performance of the Islamic duties (*faraiz*) leaves a positive impression on one's life. On the other hand, a minority of 11% think otherwise, saying that performing Islamic duties does not leave a positive impression on one's life. Opining about the same questions, a vast majority of 88% of the graduated people said that the regular performance of the Islamic duties leaves a positive impression on one's life. But a minority of 8% think that performing Islamic duties/*faraiz* does not leave a positive impression on one's life.

Role of Practicing Muslims in Shaping Society: A stunning majority of 78% of the postgraduates opined that a practicing Muslim helps shape a rational society, while a minority of 22% thinks that a practicing Muslim has got no share in shaping a rational society. Another majority of 75% of the graduated respondents think that a practicing Muslim helps shape a sensible society, but a minority of 25% says that a practicing Muslim does not take part in shaping a rational society.

Rift between Different Sects of Islam: A majority of 79% of the postgraduates and 75% of the graduated people think that the sectarian rift between different sects of Islam has been widening lately. A minority of 21% of the same group and 25% of the graduated people think that the rift between different sects of Islam has not been widening.

Islamic Values in Pakistani Society: The survey results show that an overwhelming majority of 87% of the post graduate and 63% of the graduated respondents opined that a Pakistani society does not possess the true Islamic values. The remaining 13% of the above-graduated and 37% of the graduated respondents hold the opinion that a Pakistani society possesses the true Islamic values.

Religious Faith and Life Satisfaction: A majority of 65% of graduates and 69% of postgraduates think that the individuals with strong religious faith possess higher levels of life satisfaction. 19% of the postgraduates and 8% of the graduated people think negatively about the statement. The remaining 12% of the postgraduates and 27% of the graduated people think that individuals with strong religious faith possess higher levels of life satisfaction to some extent.

Religious Pilgrimages and Transformative Impact or Persistent Malpractices: The survey reveals that a significant majority of respondents believe that performing Hajj and Umrah does not necessarily

lead to a change in behavior. Specifically, 78% of post-graduate respondents and 66% of graduates think that people continue their malpractices even after performing these religious pilgrimages. In contrast, only 9% of post-graduates and 10% of graduates believe that people stop their malpractices after performing Hajj and Umrah. Additionally, 13% of post-graduates and 14% of graduates think it is true to some extent that individuals persist in their malpractices despite undertaking these religious obligations.

The survey reveals that a vast majority of 78% of the post graduate and 66% of the graduated respondents think that despite performing Hajj and Umrah, people continue their malpractices. On the other hand, the minority of 9% of the post graduate and 10% of the graduates think that after performing Hajj and Umrah, people tend to stop their malpractices. Moreover, 13% of the post graduate and 14% of the graduated people think that it is true to some extent that despite performing Hajj and Umrah, people continue their malpractices.

Religious Observance and Adherence to Traffic Law: The survey results show that 68% of the postgraduates and 49% of the graduated people said that the people who offer prayers five times a day are more likely not to violate traffic laws. But a lesser majority of 23% of the postgraduates and 38% of the graduates do not agree that the people who offer prayers five times a day are more likely not to violate traffic laws. But 9% of the postgraduates and 13% of the graduates partially agree that the people who offer prayers five times a day are more likely not to violate traffic laws.

Islamic Teachings on Cooperation and the Reality of Undermining Behaviors: Referring to the Hadith, 'The best human being is the one who is most beneficial', the survey shows that a significant majority—85% of postgraduates and 80% of graduates—agree that Islam encourages cooperation. However, they also believe that even practicing Muslims do not refrain from engaging in leg-pulling. A small minority of 8% of both postgraduates and graduates disagreed with this view, while 7% of postgraduates and 12% of graduates partially agreed.

A Perception Analysis of Prayers and Malpractices: Referring to the Hadith, "Offering prayers five times a day keeps you away from evil," the survey shows that a majority of 88% of postgraduates and 60% of graduates believe that people who pray five times a day are still involved in malpractices. In contrast, 8% of postgraduates and 16% of graduates disagree, believing that those who pray five times a day are not engaged

in malpractices. Additionally, a minority of 4% of postgraduates and 24% of graduates partially agree with the statement.

Characteristics of a Virtuous Society: The findings indicate that, according to a majority of 48% of the postgraduate and 58% of the graduated respondents, the most important trait of a good society is being educated and religious at the same time. On the other hand, a lesser majority of 41% of the postgraduates and 25% of the graduated respondents think that being moral-bound is the most important trait of a good society. Moreover, a minority of 10% of the postgraduates and 12% of the graduated respondents opined that being educated is the most important trait of a good society. Only 1% of the above-graduate respondents think that it is more important for a society to be religious to become a good society.

Discussion

The study's analysis and theme recognise Pakistani society and its religious practices as a significant obstacle to achieving a peaceful and harmonious community. In recent years, Pakistan's religious landscape has undergone a notable shift towards more conservatism. Violent religious conduct has surged in prevalence. Intolerant religious behaviour is increasing as religious tolerance diminishes. With certain exceptions, numerous interpretations of Islam have become progressively orthodox, rendering Islamic practice more dogmatic and militant. Islam establishes particular criteria for not just one's personal life, but also for the social, political, and economic aspects of life. To comprehend the relationship between religious behavior and societal growth, the personal, social, political, and economic components of people's behavior must be examined. Social behaviour is defined as 'behaviour that occurs in a social environment and emerges from the interaction between and among persons'.

The survey data suggests that religious rituals have a significant influence on Pakistani people. They perceive religious rituals as means of attaining spiritual benefits and eternal rewards, including a favorable afterlife. They consider faith an immediate need for survival. Still, on the other hand, they are not trying to comply with the restrictions and duties that religion has imposed on them. The essence of religion is based upon a strong sense of self-judgment that calls one to evaluate every moment regarding good deeds and wrongdoings.

It is not just personal exploitation of religious impositions but also a collective behavior of Pakistani people at multiple levels on political, economic, social, and moral grounds. The data clearly explain the

confused mindset of even highly educated and qualified people because, in different questions, their answers are pretty contradictory, much like every day people's behavior. They cannot define the line between religious limitations and personal advantages despite declaring that a practicing Muslim usually has a humble and soft nature. Still, that humble-natured person cannot refrain from law-breaking, bribing, or even corruption. It declares that we as a nation only believe in rituals and practices but are not interested in the philosophy behind imposing those obligations. The holy month of Ramadan is a period during which Muslims seek Allah's forgiveness by refraining from misdeeds; but, upon its conclusion, their previous behaviour often resumes. The reason for this temporary transformation is that people don't work out to enhance their 'Taqwa' as a nation, and don't want to abide by the strict rules and regulations against their will. Another finding after observing Daily *Jang* news related to the crime rate before, during, and after Ramzan in Karachi indicates that even the blessed months of Ramzan couldn't restrict Pakistani Muslims from committing crimes. After the month, this rate grew very fast.

Conclusion

The study concludes that the religious practices and the increasing trend of maintaining a religious lifestyle do not influence the moral values of the common public. Pakistani society is getting significant implications because of the increased religious mindset and heightened ethical and character degradation. The research questions, survey, and content analysis of *Daily Jang* suggest that Pakistan, as a predominantly Muslim nation, largely adheres to religious regulations. However, there remains a lack of understanding regarding the fundamental essence of Islam and the deeper philosophy behind its rituals.

Findings related to the *Jang* Newspaper's content analysis that aimed to assess the people's religious practices and character building in Karachi during the months of pre-Ramzan, Ramzan, and post-Ramzan clearly showed that in the holy month of Ramazan, the rate of multiple natured crimes escalated. Even after the end of the month, the rate kept increasing. These observations reveal that Muslims in Pakistan are not significantly influenced by religious duties and obligations, even during the holy month of Ramazan, which is regarded as the most sacred and blessed period. At the expense of the specific religious obligations as they are considered a separate part of the life activities, contrary to the spirit of Islam that talks about Islam have devised a complete code of ethics of spending a modest life. The utter deviance in the people's behavior compared to their instilled religious practices depicts a pattern of cognitive dissonance, showing a conflict resulting from contradictory beliefs.

Furthermore, the inquiry regarding the efficacy of religious activities in sustaining a harmonious community has been validated. It is applicable because all the survey findings indicate that only adopting religious responsibilities and practices cannot make any difference. Unless the rationale and philosophy of the religion that emphasizes a collective approach as a nation would not be an integral part of Muslims in Pakistan.