IMPACT OF SOCIAL CULTURAL FACTORS ON THE HARMONY AMONG THE DIFFERENT COMMUNITIES IN DISTRICT TOBA TEK SINGH

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ABSTRACT
Harmony across religions expresses the idea of live and let live. In a world where political and economic unrest is on the rise, peaceful coexistence among followers of many theological perspectives may prove to be the way forward for peace and prosperity. Interfaith cooperation and religious diversity must be strengthened for Pakistan to prosper and grow. This study aims to analysed the social and psychological factors that are supporting peaceful coexistence among four varied communities i.e., Sikhs, Hindus, Muslims, and Christians in the district of Toba Tek Singh in order to support interfaith harmony. Based on their willingness to take the survey, a sample of 120 respondents from these communities was selected. An effective interview schedule was used to acquire the data. The collected data was analyzed with the help of SPSS. For further inferential statistics (chi-square and gamma test) was used.

In this study the relationship between gender together with age of respondents and harmony among the communities has been examined using Chi-square and Gamma tests. The value of Chi-square is 6.29 and 11.006 for gender and age respectively, which is significant at alpha value of .05%, it indicates that there is a significant relationship between the gender together with age of the respondents and harmony among the communities. The Gamma value which is 0.52 and 0.403 respectively for gender and age factor also supports the positive relationship between the gender along with age of the respondents and harmony among the communities. Older and female respondents are likely more liberal and have a positive attitude towards the communities that create harmony among the members of the communities.

KEYWORDS
Interfaith, harmony, peaceful co-existence, prosperity, communities
INTRODUCTION
At both the interpersonal and institutional levels of interaction, interfaith discourse refers to cooperative, constructive, and beneficial engagement between individuals of various religious traditions (i.e., faiths) and/or ideas of a spiritual or humanistic nature. It varies from syncretism or alternative religion in that it frequently builds knowledge across multiple religions or concepts to encourage acceptance of others, rather than synthesising new beliefs (Küng, 1995).

When we refer to interfaith harmony or interfaith dialogue, we mean a discourse or conversation aiming at dispelling myths and fostering mutual understanding between various sects of other religions as well as between different sects of the same religion. It can also be referred to as the necessary for religions to work together in their shared goal of bringing spiritual inspiration to a society of many different religions (Takim, 2008).

Interfaith dialogue is the cooperative, productive, and positive interaction between people of different spiritual backgrounds (such as faiths) and/or ideas that are either religious or humanistic. Conversation frequently fosters awareness across many faiths or beliefs in order to inspire acceptance of others, as opposed to synthesising new viewpoints. Many contend that the history of religion shows that conflict has predominated over discussions more often than not. Around the world, there are interfaith initiatives at the local, regional, national, and international levels; many of these are As the saying goes, until there is peace among faiths, there will not be peace among nations unless they connect legally and create broader networks or federations (Finlay, 2010).

Peaceful Coexistence
A peaceful coexistence as opposed to ongoing hostility In essence, peaceful cohabitation is giving up on confrontation as a strategy for dealing with challenging circumstances. It entails a promise not to violate the sovereignty and territorial integrity of another state. It represents a reluctance to get involved in the internal affairs of other nations. In other words, all political and economic transactions must be fair and mutually beneficial. It entails eliminating even the threat of conflict, in his opinion. With the aim of best meeting man's aspirations, it should grow into a peaceful contest (Khrushchev, 1956).

Tolerance
Accepting differences and having the self-control to let others live are also characteristics of tolerance. It is the capacity to treat others with justice and objectivity regardless of their opinions, actions, religion, or country. Respecting everyone's inherent humanity demands
more than just cooperating with people who hold similar opinions or remaining mute in the face of injustice. The definition of intolerance is the inability to understand and appreciate the actions, opinions, and beliefs of another group. In order to lessen hostility between groups and help communities get past unresolvable dispute, tolerance is still crucial. For different groups to communicate with one another in a polite and understanding way, tolerance is necessary. When people or groups have been deeply engaged in violent disputes, tolerance helps affected parties endure the pain of the past and resolve their disagreements. Communities will become permanently estranged from one another as a result of intolerance. When people form opinions and attitudes about one another based on preconceived notions about that person, intolerance towards that person is fostered.

Without a doubt, peace is a requirement for development. No culture has actually been able to develop affordable and Politics cannot advance until there is social progress, peace, and harmony. Therefore, whether multi-religious or multi-ethnic, all governments desiring greatness must by necessity travel the path of peace among their citizens. A tolerant society should be developed with literacy as a top priority. There is also a need for silence because it has positive effects on one's personal, cultural, social, political, and financial spheres.

Learning to Co-exist in Peace.

Individuals and groups collaboratively internalise and practise mutual respect, understanding, caring, and sharing, compassion, social responsibility, solidarity, acceptance, and tolerance of diversity in order to solve problems and work towards a just and free, peaceful, and democratic society. This process of learning to live in peace and harmony is dynamic, holistic, and lifelong. The first step in this process is the cultivation of inner serenity in the minds and hearts of those who desire to build a better future via the pursuit of truth, cultural understanding, and respect for universal human aspirations. Living in harmony and peace requires a dedication to social justice, democracy, human rights, and peace at all levels of interaction in a sustainable environment.

Peace Building and Civil Society

Academics who study peace often make the case that building a democratic state with a purpose can lead to peace. An fundamental part of peace studies is now historical understanding of the human condition, human nature, character of society, structure of the international system, moral principles, and so forth. During the Cold War, peace experts predicted that by letting nation-states forgo military investment in order to gain from peace,
society would be able to live in harmony and order. Through dialogue, mediation, inquiry, reconciliation, negotiation, legal settlement, option to local institutions or organisations, or peaceful ways of their own choosing, the United Nations developed techniques for settling Pacific conflicts. In order to handle conflicts before they turned violent, it also deployed preventative diplomacy. The role of civil society as a partner in promoting peace has increased since the conclusion of the Cold War. The idea of peacebuilding, which seeks to identify and promote peace mechanisms in order to prevent civil conflicts and stabilise the political situation, was popularised by former UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. The long-term structural transformation of lethal conflict into ceasefires, peaceful relationships between stakeholders, democracy, social justice, and other aims & increased collaboration is known as peace building (Cousens, 2001).

**Significance of Study**

As a social activist and social science student, my aim in conducting this sociological study was to learn more about the actual experiences of those working to advance interfaith harmony and peaceful coexistence in the Toba Tek Singh region. People from four diverse communities i.e, Sikhs, Hindus, Muslims, and Christians live and celebrate variety in Toba Tek Singh. It is acceptable for everyone to go to their personal shrines and make their own prayers. the real-world experiences of people from all religions, ideologies, and sects who are trying to figure out how to build interfaith harmony, social harmony, peace, and peaceful coexistence among various communities. Positive study results will highlight the significance of interfaith dialogue projects in local communities with the aim of informing/teaching other groups to live with each other and pave the way for friendship, love and peaceful coexistence.

**Objectives of the Study**

- To study the socioeconomic traits of the respondents.
- To study how respondents felt about harmony.
- To look into the problems or challenges in fostering harmony across communities.
- Recognize/see the positive contribution of stakeholders and civil society to fostering community cohesiveness.
- To suggest some ways to enhance peace.
- To suggest some measures to enhance the harmony.

**Hypothesis**

- The age of the respondents is likely to be associated with harmony among the
communities.

- The gender of the respondents is likely to be associated with harmony among the communities.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The data were collected from 120 respondents using a straightforward random sample technique. Information was gathered utilising an interviewing schedule, a well-structured research tool developed in accordance with the objectives of the study. To make sure the study instrument was accurate and applicable, two respondents pretested it. Using SPSS software, the final data was collected and examined. Inferential statistics were utilised for data analysis, specifically chi-square and gamma.

Research Plan

The review's objectives were to identify and remove obstacles to promoting interfaith harmony and attaining peaceful coexistence among the several networks in the Toba Tek Singh area, as well as to examine the sociological and psychological variables that affect how important interfaith harmony is. The current literature on the subject was examined in order to achieve this objective. Information was collected from 120 respondents, chosen using a variety of sample strategies, utilising simple random sampling. The respondents, which included religious leaders, political leaders, social activists, local administration, lawyers, and journalists from various communities belonging to Hinduism, Sikhism, Islam, and Christianity, were chosen based on some fundamental characteristics, which may be referred to as control variables or basic study assumptions. This was done while keeping in mind our cultural norms, values, and beliefs.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

A purposive sample technique was employed to gather data from 120 respondents. Religious and political leaders, social activists, local officials, lawyers, and journalists were among the responders from each group. Residents of the district Toba Tek Singh who practise multiple religions, including Islam, Sikhism, Hinduism, and Christianity, make up all of the respondents from four distinct communities.

Data Collection

The systematic process of gathering and analysing information from various sources to create a complete and in-depth picture of a certain region is known as data collection. A well-organized interview schedule was adopted for the current investigation.

Tool of Data Collection
The instruments available for gathering data in social research are countless. But an interview schedule was employed to gather the data in light of the socioeconomic and literacy rates of the study area. A schedule for an interview is a collection of different questions that are asked by a researcher or his qualified demonstratives, who filled out the schedule in-person during a direct interaction with the respondents (Gregory, 1953).

In the most recent study, information was gathered using a questionnaire and interview schedule. A timeline of a survey consists of a number of questions posed to respondents. A questionnaire schedule was made taking into account the objectives of the study. The majority of the questionnaire's questions were organised. Even though the questionnaire was in English, it was also available in Urdu and Punjabi:

- The respondent's awareness of some vocabulary related to the subject is restricted, hence the questionnaire timetable was used.
- The questionnaire schedule was used to convey the true meaning of the question to the respondent; the researcher could clarify any questions that were difficult for respondents to understand.
- The researcher may provide the respondents advice regarding their environment, the order of the questions, and nonverbal cues while they are speaking.
- Some respondents felt these kinds of questions were strange to them because they were not familiar with interfaith peace, so they did not give enough time for data gathering.
- The questionnaire interviewing format was used by the researcher because it generated more responses from respondents.

Pre-testing

Pre-testing was done in order to ensure the reliability and accuracy of the feedback form of the interview schedule. Pre-testing was carried out on 2 respondents in order to make sure that the research instrument is accurate and acceptable. Each scale's internal consistency was determined. A few enquiries received rewards after the pre-testing. Reproduced and modified to enhance the survey's functioning.

Field Experience

Research in sociology is unique in that it deals with human attitudes and behaviours, which vary from person to person and can even alter in response to slight changes in the environment. Specialists faced a variety of difficulties when gathering the information. While some respondents were disagreeable, some respondents displayed incredibly helpful behaviour. Some of the responders are unsure whether to bring up interfaith concordance as
well. Several survey participants lacked awareness. Regularly, the professional got in touch with the respondent to get confirmation. They then helped the expert after getting that confirmation.

**Data Analysis and Reporting**

**Social Economic Characteristics**

As opposed to socioeconomic qualities, which are mostly determined by occupation, gender, age, and religious affiliation, financial variables often reflect an employee's personality (Hassan, 2009).

The Socioeconomic traits are a collection of interconnected attitudes that are not the result of a single measurement. Socioeconomic aspects are therefore made up of a variety of components, each with its own set of indices (Levi and Davis, 2008).

Because a person's socioeconomic traits are influenced by the norms and values of their society, the socioeconomic traits of the participant's family were chosen as an independent variable in the study due to their importance.

For the purpose of this analysis, the following socioeconomic characteristic indicators were taken into account.

- Age
- Sex of the respondent

**Age**

When evaluating attitudinal changes in behaviour, age is a crucial factor. Age is the participant's total number of completed long periods of time. The respondent's own response served as the basis for defining the current review age, which was based on the respondent's years of life. The participant ages were divided into three categories:

- Less than 30
- 31 to 40 Years
- 41 and above

**Sex of the Respondent**

- Men
- Women

**Statistical Techniques Used**

The following factual approaches were used for measures investigation:

- The Measurable Bundle for Sociologies was used to research quantitative data.
- Reminiscent data were used to condense various pieces of information, like frequencies and
rates. Chi-square and gamma tests were applied to determine how autonomous and subordinate factors interacted.

**Percentage**

In order to make the information comparable, different information group percentages were used in this study. A useful depiction of the data is essentially the percentage frequency distribution. This displays the proportion of facts. The formula below was used to determine percentages.

\[
\text{percentage} = \frac{\text{F}}{\text{N}} \times 100
\]

Where

\( f = \) Outright Recurrence
\( N = \) Complete Number of things

**Chi-Square**

In informal studies, the chi-square test is used to determine whether real-world data compares with that of persons who are not surprising in a challenging hypothesis. The equivalent was done in the continuing examination. The most popular technique for matching up occurrences or proportions is the chi-square test (Ewens & Grant, 2001).

The chi-square test measurements for the autonomy test sum up how close to the anticipated frequencies are to the accomplished frequencies. It is signified by image X2. The equation of chi-square is displayed as under:

\[
\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(O - E)^2}{E}
\]

Where \( O \) is the frequency actually experienced by a specific cell, and \( E \) is the projected frequency for a cell that is similar. The fractions for each cell are calculated by the big summation sign, and they are then added to yield X2.

**Gamma Test**

Gamma is used to examine the direction and significance of the relationship between ordinal variables. It is the extent of the overall organized data association/relationship when two variable quantities are evaluated at the ordinal assessment point. Amount of determined gamma differ from -1 to +1, -1 indicates full -ve relationship b/w independent and dependent variable and +1 indicates full +ve relation b/w variables and zero determined value indicates that there is no association amongst in research variables. It is the amount of cross
organized data association/relationship where two variables are evaluated at ordinal magnitude point (Sheskin, 2003).

For calculation, subsequent formula was employed.

\[
\text{Gamma} = \frac{N_s - N_d}{N_s + N_d}
\]

Where as:

Ns stands for numbers of pairs of cases ranking in similar orders on each variable.
Nd holds for numbers of pair of cases ranking in a various way on each variable.

**Results and Interpretation**

**Table 1: Association between the age of the respondents and harmony among the Communities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Positive effect of harmony among communities</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 30</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 - 40</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41 and above</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The relationship between age of respondents and harmony among the communities has been examined using Chi-square and Gamma tests. The value of Chi-square is 11.006 which is significant at alpha value of 5%, it indicates that there is a significant relationship between the age of the respondents and harmony among the communities. The Gamma value which is 0.403 also supports the positive relationship between the age of the respondents and harmony among the communities. The older respondents are likely more liberal and having positive attitude towards the communities that create harmony among the members of the
107

communities. So, hypothesis there is relationship between age of respondents and harmony among the communities is accepted.

The study conducted by Shakir (2007) has also found positive impact of the age on harmony among the communities.

![Figure 1: Positive Effect of Harmony among Communities](image)

**Table 2: Association between gender and harmony among the communities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Positive effect of harmony among communities</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi-square = 6.29 d.f. =1 P- value =.05 Gamma=0.52

The relationship between gender of respondents and harmony among the communities has been examined using Chi-square and Gamma tests. The value of Chi-square is 6.29 which is significant at alpha value of .05%, it indicates that there is a significant relationship between the gender of the respondents and harmony among the communities. The Gamma value which is 0.52 also supports the positive relationship between the gender of the respondents and harmony among the communities. The respondents are likely more liberal
and having positive attitude towards the communities that create harmony among the members of the communities. So, hypothesis there is relationship between gender of respondents and harmony among the communities is accepted.

The study conducted by Shakir (2007) has also found positive impact of the gender on harmony among the communities.

![Bar Chart: Positive Effect of Harmony among Communities](image)

**Figure 2: Positive Effect of Harmony among Communities**

**Conclusion**

- This has been my major method of learning where various networks are located. Toba Tek Singh is a remarkable gift from the Divine where people from different networks, such as Hindus, Sikhs, Muslims, and Christians, live. People regularly visit religious sites including churches, mosques, Gurdawaras, and sanctuaries out of respect for all religions. Many different networks have people as pals. In terms of companionship, they have several notable advantages.

- People who share a connection with Toba Tek Singh desire a peaceful existence. They have applauded both the cordial and formal circumstances.

- Concerns of friendly and interfaith amicability must be brought to light. This word may be totally foreign to some individuals. Whatever the circumstances, they expressed their gratitude for a friendly atmosphere and good friends. Additionally, some participants mentioned that they face challenges in their efforts to advance amicability, while others said that their motivation is to save humanity and promote friendship rather than to be angry and defiant. In place of resilience, there is a need to encourage acknowledgment. The two courageous elements of the serene mixture are
acknowledgment and absolution.

• People concur that in order to create a peaceful and harmonious union, it is crucial to foster social harmony and interfaith harmony within networks. Partners include academic trailblazers, political trailblazers, columnists, attorneys, educators, and neighbourhood associations.

• People may gain a lot from strict pioneers introducing them to religious concepts like love, solidarity, and harmony. In reality, some individuals thought that political leaders stir up dissent and war. However, boards of trustees for harmony and common society organisations are quite active in promoting love, harmony, and concordance. Common social orders at the regional level should collaborate with the government to create obedient boards of trustees. The planning stages for raising the ceiling for common and public employees should be managed by the public authority.

• The media can also be effectively utilised to address the grassroots impacts of compromise. The entire group should be given access to the Harmony Channel so they may all contribute their stories and ideas. The way that writers construct their parts and pieces might throw light. The most efficient technique to develop constructive masterminds is through instruction. The public authorities should design the educational programme without bias in the reading materials and without showing disrespect. A Harmony library should exist at each place.

Recommendations

• Social and religious holidays should have to be observed simultaneously.

• Increased acknowledgement should be made across numerous networks.

• Events open to the public should be scheduled and coordinated to celebrate.

• Interfaith cooperation and mutual coexistence should be promoted through radio and television programming.

• To make peaceful coexistence more relevant, a Harmony channel where like people can share their wisdom should be established.

• The stages of training for political pioneers, social experts, and local groups should be led by the government.

• At the elementary, secondary, and college levels, open visits to revered places like Masjids, Gurdwaras, Sanctuary, and Churches should be permitted.

• Redesigning educational courses is necessary to foster social harmony and peaceful cohabitation.
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