

PAKISTANI MUSLIMS RELIGIOUS PRACTICES IN AUSTRIA

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Abstract:

The current study concerned with to know the religious practices of Pakistani muslims in Pakistan. The main objectives of this study were to know the demographical information of mosques managed by Pakistani community and know national and international level religious and political leaders and their religious practices. The snow ball sampling techniques were used to identify the sample of this study. In depth interviews were to collect the data. The data revealed that there are 08 mosques, 06 sunni muslim and 02 shia muslim community. Among 8 Pakistani mosques, 05 are working under the clear philosophy of religious organizations based in Pakistan. They have some sought of link with these organizations and their leaders and representatives often visited in these mosques. More than 50% are in favour of integration in Austrian society.

Key Words: religious practices, Austria, Imam, Pakistani Muslims, Philosophy of religious organizations.

Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan have majority of Muslim in South Asian countries. One third of the world's Muslim population lives in South Asia (Gugler, 2013). These are developing countries and many people from these countries travel to other developed ones to support their families to search for better earning resources. Austria is one of them, where people of these countries immigrate. Islam is the second largest religion with 7% of total population in Austria.

Majority of Muslims in Austria belong to Sunni denomination. Most Muslims came to Austria during the 1960s as migrant workers from Turkey, Bosnia and Herzegovina. There are also other Muslim communities from Pakistan, Bangladesh, Afghanistan and others living in Austria. Islamische

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Glaubensgemeinschaft of Austria (IGGIÖ) is officially representative of Muslims in Austria. IGGIÖ was established in 1912.

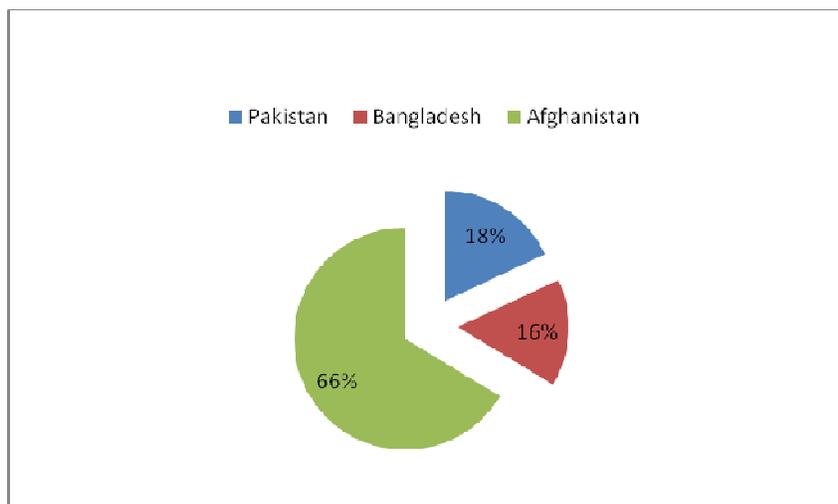


Figure 1 Muslim Population of Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh

Table 1

Demographic information of 03 South Asian Muslim countries in Austria

Sr. No.	Name of country	Total Population in respective country	Muslim population ratio	Population in Austria	As reported by community leader	Mosques in Austria
1	Pakistan	191,171,000	96.16% (2015)	8,490	12000+	08
2	Bangladesh	145,607,000	90.4% (2015)	7,413	9000+	05
3	Afghanistan	29,047,100	99% (2015)	31,300	50000 +	05
Total				47203	72000	18

Therefore it is very important to get more informations about the muslims of above mentioned countries about their religious activities, role of mosques, their affiliation with religious and political organizations in their home country as well as other countries. The procedure regarding selection of imam and role of imam in mosques. There is dire need to collect the information about the religious activities, demographical informations of

mosques, role of imam and its affiliation with religious and political parties.

The main objectives of this study were to know the demographical information of mosques managed by Pakistani community, know the historical background of mosques, know national and international level religious and political leaders and their religious practices, review the current difficulties, activities and services for respective communities, know the relationship of these organizations and mosques at national and international level organizations, role of imams and their relationship with the State, democracy and violence.

PAKISTANI MUSLIMS IN AUSTRIA

Pakistani community is fairly small but well-integrated. The *Austro-Pakistan Society* based in Vienna was founded in 1976, which aim to foster and improve Austrian-Pakistani relations at the political, social, cultural and scientific levels. (Austro-Pakistan Society) Islam is the state religion of Pakistan, a country that provides the right to its citizens. The population of Pakistan (191 million) is comprised of 96.16% Muslim and 3.84 % Non-Muslim.

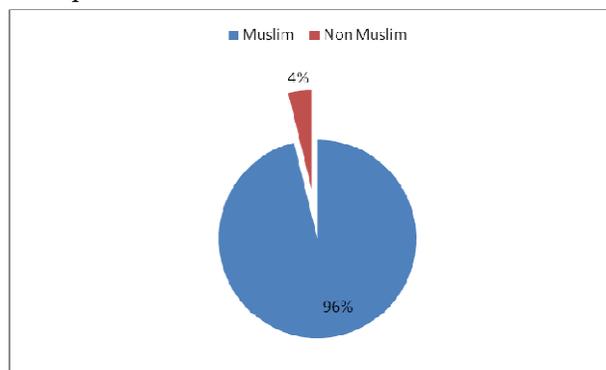


Figure 2 Distribution of population of with reference to religion in Pakistan

Majority of population (110 million) are under the age of 25, which is the one of the majority in the world (Gugler, 2013). Muslims in Pakistan belong to two sects: Sunni (77%) and Shia (19.16%). Though members of Ahmadiyya (Qadiani) are 0.35% and consider themselves Muslims (last Census of Pakistan, 1998). The government of Pakistan does not consider this group as true followers of Islam and has declared “Ahmadis” as “Non-Muslims”

(Miller & Tracy, 2009). More than 8,490 Pakistani are living in Austria. Majority based in Vienna and belong to Sunni Muslim. There are eight mosques in Austria managed by Pakistani origin community. The demographic information such name of mosque, religious affiliation, political affiliation in Pakistan and geographical location of Pakistani mosques is available in below table 2.

Table 2
Pakistani origin mosques in Austria

Name of Mosque	Name of Organization	Religious affiliation	Political affiliation in Pakistan	Address
Masjid-e-Ibrahim	Austro-pakistanischer islamischer Verein - Masjid-e-Ibrahim	Jamaat-e-Islami	Jamaat-e-Islami	Leohrgasse 3/5 wien 1150
Masjid Al Madina	Islamische Kultur vereinigung	Pir M.Karam Shah Al-Azhri	Pir Amin Ul Hasnat Shah	Weisselgasse 28, 1200 Wien
Minhaj ul Quran Center	Minhaj Ul Qur'an cultural center	Minhaj-ul-Quran International (MQI)	Pakistan Awam-e-Tahreek	Toßg. 4, 1150 wien
Noor Islamic Center	Islamisches Zentrum Noor	Pir M.Karam Shah Al-Azhri	Pir Amin Ul Hasnat Shah	Währinger Gürtel 57, 1180 Wien
Masjid-E-Bilal	Pakistanischer Islamischer Kulturverin	Sunni	No specific	Diefenbachg. 12/12 1150, wien
AL-ASR	AL-ASR Islamische Kulturzentrum	Schiiten	No specific	Raffaelg. 6
Imam Bargah, Jageer-e-Ali-Akbar		Schiiten	No specific	Simmering hauptstarsse 501, 1110
Faizan-e-Madina	Da'wat-e Islāmī culture center	Da'wat-e Islāmī	No specific	Herzgasse 84, 1100 Wien. 0660/4906990

Source: Respective mosques provided information

In the above table there are 08 mosques, 06 sunni muslim and 02 shia muslim community. Imam Bargah Jageer –e- Ali Akbar is used for arrangement of Matam (a session in which a group of people beat themselves and mourn the death of Imam Hussain) during 9-10 Muharrum. The six mosques belong sunni but one mosque have religious affiliation with Jamat-e-Islami Pakistani.

There is no permanent Imam in that mosque. Among eight mosques, four have permanent imam. All mosques provide religious guidance to their community. These mosques provide facilities and services to Muslims to celebrate their religious festivals with full spirit.

Table 3

Information of Pakistani mosques, organization leaders and imams

Name of Moques/centers	Name of organization leader in Austria	Name of Imam
Noor Islamic Center	Abdul Hafeez	Abdul Hafeez
Ibrahim Mosque (Masjid)	Amjad Bhatti Sheikh Waheed	Currently there is no permanent imam. Mr. Habib and Arshad butt perform the duties of imam.
Bilal Masjid	Anwer Rabbani 0043-699-10565431	No permanent Imam
Al Madina Center, Vienna	Ghulam Mustafa 069916960231	Muhammad Shabbir/ Ghulam Mustafa 06507788054 069916960231
Minhaj ul Quran cultural center, Austria	Mr.Naeem	Disputed. Ex- Khawaja Naseem 069914062526
Al- Asar Islamic Center- Wien	Galib Shah	Mr.Mahsam mahsam62@yahoo.com 0043/19256505
Jageer-e-Ali-Akbar, Vienna, Austria	Mr.Jafari	

Source: Respective mosques provided information

The above table indicated that among 8 Pakistani mosques, 05 are working under the clear philosophy of religious organizations based in Pakistan. They have some sought of link with these organizations and their leaders and representatives often visited in these mosques. The detail of these religious and political organizations is as under:

- i. Jamaat-e- Islami
- ii. Minhaj ul Quran International
- iii. Anjuman Taleemul Muslimeen Ghosia(ATMG) Bhera, Pakistan

iv. Da'wat-e-Islami

I. Jamaat-e-Islami

Jamaat-e-Islami representative mosque in Vienna is Masjid-e-Ibrahim. It is managed by the Pak Austria Islamic Society(Austro-pakistanischer islamischer Verein). There is no permanent Imam in that mosque for the last two years. There is capacity of more 300 people to offer namaz at a time. On Juma prayer about 40% namazi belong to other countries instead of Pakistan. Although this mosque claims that this mosque is open for all political and religious parties but majority of Pakistani people who have affiliation with Jamaat-e-Islami, Pakistan attend this mosque. The detail of Jamaat-e-Islami is as under:

Jamaat-e-Islami Founder: Sayyid Abul A'la Maududi (August 26, 1941) Head Quarter: Mansoor, Lahore, Pakistan	
Ameer/Leader	Siraj ul Haq
General Secretary	Liaqat Baloch
Naib Ameer	Khurshid Ahmed, Mian Muhammad Aslam, Rashid Naseem, Asad ullah Bhutto, Hafiz Muhammad Idress.
Ideology	Islamism Islamic democracy
Political position	Right-wing
International affiliation	Jamaat-e-Islami Hind Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami Muslim Brotherhood
Colors	Green, white, blue
Seats in Government of Pakistan /Political strength (2016)	Seats in Senate: (1 / 104), National Assembly (4/342), Punjab Assembly (1/371), Pakhtunkhwa Assembly(7/124)
Sympathizers and workers	4.5 million

Activities and Services for Community

1. Daily Namaz (Celebration of religious events with religious zeal and enthusiasm. Such as Eid Namaz, and others.
2. Conducts NAKAH for marriages and wedding services.

3. Provides funeral services (janaza prayers) and access to muslim cemetery.
4. Arrange traweeh prayers anf Iftar during Ramadan.
5. Children weekly Islamic educational classes and special occasional seminars.
6. Adult and youth counseling.

II. Minhaj-ul-Quran Center Vienna

Minhaj UlQuran center in Vienna was established in 2010. The center is located at Toss gasse-4, A-1150 Vienna. The center was established to preach the philosophy of Islam under the guidance Minhaj ul Quran, Lahore. Minhaj-ul-Quran International is an international non-governmental organization(NGO) and registered as NGO in Pakistan.

Minhaj-ul-Quran International Founder: Dr. Muhammad Tahir Ul Qadri (Dual National of Canada and Pakistan) Year of Establishment: 1981 Head Quarter: Model town, Lahore	
Ameer/Leader	Dr. Muhammad Tahir Ul Qadri
Ideology	Sufism and spiritual development, human rights, women's rights, tackling extremism, promoting peace, interfaith dialogue and religious moderation
Political position	No seat, boycotted the last elections held in 2013
Political Party	Pakistan Awami Tehreek(PAT)
International affiliation	Presence in 100 countries
Colors	Red, Green and White
Sympathizers and workers	More than 2.0 million
Key peoples	Hussain Mohi-ud-Din Qadri, Raheeq Abbasi, Nizam ud din, Zahid Fayyaz, Muhammad Afzal Saeedi, Dawood Mash'hadi

Activities and Services for Community

1. Organise Annual Milad Conference along with historical “Milad Peace March”. In the last conference, a large number of people including women and children attend this conference.

2. German course A-1 has been started for promotion of German language and integration.
3. Conducts for marriages and wedding services.
4. Provides funeral services (janaza prayers).
5. Traweeh prayers during Ramadan.
6. Adult and Children weekly Islamic educational classes.
7. Umrah Ticket draw each year
8. Arrange programs on different events and invite peoples of other religions and official s of Austrian government in these program.
9. Provide initial counseling to start business and other documentation for their community and some time provide residence for short stay of their community.
10. Collaboration with other muslim groups in Austria such as on the 11th of November 2012, Minhaj Youth League (MYL) Austria welcomed the Muslim Youth League Austria at Minhaj-ul-Quran International Austria Centre.
11. Help refugees through provision of food, clothes and necessary guidance

III. Anjuman Taleemul Muslimeen Ghosia (ATMG) Bhera, Pakistan.

(Pir Muhammad Karam Shah al-Azhari)

Noor Islamic Center and Masjid Al Madina are the followers of Pir Muhammad Karam Shah. The imams of these mosques were graduated from Bhera (center of Pir Karam Shah Movement and as well as Jamia Al Azhar, Egypt)

Pir Muhammad Karam Shah al-Azhari, *Sitara-e-Imtiaz*, (1918–1998) was an eminent Sheykh (Spiritual Master) of tariqa Chistiyya and an Islamic (Sunni) scholar associated with Barelvi movement. ("*Justice Pir Muhammad Karam Shah Al-Azhari (1918-1998)*". *pakpost.gov.pk*. Retrieved 28 July 2015.)

Muhammad Karam Shah al-Azhari Movement Founder: Muhammad Karam Shah al-Azhari Head Quarter: Bhera, Jhelam, Punjab, Pakistan	
Ameer/Leader	Shaykh Muhammad Amin al-Hasanat Shah

Ideology	Sunni Islam, Hanafi Madhab
Political position	Alliance with Pakistan Muslim League(N). Shaykh/Pir Amin ul Hasnat was elected Member of National Assembly (MNA) in last election in 2013. Now he is Ministers of State religious affairs and interfaith harmony.
International affiliation	Presence in 50 + countries
Sympathizers and workers	2 million
	The present leader of this anjumum Pir Amin ul Hasnat has visited 03 times in Austria.

Activities and services for community

1. Marriages and wedding services.
2. Provides funeral services (janaza prayers) and access to muslim cemetery.
3. Traweeh prayers during the month of Ramadan.
4. Children weekly Islamic educational classes and special occasional seminars and conferences.
5. Celebrate religious events other normal activities.

IV. Da'wat-e Islāmī

Da'wat-e-Islami is a non-political Islamic organization based in Karachi, Pakistan. It become the largest religious organization in Pakistan (Goger, 2013) founded in the early 1980s by Muhammad Ilyas Qadri, the organization is ideologically aligned with Sunni Islam. It also publishes Islamic books under its publisher name of Maktaba-tul-Madina. It has several Islamic educational institutions around the World. In addition to local charity efforts, Dawat-e-Islami also offers online courses in Islamic studies and runs a television station, Madani Channel.

Dawat-e-Islami Founder: Muhammad Ilyas Qadri (1981) Head Quarter: Karachi, Pakistan		
Ameer/Leader	Muhammad Ilyas Qadri	
Ideology	Sunni Islam, Barelwī approach is used for Tabligh. Faizān-e Sunnat written by Muhammad Ilyas Qadri, is the major central	

	source in Da'wat-e Islām.
Political position	No
International affiliation	Presence in 176 countries
Colors	Green turban,
Sympathizers and workers	Presence in 176 countries
	The representatives from head office, visited many times in Austria and lead preach groups (Madni Kafilas)for other countries in the Europe.

Some special Activities and Services for Community other than normal activities

- one-day missionary trip (nekī kī da'wat) in the neighborhood once a week
- Weekly counseling session for community
- The "Islamic Project" of Dawat-e-Islami is the "Sunnaization", that is the Re-shaping and Re-construction of the daily routine and the individual markers of identity based on the examples of the Prophet and the Sahabi as portrayed in the Hadith-Literature. ("Parrots of Paradise - Symbols of the Super-Muslim: Sunnah, Sunnaization and Self-Fashioning in the Islamic Missionary Movements Tablighi Jama'at, Da'wat-e Islami and Sunni Da'wat-e Islami". Crossasia-repository.ub.uni-heidelberg.de. 2008-07-31. Retrieved 2015-09-20.)
- Weekly Quran classes for children
- Counselling session for women

CONCLUSION

The people of Pakistan are living in Austria with peace and busy in their work. These people are not too much rich community. Majority of people are attach with Pizza Shop, restaurant, taxi driver and labour work. However, there is students' community as well. A number of Pakistani doctoral students are contribution to Austrian society though their research work and spending huge money in Austria particularly by those doctoral students and post-doc scholars who are awarded scholarships by Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan. A small community is also working

in UNO offices and other industrial and corporate sector of the county.

Pakistan and Austria have between them a number of agreements which include: 1) Air Services Agreement (however there are currently no direct flights between the two countries), 2) Extradition Treaty, 3) Agreement for visa abolition for diplomatic and official passport holders, 4) Double Tax Avoidance Agreement and 5) Several Memorandums of Understanding on educational cooperation. Austria and Bangladesh also have agreement on bilateral economic relations in 2002. Mr. Dipu Moni (Bangladeshi Foreign Minister) also visited Austria in 2013 and met with key government officials and signed MoU on different agreements. The relations of Austria and Afghanistan were very deep before civil war in Afghanistan. Austria still provide support to Afghanistan through fundings, arranging conferences and also through exports.

There is no permanent Imam in 40 % Pakistani mosques. In 50 % of mosques the Imam are not paid and some mosques Imams are paid but not enough. They have to work extra to meet their daily life expenses and due to this reason often at Fajar namaz is performed without Jamaat and sometimes a few Namazi offer Fajar Namaz and same time he was also remaining busy in his part time work and unable to organize Zohar Namaz. Imam is selected by the concerned religious leader. Majority of Imam are close friends or relatives of the religious leader of the concerned organization. 50% organizations are personal and territory level and they work according to the wish of organizational leader. Although there is elections in each organization but real democracy is missing during elections.

Each religious leader, Imam and other community have in contact with their country of origin because they have to support their families. They try their level best to fulfill the needs of their families. It was also observed that they have not enough money or time to play vital role in political in their country of origin.

Imams used traditional teaching methodology on weekly classes such as more focus is giving in memorizing the information instead of understanding. Lecture method is used almost all mosques to teach students in weekly classes. Teacher center approach is used during teaching. There were no activities for character building of young children.

More than 50% are in favour of integration in Austria society. They believed that their community should learn German language and they should use German language in Juma khutba and so on. The religious organization in Austria have some contact with other religious organizations in their respective homeland but it was also observed that they have a very few link with these organizations. Only 30% mosques have affiliation but they are not answerable about funds and other activities. The activities of mosques are confined to religious and educational activities, and their institutional structures do not include any mechanisms for political action.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. There should be permission for Imam to work in an open market along with Imamat. When Imam come here after giving up everything in his country. Here government should pay its cost. The appointment of Imam should be through government of concerned country or neutral body. It is very big through and in this way monopoly will be ended.
2. There is a great need that the further research should be conducted to know the detail activities, teaching methodology of weekly classes. Training imams should be arranged for better use of innovative technology in their teaching learning process. Minimum qualification and income of Imam should be determined.
3. Local language courses should be arranged for imams so that they can communicate with children in local language (German) as well as use this language during Juma Khutba.
4. The directory/digital directory of each mosque regarding its activities, services for community along with imam and its organizational leader should be prepared and made available for everyone.
5. There is dire need to conduct a detailed research regarding National and international cooperation as well as political and theological orientation of religious organization in Austria. There is also need to know the depth relationship of these religious organizations with state and their role in integration.

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