

Islamization in Pakistan: A Need to Focus on Promoting a Tolerant Society

Pengislaman Di Pakistan: Satu Refleksi Mengenai Isu- Isu yang Berkaitan

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Abstract

The issue of incorporation of Islamic provisions in the constitutional, legal, economic, socio-political order as well as policy structures of the Government of Pakistan emerged on the policy agenda in the last years of Pakistan movement and immediately after independence. This issue, commonly known as 'Islamization', however, remained a hotly debated topic. Undoubtedly, Islam, as a way of life and the embodiment of universal human values of social justice, tolerance, and equity was the most motivating and inspiring factor in the struggle for creation of Pakistan. It was believed that the enormity of the task of re-construction of Islamic thought notwithstanding, it would not be beyond the resources of Pakistan to convert itself into model Islamic welfare state, where all citizens, irrespective of their caste, colour, language or creed, would live in an atmosphere of tolerance and harmony. It was unfortunate that Pakistan, despite the lapse of 67 years, could not promote an enlightened and tolerant society. The policy debate in connection with the issue of Islamization should, therefore, be directed towards the promotion of a society which should be more tolerant, just, equitable and prosperous. It would, in turn, require the evolution of a balanced and uniform system of education, in which the existing religious stream of education i.e. 'Madaris' should also be integrated. The paper in hand aims at analyzing the dynamics of Islamization, as a policy perspective, with a view to identifying the direction of policy debate that should take place in the policy-making institutions about this issue.

Keywords: Islamization, Mainstreaming, Tolerant-society, Weltanschauung, Justice, Equity.

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Abstrak

Isu perintah pemerbadanan peruntukan Islam di perlembagaan, perundangan, ekonomi, sosio-politik dan struktur polisi Kerajaan Pakistan muncul dalam agenda polisi pada tahun-tahun terakhir pergerakan Pakistan dan sejurus selepas kemerdekaan mereka. Isu ini, biasanya dikenali sebagai 'Pengislaman', bagaimanapun, kekal sebagai topik hangat. Tidak dinafikan, Islam, sebagai satu cara hidup dan penjelmaan nilai-nilai manusia sejagat bagi keadilan sosial, toleransi, dan ekuiti adalah faktor motivasi dan inspirasi yang paling penting dalam perjuangan untuk penciptaan Pakistan. Ia dipercayai bahawa kebesaran tugas pembangunan kembali pemikiran Islam, walau apa pun, ia tidak akan melebihi keupayaan sumber Pakistan untuk menukar dirinya menjadi satu model negara kebajikan Islam, di mana semua rakyat, tanpa mengira kasta, warna kulit, bahasa atau fahaman, akan hidup dalam suasana bertoleransi dan keharmonian. Ia sangatlah malang bahawa Pakistan, walaupun luput 67 tahun, tidak boleh menggalakkan masyarakat untuk berpengetahuan dan bertoleran. Perdebatan dasar berkaitan dengan isu pengislaman harus, oleh itu, ditumpukan ke arah menggalakkan masyarakat untuk lebih toleran, adil, saksama dan makmur. Ia akan, seterusnya, memerlukan evolusi sistem yang seimbang dan sekata bagi pendidikan, di mana arus pendidikan agama yang sedia ada yakni 'Madaris' juga perlu bersepadu. Karya ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis kedinamikan pengislaman, sebagai perspektif polisi, dengan tujuan untuk mengenal pasti arah perdebatan polisi yang perlu mengambil tempat dalam institusi pembuat polisi mengenai isu ini.

Kata Kunci: Pengislaman, Mainstreaming, Masyarakat Bertoleran, Weltanschauung, Keadilan, Saksama.

Introduction

The debate on Islamization in Pakistan existed even before its creation and it ensued in the subsequent history of its existence. A close scrutiny of historical record shows that the top leadership of All India Muslim League, the party which led the struggle for independence, had only the 'tentative idea' about the policy implications of Islamization in the newly born state. The creation of Pakistan, as an Islamic state, was a unique experience at that point of time, as there was no other Muslim nation which could be considered a modern Islamic welfare state. The system of governance in Muslim India, prior to the arrival of the British, was dynastic in nature. Notwithstanding the cultural permeation of Islam in the social fabric of Muslim polities, Islam as a system of governance and body politics could hardly be identified in the modern era. The ideologues of Pakistan, particularly Sir Muhammad Iqbal, took upon them-

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selves an enormous task of (1) creating an awakening and understanding of Islam as a system of life which is capable of solving the problems of man in all walks of life; (2) distilling the prevalence of stagnation and ossification in the body of knowledge of the Muslim scholarship and literature; (3) initiating a dialogue to incorporate modern scientific and technological knowledge in the corpus of Muslim literature in India; and (4) carving out of a system of governance and politics which should be democratic in nature and spiritual in spirit. This enormity of task of recasting not only the whole colonial politico-economic system into a new way of life but also the philosophy, aims and objectives of education, was a challenge that neither the political leadership nor the policy makers in Pakistan were well trained to confront with. The paper in hand aims at analysing the issue of Islamization in Pakistan, through the lens of public policy, with an underlying assumption that sufficient provisions of Islam had already been incorporated in the constitutional and legal structures of the state. What, however, had not been done, was the promotion of a tolerant, just, equitable and enlightened society, which was more essential than feuding over polemics.

Revival of Muslim Nationalism in the Subcontinent and Pakistan Movement

Islam has long been very much the part of Muslim life in the united India even during the colonial period of more than a century. Before dwelling on the post-independence dialectics related to Islamization in Pakistan, a few assertions about revival of Muslim Nationalism need to be made.

Contrary to general perception about revival of Muslim Nationalism at the hands of traditional religious scholars, it was the modern educated youth, trained in Western dialects that took up the banner of revival of Muslim nationalism in the Subcontinent in the late 19th and the first half of 20th Century. The most ardent and articulate of those revivalists somehow gathered under the leadership of Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ai Jinnah and they were the ones who chartered the troubled ship of Muslim politics to a safe destination. Quaid-i-Azam provided statesmanship and strategic leadership, whereas it was Allama Iqbal, who emerged as an

ideologue, to whom any reference pertaining to ideological foundations of Pakistan needs to be made. Iqbal was the one who had the insight into both Islamic and Western sources of knowledge and he was the one who thought of a separate homeland, where Islam as a dynamic system of life could serve the basis of its governance.

Even in the post-independence period, the credit of putting Islam on the policy agenda does not go to Muslim religious scholars. Majority of the religious scholars particularly the affiliates of Dar al-'Ulum Deoband was against the creation of Pakistan. Religious scholars had, therefore, a marginal role in the policy debates of the newly born state of Pakistan. The most effective religious influence on the politics of Muslim League was of the mystics, particularly of Punjab, who had vehemently supported Pakistan movement, right from Banaras Conference of 1946 to the day of independence and afterwards. Their tendency to remain low profile has somehow resulted in lack of appreciation of their role in the Pakistan movement. The most prominent among them were Pir Sahib Manki Sharif, Pir Jamaat Ali Shah, Hafiz Pir Jamaat Ali Shah, Pir Ghulam Mohyuddin Golra Sharif, Pir Sher Muhammad Shariqपुरi, Pir Qamaruddin Sialvi, Pir Sa'id Muhammad Sahib Pakpattan Sharif and other mystics of Punjab, Sindh, Bengal and Kashmir. It was the mystic Islam, which created enthusiasm and fervour among Muslims to take part in the Pakistan movement. Since mystic interpretations of Islam are more tolerant, humane, pluralistic and accommodative, they rallied all sects of Muslims under the banner of Muslim League. The exclusivist and militant Islam had nothing to do with the state that Allama Iqbal and Quaid-i-Azam envisaged. The spirit of Islam that permeated the body politics of India since Allama Iqbal's Address at Allahabad in 1930 needs to be appreciated, if the rationale for demand of Islamization is to be correctly understood.

The argument that Islam had nothing to do with the creation of Pakistan seems to be out of context and afterthought. By excluding Islam from Muslim politics of 1940s, the very 'raison d'être of Pakistan' is challenged. The geo-political and geo-economic environment of the world during and after the two World Wars needs to be taken into account. The civilizational and cultural pride of the West was badly dented

by unprecedented human and material losses during these Wars. Consequently, the Western system, whether capitalist or communist, were no more attractive for the colonial states. Those who dissipate their energies to prove that Pakistan was created to embrace Western liberal doctrines need to reconcile with the historical evidence.

Fazlur Rahman, the first Education Minister of Pakistan, dwelt on this aspect in these words: "I attach the highest importance to the spiritual element for its neglect, which has characterized modern education, has had disastrous consequences. The experience of two World Wars, as also the vast technological inventions of recent years, fraught as they are with incalculable possibilities of destruction, have brought home to us the realization that unless the moral and spiritual growth of man keeps pace with the growth of science, he is doomed to utter destruction. It is surely a disturbing thought that every step forward in the domain of knowledge should be attended with not a diminution but an increase in barbarism and frightfulness so that the pursuit of knowledge becomes a self-defeating process. To arrest this process, to purge man's minds of barbarism and turn them to humanitarian purposes is the great task, which our education must attempt, if we are to help mankind survive. The provision for instruction in the fundamental of religion in schools is, therefore, of paramount necessity for without such knowledge we cannot hope to build character or lay the foundations for an adequate philosophy of life. What form this instruction should assume is a matter for your careful and detailed consideration, but you will agree with me that it must be catholic in outlook and must eschew sectarian or narrow doctrinal lines."¹

Emergence of Islamization on Policy Agenda

It is again a misperception that the demand for incorporation of Islamic provisions in the constitutional and legal structures of Pakistan was initiated by religious scholars (*'ulama'*). It had already been brought into policy debate by the Government, under the leadership of the Quaid-

¹ Fazlur Rahman, *The Proceedings of First Education Conference*, held at Karachi during 27 November to 1 December 1947', p. 8.

i-Azam and Nawabzada Liqat Ali Khan. The following important historical facts provide ample evidence.

The Debate about the Educational Philosophy of the State of Pakistan in the 1st Educational Conference

It was the most important Educational Conference ever held in Pakistan, in which the fundamental questions of educational philosophy of newly born state were not only discussed but also the resolutions were passed on basic policy directions. The Resolution No.7, 8 and 14 pertained to educational ideology and religion, which were as under:

Resolution No.7: Ideological Basis of Education “Resolved that education system in Pakistan should be inspired by Islamic ideology, emphasizing among many of its characteristics those of universal brotherhood, tolerance and justices.”²

Resolution No.7: Religious Instruction “Resolved that religious instruction should be compulsory for Muslim students in schools. Attendance in religious instruction should be compulsory for Muslim students in colleges. Same facilities may be provided for other communities in respect of their religions, should they so desire.”³

Resolution No.14: Central Institute for Islamic Research “Resolved that a Central Institute of Islamic Research should be established for the purpose of organizing and stimulating Islamic Research with special emphasis on the needs of modern time.”⁴

The timing of this Conference is of critical importance. It was the time when the Government of Pakistan was facing the formidable challenges related to settlement of refugees, setting up of Government offices and Kashmir War. Despite all this the Quaid-i-Azam ensured that the Conference should take place. The Proceedings of this Conference somehow could not attract attention of the scholars and policy-makers. The significance of this Conference was that the Quaid-i-Azam, as the head of the state, sent special message for the participants of the Conference,

² ‘*The Proceedings of First Education Conference*, held at Karachi during 27 November to 1 December 1947’, p. 44.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

which was read by Mr. Fazlur Rehman, the Education Minister of Pakistan. Apart from other policy directions, the Quaid's message clearly elucidates the need for evolving a new system of education. He wrote, "You know the importance of education and the right type of education cannot be over-emphasized. Under the foreign rule for over a century, sufficient attention has not been paid to the education of our people and if we are to make real, speedy and substantial progress, we must earnestly tackle this question and bring our policy and programme on the lines suited to the genius of our people, consonant with our history and culture and having regard to the modern conditions and vast developments that have taken place all over the world".⁵

Quaid-i-Azam's Policy Statements

The following statements of the Quaid-i-Azam reflect his vision of Pakistan as an Islamic welfare state.

Muslims are a Nation

"We maintain and hold that Muslims and Hindus are two major nations by any definition or test of a nation. We are a nation of a hundred million people, and, what is more, we are a nation with our own distinctive culture and civilization, language and literature, art and architecture, names and nomenclature, sense of value and proportion, legal laws and moral codes, customs and calendar, history and traditions, aptitudes and ambitions – in short, we have our own distinctive outlook on life and of life. By all canons of international law we are a nation."⁶

A Democratic and Islamic Constitution for Pakistan

"The constitution of Pakistan has yet to be framed by the Pakistan Constituent Assembly. I do not know what the ultimate shape of the constitution is going to be, but I am sure that it will be of a democratic type, embodying the essential principles of Islam. Today, they are as applicable in actual life as they were 1300 years ago. Islam and its idealism have taught us democracy. It has taught equality of men, justice and fair-play to everybody. We are the inheritors of these glorious traditions...as framers of the future constitution of Pakistan. In

⁵ Ibid .p.5.

⁶ Jinnah's Reply of 17 September 1944 to Gandhi's Contention of 15 September 1944, accessed through [http:// www.nazariapak.info/Quaid-e-Azam /Qoutes.php](http://www.nazariapak.info/Quaid-e-Azam /Qoutes.php)

any case, Pakistan is not going to be a theocratic State – to be ruled by priests with a divine mission. We have many non-Muslims – Hindus, Christians, and Parsis – but they are all Pakistanis. They will enjoy the same rights and privileges as any other citizens and will play their rightful part in the affairs of Pakistan.”⁷

Islam – Democracy, Equality, Justice, Freedom, Integrity, Fair-Play

“Islam and its idealism have taught us democracy. Islam has taught equality, justice and fair-play to everybody. What reason is there for anyone to fear democracy, equality, freedom on the highest standard of integrity and on the basis of fair-play and justice for everybody.....Let us make it (the future constitution of Pakistan), we shall make it and we shall show it to the world.”⁸

Islamic Economic Theory and Practice to Suit Pakistan

“The adoption of Western economic theory and practice will not help us in achieving our goal of creating a happy and contented people. We must work on our destiny in our own way and present to the world an economic system based on the true Islamic concept of equality of manhood and social justice.”⁹

Fazlur Rahman’s Address to First Education Conference, 1947

Qureshi reflects on the significance of First Education Minister’s Address in these words: “His address to this Education Conference is of great value to a student of history of education in Pakistan”.¹⁰ This address encompasses all essential elements that an initial policy should have brought out. He says, “It is, therefore, a matter of profound satisfaction to me, as it must be to you, that we now have before us the opportunity of reorienting our entire educational policy to correspond closely

⁷ The Quaid’s Broadcast to the People of USA, February 1948, accessed through <http://www.nazariapak.info/Quaid-e-Azam/Qoutes.php>

⁸ The Quaid’s Address to Bar Association, Karachi, 25 January 1948, accessed through <http://www.nazariapak.info/Quaid-e-Azam/Qoutes.php>

⁹ Speech at the Opening Ceremony of the State Bank of Pakistan, Karachi, 1 July 1946, accessed through <http://www.nazariapak.info/Quaid-e-Azam/Qoutes.php>

¹⁰ I.H.Qureshi.op.cit. p.28.

with the needs of the times and reflect the ideals for which Pakistan as *an Islamic State* stands. This is a great, indeed, a unique opportunity, but even greater is the magnitude of the task which it imposes on us. For the task is no less than building up a modern democratic state, whose citizens are equipped by the requisite training of body, mind and character to live the good life and to make their contribution to the common efforts of a tormented humanity for the establishment of global peace and security. This calls for a supreme act of dedication, for which I can think of no higher sanction than that of Islam, which came as a mission of mercy to the world and unfolded the vision of universal brotherhood of man. It is this vision which was translated into reality by the followers of Islam in its early days that the materialistic civilization of the West is at last directing its eyes after more than thirteen centuries of human misery, strife and bloodshed. And it is for making this vision a living reality, once again that Pakistan stands....where but in Islam could we find the democratic virtues of tolerance, self-help, self-sacrifice, human kindness, the protection and the succour of the weak and oppressed. And what better ideals could we postulate for our educational theory than these.”¹¹

Whether the aforementioned philosophical narratives had the support of the then Government of Pakistan? Qureshi, who was himself the member of Educational Committee constituted by the Quaid-i-Azam in 1946 and who also participated as an invited delegate in the First Education Conference, wrote: “It is doubtful whether the sentiments expressed by Fazlur Rahman did represent the views of the Government of Pakistan, even though he claimed to be speaking on its behalf. There are strong reasons to believe that there was a strong dissident view inside the Government, as can be proved by reference to subsequent events. This was the unimaginative and bureaucratic view of the Ministry of Finance, which was headed by a former bureaucrat, Ghulam Muhammad. In all probability, Fazlur Rahman had been able to make such a statement because he had the support of the Prime Minister, Liaquat Ali Khan and the

¹¹ Fazlur Rahman, op. cit., p. 6.

Quaid-i-Azam himself, whose interest in education has been mentioned above.”¹²

It seems that the political leadership of Pakistan as well as academia had a fair understanding and a sense of direction about the broader contours of educational philosophy, undercurrents of state ideology, and constitutional framework and the role required to be played by Pakistan in the comity of nations. It was, however, the bureaucracy, both civilian and military, who was somehow afraid of Islamic injunctions, perhaps, due to the reason that they would bring them to the level of common man.

The Objectives’ Resolution of 1949 – An Important Milestone in Policy Formulation

It would be pertinent to incorporate the views of Sharif al Mujahid, who is considered an authority on the ideological debates in Pakistan. He says “over the decades, the Objectives’ Resolution has continued to be relevant to Pakistan’s body politics. It has been included, with minor adaptations, as Preamble to three constitutions (1956, 1962 and 1973). It means, despite political upheavals and convulsions, despite periodic shifts in the political, social and economic orientation of those in power, the Resolution has continued to remain the primary source of inspiration on the ideological front to all shades of opinion on the political spectrum.Its importance has been affirmed and attested to by political theorists, jurists, and scholars. In a recent pronouncement, the then Chief Justice of Pakistan, Justice Sajjad Ali Shah, underscored the fact that the Resolution represents, as it were, the cornerstone of the constitution of Pakistan. The constitution could be amended in conformity with the procedure laid down therein, without, however, tampering with the salient features of the Objectives’ Resolution, and he listed ‘federalism, parliamentary democracy blended with Islamic

¹² I.H.Qureshi, op.cit., p. 29.

provisions, including independence of the judiciary’ among its ‘salient features’.”¹³

Two speeches are often referred to, in the constitutional debate, particularly pertaining to the Objectives’ Resolution, one delivered by the then Prime Minister of Pakistan, Nawabzada Liaqat Ali Khan, and the other delivered by Iftikharuddin, a leftist member of Constituent Assembly, which was surprisingly in favour of the Resolution.¹⁴ These speeches clearly reflect the thinking of the generation who created Pakistan.

Second Educational Conference Held at Karachi (4-5 December 1951)

This all Pakistan Educational Conference was held at Karachi during 4-5 December 1951. The opening address of Mr. Fazlur Rahman covers all issues of policy-formulation in Pakistan and problems associated with them. This speech is again very important to understand, as to what type of education system the policy-makers wanted to give to the State of Pakistan. Mr. Fazlur Rahman concluded his speech with these words:

“.....I felt it necessary to deal with them at some length. Quaid-i-Millat Liaqat Ali Khan had proclaimed repeatedly that he wanted to make Pakistan a ‘Laboratory of Islamic Socialism’. Now that he is no more with us, let us redouble our efforts to bring Pakistan nearer the ideal he cherished. Thus alone can we honour his memory and thus alone can we contribute to the progress and prosperity not only of our own people, but also of mankind at large.”¹⁵

¹³ Sharif al Mujahid, *Ideology of Pakistan*, Services Book Club, 1974, p. 141.

¹⁴ Ibid. 163.

¹⁵ *Proceedings of Second Educational Conference, Held at Karachi on 4-5 December, 1951.* p. 4.

Islamic Provisions in the Constitution of Pakistan

All three constitutions of Pakistan contained Islamic provisions, but the 1973 Constitution went much further.¹⁶ Abdul Hafeez Prizada, the then Law Minister, who piloted the constitution, claimed that “a serious effort has been made to take out the Islamic provisions (of the constitution) from the cold storage of the principles of the policy...and convert them into substantial parts of the constitutions. The Islamic provisions of the constitution would transform the basic injunctions and tenets of Islam into law and give them legislative effect.”¹⁷

The following inferences of Sharif al Mujahid also merit attention: “Besides Part-IX, the 1973 Constitution, with or without amendments made by General Ziaul Haq during the 1980s, contains several provisions bearing on Islam, which call for notice, for instance, **Article-2** designates Islam as the state religion. This provision, the jurists opine, is not merely ritualistic as in Malaysia, but has administrative and political thrust; **Article-2A** promulgated by General Zia on 2 March 1985, makes ‘the principles and provisions set out in the Objectives’ Resolution ...substantive parts of the constitution... (which) shall have effect accordingly. This makes, the Preamble an integral part of the constitution, enforceable in a court of law. It has been included as an annexure, so that if the constitution is abrogated, the Objectives Resolution is not automatically suspended, diluted, or abrogated; **Article-6, 9, and 12** also have a bearing on Islam; and **Article-31**, which concerns the Islamic way of life, is in the nature of a constitutional command. It reads as follows:

“Steps shall be taken to enable the Muslims of Pakistan, individually and collectively to order their lives in accordance with the fundamental principles and basic concepts of Islam and provide facilities whereby they may be enabled to understand the meanings of life according to the Holy Qur’an and Sunnah.”

¹⁶ Sharif al Mujahid, op. cit., P. 146.

¹⁷ The National Assembly of Pakistan, Constitution-Making debates, 19 February 1973, DD.103-114, Quoted by Sharif al Mujahid in *Ideology of Pakistan*, Services Book Club, 1974, p.146.

“The State shall endeavour, as respects the Muslims of Pakistan: (a) to make the teachings of the Holy Qur’an and Islamiat compulsory, to encourage and facilitate the learning of Arabic language and secure correct and exact printing and publishing of the Holy Qur’an; (b) to promote unity and the observance of the Islamic moral standards; and (c) to secure the proper organization of Zakat, (ushr), auqaf and mosques.”¹⁸

Conclusion

The existing society of Pakistan, however, does not reflect the polity that the founding fathers of Pakistan envisioned or the public at large yearns for. It is not only un-Islamic but also inhumane. Injustice, exploitation, intolerance, extremism, misconstrued interpretation of the religion are the symptoms of bad governance practices, inadequate education and lack of training of citizens, and a long neglect in the correct prioritization of policies. Whereas, Pakistan has made substantial progress in achieving the realistic constitutional and legal structures, the successive governments have not been able somehow to translate them in effective policies which could make better the lives of the people. The policy debate in the context of Islamization in Pakistan should, therefore, revolve around practical mechanisms as to how a balanced and uniform system of education can be introduced in Pakistan, in which religious institutions should also be incorporated; how a wider interpretation of Islamic teachings can be ensured, which should be acceptable to all sects; and how the real teachings of Islam concerning dignity of man, provision of justice, equitable access to political and economic rights, purification of inner-selves, prevalence of truth, love and kindness can be fostered in our day-to-day lives.

¹⁸ Ibid.