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EXAMINING THE CAUSES OF SOCIO-CULTURAL BARRIERS THAT ADVERSELY IMPACT ON PEACE OF ISLAMIC SOCIETY

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EXAMINING THE CAUSES OF SOCIO-CULTURAL BARRIERS THAT ADVERSELY IMPACT ON PEACE OF ISLAMIC SOCIETY

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ABSTRACT:

Culture serves as the key to every society. It shapes the societal norms and guides the individuals the social behaviors. It is the man-made environment which includes norms, values, customs and all the habits of individuals which he acquired as a member of the society. In this Study, the researcher has attempted to create a ground for all the thinkers and philosophers that is, where the norms are up to and what are the barriers which we need to sort out in the light of social role theory which talks about the roles of men and women within the society, national culture theory which gives the idea that the cultural values are formed by man, cultural leg theory which puts the light upon the gap between the material and non-material culture so it talks about the significance of both to grow with the same speed and by linking these theories to create an argument with the support of Quranic verses, the last sermon of the Messenger (Peace be upon him) and the addresses of the founder of Pakistan Mr. Quaid-E-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. The study will finally be concluded with some of the recommendations so that the rising hatred of society can be converted to the peaceful one.

KEYWORDS: Culture, Societal Norms, Social Role Theory, National Culture, Cultural Leg Theory, Muslims, Islam.

Introduction:

The Study entitled, "Examining the Causes of Socio-cultural Barriers that Adversely Impact on Peace of Islamic Society." which mainly focuses upon the hurdles created by the social norms that governs the behaviors of the individuals and responsible for the misdeeds and lack of solidarity within the society. It will also emphasize on the difference between the current cultural scenario and the view of Islam along with the views of the founder of Pakistan Mohammed Ali Jinnah who believes in peace and harmony in a society so that everyone could live freely, and the state could progress.

Peace is not something which can be achieved but can be inculcated in the members of society through the process of socialization. Socialization is a process which starts from the birth of the child and continues till the last breath. However, as in the study we are going to develop the ground for peace building and the need to eradicate socio-cultural barriers, so we need to define each term separately very first. We will be splitting the topic into two; that is, socio-cultural barriers and peace. To develop an understanding about socio-cultural barriers, we will be elaborating the culture first so that the phenomena could be more clear. In this introductory section, we will also be examining the concept of peace in Islam, the argument will be set for the upcoming section in which we will be looking the relevant literature. Let us have look on the culture first:

Definition of Culture:

The term culture depicts the idea in which a person acquires some of the habits, he learns some traditions, follows the norms and values to serve as the member of a particular society. There is no single definition of culture but are some, that gives a comprehensive idea about the concept; Hall (1976) states that "Culture is not genetically inherited, and cannot exist on

its own, but is always shared by members of a society." As per Hofstede, "the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group from another." So, it can be said that this concept is all about the choice of man, he is the master of forming the norms, customs, traditions, and values so at this point it can be said that it is a man-made environment which shapes the social behaviors of the individuals.

Socio-cultural barriers:

As mentioned above that culture is the formation of man and when we agree with this ideology so this is understood that the socio-cultural barriers are also made by man, which emerge in consequence to the conflicts due to cultural diversity and when an individual does not show will to understand the others culture. So as a matter of fact, socio-cultural barriers are the constructs, their origins lie in the norms and values made by the members of society themselves. The individuals are influenced by the social phenomena, the limited information provided to the individuals and access to the informational resources is also restricted thereby, negative emotions arise. These man-made problems disrupt the social order and hinder the development of a peaceful society.

Definition of peace:

As far as the idea of peace is concerned, it is the main emphasis of Islam, it is the state of comfort when every person is enjoying freedom and living

¹ Beyond culture. Author: Edward T. Hall (Author). Front cover image for Beyond culture ... Publisher: Anchor Press, Garden City, N.Y., 1976, p 16

² Hofstede, Geert (1980b) Culture's Consequences: International Differences in Work-Related Values. Newbury Park, Calif.: SAGE. N.Y 1980, p. 21-23

without fear, it is the condition when society performs every function smoothly. The term peace is taken from the original Latin word.

"pax" which means a pact, a control, or an agreement to end war or any dispute and conflict between two people, two nations or two antagonistic groups of people. According to the viewpoint of Albert Einstein, "Peace is not merely the absence of war but the presence of justice, of law, of order in short of government." As per Martin Luther King, Jr., "peace is not merely the absence of tension: It is the presence of justice." Jawaharlal Nehru (1889-1964) denotes that "Peace is not a relationship of nations. It is a condition of mind brought about by a serenity of soul. Peace is not merely the absence of war. It is also a state of mind. Lasting peace can come only to peaceful people." In this way we can assume that it is an obligation to form a progressive society, it is the state of the well-being of individuals and the state of happiness of the heart and soul.

The idea of peace in Islam:

Allah loves peace, Quran has so many verses that define the importance of peace. Islam discourages the idea of war; it gives the lesson of peace. It does not allow its followers to create conflicts on such issues that are just based on ego rather the war is only allowed when the other group hurts the rights of humans and creating harm for the religion etc. But even in this

Coretta Scott Kin, The Words of Martin Luther King, Jr., Newmarket Press, 2008, p. 83.

³ Coretta Scott Kin, The Words of Martin Luther King, Jr., Newmarket Press, 2008, p. 83. A Martin Luther King Treasury by Martin Luther King Jr., Chapter 2: Montgomery Before the Protest, Quote, Published Educational Heritage, Yonkers, New York, 1964, P- 30

case settling of the problems should be the ultimate purpose of the every soldier of Islam. The Quran says, "And if they incline to peace, then you should incline to it; and put your trust in God; He is the All-hearing, the All-knowing." (Al-Quran, 8:61). Allah is the most merciful and the only supreme authority of the whole universe, and in his names one of the name is peace. Allah says, "He is God, other than whom there is no god, the King, the Holy, the Peace, the Defender, the Guardian, the Mighty, the Omnipotent, the Supreme." (Al-Quran, 59:23). It declares that one of the names of Allah is peace so that he wants us to live peacefully and not in a tyrant way, the way of living is the way of dignity which forms a peaceful society. Similarly, "the servants of the All-Merciful who walk humbly upon the earth and when the ignorant taunt them, they reply, 'Peace!" (Al-Ouran, 25:63) which is clear about the behavior of the individuals, for this reason, Allah has also set the greetings for the Muslims is to wish peace each other. This argument comprehends the view that Islam is a religion of peace, there is no taunting, conflict, and arrogance tolerable so the Muslim companions must be careful as Allah is monitoring all of their doings.

Literature Review:

In this section, the researcher will attempt to elaborate some of the theoretical models which supports the argument. We will be examining the national culture theory, the social role theory, and the cultural lag theory to determine the main challenges.

The national culture theory:

Geert Hofstede et al.'s theoretical model (1980) is the result of their wide experiences; it shows emphasis on the characteristics of cultural operations within the society. It comprehends the perception of individuals belonging to various cultures, that how they think about the norms and values which

they have got by birth (Dimitrov 2018) Initially the model set the four basic dimensions but as the time passes, the model evolved, and more characteristics or dimensions were added in the model. The dimensions of the model are as under:

1. Individualism versus Collectivism (IC). In this first dimension, two terminologies are used which possess contrasted meanings, but the research shows that both are equally essential for the society.

The term individualism gives the idea that how much individuals are supposed to rise for themselves and opt their allies. The model also shows the degree of concern for themselves rather than thinking of other members of the society as well; they just pay attention to their deeds and of their family, showing less or no interest for their other fellows in the society which indicates the weaker bonding within the society and a low level of integration among the members. On the other hand, the word collectivism denotes the degree of we feeling among the members that is, at what level they are ready to perform their role as a member of the long group or the society in which they live? If they are prepared to play their role and understand the significance of their participation, then it is the sign of the strong bond and high level of integration among the individuals of society. The terminologies represent the level of integration among the members of society which is one of the basic elements of forming culture and creates a respectful environment in the society.

2. Large or Small Power Distance (PD). This dimension is all about the distribution of power, it is to assess that at what extent the people of society are able to comply with power differences for example, we have power divisions at every sector and at every institution so, if the power would be highly unequal the level of equality would also be a question mark in that society.

- 3. powerful, or poor Uncertainty Avoidance (UA). This refers to the regulation of norms within the society that to what extent members are able to cope up in an uncertain situation? Whether the society allows their members to take their decisions freely or they got nervous as there is less tolerance level that leads towards greater anxiety.
- 4. Masculinity versus Femininity (MF). This dimension is concerned with the enormous inequality or with the two extremes in society. It talks about the situation in which there is no ideal scenario and gender roles are in conflict.
- 5. Long versus short term orientation (TO). This fifth dimension was firstly termed as the "Confucian Dynamism" (Dimitrov 2018), deduce that those societies which are long term oriented have a greater value of their future and are focused on contrast to the short-term oriented societies in which the present is more important and small gifts and favors are valued.
- 6. Indulgence versus Restraint (IR). As the name indicates, indulgence refers to the free environment and to seek pleasure in contrary to the restraint societies which regulate the natural drives and needs with strict norms.

This theory has greatly analyzed the roots of conflict within the society. We will take the look on this in the third section.

Social role theory:

Before understanding exactly the social roles, let us view a glance of the concept of role! Biddle (1979) well defines the term role, "those behaviors characteristics of one or more persons in a context." 4 This clearly portrays

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⁴ Biddle, Bruce J. "Role Theory: Expectations, Identities and Behavior, Academic Press." New York, New York 1979.

the state where individuals are responsible and is an obligation for them to fulfill these traits as a member of society. As this process is continuous and related to the socialization of the individuals that is, how society is forming the behaviors of its members; whatever we transfer to our individuals it results in their behaviors, that is how culture, and the formation of role are interlinked to each other. However, if we talk about social role theory, which is also known as the socio-cultural theory or social structural theory, was given by Eagly and Wood (1999). It posits that the division of labor is clear in the society. Gender based role division guides the members about their part in the society. The idea is about the normative influence upon the members, which somehow restricts them to work freely and to participate in a productive way. 5

The cultural lag:

This theory defines the discrepancy between the structures or in a more appropriate way, it deals with the material and the non-material culture. It takes into account the socio-political structures and the modern technological advances, as society is going through with the developmental stage from the beginning till present and will not be stopped in future, but the development is only rapidly be seen in the technological sector on the other side the social relationships are not following the pace rather these are as same as the past. This is creating the lag in the culture. It generally says the technology and inventions are the new additions and people are reluctant to adapt any change. As per the views of Ogburn, "By definition, to invent is to contrive something new.

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⁵ Eagly, A.H., & Wood, W. Social role theory. In van Lange, P., Kruglanski, A., & Higgins, ET. Handbook of Theories in Social Psychology, (2012), vol 2, P-458-476.

But in trying to describe the particular new thing about the invented object, it is seen that the new thing is sometimes quantitatively inconspicuous in comparison with the amount of old in such a newly invented object. It is rather the putting together of certain appliances that is new". He further postulates that, "The first point to be observed (about the growth of material culture) is that material culture accumulates.". This aspect is known to be cumulative because of two features of the cultural process, one is the continuance of cultural forms, that is, the people are using the old methods and they are satisfied with the ways what they are following and at the other side, new forms addition in the culture in which we find the new discoveries and inventions everyday.6 We can see from the above discussion that is how the material culture emerges so promptly. The secondary segment is the non-material culture which is an actual the primary concern of every society, it takes time to evolve as the inventions are just the matter of human mind whatever he wants to create he can but norms and values are the question of inheritance which is being transmitted from generation to generation and that people think as a cultural heritage thereby, myths and superstitions are made.

The Argument:

In this section we will be addressing the first research question and then in the light of the argument, the second research question will be answered. However, the study is based on the following research questions:

1. What are the cultural barriers which are maligning for peace building within the society?

⁶ Ogburn, William F. Social change with respect to culture and original nature. BW Huebsch, Incorporated, 1922, P. 74

2. What measures should be taken to eradicate these cultural barriers?

To create an argument, some theoretical works are shared above, which possess some key points through which society is suffering. The theories which are discussed above, have a link with the culture and with the religion too, as the national culture model (Hofstede et al. 1980) and social role theory (Eagly and Wood 1999) states that there is a war of power and the roles are the conflict but in the view of Islam, both the concepts are in equilibrium and the state of disequilibrium is made by our wrong conceptions. As prophet Muhammad Peace Be Upon Him says in his last sermon, "O People, it is true that you have certain rights with regard to your women, but they also have rights over you. Remember that you have taken them as your wives only under Allah's trust and with His permission. If they abide by your right, then to them belongs the right to be fed and clothed in kindness. Do treat your women well and be kind to them for they are your partners and committed helpers.⁷" In this way, Islam has given the rights and has also formulated their roles, the problem which exists in our society that we speak for gender equality rather than gender equity. Allah has made everyone with equal rights but not with equal roles as in our families, the role of a father in terms of providing a secure environment and taking care of the family is quite difficult. At the same way, for mothers, raising the children and providing them moral ethics that makes them a better person is a troublesome as we cannot ignore the individual differences. So, both the tasks are distinct from each other, important and strenuous; these are at the same time interconnected

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⁷ Imam Ahmed bin Hambal, Musnad Ahmad, Tahqeeq Shoaib wa Adil Murshid, Musnad Ahmed bin Masood, Muassisah, al Risala, Beirut, 1421H, vol 34, P- 300

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to form a better and peaceful society. If firstly, we would keep the above argument for debate, then it is the rising trend in our society that women empowerment and feminism are the symbol of being modern despite of the fact that Islam has already empowered all the human beings. Allah is defining equality in Quran as, "O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each (not that ye may despise each other). Verily the most honored of you in the sight of God is (he who is) the most righteous of you, and God has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things)." (Al-Quran, 49:13). Furthermore, Allah says, "For Muslim men and women, - for believing men and women, for devout men and women, for true men and women, for men and women who are patient and constant, for men and women who humble themselves, for men and women who give in charity, for men and women who fast (and deny themselves), for men and women who guard their chastity, and for men and women who engage much in God's praise,- for them has God prepared forgiveness and great reward.". (Al-Quran, 33:35) So Allah has designed the whole system, he has made the mankind free and made the human the most responsible creature on earth as he has given him greater responsibility and decision-making power. Although Islam has obliged its followers with some sanctions, but these are the constraints which are regulated to create a balanced society. From the view of researcher, this is the first sociocultural barrier that needs to be addressed. Most of the problems would be solved if the roles will be defined and the philosophy of power will be understood. According to Emile Durkheim one of the founding figures in Sociology, division of labor is a process that separates the work and operations on the basis of specialization. In a more specific manner he states, "Social harmony comes essentially from the division of labor. It is

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characterized by cooperation which is automatically produced through the pursuit in each individual of his own interests. It suffices that each individual consecrate himself to a special function in order, by the force of events, to make himself solidary with others.". .8 To define the power and to resolve the role conflict Allah states, "Men are the protectors (Ghavamoon) and maintainers of women, because God has given the one more (strength) than the other, and because they support them from their means. Therefore, the righteous women are devoutly obedient, and guard in (the husband's) absence what God would have them guard" (Al-Quran, 4:34). This verse clearly indicates that why there is equity not equality in terms of role and power whatever Allah decides he decides the best, but our culture portrays it wrong, and the norms make the men and women are like the rulers and the slaves which is totally the misconception and the man-made phenomena.

Materialism is also the increasing trend of society; we are perplexed what direction to choose. At one side we have technology and advancements, on the other hand we have the norms. The problem is the change acceptance and is not to choose between the directions. Allah has made everyone with wisdom, and he has also urged the men to explore. So, he says, "It is He who sends down water from the sky. From it you drink and from it come the shrubs among which you graze your herds. And by it He makes crops grow for you and olives and dates and grapes and fruit of every kind. Therein is certainly a sign in that for people who reflect. He has made the night and the day subservient to you, and the sun, the moon and the stars,

⁸ Durkheim, E., The Division of Labour in Society, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul. 1982, P-200

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all subject to His command. Therein are certainly signs in that for people who use their intellect. And also, the things of varying colors He has created for you in the earth. There is certainly a sign in that for people who pay heed. It is He who made the sea subservient to you so that you can eat fresh flesh from it and bring out from it ornaments to wear. And you see the ships cleaving through it so that you can seek His bounty, and so that perhaps you may show thanks. He cast firmly embedded mountains on the earth so it would not move under you, and rivers, pathways, and landmarks so that perhaps you might be guided. And they are guided by the stars. Is He Who creates like him who does not create? O will you not pay heed?" (Al-Quran, 16:10-17) The fact on which Quran wants us to pay attention is that the world is huge and everyday there will be new explorations, and all will show the signs of Allah. If we look back to the history, then we would be able to recognize that the development of society was made as stated by the Holy Quran and the humans were the ones who got indulged throughout. It is now our decision how to use the blessings and not to create hazards for the society. The culture of Islam is simple and easy to follow rather than the imposed man-made culture in which norms are creating panic in societies and disrupting the social order without any valid justification.

After discussing the role conflicts, the philosophic nature of the materialism and distribution of power the next most important societal problem is the inferiority and superiority, the lack of unity; just because of this social tragedy our societies are in decline. Unity never prevails till or until we treat everyone with dignity. Islam gives the lesson of unity, so as the ideology of Pakistan which is totally based on Islam. We wanted the separate state to implement the just Islamic principles. Islam gives equal rights to every citizen without any discrimination on the basis of gender,

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race, or ethnicity. It has also defined the rights of non-Muslims in a Muslim homeland. Let us take the view of Islam and then we will link this to the ideology of Pakistan. Allah defines the human rights in Ouran as, "And feed with food the needy wretch, the orphan, and the prisoner, for love of Him: We feed you, for the sake of Allah only. We wish for no reward nor thanks from you." (Al-Quran, 76:8-9). This verse of the Quran explain that the society should have provide equal privileges to all its members. For the provision of equal human rights, it is obligatory for us to consider every human being equal. Quran defines the unity as, "The believers are nothing but brothers, so make settlement between your brothers. And fear Allah that you may receive mercy" (Al-Quran, 49:10). In the third chapter of Quran Allah says, "And hold firmly to the rope of Allah all together and do not become divided. And remember the favor of Allah upon you - when you were enemies and He brought your hearts together and you became, by His favor, brothers. And you were on the edge of a pit of the Fire, and He saved you from it. Thus Allah does make clear to you His verses that you may be guided?" (Al-Quran, 3:103). So by the verses we are well aware of the idea that Islam teaches us unity and similarly, by the time of formation of Pakistan Quaid-e-Azam emphasized on the unity of nation he said, "You are free; you are free to go to your temples, you are free to go to your mosques or to any other place of worship in this state of Pakistan. You may belong to any religion or caste or creed — that has nothing to do with the business of the state ... We are starting with this fundamental principle: that we are all citizens and equal citizens of one state ... Now, I think we should keep that in front of us as our ideal and you will find that in course of time Hindus would cease to be Hindus and Muslims would cease to be Muslims, not in the religious sense because that is the personal faith of each individual, but in the political

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sense as citizens of the state." He also opined, "My young friends, students who are present here, let me tell you as one who has always had love and affection for you, who has served you for years faithfully and loyally, let me give you this word of warning; you will be making the greatest mistake if you allow yourself to be exploited by one political party or another ... Your main occupation should be — in fairness to yourself, in fairness to your parents, in fairness to the state - to devote your attention to your studies." The main focus of that argument was the state neither any person nor any organization. The unity is the pillar of any strong nation. At another place he stated, "I have no doubt that with unity, faith and discipline we will not only remain the fifth largest state in the world, but will compare with any nation of the world ... You must make up your mind now. We must sink individualism and petty jealousies and make up our minds to serve the people with honesty and faithfulness. We are passing through a period of fear, danger and menace. We must have faith, unity and discipline." From the discussion above, we can assume that not only Islam teaches us the lesson of equality and unity but the ideology of Pakistan which roots are lie in the principles of Islam also maintains the phenomena of peace, unity, and equality.

Conclusion:

For the creation of harmonious and a peaceful society, it is mandatory to avoid conflicts; as in the holy Quran Allah says, "These are given their reward twice over, because they're patient, and repel evil with good, and spend (in charity) out of what we've provided them. And after they hear ill

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⁹ khurshid ahmad khan yousufi, The Speeches, Statements & Messages of the Quaid-i-Azam vol:04, Lahore bazme Iqbal 1996,P2604

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speech, they regress from it and say, "For us are our deeds and for you, your deeds. Peace is upon you; we seek not the ignorant." (Al-Quran, 28:54-55) The Lord and the king of the whole universe also denotes, "And fight in the way of God with those who fight with you, but aggress not: God loves not the aggressors." (Al-Quran, 2:190). This verse also guides us to be a problem solver not the creator and avoiding the conflict is the major goal of Islam as it wants to form a peaceful society for the welfare of the people. So many times, Islam has taught the lesson of peace which is the only way of spending life as a true Muslim; the Quran says, "God abhors any disturbance of peace!" (Al-Quran, 2:205) Same lesson is given by Allah at one other place as, "O believers Enter absolutely into peace (Islam). Do not obey footsteps of satan. He is an outright enemy to you." (Al-Quran, 2:208). As the ideology of Pakistan is linked with Islam, so during his address to the nation Quaid-e-Azam remarked, "Brotherhood, equality and sodality, of man these are all the initial points of our religion, culture and civilization, and we fought for Pakistan because there was a danger of the denial of these rights in the subcontinent." So, with these views we can declare that the social conflict is the result of our misconceptions we must show some concern towards our cultural paradigm which is really needed to be shifted and should be adjusted in the light of Quran and Sunnah along with the ideology of Pakistan which was founded on Islamic principles.

Recommendations:

The researcher has formulated the following recommendation in the light of the above argument:

1. The pupils must have an understanding about the division of roles. The roles should be taught with logic and proper justification. It should be included in their socialization that none is superior or inferior, but the

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difference is of their work which society demands from them. So the phenomena of gender equity should be talked and discussed rather than gender equality. If we think of nature then neither all the seasons have given equal time period nor the cycle of day and night remain equal the whole year; same as the roles of humans in the society which are well decided by the Almighty Allah who is the best planner but the thing is that the concept should be properly taught to the children so that they would not have any confusions.

- 2. The Arabic should be taught in every school so that the children will be able to understand what the Quran says! As this is the complete way of life and every Muslim should be aware of it. When we would be well-aware of the rules and regulations which is the real code of conduct of our lives then, the situation of anomie which is rapidly prevailing in our society will be decreased and we will be able to choose the right path.
- 3. It should also be taught that the most important is the state without any discrimination on the basis of language, province or any other trait. National interest should be given priority over individual, community, or provincial interest. The love for homeland, the consciousness for enemies and the faithfulness should also be transmitted to the new generations.

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