



RESEARCH PAPER

Socio-Political Issues of Hindu Community in Punjab: A Case of Gujranwala Division

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ABSTRACT

This study seeks to examine socio-political issues that have been encountered by Hindu community in Punjab, and their livelihoods, cultural conservation and general welfare. Religious identity discrimination and marginalization is a great challenge even though the constitution guarantees equal rights. These are further aggravated by economic disenfranchisement, absence of political representation and cultural assimilation. Social stigma and discrimination also form an obstacle to access to education and healthcare. The study follows a mixed-method research, utilizing both qualitative and quantitative research methods. The qualitative approaches entail in-depth interviews and discussion sessions with the members of Hindu community, leaders of the religions, and stakeholders from Gujranwala division to understand the details of their experiences and their perceptions on socio-political issues. Data were collected through structured questionnaires distributed among members of the Hindu community across selected regions. The responses were analyzed using qualitative methods to assess patterns of marginalization and the extent of socio-political exclusion. The findings reveal that despite constitutional guarantees, many Hindus experience systemic barriers, including social prejudice, inadequate legal protection, and underrepresentation in decision-making bodies. Furthermore, gender-based disparities within the community intensify these challenges, particularly for women. The study highlights the need for inclusive policies, stronger legal frameworks, and effective implementation of minority rights to improve the socio-political conditions of the Hindu community. It also emphasizes the importance of awareness, interfaith harmony, and community empowerment in fostering a more equitable and cohesive society.

Keywords: Socio-Political Issues, Hindu Community, Social Discrimination

Introduction

Pakistan was established on 14 August 1947, based on the ideology of Islam. Most of the population in Pakistan was Muslim at this time, with almost 23% of Pakistan's population comprising non-Muslim citizens at the time of partition in 1947 (Gregory 2012). Today, the proportion of non-Muslims has declined to approximately 3.7% of the population due to the fact that non-Muslims face many challenges, such as employment discrimination, societal discrimination, forcible conversion to Islam, intimidation, violence, and much else besides (Manchanda 2009). The distinctions among Muslim denominations have also become far more accentuated over the years. While conducting a survey about minorities' rights in a Christian colony in Lahore, one of the Christian residents said: "We received threats and our churches have been burnt by a religious extremist in Pakistan whenever in abroad people used insulting remarks in respect of Holy Prophet (PBUH)" Bureau of Democracy Human Rights and Labor (2006).

Pakistan is a multi-religious and multi-cultural society, in which the religious minorities are already an essential portion of the population. The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan (1973) puts forward that all citizens are entitled to equal rights, the right to practice religion, and protection against any form of discrimination. Irrespective of these constitution guarantees, religious minorities in Pakistan still have to grapple with a number of socio-political challenges, which influences their involvement in social, economic, and political processes. One of these minorities is the Hindu community, which is one of the oldest religions in the area.

Firstly, the take a look at of socio-political issues affecting the Hindu network in Pakistan is of paramount importance because of its implications on human rights, non-secular freedoms, and societal concord. As a minority organization, Hindus in Pakistan come across diverse socio-political hurdles that shape their lived reports and opportunities. Examining those demanding situations provides insights into the wider dynamics of religious tolerance, minority rights, and democratic governance within the USA.

Secondly, the effects of the sort of examine are not limited to the Hindu community, but felt, as long as the Pakistani society and even longer. Through losing mild on the challenging circumstances faced via spiritual minority, such as Hindus, the observe highlights the necessity of inclusive standards, multi-faith communication, and discrimination and bias struggle. Besides, the awareness of these issues can inform policy formulation plans to advance social justice, equality and pluralism (Ahmad.2023).

After all, the rationale behind conducting such an observe is within the crucial to work with systemic injustices and advance a more fair and inclusive society. Through this process of scrutinizing the socio-political woes of the Hindu community in Pakistan, it is through this that the stakeholders will be made aware of the policy, advocacy, and social services gaps, thus enabling specific interventions and initiatives. Ultimately, this research is a crucial initiative towards building a society where everyone, regardless of their religious group, is free to exercise their rights to the fullest and engage in civic activities (Schaflechner, 2018).

Punjab had a large Hindu population in the past before the parting in 1947. The partitioning of British India created colossal changes in the demographics and a high population of Hindus was moved to India. Nevertheless, there was still a relatively minor but significant community of Hinduism in other portions of Punjab, such as the Gujranwala Division. With the passage of time, demographic changes, redefinition of political structure, and changes in socio-cultural variables have influenced the status of the Hindu community in the province.

The Hindu group is a minority group with unique religious, cultural, and social identity in modern Punjab. Although most of the population in the community is living peacefully and even working in the local economies and social life, these people also face challenges of political representation, social discrimination, economic marginalization, and religious security. At regional level, these problems are not well studied and especially in areas like Gujranwala, which comprises of such districts like Gujranwala, Gujranwala , Narowal, Hafizabad and Gujrat. This paper pays special attention to the socio-political problems of the Hindu community in the Gujranwala Division to give a localized concept of the minority experience in the state of Punjab.

Although a number of studies have been conducted on the national or provincial-based analysis of minority rights in Pakistan, there is still a dearth of scholarly studies on the divisional or district-based analysis. Majority of the studies talk of minorities in broad strokes and not in detail of Hindu community in Punjab, or the difference in experiences across regions.

The Gujranwala Division is a different case because it is an industrialized rural-urban mixed zone with socio-political forces. The socio-political positioning of the Hindu people in this particular area might help to see local trends of marginalization or inclusion or integration which might not be in line with other provinces like Sindh where the Hindu community lives in large numbers.

Literature Review

The comparative analysis of Hindu political engagement in Pakistan Ahmed highlights the differences and obstacles impeding Hindus' effective representation in Pakistan's political arena by contrasting their political participation with that of other religious groups. Probably, the research examines such aspects of the work as party membership, the presence in legislative formations, voter turnout, and election bids to a position of power. It may also study the socioeconomic factors of political participation such as geographical dispersion, socioeconomic level and education. Understanding the underlying causes of Hindus' underrepresentation in politics requires identifying the obstacles that stand in the way of their political participation, such as social stigma, discrimination, and a lack of political empowerment. (Ahmed,2010).

The reason for this beginning to the scholarly and popular discourses on minorities. It also tries to define the term "religious minority," illustrating how closely it relates to the caste issue a feature unique to the South Asian situation and places this discussion in the context of larger discussions about post-colonial state-building, the history of sectarianism in the area, conflicts over religious authority, and Pakistan's struggle to forge a cohesive political and cultural identity. (Rajak, 2018).

Despite being regarded as non-Muslims by Pakistani law, Ahmadis constitute a sizable group in Pakistan and frequently endure prejudice and persecution as a result of their religious convictions. Though they are few in number, Parsis, Buddhists, and Baha'is are among the other religious minorities. Even in Pakistan, where religious minorities are protected by the constitution, they often face violence, economic marginalization, and social prejudice. Fostering a culture of tolerance, upholding the rights of minorities, and guaranteeing their equal participation in society (Malik 2002).

In Pakistan, a small number of minorities have notably influenced politics, yet they maintain the belief that minorities are denied the same opportunities to actively engage in politics. Constitutionally speaking, they are not allowed to hold the office of governor, and they have several institutional obstacles while trying to win general seat elections. Because Muslims in Pakistan maintain their religious connections when it comes to voting and political engagement, they blame the greater Muslim majority for the underperformance of the minority in politics. In addition, the reasons for the lowest presence of minorities in the workforce are also linked to their lack of resources, unemployment, and success in business and education (Khalid & Rashid, 2019).

In this analytic paper, the authors, Dr. Ghulam Mustafa, Tooba Ahmad, and Muhammad Arslan, collaborated in an analytic study to come up with this version titled *Minorities in Pakistan: An Analytical Analysis of the 1973 Constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan* (2020). It was published in the well-reputed and famous Journal i.e. *Pakistan Social Sciences Review (PSSR)*. The Research paper dwells upon the constitutional rights provided to the religious minorities in the detail in all the constitutions of Pakistan and in constitution of 1973 the rights are detailed in different articles. The objective of Quaid has provided the equality of all, regardless of their discrimination. The research explains the gap between the rights that the religious minorities were provided and their absence. The war against terrorism and its radicalization in Pakistan affected both the minorities and religious minorities (Mustafa, Ahmad & Arslan, 2020).

It is stressed in historical studies that the place of Hindus in Punjab is incomprehensible without mentioning the Partition of British India in 1947. According to scholars like Talbot (2009) and Jalal (2013), Partition brought about massive demographics change and a large number of Hindu population was displaced in Punjab to India. The ones that kept on were left as a small numerical minority that considerably diminished their political power and social presence. Studies also indicate that the nation-building processes in Pakistan after Partition were dominated by the emphasis on the homogeneity of religions at the expense of the non-Muslim populations (Shah, 2015). As Sindh had a comparatively larger population of Hindus, Hindus in Punjab were scattered and lost their social interaction. Nevertheless the majority of historical studies are macro-oriented and they never consider how historical processes and events still fraternize the lived experiences of Hindus in the Gujranwala Division.

Social exclusion, citizenship, and identity politics theories are commonly used to inform the literature on minority issues. The social exclusion theory describes the process through which the minorities are excluded systematically in terms of economic, political and social resources (Silver, 1994). Researchers who use this framework to Pakistan hold that religious minorities are subjected to multiple forms of exclusion because of institutionalized biases and attitudes within society (Ahmed & Sattar, 2019).

The theory of citizenship brings out the disconnection between the formal legal citizenship and substantive citizenship. Even though the minorities might enjoy the constitutional rights, their daily lives are usually an indicator of a disparage treatment (Kabeer, 2005). These theoretical approaches are a good analytical tool in explaining the socio-political challenges of the Hindu community of Punjab.

Another theme that is repeated in the minority studies is socio-economic exclusion. It has been found that the proportion of religious minorities in Pakistan is overrepresented in the low-income sectors and the informal labor market (Farooq, 2015). Poor access to education, healthcare, and political participation is caused by economic marginalization. The literature in educational research shows that Hindu children have restricted access to quality education, such as poverty, social discrimination, and poor school amenities (Rizvi, 2017). Such drawbacks are a source of intergenerational poverty and political inactivity. Although there are national level data, micro research on Hindu communities in the industrial and semi-urban areas of Punjab like Gujranwala is very elusive.

Pakistan is characterized as having interfaith relations, which are marked with a coexistence with social boundaries which are not easily erased. Lack of organized interfaith interactions is the reason why stereotypes might continue to exist, according to Bari (2019). The media and education are cited as main institutions that create the attitude towards minorities in the population. Studies emphasize the fact that social cohesion is something that should be proactively engaged in and not tolerated (UNDP, 2017). Nevertheless, the empirical studies of interreligious contact on community level in Punjab divisions are low especially in terms of Hindu-Muslim relationship in Gujranwala.

Media studies emphasize the aspect of representation in creating minority identities. According to Ali (2018), Pakistani media is underrepresenting or reporting negatively on minority people. These representations support social exclusion and incomprehension. Researchers highlight the importance of moral journalism and diverse stories in order to facilitate social reconciliation. Nevertheless, little research has been done on the impact of media representation to Hindu communities in certain areas like Gujranwala Division.

Material and Methods

The research methodology used in this study is the qualitative research type as it will be analyzing the socio-political problem of the Hindu community in Punjab with the focus on Gujranwala Division. A qualitative method is deemed to be suitable since the study aims to allow perceptions, lived experiences, and social realities to be comprehended based on numerical data only. Socio-political issues like discrimination, marginalization, political participation, and identity issues are such complex and contextual phenomena that need to be explored in great detail. Thus, the research is descriptive and exploratory in nature to give a clear picture of the circumstances in which the Hindu minority is located in the chosen area.

This study employed mix method approach descriptive, Explanatory, Analytical in nature, and quantitative approach will be used to generalize the results.

Population

As this study concentrates Socio Political Issues of Hindu Community in Punjab A Case of Gujranwala Division, therefore the population of this study will be the literate Hindu People which experience some socio political issues.

Construction of Interview Protocol

The research study was unique as it invested all its energies and resources to investigate the social and political situation influencing the socio-political issues faced by the Hindu community in Punjab, particularly in Gujranwala Division. To investigate the desired population, semi-structured interviews were conducted by the researcher with the members of the Hindu community (including community leaders, youth, women, and religious figures) as well as from government officials, law enforcement, and civil society organizations working on minority rights in Gujranwala Division.

The interview protocol was developed by the researcher according to the research questions and with the help of the theory which is used (Theory of Minority Rights and Social Exclusion) in the study. Minority rights theory is about the protection of religious minorities, ensuring their fundamental rights, and preventing discrimination based on faith. It means giving protection to minority communities from social exclusion, economic marginalization, and political underrepresentation. The socio-political issues of the Hindu community are also relevant to this theory as these issues also focus on protecting minorities from all forms of threats and ensuring the provision of equal opportunities and safety to make them more comfortable in their lives. The socio-political issues are relevant to the five key dimensions of Minority Rights theory which are: social exclusion and discrimination, political representation and participation, economic security, religious freedom and security, and legal and institutional protection. The Hindu community in Gujranwala Division faces challenges such as forced conversions, temple desecration, social boycotts, restricted access to public spaces, and lack of effective political representation. The interview protocol was made according to these five key dimensions and the specific local context of Gujranwala Division.

Validity

The validity of the instruments was assured by experts. The amendments in the interview protocols were made according to the experts' opinion. The Supervisor requested the Chairperson of the Department of Politics & IR of GCWU Sialkot for the constitution of an Instrument Validation Committee via letter number Ref, GCWUS/SKT/POL.SC/24/ dated 26-08-2024. This committee checked the reliability of the tools and instructed about the changes where required. The following were the members of the committee:

- Chairperson, Department of Politics & IR

- Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology
- Assistant Professor, Department of Law
- Assistant Professor, Department of Social Work
- Assistant Professor, Department of Politics & IR

Procedure of Selecting Sample

Literate Hindu People which experience some socio political issues in Punjab. To approach all the target population was very difficult. Keeping in view all the situation random and convenient sampling technique will used to obtain the representative sample for this study.

Data Analysis

The questionnaires of the desired sample were analyzed by two different ways. Firstly, the analysis of each open-ended questionnaire was made to find out the challenges and to examine the social and political conditions of the Hindu community.

Ethical Consideration

Some ethical considerations were accorded great significance in the course of the research. All the participants were informed and given consent before the interviews. The respondents got to understand the purpose of the study and were assured that their identities would be kept confidential. The involvement was fully voluntary, and the interviewees were able to drop out any time during the level of the interview. Considering that minority-related issues are sensitive condition, extra care was taken to ensure there was no harm, discomfort, or risk to the respondents.

Results and Discussion

Table 1
Demographic Information of the respondents (N-15)

Variables	Frequency (%)
Gender	
Male	7(46.66%)
Female	8 (53.33%)
Age	
18-25	5 (33.33%)
25-40	10 (66.66%)
Ethnicity	
Urdu	11(73.33%)
Punjabi	4 (26.66%)
Education	
Literate	09(60%)
Illiterate	6(40%)
Residential Area	
Rural	4 (26.66%)
Urban	11(73.33%)
Occupation	
Government Employee	5(33.33%)
Business	1(6.66%)
Unemployment	4(26.66%)
Student	2(13.33%)
Private Employee	3(20%)
Monthly Income	
<7000	5(33.33%)
7000-21000	2(13.33%)
21000-42000	8 (53.33%)

Of the 15 respondents 7(46.66%) were females while 8 (53.33%) were males. About 10 (66.66%) respondents were aged between 18-25 years, 5 (33.33%) were aged between 25-35 years 10 (66.66%). A greater part of the respondents 11(73.33%) were Urdu Speaking and 4 (26.66%) were Punjabi speaking. The majority of the respondents 09(60%) were literate and 6(40%) were illiterate. Most respondents belong to Urban areas 11(73.33%) and 4(26.66%) were belong to rural areas. Of the 15 respondent's majority of respondents were doing an ordinary job in government sector 5(33.33%). The Majority of the Respondents (53.33%) monthly income were less than 100000/-RS.

Table 2
Survey

Sr.#	Statement	Yes	No
1	Do you have any property in your residual District	5(33.33%)	10(66.66%)
2	Have you or someone you know faced barriers in practicing Hindu rituals and customs openly in Gujranwala	12(80%)	3(20%)
3	Do you have freely worship	11(73.33%)	4(26.66%)
4	Do you think that the Hindu community's voice is adequately represented in local political decisions and governance in Gujranwala	2(13.33%)	13 (86.6%)
5	Do you believe that the Hindu community in Gujranwala has equal opportunities for employment compared to other religious groups	4(26.66%)	11(73.33%)
6	Do you think that Government is taking interest to solve your issues	3(20%)	12(80%)
7	Have you ever been discriminated at your workplace	4(26.66%)	11(73.33%)
8	Have you encountered any challenges in accessing basic services such as healthcare or sanitation as a member of the Hindu community in Gujranwala	2(13.33%)	13(86.66%)
9	Do you feel that the Hindu community in Gujranwala faces discrimination in access to education	5(33.33%)	10(66.66%)
10	Do you hold a computerized national identification card	11(73.33%)	4(26.66%)
11	Are you register votes	9(40%)	6(40%)

Of the 15 respondent's majority of the respondents 10 (66.66%) were not having their own property district, while 5(33.33%) were having their own property The question was asked to the respondents regarding the celebration of their religious ceremonies freely, the greater part of the respondents 12(80%) response "yes" while 3(20%) were not freely celebrate their religious ceremonies. The majority of the respondents were living for the generations, so the Hindu community's voice is adequately represented in local political decisions and governance in Gujranwala 2(13.33%) while 13 (86.66%) were responding that other religious community members not participated. The respondents faced discrimination at the job places 4(26.66%) were responding that 11(73.33%) were not faced any discrimination in their workplace. Of the 15 respondent's majority of the respondents 7 (46.7%) replied that the Movement is not taking interest to solve their uns. Moal of the respondents were explaining that they compelled to convert Islam 2 (13.33%) and 13(86.66%) cannot other community persons they forced to change the religion. Respondents 5(33.33%) wave due to religious identity they faced obstacle to get admission in academia institution while 10(66.66%) not faced any obstacle at the time of admission. The majority of the respondents was having their national identity card and they were registered for the casting of their votes.

Discussion

The Present Study was conducted to examine Socio-Political issues of Hindu Community and the role of government for the protection of Minorities in District Gujranwala . Of the 15 respondents 5(33.33%) have residual property in district Gujranwala , 12(80%) faced barriers in practicing Hindu rituals and customs openly in Gujranwala , 11(73.33%) have freely worship, 2(13.33%) Hindu community's voice is adequately represented in local political decisions and governance in Gujranwala , 4(26.66%) Hindu community in Gujranwala has equal opportunities for employment compared to other

religious groups, 3(20%) Government is taking interest to solve their issues, 4(26.66%) discriminated at their workplace, 2(13.33%) encountered any challenges in accessing basic services such as healthcare or sanitation as a member of the Hindu community in Gujranwala , 5(33.33%) faces discrimination in access to education, 11(73.33%) have computerized national identification cards, 9(40%) have register votes.

Hindu community Challenges in Pakistan, Gujranwala division

The Hindu population in Gujranwala , Pakistan is facing many problems and some of these issues include discrimination in terms of employment, education and social life. There are cases of religious persecution where people are forced to convert or even attacks on temples that breed insecurity and fear on the part of the people. They experience challenges in getting legal documents, which are key to accessing the services of government, and marginalization socially, restricting their access and assimilation with the society. Their plight is further compounded by property wrangles and political institutions underrepresentation. Also, they are forced by social pressure to conform to the norms of the majority, which will push aside their religious and cultural practices. To solve these issues, the government and civil society must work together in order to enhance religious tolerance, minority rights, and equal opportunities of all citizens (Zahoor,& Rumi,2020).

Discrimination

Discrimination against Hindus in Gujranwala , Pakistan, permeates various facets of their lives, deeply impacting their opportunities and quality of life.

- **Employment Discrimination:** Hindus are usually faced with the challenge of getting job opportunities. They might be discriminated against and discriminated against in terms of employment which means that they might have limited employment opportunities or career growth opportunities as compared to their Muslim colleagues. Unequal treatment, fair wage and reduced access to benefits or promotions based on their religious identity may also be the forms of discrimination in the workplace (Zahoor, & Rumi,2020).
- **Educational Discrimination:** Hindu students can be discriminated against in the school and educational institution environment. They can be bullied, ostracized, or marginalized by others or even teachers depending on their religion. Also, any discriminatory policy or practice in the educational system can deny Hindu students access to a good education or enough extracurricular activities, which can limit their academic performance and future (Zahoor,& Rumi,2020).
- **Social Discrimination:** The community of Hinduism is the one where Hindus in Gujranwala are frequently subjected to social discrimination and marginalization. Their fellow citizens or Muslim neighbors may ostracize, stereotype or prejudice them. The social interaction can be uncomfortable or limited, which results in isolation, marginalization, or the feeling of being perceived as second-class citizens in the society (Zahoor, & Rumi,2020).

All in all, Hindus in Gujranwala are discriminated against in most areas of life which has affected their socio-economic opportunities, level of education and social integration. These systemic issues will need extensive efforts to fight prejudice, encourage the principles of diversity and inclusion, and ensure all people, irrespective of their religious affiliation, are granted the right to fundamental rights and dignity.

Persecution

Instances of religious persecution against the Hindu community in Gujranwala , Pakistan, contribute to a climate of fear, insecurity, and vulnerability among its members.

- **Forced Conversions:** Hindus are also being pressurized or coerced into converting to Islam especially in Gujranwala and other areas of Pakistan. This might be done in a number of ways, such as threats, violence or manipulation. Forced conversions do not only infringe upon the freedom of religion but deprive people of their cultural and religious identity, causing an extreme level of psychological and emotional trauma (Hussain,2020).
- **Attacks on Temples:** Vandalism, desecration, or destruction of Hindu temples and places of worship is a common practice. Not only is such an attack a form of infringement on religious freedom, but it also makes the Hindu community feel fearful and insecure. Temple destruction deprives Hindus of their religious spaces and cultural life and makes them even marginalized in society (Hussain,2020).
- **Harassment and Intimidation:** The Hindus of Gujranwala might be harassed, intimidated, or even they may be subjected to violence because of the religious affiliation. This might consist of verbal abuse, bodily attacks or even threats by extremist groups or anybody. These acts of persecution create an atmosphere of fear and distrust and prevent Hindus to practice their religion freely and fully engage in society (Hussain,2020)

Table 3
Instances of Religious Persecution in Pakistan Annual Reports

Persecution Type	Percentage Reported	Date Reported
Force Conversion	40%	April 2023
Attacks on Temple	65%	July 2022
Harassments	75%	October 2021

Source: <https://www.state.gov/reports/2022-report-on-international-religious-freedom/pakistan/>

Religious persecution of Hindus in Gujranwala is a widespread problem, which highlights the necessity of strong efforts to guarantee the religious minorities their fundamental rights, encourage their tolerance and pluralism in the Pakistani society. Combating religious extremism, enforcing anti-discrimination and hate crime laws, as well as encouraging interfaith dialogue and understanding in society are necessary to create a more inclusive and harmonious society that all people in society can live without fear of persecution.

Political Representation

Limited political representation in Gujranwala , Pakistan, is described as the underrepresentation or marginalization of some groups of the political system that may have serious consequences to the governance, policy-making and protection of minority rights.

- **Minority Communities:** The minority groups, such as the Hindus, Christians, and many others, find it difficult to have proper representation in the political institutions in local, provincial, and national levels. Such a lack of representation may lead to their being sidelined or disregarded during decision-making (Fruhstorfer, & Hudson, 2022).
- **Geographical Disparities:** Moreover, some parts or neighbourhoods in Gujranwala might have low political representation as compared to others. This may be caused

by uneven allocation of resources, infrastructural gap or failure on the part of political leaders which results to unequal political empowerment and services access.

- **Women and Youth:** Moreover, some parts or neighbourhoods in Gujranwala might have low political representation as compared to others. This may be caused by uneven allocation of resources, infrastructural gap or failure on the part of political leaders which results to unequal political empowerment and services access.
- **Economic Disparities:** Underprivileged groups can also have a greater effect on poor political representation because the marginalized groups might not have the means or resources to be effectively involved in the political process or even to run as candidates. Politics can be controlled by wealthier people or more established political elite, which marginalizes the underrepresented communities (Fruhstorfer, & Hudson, 2022).

To improve political representation in Gujranwala, the issue of limited political representation has to be confronted through inclusivity, diversity, and fair political representation. These are by introducing electoral reforms to maintain a fair representation, developing civic education and participation, empowering the marginalized communities and promoting the culture of political pluralism and tolerance. Also, to develop trust between citizens and political institutions, promoting transparency, accountability, and good governance can contribute to the democratic practice, which will ultimately empower the democratic practice in Gujranwala and elsewhere.

Social Pressure and Stigmatization

The issues of social pressure and stigmatization faced by Hindus in Gujranwala, Pakistan are based on the forces of minority group that live in the Muslim majority society. This pressure can be of different forms and this includes:

- **Cultural Assimilation:** The issues of social pressure and stigmatization faced by Hindus in Gujranwala, Pakistan are based on the forces of minority group that live in the Muslim majority society. This pressure can be of different forms and this includes:
- **Religious Restrictions:** Social force can also result in restrictions on Hindu religious practices being publicly expressed, e.g. by prohibiting the building of temples or the Hindu festivals. Hindus can experience the feeling of being out of the social space where they can safely practice their religion, which adds to the feeling of alienation and inequality.
- **Stigmatization and Discrimination:** The religious identity of Hindus can be taken as a subject of stigma and discrimination and it can be expressed in many ways, which can be verbal abuse, stereotypes, and denial of social, economic, or political opportunities among others. Such stigmatization may affect their self esteem, mental health and a feeling of belonging in the society negatively (Rehman, 2007).
- **Economic and Social Marginalization:** The Hindu social and economic marginalization of Gujranwala can be served by social pressure to follow the norms of the majority. Employment, educational and housing discrimination can restrict their access to socio-economic development and lead to recidivation of poverty and inequality in the society.

The problem of social pressure and stigmatization should be dealt with by trying to ensure that religious tolerance, cultural diversity and social inclusion should be

encouraged in Gujranwala and the Pakistani society in general. This is to be done through encouraging dialogue and understanding of different religious and cultural backgrounds, anti-discrimination policy, and the respect of rights and liberties of the minority (Rehman, 2007). Also, campaigns targeting the issue of stigmatization through awareness creation about the role of Hindus in the Pakistani society and celebrating the diversity of culture can assist in establishing social cohesion.

Conclusion

To sum up, Hindu community in Gujranwala, Pakistan has a set of socio-political issues, which weaken their rights, well-being, and cultural legacy. The challenges need to be tackled through concerted efforts of government authorities, civil society organizations and the society at large, with a view of encouraging social inclusion, economic empowerment, and cultural preservation of religious minorities. Through their combined efforts in solving these problems, the Pakistani country will be on the way to creating a more inclusive and fair society and enabling all groups of people to live with dignity and respect. The socio-political issues of the Hindu community in Gujranwala Division require holistic, sustained, and inclusive solutions. Strengthening legal frameworks, enhancing political representation, improving education and economic opportunities, and promoting interfaith harmony are essential steps toward meaningful inclusion. The successful implementation of these solutions depends on political will, institutional accountability, and active participation from both the majority and minority communities. Addressing these challenges will not only improve the conditions of the Hindu community but also contribute to social stability and democratic development in Punjab as a whole.

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