

# INTERFAITH CONFLICTS RESOLUTION(HARMONY) THROUGH SOCIO ECONOMIC COOPERATION

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**Abstract.** *World's population is fast growing with increase in the number of adherents of different religions. Side by side, the economic needs also increase*

*and simultaneously creates a gap between demand and supply of exigencies of life. Disposal of industrial surplus on the one hand and need satisfaction of the developing countries on the other hand is one of the reasons of conflicts. The development of communication system and advancement in electronic media has been bringing the people closer to each other. Due to human interaction and demonstration effect, different sociologies are continuously influencing the living style of the people across the globe. The level of knowledge is again affecting the mind set and attitude at larger scale. All these changes, resulting from fast human interaction, traditional life style is passing through a radical change. Simultaneously, the economic race among industrially advanced countries and urge for economic development in developing countries resulted in creating rivalry and hatred among the nations. Due to this hatred many civilized nations have been found discriminatory treatment with minority, sending severe shock to the philanthropists and attracting attention of the agencies fighting for Human Rights. Such incidents are causing disruptions in international relations among the countries and adding fuel to the fire of hatred. This paper aims at finding out root causes of the discriminative treatment leading to hatred and suggesting measures which can eliminate hatred and develop interfaith harmony throughout the world.*

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## Introduction

Since industrial revolution in the West, world has seen tremendous economic growth which facilitated acquisition of life comforts. However, the fortune remained confined to those who made progress in science and technology in Europe and America. The wealth began concentrating in industrially advanced countries. Those lagging in science and technology became dependent on countries

which can develop their economies on modern lines of production. World was divided into rich and poor nations. Poor nations were mostly Muslims of Asia and Africa which could not adopt scientific means of production to exploit their growth potentials. This sluggishness on the part Afro-Asian became a stumbling stone in the way of economic development. The financial supremacy of affluent societies reduced the backward countries to slavish mindset succumbing to dictation from money masters. It became easier to be influenced by culture and civilization of the rich societies but adaptation was never willful and hesitation always remained in mind because of envy. Although, with rapid development in science and technology geographical distance has lost its significance because of easy netting of communities through electronic communication, yet ethnic conflicts are increasing at fast rate because of growing discrimination and hatred. Simultaneously, it is damaging the delicate fiber of relationship among the world communities. Fast access through various means of communications, spreading simple news of little importance to masses but with big exaggeration and distortion resulting in negative change in relation due to hatred created out of false and fabricated stories. This paper is an effort to identify the reasons of hate leading to conflicts and then suggests a few measures for bringing about an environment conducive for living together with peace and tranquility.

### **Literature Review**

How Muslims live in America and what is their social status on the basis of their religious affinity, Brocken (2017) states that “If nothing else the question of the status of Muslims in America-typically framed in culture war terms-is proof that culture war rhetoric is still galvanizing opinions”. The prejudice that hatred infused in the minds of the people around the globe that Muslims are terrorists has divided the world into two cultures which is not correct. Picturing Islam as violent while conniving at the policies damaging the world peace is in no way seeks justification. Prejudice, hatred and disliking based on religion is in fact negation of natural justice. Every religion is a message of **peace**. Some or any of the adherents may deviate from the principles and resort to an action/activity which is generally termed renege. A malpractice of individual if attributed to religion will provoke other adherents and may lead to undesirable level. Policy matters have strong influence on opinion building and is ultimately reflected in the overall behavior of most of the public.

Julia (2016) has seriously criticized the policy speeches of Donald Trump in which he has consistently been targeting Islam. At many times classifying Muslims as radicals and responsible for violence. Julia Commenting on the views of Christian about Islam wrote” *The Crusades are still a sore subject in the Muslim world, but it is easy to forget the havoc they wreaked on the Jews of Europe. Time and again as Crusaders slogged southeast on their umpteenth trip to the Holy Land, they slaughtered the Jews in their path. They herded them in to synagogues and set the building alight. The Crusaders killed so many Jews in the name of their Christian*

*Faith as it was the most stunning demographic blow to European Jewry until the Holocaust. Which just a friendly reminder, happened in Christian, civilized Europe only 70-some years ago....And it is not ancient history—violence between Protestants and Catholic continued in Ireland until the end of 20th century".*

A reading of the Annual Report of Amnesty International for the year 2017-18 gives a very glooming picture of the world peace because of unbelievable facts with regard to the behavior of world leaders. As a part of the report Shetty (2017) wrote “The specters of hatred and fear now loom large in world affairs, and we have few governments standing up for human rights in these disturbing times. Instead, leaders such as al-Sisi, Duterte, Madura, Putin, and Trump are callously undermining the rights of millions”.

With such a world scenario maligning one religion for violence or hatred leading to acts of violence has no justification It is because of prejudice that Muslims are labeled some time radical while other way terrorists. When a dignitary of not less than the status of President of America is biased and his words of every speech are dipped in venom against Muslims then the public will definitely form blind opinion against adherents of particular religion. Muslims observing their religious duties according to their own beliefs are labeled as radical. Should every human being be colored in Western or American culture disregarding their own civic principles ordained by Almighty Allah and traditions set by the Prophet (PBUH) they are supposed to follow. This very culture immensely needs immediate change lest the world may be caught up in the worst whirlpool of culture war.

Farivar (2018) informs that in the first nine months of 2017 the No. of hate crimes against Muslims in nine major cities of America rose to 195. The following few examples of victimization of Muslims during 2017 at the hands of Americans speaks about the disliking and hate against Muslim living for time immemorial in America.

Table 1 *Anti Muslim Hate Crimes*

#	Nature/type of hate incident	No. of Victims	Location
1.	Anti-Muslim Hate crimes	73	California
2	Anti-Muslim Hate crimes	20	New York
3	Anti-Muslim Hate crimes	11	Florida
4	Anti-Muslim Hate crimes	9	Texas
5	Assault on Hijab wearing women	1	Los Angeles
<b>Total</b>		<b>114</b>	

Source; <https://www.voanews.com/a/hate-crimes-rising-in-us/4034719>;

This is one source information and California the most affluent province of the United States with maximum No. of hate crimes against Muslims tells a very agonizing story of Muslims in a country which should have been peace model for

the rest of the world. This area has large peaceful population of Indians settled there for the last so many decades and have been playing their role in economic growth of the state. Victimization merely being Muslims has no justification and is real challenge for the authorities at the helm of affairs.

The hate crimes are not limited to America. All over the world where Christians are in majority the Muslims and adherents of other religions are victimized and subjected to various kinds of hate crimes. The following table tells us about the miserable plight of Muslims in United Kingdom.

Table 2 *Hate Crimes against Muslims in UK during 2017*

#	Nature and type of Hate crime	No. of victims/ incidents	Location
1	Anti-Muslim vandalistic crimes	15	
2	An Imam and a surgeon stabbed	02	Cheshire
3	A 14-year-old boy stabbed	01	Birmingham
4.	Finsbury Park Terror attack on Mosque	01	Finsbury
6	Sending of white powder & bomb threat	03	London
7	Hate crimes against Muslims	141	After the Manchester Attack in May
8	Anti-Semitic crimes	767	In the first six months in UK
9	Ban on Scarf of Muslim women at work place	Muslim Women in Eu. Union	Judgment by Court of Justice

Source; <https://www.independent.co.uk>

The above figures though do not seem large in counting but carry serious social impact on the whole society rather send a very disgusting and gloomy message to the world outside.

In Switzerland more than 400,000 Muslims forming 5 % of the total population are permanent citizen and serving the country where hijab is banned and women wearing Burqas are fined up to £8000/ (Sims, 2015). France has more than five million of Muslim population. Strict ban on Burqa wearing by Muslim women is religious discrimination. It is very strange that the Govt. of France doubled the fine on those who found guilty of an act of discrimination but the French Supreme Court decision announced on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2017 which disallowed wearing of full-face veil by working women rightly attracted attention of the Human Rights Organizations and those working against religious discrimination. Also, the European Court of Justice while banning the use of Burqa by Muslim women

employed in European companies for earning their livelihood by their gotten gear has seriously provoked the world religious leaders<sup>1</sup>.

Lizzie Deardon (2017), the European Court of Justice gave a judgment that employers can bar the workers who wear religious symbols and subsequently on 31<sup>st</sup> May the Danish Parliament approved a bill banning burqa by Muslim women<sup>2</sup>.

Alastair Macdonald (Mar 14, 2017) - Rabbi Pinchas Goldschmidt, president of the Conference of PARIS in his detailed comments on ruling of the European Court that European Union hijab ban sparks all religious groups and has been adding to the incidents of discrimination and hate crimes. Pinchas Goldschmidt who was presiding Conference of European Rabbis informed” This decision sends a signal to all religious groups in Europe<sup>3</sup>.

### **Discussion**

Although in most of the poor countries the impact of communication has not felt so strong because of low level of literacy, yet the incidents of hatred and discrimination have badly hurt the feelings of the people in every nook and corner though in some cases with low intensity. Nevertheless, it is as a pin prick in the foot of a person sends shock through the body, discrimination with one of the sects of the community sends immediate poisonous effect on population of the same religious group in other parts of the world. Religious conflicts have never sprung from individual act. It, however, instigates others to retaliate or rise up to take a revenge. This feeling of hatred, a disliking and provocation infuses injurious sentiments against the aggressors. The injury inflicted upon the mind of one sect of the community refers pain to the farther part of the civic group which leads to communal rift. Sense of inferiority develops feeling of deprivation of protection. This phenomenon further promotes disliking. Hatred once fostered smolders and

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<sup>1</sup> *France doubles fine for racial discrimination.* (2017). Retrieved from <https://www.thelocal.fr/20170824/france-doubles-fines-for-racial-discrimination>

<sup>2</sup> *European Court rules employers can ban women from wearing Islamic headscarves and religious symbols.* (2017, March 14). Retrieved from <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/european-court-justice-islamic-headscarf-hijab-ban-employers-legal-religious-symbols-case-belgium-a7628626.html>

<sup>3</sup> *European rabbis: EU court's ruling on religious garb means Jews, Muslims unwelcome.* (2017, March 14). Retrieved from <https://www.jta.org/2017/03/14/global/european-rabbis-eu-ruling-on-religious-garb-means-jews-muslims-unwelcome>

slowly heats mine mouth of the volcano which ultimately erupts into catastrophe taking away peace of the whole community. It is hatred and disliking which eventually leads to conflicts not only within the society but also beyond the national boundaries and damages world peace. Discrimination based on religion or culture has been creating very serious issues disturbing the normal life of aggrieved. Oppressed by prejudicial treatment, the victims' resort to revenge and further aggravate the situation. It is not only the religion which causes hatred but even within the same religion sectarian disliking results in massive destruction and loss of lives as well. The loss sustained by world community due to religious discrimination has now sent a very serious wave of hatred among the poor and dependent nations of the world. It is because of the reasons that people migrating from poor countries in search of livelihood shift to industrially advanced countries but instead taking care of them, they are subjected to various types of prejudice leading not only to humiliation but many a times damages to their properties and depriving them of the opportunity of living a peaceful life. It is religious hatred, disliking and animosity which should have stirred the world conscience over massacre of Muslims in Burma. None of the world's Human Rights Bodies could stop the barbaric hands of Burmese soldiers and civil cannibals from killing innocent women and children who have been part of the land of Burma since time immemorial and had been contributing in the construction of State of Burma with their gotten gear. Unabated killing of millions of Muslims by Indian forces in Occupied Kashmir could not seek justification but international claimers of peace are silent over the atrocities being committed in the area.

Unabated bloodshed in Palestine has been recalling the world conscience for the last seven decades but all in vain because Israel has strong support of United States of America and its allies. East Taimur could be created as separate independent state because of Christianity whereas neither Palestine nor Kashmir, being Muslim majority areas, could be emancipated from the clutches of Jews and Hindus. I wish, I desire, it has been my urge to see human beings enjoying peace. Living with comforts without fear of aggression, without fear of loss of life or livings. But my sentiments are clouded by nervous anxiety when I think of people dying of bullets and explosion only because they are part of a certain sect or adherent to religion. It is in fact the part to be played by the affluent societies of the world which can come forward and act as model peace monger. Unfortunately, situation is posing a different picture. The organized killing of millions of Muslims in Palestine, Syria, Iraq, Libya and Afghanistan has imprinted agonizing impact on the minds of Muslims world over. It sends a negative message. The treatment afforded to Muslims in France has put the socio-cultural life of Europeans Muslims at stake. Interestingly the Christianity still has majority in the world population with strong financial base all over the world. A look at the following table No1 will give very good information about the world division by population.

Table 3 *World Population by Religion 2015* <sup>(10)</sup>

#	Religion	Total Population	Population % of 7.3 billion	Addition to population during 2010-15
1	Christian	2.3 billion	31	115.9 million
2	Muslim	1.8 billion	24	152.4 million
3	Unaffiliated	1.2 billion	16	26.1 million
4	Hindus	1.1 billion	15	66.8 million
5	Buddhist	0.5 billion	07	11.9 million
6	Folk religion	0.4 billion	06	13.2 million
7	Jews	0.01 billion	smaller	1.3 million
8	Other religion	0.1 billion	0.75	00.4 million

Source. Http: [www.pewresearch.org](http://www.pewresearch.org) Christian

The above table reveals two important facts. That the Christian population, with 31 % of the world population, is more than any other religion and thus Christianity by virtue of large population is bigger religion of the world. That Muslim population though second to Christianity by number of persons but fast-growing religion of the world which, some Christian researcher apprehend will surpass Christianity by 2050. Hindus with 15% of the world population are concentrating only in the continent of Asia. Muslims with majority population occupying parts of Asia and Africa have their presence throughout the world though with small percentage.

Muslim and Hindus have been living together for centuries in the undivided Subcontinent of India. There has rarely been any incident of ethnic conflict. Adherents of both religions were performing their rites with least interference. Mutual trading and taking part in various socio-cultural events had been a normal course of business. Every individual was at liberty to perform his/her religious duties at sweet will. The values immediately changed when the subcontinent was divided based on religion. The formation of two separate states in Sub Continent of India opened the door of controversy. Muslims in India being in minority have been subjected to heinous ethnic crimes which phenomena has made the life of Indian Muslims full of miseries because of cruelties committed by Hindus with one or the other pretext. Till year 1968 Pakistan and America had very cordial relation. Cooperation and friendship proved a good omen for Pakistan. America had been extending all help in the development of social overhead capital in Pakistan. It has also been extending food aid to Pakistan under its PL 480 program. The Public Law 480 was enacted on 10<sup>th</sup> July, 1954 under the title “Agriculture Trade Development Assistance Act” Its Food for Development Program aimed at solving the problem of food and nutrition in the less developed countries. This program was executed through Govt. to Govt. grant. The scheme had very positive impact and developing countries like Pakistan came closure and agreed to allow America build air base in Peshawar. The friendship relation continued strengthening till 1968.

This Law was particularly passed to develop confidence and build cordial relationships with backward and developing countries through extending to them assistance for promoting agriculture sectors in the developing countries. With the help of this Law the developing countries were exported surplus food grains to overcome their food shortage problem. The Law succeeded in diffusing ethnic tension because of apparent sympathies of American Govt. towards these backward and developing countries.

Christians living in Muslim majority areas throughout the world have been safe enjoying cooperation by Muslims and similarly Muslims remained protected in Christian Majority areas till the end of 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Religious bias has negative effect on both the internal as well as external image of a country. It is because of the reasons that a rift in relation sends negative message outside the national boundaries and people with diverse faiths take negative impression which develops into rivalry and revenge. It also affects international relation leading to review of foreign investment policy of each country. The socio-cultural set up is disturbed due to dislike and hatred fostered as a result of bias and prejudice. The adverse impact is generally born by the developing country which not only loses good friend but also a setback to economic growth process. It is really agonizing that in the recent past hatred increased not because of common man's thinking but it resulted from the state policies of some of the western countries and America itself.

Human behavior is often influenced by state policies. Also, state policies are reflected in the form of individual behaviors which ultimately form part of a culture. The countries enjoying bond of friendship promote liking for people of the two countries. In Pakistan America had been extending all cooperation in the socio-economic development process during the 1960s decade because strong friendship ties between the two countries. The speeches of Donald Trump apparently maligning Muslims and then threatening of sanctions and restrictions of issuance of visa to Muslim for entry into United States is creating a feeling of disliking and discrimination though there has been an urge on the part of Muslims to develop relations of mutual interest. Mostly countries have diverse religions and mixed culture. It is, therefore, more serious a matter when the sentiments of certain sects are hurt by the words of mouth. When culture is composite, its moral values and standards, the human behavior is then of more importance in determining the culture in a country. In majority of societies people have a strong cultural bond which they hesitate to separate. Muslims around the globe have similar values and they make all out efforts to maintain their norms of life.

### **Conclusion.**

Of late we had been making efforts to convince individuals of the importance of living together and that too in a conducive and peaceful environment. However, recent studies have transpired that it is the lower strata which responsible for ethnic



conflicts rather it is the influential members of the society and powerful leaders of the industrially advanced countries which have widened the bay of rift. For centuries people were living together around the globe inspired by the fact each community had separate religious norms. But people used to respect each other because of personal relationship. Each religion has cardinal virtues and adherents of different religion and different beliefs follow their own tradition without disturbing the norms of others.

Current studies have presented a very gloomy picture because of the reasons that there is a conflict of interest and not of ethnic. Ironically, people are provoked rather instigated to demean the minority people and compel them to adopt country culture disregarding their own tradition and rites.

From the review of observations and comments of the sages of the ages we arrive at a conclusion that much of the hatred is created out of discriminative treatment by the affluent societies hitherto accommodating migrants settled in industrially advanced countries for better living. This settlement is not new but the treatment being afforded to them during last five decades has been undergoing radical changes not because of the minority people but due to change in the attitude of the majority local citizens. Curious study further transpired that change in the mindset of the people in majority has been influenced by the speeches of the political magnets and statesmen in these industrially advanced countries. More provoking has been speeches of President Donald Trump who has, at many occasions, using undesirable language against Muslims. Also, the treatment accorded to Muslim Women in France is highly excruciating because both the countries claiming to be secular but cannot sustain adherents of other religions.

Looking around us, we see that the world is fast moving toward a devastating disaster of religious conflicts and culture war which may ultimately take the form of civil wars within the countries and will simultaneously invite foreign intervention and loss of sovereignty of the weak economies. The countries falling prey will prepare themselves for revenge putting the world peace at stake. We in the sacred name of humanity, must play our role both individually and collectively to save the mankind from obliteration. It is, therefore, time to realize the critical situation and guard against the point which may lead to barbarism.

### **Recommendations**

Current studies have presented a very disgusting picture because of the reasons that there is conflict of **interest** rather than that of **ethnic**. Ironically people are provoked and instigated to demean the minority people and compel them to adopt local country culture disregarding their own tradition and rites. It is, therefore, recommended that an environment be created in advanced countries ensuring security and dispensation of true justice to minority people. Cordial relationship

development can be facilitated through vigorous publicity on various means of media. Meeting of political magnets, public office holders and cultural leaders of different sects /communities can build trust and respect for cross culture values and will subsequently help in minimizing the chances of ethnic conflicts.

**Respect for Cross Cultural Values:** Of late we had been making efforts to convince individuals of the importance of living together and that too in a conducive and peaceful environment. However, studies have transpired that it is not the lower strata which is responsible for ethnic conflicts rather it is the influential members of the society and powerful leaders of the industrially advanced countries which have widened the bay of rift.

For centuries people used to live together around the globe inspire of the fact that each community had separate religious norms. But people used to respect each other because of personal relationship. Each religion has cardinal virtues and adherents of different religion and different beliefs follow their own tradition without disturbing the norms of others. Let each believer may continue following his/her own culture without intervention and meddling.

**Promotion of Socio Cultural Relationship across the borders:** Restrictions and bans have always been injurious to social relations. The advance countries may allow entry to youths of the developing countries Frequent visits will facilitate the minority people mix up with home citizens and promote friendship. Both nationals will learn from human interaction and develop a bond of living together. Increasing familiarity will help in taking care of mutual interest and ensure strong social relationship.

**Awareness of Intercultural Values through Mass Education:** Recognizing the strength of religious norms of adherents of other religions and respect for cultural values is core to peace maintenance. Need is to educate people on intercultural values. Turban is common symbol of Sikh community which they are at no cast lose. Muslim women are not allowed to disclose their facial appearance except their Mahram. Autism (Conditions disturbing perception and relationships) on the part of any community or a sect of the community has never earned liking or appreciation. The need of creating awareness among majority population is urgently felt to ease the tension among people of different sects so that members of every community living in a country may understand the ritual obligations of other sects and accord respect for each other. Widespread education on social values of each rather adherents of different religions will widen the mental horizon of the population hitherto lacking respect for others. The State as well as Social Organizations may take upon themselves to evolve a scheme of mass education on cultural values and their importance in each religion.

**Role of Philanthropists in Bridging Gap--Intervention Strategies:** The social reformers and philanthropists have major role to play in bridging gap between the various communities living in a given locality. To eliminate the discrimination and

disliking by creating an environment of peace and tranquility the religious leaders and social reformers have the responsibility of motivating people for accepting each other and foster love for humanity. Attending social traditional ceremonies of the people in a locality strengthens mutual care taking.

**Economic Cooperation:** The behavior and attitude of advanced countries towards developing nations has always been a question mark in the sense that whatever Financial Aid, may it be in grant or loans, is always tied with conditions that results in lion's share repatriation to the donor or lenders. Resultantly a small difference in opinion, the rich country puts unwarranted sanctions and ultimately compels the receiving country to submit to the conditions.

Instead there is a need of -- **negation of deprivation**. The advanced countries may come up to contribute towards the economic growth of the developing countries through direct investment. Encourage imports from developing countries. Add to policy on soft loans and remission of accrued interest on the existing outstanding amounts so that developing countries can concentrate on socio economic development and increase higher education rate which will ultimately improve positive thinking of the neglected layer of the society. Equally important is taking care of migrants from developing countries (Also those seeking asylum) and ensuring them security, honor and respect. Generous policies encouraging employment opportunities for youths of the developing countries will not only add to the welfare of the individual workers but will eliminate conceptual differences through human interaction. In my presentation at the floor of Gonzaga University I had a very humble submission to the people at helm of affairs” Let us embrace each other instead of embarrassing”.

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