Social Problems faced by Non-Muslim Citizens of Rawalpindi

Dr. Khalid Mahmood¹, Malik Akhtar Hussain², Mr. Irfanullah³

Abstract

Pakistan is an Islamic Republic having 96 percent of Muslim population. The other population is composed of Hindus, Christians, Sikhs, Qadianies, Parsis and Bihais. Some of these are well settled but a large number of them are underprivileged. The social problems of non-Muslim citizens in Rawalpindi based on religion are discussed in this research. Rawalpindi city was universe in this research while Hindu and Christian respondents were the population. A large number of non-Muslim citizens face these issues due to being minority in the country. Lack of freedom for religious practices to non-Muslims in Pakistan is the most important issue for the minority groups. Even they cannot perform their religious festivals with ease in some areas. The religious identity of non-Muslim citizens has also been affected. Moreover, they have to face religious bias in the society, due to this bias minority groups have to face social discrimination. One reason of this discrimination is the old caste system in our society. Rapidly growing intolerance has been changed into extremism and violence. The minorities in Pakistan are living as a depressed class of the society. Having a reasonable job is also a difficult task for the marginalized minority groups. In this research some issues of non-Muslims citizen residing in Rawalpindi are discussed based on religion.

Key Words: Minorities, Discrimination, Marginalized, Conversion, Extremism.

1. Introduction

The article 18 of Universal Declaration of Human Rights gives total freedom of belief, religion and thought to everyone. It also allows everyone to worship and practice the teachings of their religion (UN). Article 26 (1) of the constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan provides the equal rights to every citizen of the country and there is no discrimination on the bases of race, religion, caste and sex (NA). Pakistan is the country where freedom of minority groups is limited in the society. The access to justice is
difficult for majority people therefore the non-Muslims are deprived of it. A Christian couple was burned alive by a mob near in Kot Radha Kishan of Qasur District in Punjab in 2014. A very remarkable step was taken then by the anti-terrorism court to sentence Five men to death involved in the incident (Gabol). Moreover the non-Muslim citizens also have to face social discrimination and bias due to their poverty and undesirable professions (Sultan). Some important social issues faced by the non-Muslim citizens of Pakistan are discussed here in the light of available published literature.

2. Literature Review

Religious minorities have played a key role in the history of Pakistan and their services cannot be denied in various fields. Sikh and Hindu community also had an important role in business and trade especially in villages (Majid). Pakistan was established as the result of division of Subcontinent for the Muslims and according to constitution all of the citizens have an equal right to live according to their own faith or religion but practically the religious minorities have not been provided their fundamental rights to live (Imdar).

Farooq Yousaf (2016) has the opinion that Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah created Pakistan on the basic principle of secularism where all the citizens may enjoy equal rights, but right wing religious groups had imposed their desire that Pakistan would be the country for the Muslims. After the arrival of Talibanization in the country; the wave of intolerance spread all over the country rapidly and because of this issue, non-Muslims of Pakistan feel themselves more insecure in the society (Yousaf).

According to UKFCO (2009) Pakistan has become a symbol of Alienation for the religious minorities at all level as, since her creation non-Muslim citizens of the county have been subject to attacks (CW). Junaid Qaisar (2010) discussed the responsibilities of the state and government as the religious minorities in Pakistan have been facing severe issues but the process of “prolonged silence” opted by the ruling class
shows that they never remained sincere to solve the problems. This is a real gap between state and non-Muslim citizens of Pakistan and due to this gap the religious minorities of the country have become isolated and disappointed (Qaisar, Situation of Minorities in Pakistan).

Religious minorities can play more effective role if they are awarded respect in the society. Now the media has grown positive in its effect and violence against minorities is reported regularly on media. The local media has been instrumental in bringing the issues of the non-Muslim citizens. Moreover, media should also have to fulfill the responsibility to promote inter religious harmony among the nation by presenting exclusive programs (Amber Mubeen).

Churches and temples have been attacked at a large scale in Pakistan by the extremists. The minorities of Pakistan remained under the stress because not only their buses, worship places and social congregation were attacked but they also feel unsafe within their own houses. One hundred and twenty-seven Christians lost their lives during their worship in Peshawar in 2013 as result of a suicide attack on the church. These types of incidents show a very less space for the non-Muslims in Pakistani society. This is the matter of concern that highly ranked religious and political leaders played a rare role to support the minority groups emotionally (PIPS).

The rights of minorities are being violated all over the world. The minority groups are looking for the states and governments, they need to secure their rights of religious freedom, identity, languages, religious practices and the promotion of culture (UNHR).
3. Religious Freedom

All the citizens of Pakistan have religious freedom according to Constitution. But some discriminatory laws make this freedom limited for the religious minorities. The examples can be seen in the society commonly. Above discussion shows that minorities are not granted religious liberty in Pakistan as per constitution. Practically they are considered as second class citizens in the country. Discriminatory laws are used to take revenge of personal rivalries. Under-privileged non-Muslim citizens are seen from the eyes of aversion.

Islam and Christianity are both called missionary religions by Norin Nazir while discussing socio-religious issues. In this regard, referring to the Meesaq-e-Madina, she said that all the religious groups had the freedom of worship and preaching of their religions in the Islamic state of Madina (Nazir).

According to Dr. Mubarak Ali untouchable class is marginalized by a planned conspiracy in our society, so that they may remain oppressed to raise the voice for their rights and in this way the upper class will enjoy their rights. Still the lives, properties and honor of untouchable are not secure. Their women are raped, their houses and shops burned and they are not allowed to excel. This is a historical reality that Christians and untouchable were discouraged when they tried to accept Islam only to deprive them of benefits which they could get after converting to Islam (Aabdi). In some areas, it is very difficult for non-Muslims to perform the religious rituals. In Pakistan the situation of marginalized minorities is very pitiable (Khaliq).

4. Religious Identity

All the Pakistani minority groups have a wish to be recognized and identified on the base of religion. The sense of being a minority encourages them to maintain their presence. Although they have been maintaining the existence of their culture and customs
living with the majority group, but in this respect, the non-Muslim citizens of Karachi have been facing several problems. Hindus were in majority here before the existence of Pakistan and all the others were in minority. The larger roads, highways and settlements were attributed with the names of Hindus but later on their names were changed. These buildings and settlements were the reasons of identities of Hindus as these were designated with their names. But after the creation of Pakistan the names of these roads and areas were gradually replaced with those of the Muslim leaders. Now few pristine roads or settlements are left connected with the Hindu names.

Regarding the identity of religious minorities Ghulam Muhiuddin said that the Hindus of Karachi are losing their identities. The settlements attributed to Hindu names were very popular and no one had the objection to these names. But despite this, the names were altered due to discrimination. The name of popular Guru Mandir Chowk of Karachi was converted into Babri Chowk. But despite it, public calls it as Guru Mandir. The identification of Hindus had been affected due to changing names of roads. The clear ancient proofs of Hindus are disappearing rapidly. It's regrettable that Hindus’ temples are now deserted. They perform their religious rituals at their homes. We cannot easily identify the Hindus living in the city. The persons who wear dhoti can be rarely seen. Hindu men wear shalwar kameez and also have beards like Muslims. Their own identity has suffered living within the Muslim culture. The Hindus of Karachi are like Muslims, eat meat and don’t demonstrate bias. That is why when the hotels of Muslims are commonly closed in the month of Ramazan then the Muslims visit Hindu hotels in a large number. Some Hindus arrange rallies to mourn in the month of Muharram. However, some of their customs are different than Muslims, for example Hindu marriages are not common in the family and they keep distance of a few generations. If someone dies, then the family of deceased prepares meal on the 12th day after death. This meal is eaten by the Pundit first and no one is allowed to eat it before the pundit. At this occasion, pundit announces to make the house pure, so it is necessary to pay some money to the pundit for
his pleasure. Like this, if any Hindu kills any animal the killer is considered as unholy. The pundit makes him holy after he begs from seven villages (Mohayuddin).

In India the Hindus are divided into four castes Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas and Shudras. However, in Pakistan the fifth caste also exists namely Balmeek who had forsaken their religious identity for their survival in the Muslim majority community. Therefore, they have sometimes been seen to partake in Muslims’ religious festivals or rituals etc. this trend started in the backdrop of Babri Masjid incident that took place in 1992 in India (Shinker, A Hindu Respondent of Goal Mandi, Rawalpindi). According to Sada, the biggest problem of Christians is of their religious identity since the establishment of Pakistan till today (Sada, Pakistan men Masihi Hona”, in Zakyia Tariq and Father Emanuel Aasi).

The customs and culture also play significant role in the identity of minority citizens. Their identity somehow remains intact due to these customs. Although some customs need expenses and if the economic conditions are better than no minority group wishes to leave these but due to compulsion minority groups living in Pakistan had to abandon their customs. Sada has discussed only about the identity of Christians while Ghulam Muhiuddin has written widely about the customs of Hindus of Karachi. It is the matter of concern that no one has discussed about the identity of Sikhs, but Sikhs have lost their identity all over Pakistan. Sikhs also wish to maintain their identity like Hindus but they avoid being prominent due to the fear of majority group. One of its reasons is the rare population of Sikhs in Pakistan. Contrary to it, the population of Christians is very large but the people of this group don’t use the word “Masih” with their names because they have to face discrimination due to it. Particularly the Christians living in big cities want to keep themselves secure in the society.
5. Religious Biases

Hindus, Christians, Sikhs and other marginalized religious minorities are frequently seen with prejudice in Pakistan and this bias has spread so much that it can be a dangerous menace to society. At first these problems were for non-Muslims but much of community itself is now divided on religious grounds. In this context, Father Pascal Robert said that the religion has restricted us, but when we get out of religion then humanity connects the people. When we work for humanity, the religious discrimination ends automatically (O.F.M). According to Mahboob Sada let us change our attitudes to eliminate the biases. Christians and Muslims should live together not only in the society but should benefit each other (Sada, op.cit.,).

Father Emanuel Aasi writes that Christians have made valuable contributions to the education and health and everyone acknowledges their services. Being a minority Christians have served the people of various other religions. In contrast, Christians have to face many difficulties, and intolerance and discrimination are the issues on top. Aasi said about his childhood that he attended the morning assembly at school and had led other students saying “Lab p aati hay dua ban k tamana meri” but after that he had to be seated in a corner of class on the sackcloth. According to him, he was considered hateful due to being a Christian (Aasi).

It can be estimated with the above discussion of the authors that prejudices have come to a terrible situation in the Pakistani society. Humans are seen on religious grounds rather than humanity. Often minority citizens are treated with inhuman behavior. Marginalized minorities are considered inferior through which they have to face social discrimination.
6. Forced Conversions of minorities

Article 20 of the constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan guaranteed liberty to all the citizens of the country to profess, practice and propagate their religion and everyone has the right to establish and manage his or her religious institution (Pakistan). Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah promised (Malik, I.H. 2002) to the minorities of Pakistan that they will be awarded equal rights and fully religious freedom in the country but with the passage of time; their rights have gone limited. The long process of Islamization in the country has not only limited the sphere of religious practices for the non-Muslims but the alarming wave of forced conversion of Hindus and Christian girls spread almost all over the country particularly in the Sindh (Malik). The cases of forced conversion and rape cannot be neglected against the minorities in the society. Two Christian girls near Lahore, in the mid of 2004 were raped, one of them was seven years old and the other was less than three years (Gregory).

Nasir Saeed (2016) discussed the case of Asma a disabled Christian girl of Sialkot who was kidnapped by her Muslim neighbor Ghulam Hussain. After a few months, Asma was succeeded to escape and reached her father. Ghulam Hussain later claimed that Asma have accepted Islam and got married with him, so she cannot live with their parents as they were Christians. Nasir also described the case of Shazia from Pattoki of Qasur District. She was a married Christian woman having four children and was converted after kidnapping by influential person of the area. She escaped luckily from his clutches and was able to reach and join her family. The landlord had the statement that she had accepted Islam and her previous marriage had been revoked, therefore, Shazia had to live with him. The concerned person trapped her family in a false case due to his power and was succeeded to get her in his custody again (Saeed).

Bina Shah (2016) said that kidnapping of the vulnerable Hindu girls by the powerful Muslims has become a daily routine in Sindh. The abductors have access to get a marriage certificate (nikahnama) by paying its price and this page or paper declares the
marriage as legal step. Although government of Sindh has taken initiative in this regard after passing a bill against forced conversion and marriages of the non-Muslims girls but this legislation will not be able to fulfill the requirement of Hindu girls because they require a law that should protect them more effectively (shah).

7. **Social discrimination towards minorities**

Since ancient times, poverty and retardation in Pakistan are existing and caste system is also centuries old. Despite extreme hardwork, the poor could not save their upcoming generations from poverty. Although citizens may have some opportunities to proceed in the society in any way, but minority citizens do not get the opportunity of growth due to social discrimination. In this context, *Akhtar Hussain Baloch* said that due to caste system not only minorities but majority groups also have to face numerous problems, however Minorities face exclusively severe problems in the society. Its first reason is their being minority because if the minority groups belong to lower caste, they have to bear the invasive of majority group on one hand and on the other hand they have persecution to face from their upper caste people belonging to their religion. Therefore, they are forced to live in slavery generation after generation (Baloch).

When the British formed their government in India, they tried to make Christianity the state religion, however when they failed in their mission, they paid attention to the poor Hindus to protect their interests and admitted them into Christianity. Marginalized Hindus were in miserable social condition at that time. They lived a humiliating life in the society. Thus they had to accept Christianity for the purpose of changing their circumstances and having a positive change in their lives. But socially and politically, they were pushed back more. When they accepted Christianity, they were kept separate from the rest of society in separate communities far from the cities. Even those belonging to the *Shudra* caste people had adopted Christianity; they could not worship with the British and churches were also different for their worship (Noreen Nazir).
Discussing the situation of Christians living in diocese of Multan, Sultan said that now in Pakistan the existence of separate settlements is an indication of the fact that they are placed with discriminatory social behavior because of which people who live in “Basties” (slum) are suffering from mental retardation and a sense of inferiority because other people avoid to make relationship with them. The communities of their own religion living in settled areas also hate the Christians living in the Basties.

Sultan also said while discussing Hyderabad that it comprises the entire Sind except Karachi and in Sind Schedule caste Hindus are largest majority. Most of them work as agriculture laborer in the fields of Muslim landlords. They have specific tribal life style. They do not assimilate with common people. While second largest minority group is of Hindus Caste who do business or trade. The caste and schedule caste Hindus of Sind are two percent of the total population of Pakistan. Although they are mostly not involved in conflicts, but Hindus of Sind would suffer the penalty of sins they did not commit due to breakdown of Indo-Pakistan relations and because of attacks on Muslims by the Hindu extremists in India (Dr. Pervez Sultan).

8. Intolerance, Extremism and Attacks on Minorities

Today in Pakistan, culture of intolerance and violence has been developed. The religious minorities are not only vulnerable, but the majority of community is also facing numerous problems. After the era of Zia's Islamization in Pakistan, an un-ending series of attacks started on religious minorities. The revenge of martyrdom of Babri Mosque in India was taken from the non-Muslim citizens of Pakistan. Christians and Sikhs were also targeted along with Hindus. The minority settlements and places of worship are targeted especially. When the majority of the country is vulnerable then the atmosphere is much more alarming for minority communities. In this context Junaid Qaisar has the opinion that attacks on Christian institutions and churches have become a daily routine due to increasing intolerance and extremism in Pakistan. Governments have continued the practice to divide people by the discriminatory rules. When a great tragedy happens in the
world then Pakistan's marginalized religious minorities are targeted. As government of Pakistan sided with the United States in the global campaign against terror, its impact was also on the Christian minority in Pakistan. Churches of Christians and their other organizations were targeted by the terrorists in Pakistan (Qaisar). Prof. Dr. Syed Jaffar Ahmed said that the rapidly increasing trend of violence and intolerance is the problem for religious minorities in the country. According to him although Muslims themselves are victims of intolerance and violence but non-Muslim citizens are the main targets (Ahmed).

The trend of extremism has promoted as a result of attacks on non-Muslims. Often the entire towns of non-Muslims are devastated and are usually resorted to blasphemy laws for these goals. Although these laws were enforced for good purpose so that no one would be able to insult the religion of others, and if anyone does so, the law enforcement agencies will arrange the judicial punishment after filling a case against him. However, when such an event occurs then the majority class takes laws in hands, attacks the minority communities considering a good deed for themselves without differentiating between the sinner and the innocent. If this trend continues further, it will have highly negative impact on future in the country and it will be more difficult for the non-Muslim citizens to live in the country.

In April 2009 at Taisar Town of Karachi, a local Church was attacked by the Taliban or Taliban-pro Pakhtun community. The church was desecrated at night and in response to it the Christians of Taisar Town rallied to record their protest. It was the matter of concern that during the protest, the Christians were attacked by a mob of Taliban-pro local Pakhtun and as a result an eight years old boy Irfan Masih was killed, and some were injured also. The aim of this attack was to expel the Christian community from the area of Taisar Town (Naqeeb).
9. Methodology of the Research

The universe of this research was Rawalpindi City and a survey for this purpose was conducted in different areas of Rawalpindi including Chaklala scheme III, Gracey Line, Sadiqabad and Goal-mandi. Simple Random Method was used for sampling while Hindus and Christians were included in population. 80 non-Muslims were interviewed in a survey out of which 68 males and 12 females. The religious minorities face a number of problems in Pakistani society. To find out the social problems of non-Muslims of Rawalpindi was its main objective. 20 percent Hindus and 80 percent Christians respondents were included in the sample. According to educational qualification 10 percent Literate, 45 percent middle, 20 percent Matric and 25 percent were intermediate and above.

The findings of this research are discussed in the following.

1. Type of Family

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Family</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Joint Family</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuclear Family</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>70</td>
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</table>

According to the findings 30 percent non-Muslim citizens were living in joint and 70 percent in nuclear families. Most of the people had wished to live in joint family but they had less space at their homes, therefore their offspring are bound to live in nuclear family.

2. Important Sources of Income

A large number of the non-Muslim citizens were working as sweepers in government and private sectors; however, some of them had other professions like driving, teaching,
nursing, business of scrap etc. Most of the minority women do the work as maid or sweepers and get very little in return as their wages. They spend it to fulfill the needs of their children. In nursing, the Christian girls had lost their jobs because this profession is being adopted by the Muslim girls rapidly.

3. Satisfaction with Income

Due to very less income, large family size and high rate of inflation the non-Muslims of Rawalpindi are living hand to mouth. Very fewer respondents were satisfied with their income. Only 10 percent respondents were satisfied while 90 percent were dissatisfied with their earning.

4. Range of Income

The range of monthly income or earning was up-to Rs. 10,000 (20 percent), Rs. 10,001 to 15,000 (55 percent), and only 25 percent respondents were able to earn above 15,000 Rs. per month.

5. Reasons of Economic Problems

Reasons of Economic Problems (N=80, Multiple answers)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons of Economic Problems</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inflation</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Education</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large Family Size</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unavailability of good job</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Un-sustainable Income</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Rates of Electricity Bill</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Seventy percent respondents replied that they have to face economic problems due to being non-Muslims living in Pakistan while thirty percent had the opinion that their economic issues are due to their own hard-luck and not related or linked to their religion.

**6. Educational Problems:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problems faced for Education</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inflation</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poverty</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uneducated Parents</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Marriages</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue Collar Jobs</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Educational Problems (N=80, Multiple answers)

Some parents wished to educate their children, but they thought after getting education their offspring would work as sweepers therefore they don’t take interest in educating their children at all. Some parents can’t provide lunch to their school going children. Most of the respondents said that their children had to face social and religious discrimination in the schools by the other children and teachers. The non-Muslim citizens, who send their boys to school, don’t send their girls, and the reason is that their girls would be converted to Islam.

**7. Sources of Treatment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sources of Treatment</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government hospital</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private hospital</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herbal treatment</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources of Treatment (N=80, Multiple answers)
8. Problems in taking Treatment

Table No. 5, Problems in Treatment (N=80, Multiple answers)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problems</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shortage of money</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Un-availability of medicine from government hospital</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower quality medicine</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uneasy access to government hospital</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most of the non-Muslim citizens use private source of treatment due to different reasons. In this context they said that the quality of medicine provided in the government hospitals is lower so they have to take treatment from their nearby private clinics. Heart problems, Diabetic, Arthritis, psychological problems and mental disorders were very common diseases in the minority households.

9. Condition of Houses

Table No. 6, Housing Conditions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition of Houses</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Semi-structured</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structured</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Un-structured</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10. Situation of Houses

Table No. 7, Situation of Houses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation of Houses</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government / without rent</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On rent</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
11. Area of Houses

Table No. 8, Area of Houses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of Houses</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Upto 3 Marlas</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upto 4 Marlas</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 4 Marlas</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Twenty five Percent respondents were living in *pakka* houses while 60 percent in *semi-pakka* houses. Only fifteen percent are those who live in *kaccha* houses. 75 percent of respondents were living in personal and government houses and 25 percent had to pay rent in lieu of houses. 45 percent respondents have been living in houses comprising the area of up-to three *Marlas.*

12. Residential Problems

The non-Muslims of Rawalpindi have to face different residential problems too. Some respondents from *Chaklala* scheme III and Gracey Line told that they had been living for more than one hundred years in their self-made small homes. The plots of their houses were allotted to them by the British state but now the governments’ representatives force them to leave their houses. Some respondents told that they were unable to hire a house on rent due to religious bias. Particularly the Hindus are not considered to be good citizens in the society and no one agrees to let them the house on rent. Some respondents told that they have a large family size and face difficulty in living in smaller homes. Various non-Muslims live in very old houses which have no ventilation and drainage system.
If we look at the condition, situation and area of houses in which minority groups of Rawalpindi have been living, the situation is better than the groups of those non-Muslims who live in Karachi.

13. Family Problems

The non-Muslims of our society are embroiled in family problems. There is some difference in the problems of Hindu and Christian families. Most of the Christian families have the trend to have small family size and they use the methods to control the growth of their family but contrary to it the Hindus have the trend to have large family size and they think it a sin to control the growth. Moreover, the Christians have financial issues when it comes to marry their children but the Hindus of Rawalpindi have to face difficulties to decide the wedding of their children. The pure or orthodox Hindus do the marriages of their offspring in only pure Hindu families, and for this purpose they search the perfect match in Peshawar or other cities of K.P.K. However, the Balmeek Hindus are not very strict in this regard (Shinker).

14. Loan on Interest

The non-Muslims are trapped in the clutches of interest due to their compulsions. The non-Muslims of Rawalpindi take interest-based loan on very high markup rates. The loan providers get 15 percent markup per month. Some non-Muslim citizens told that they pay 15,000 per month in respect of interest if they take Rs. one lac and the actual amount remains intact. The respondents told that they take loan in case of extreme compulsion including illness, on the occasion of girls’ wedding and in case of long duration of joblessness (Masih).
15. Political Issues

The non-Muslim citizens are not interested in the regional politics due to being cut off from their representatives. Most of them demanded the restoration of separate electorate as the politicians neglect the non-Muslim citizens because they can be elected on the basis of their party. The minority groups want to have their own representatives for the solution of their problems (Pitter).

10. Summary

The religious minorities of Rawalpindi including Hindus and Christians have to face many social problems due to being non-Muslims. Living in small and old homes, deprived of education, fearful from the majority community, joblessness, confronting social discrimination, social injustice and oversaturated loans are the common issues of Hindus and Christians of Rawalpindi. Due to long illness and unavailability of jobs, they are compelled to take loan with high interest rate.

11. Recommendations

1. There is a dire need of land or housing societies for the non-Muslim citizens as a large number of them have been living in the slums.
2. The government should fulfill the responsibility of providing jobs to the non-Muslim citizens on priority basis.
3. The financial institution may provide the interest free easy loans to the non-Muslims to help them to start their business.
4. There should be no social and religious discrimination in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the role of civil society is very useful in this regard.
5. There should be the representatives for the non-Muslims, in among themselves who can solve their issues.
6. There is strong need to provide them the educational facility; there may be established community based schools.
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