

Published:
June 30, 2024

The Rising Trend of Intolerance and Its Remedy, in the Light of Islamic Teachings

Dr. Muhammad Hasib

Lecturer in Islamic Studies in University of Gujrat, Gujrat

Dr. Taiyyiba Fatima

Assistant Professor, Imperial college of Business Studies, Lahore.

Abstract

The rising trend of intolerance in contemporary society presents significant challenges to social harmony and peaceful coexistence. This phenomenon is often exacerbated by misconceptions, prejudice, and a lack of understanding among diverse communities. Islamic teachings, rooted in principles of compassion, respect, and justice, provide valuable guidance in addressing this issue. This paper explores the multifaceted nature of intolerance and its manifestations in various contexts, including religious, ethnic, and cultural dimensions. By analyzing key Quranic verses and Hadiths, the study highlights the Islamic emphasis on tolerance (*Tasamuh*) and the importance of engaging in constructive dialogue to bridge differences. Furthermore, it discusses the role of community leaders and educational institutions in promoting values of empathy, coexistence, and mutual respect. The findings suggest that fostering an environment of understanding and acceptance can effectively counter the tide of intolerance. Ultimately, the paper calls for a concerted effort among individuals, communities, and policymakers to embody Islamic principles that advocate for tolerance and inclusivity, thereby contributing to a more harmonious society.

Keywords: Intolerance, Islamic teachings, tolerance, compassion, social harmony,

Quran, Hadith, diversity, empathy, coexistence.

Introduction:

In contemporary society, the rising trend of intolerance manifests through various forms, including religious bigotry, ethnic discrimination, and social exclusion. This unsettling phenomenon not only threatens social cohesion but also undermines the fundamental principles of respect and empathy that are essential for harmonious living. In this context, Islamic teachings provide a rich reservoir of guidance aimed at fostering tolerance and compassion among individuals and communities.

Islam, as a comprehensive way of life, emphasizes the values of justice, respect for human dignity, and peaceful coexistence.⁽¹⁾

The Quran and the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) advocate for understanding and acceptance across different cultures and beliefs, highlighting the shared humanity that binds all people together. The notion of tolerance in Islam is deeply rooted in its core teachings, which urge believers to treat others with kindness and to embrace diversity as a divine creation.⁽²⁾

This article aims to explore the rising trend of intolerance and its implications for society while drawing upon Islamic teachings that advocate for tolerance, dialogue, and reconciliation. By examining relevant Quranic verses, Hadiths, and historical examples from Islamic history, this discussion will illuminate the potential remedies within the Islamic framework to counteract intolerance and promote a culture of understanding and acceptance. Ultimately, this exploration seeks to highlight the importance of embodying these teachings in our daily lives to foster a more inclusive and harmonious society.

Understanding Intolerance:

The rising trend of intolerance in contemporary society manifests in various forms, including religious intolerance, ethnic discrimination and social injustice.⁽³⁾ This phenomenon is often fueled by misinformation, fear, and a lack of understanding between different communities. To understand intolerance, it is crucial to explore its definitions, causes, and implications, particularly through the lens of Islamic teachings.

Intolerance is the unwillingness or refusal to accept views, beliefs, or behavior that differ from one's own.⁽⁴⁾

It can lead to prejudice, discrimination, and violence against individuals or groups perceived as different. Intolerance can manifest in several ways, such as:

Religious Intolerance:

Hostility or discrimination against individuals based on their religious beliefs. This can result in sectarian violence, persecution of minorities, and a lack of freedom to practice one's faith.⁽⁵⁾

Ethnic and Racial Intolerance:

Discrimination or prejudice against individuals based on their ethnic background or race, leading to systemic inequality and social division.⁽⁶⁾

Social Intolerance:

This includes discrimination based on gender, sexual orientation, or socio-economic status, often resulting in marginalization and exclusion.

Causes of Intolerance:

Several factors contribute to the rise of intolerance in society:

Ignorance and Misinformation:

Lack of knowledge about different cultures, religions, and social practices can breed fear and suspicion. Misinformation, often propagated through media and social networks, exacerbates this problem.⁽⁷⁾

Fear of the Other:

Societal changes, such as migration and globalization, can lead to fear and anxiety about cultural dilution or loss of identity. This fear often manifests as hostility toward perceived outsiders.⁽⁸⁾

Political Manipulation:

Leaders and political entities sometimes exploit societal divisions for power, using rhetoric that fosters intolerance to unite their base while alienating others.⁽⁹⁾

Historical Grievances:

Long-standing historical conflicts can perpetuate cycles of intolerance, as groups harbor grievances and resentment based on past injustices.⁽¹⁰⁾

Socio-Economic Inequality:

Disparities in wealth and opportunity can foster resentment and division between different social groups, leading to scapegoating and intolerance.⁽¹¹⁾

Implications of Intolerance

The implications of rising intolerance are profound and far-reaching:

Social Fragmentation:

Intolerance can lead to the breakdown of social cohesion, where communities become polarized and isolated from one another, undermining the fabric of society.⁽¹²⁾

Violence and Conflict:

Intolerance can escalate into violence, leading to hate crimes, civil unrest, and even war, as seen in various regions across the globe.⁽¹³⁾

Suppression of Freedom:

In environments where intolerance prevails, fundamental rights such as freedom of expression, assembly, and religion can be suppressed, leading to authoritarianism and oppression.⁽¹⁴⁾

Mental Health Issues:

Victims of intolerance often face psychological harm, including anxiety, depression, and trauma, affecting their overall well-being.⁽¹⁵⁾

Islamic Teachings on Tolerance

Islam teaches tolerance as a fundamental value, promoting coexistence, respect, and understanding among individuals, regardless of their backgrounds. Key teachings from Islamic texts and traditions include:

Quranic Verses on Tolerance:

Universal Message:

The Quran emphasizes that God created humanity from a single soul, which establishes a foundation for human equality and mutual respect.⁽¹⁶⁾

Diversity as a Sign of God:

The Quran highlights the diversity of languages and colors as signs of God's creation, promoting appreciation for differences.⁽¹⁷⁾

Freedom of Belief:

The Quran states, "There is no compulsion in religion", reinforcing the importance of individual choice in faith.⁽¹⁸⁾

Prophet Muhammad's Example:

Ethical Conduct:

The Prophet Muhammad exemplified tolerance in his interactions with people of different faiths and backgrounds.⁽¹⁹⁾

His treatment of non-Muslims, including Jews and Christians, demonstrated respect and fairness.

Covenants with Non-Muslims:

The Prophet established treaties and covenants with non-Muslim communities, ensuring their rights and protection.⁽²⁰⁾

Forgiveness and Patience:

The Prophet encouraged forgiveness and patience, advising against retaliation and promoting peaceful resolutions to conflicts.⁽²¹⁾

Community Beyond Borders:

Islam promotes the idea of an Ummah (community) that transcends ethnic and national boundaries, emphasizing unity and collective responsibility.⁽²²⁾

Support for the Oppressed:

Islamic teachings advocate for the protection and support of the oppressed, encouraging Muslims to stand against injustice.⁽²³⁾

Remedies for Intolerance in Light of Islamic Teachings:

Education and Awareness:

Teach Tolerance in Education:

Integrating lessons on tolerance and diversity into educational curricula can foster understanding from an early age.⁽²⁴⁾

Promote Interfaith Dialogue:

Encouraging dialogue between different religious and cultural groups can enhance mutual understanding and respect.⁽²⁵⁾

Community Programs:

Establishing programs that bring together diverse groups for cultural exchange can promote tolerance and harmony.⁽²⁶⁾

Social Initiatives:

Muslims should engage in social initiatives that address economic inequality and support marginalized communities.⁽²⁷⁾

Leadership and Advocacy:

Role of Religious Leaders:

Religious leaders should advocate for tolerance and condemn acts of hate and discrimination, using their platforms to promote peace.⁽²⁸⁾

Legislation Against Hate Crimes:

Supporting legislation that addresses hate crimes and discrimination can help protect vulnerable communities.⁽²⁹⁾

Personal Conduct:

Practicing What We Preach:

Muslims are encouraged to embody the principles of tolerance in their personal interactions, leading by example.⁽³⁰⁾

Forgiveness and Compassion:

Cultivating a personal ethos of forgiveness and compassion can counteract the rising tide of intolerance.⁽³¹⁾

The rising trend of intolerance poses significant challenges to societal harmony. However, Islamic teachings offer profound guidance on fostering tolerance, compassion, and understanding. By embracing these teachings and actively promoting tolerance in our communities, we can contribute to a more peaceful and inclusive world. Through education, community engagement, leadership, and personal conduct, Muslims can address intolerance effectively, reflecting the true essence of Islam as a religion of peace.

Remedies for Intolerance in Light of Islamic Teachings

Islam, as a religion, emphasizes tolerance, compassion, and understanding. Addressing the rising trend of intolerance requires a multifaceted approach grounded in Islamic principles:

Education and Awareness:

Islam encourages the pursuit of knowledge and understanding. Educating individuals about different cultures, religions, and the teachings of Islam itself can dispel misconceptions and promote respect for diversity.

The Quran states, "*And We have not sent you, [O Muhammad], except as a mercy to the worlds*".⁽³²⁾

This verse highlights the universal message of compassion in Islam.

Dialogue and Engagement:

Islam promotes constructive dialogue and communication. Engaging in interfaith and intercultural dialogues can help bridge gaps, foster mutual respect, and promote peace. The Quran advises believers to "call to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction", emphasizing the importance of respectful discourse.⁽³³⁾

Promoting Justice and Equality:

The Quran advocates for justice and equality. Addressing socio-economic disparities and ensuring equitable treatment for all individuals can help reduce feelings of resentment and intolerance. The Quran emphasizes, "Indeed, Allah commands you to render trusts to whom they are due and when you judge between people to judge with justice".⁽³⁴⁾

Encouraging Empathy and Compassion:

Islamic teachings stress the importance of empathy and compassion towards others. Recognizing the shared humanity among individuals, regardless of their differences, can foster a culture of kindness and understanding. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) exemplified this through his interactions with individuals from various backgrounds, promoting mutual respect and understanding.

Community Building:

Building inclusive communities that celebrate diversity and promote social

cohesion is essential. Initiatives that bring together people from different backgrounds can foster a sense of belonging and reduce the fear of the other.⁽³⁵⁾

The rising trend of intolerance poses significant challenges to social harmony and peace. Understanding the roots and implications of intolerance is essential for addressing this issue effectively. By grounding our approach in Islamic teachings that emphasize tolerance, justice, and compassion, we can work towards creating a more inclusive and harmonious society. Emphasizing education, dialogue, and community engagement can help dismantle the barriers of intolerance, fostering understanding and respect among all individuals.

Remedies for Intolerance

The rising trend of intolerance in contemporary society presents significant challenges across various dimensions, including religious, ethnic, and cultural lines.⁽³⁶⁾ Addressing this issue through the lens of Islamic teachings offers valuable insights into promoting tolerance and understanding. Here's a detailed discussion on remedies for intolerance in light of Islamic principles:

Promoting Understanding and Education:

Knowledge as a Foundation:

Islam emphasizes the importance of knowledge. The Quran encourages believers to seek knowledge and understanding. By educating individuals about different cultures, religions, and belief systems, we can cultivate respect and empathy.⁽³⁷⁾

Interfaith Dialogue:

Initiatives that encourage discussions between different faiths can foster mutual respect and understanding. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) engaged in dialogues with non-Muslims, promoting a peaceful coexistence.

Emphasizing the Principle of Equality:

Universal Brotherhood:

The Quran declares that all human beings are equal, created from a single soul.⁽³⁸⁾

This principle serves as a foundation for recognizing the inherent dignity of every individual, regardless of their background.

Rejecting Discrimination:

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) emphasized the rejection of racism and discrimination, stating in his farewell sermon that no Arab is superior to a non-Arab, nor is a white person superior to a black person, except by piety and good deeds.

Encouraging Compassion and Forgiveness: Forgiveness as a Virtue:

Islam places a strong emphasis on forgiveness. The Quran encourages believers to forgive others.⁽³⁹⁾

Practicing forgiveness can help mitigate anger and resentment that often fuel intolerance.

Compassionate Behavior:

Acts of kindness and compassion can counteract feelings of hostility. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is often referred to as a “Mercy to the worlds”, setting an example for followers to embody mercy in their interactions.⁽⁴⁰⁾

Practicing Patience (Sabr):

Enduring Difficulties:

Patience is a highly regarded virtue in Islam. In the face of intolerance or prejudice, maintaining patience can prevent escalation of conflict and promote dialogue instead.⁽⁴¹⁾

Building Resilience:

Developing a mindset that encourages patience allows individuals to respond thoughtfully rather than react impulsively, fostering a more tolerant society.⁽⁴²⁾

Advocating Justice (Adl):

Commitment to Justice:

The Quran commands believers to uphold justice, even against oneself.⁽⁴³⁾

Promoting justice involves standing up against injustice and intolerance, ensuring that all voices are heard and respected.

Legal Frameworks:

Islamic teachings advocate for a legal framework that protects the rights of

individuals, including those from minority groups.⁽⁴⁴⁾

Enforcing laws that combat discrimination and promote equality can significantly reduce intolerance.

Community Engagement and Solidarity:

Building Inclusive Communities:

Engaging in community service and outreach programs can bridge gaps between diverse groups.⁽⁴⁵⁾ Working together on social initiatives fosters relationships based on trust and cooperation.

Supporting the Marginalized:

Islam encourages supporting those who are marginalized or oppressed. Building solidarity with those facing discrimination helps create a united front against intolerance.

Reinforcing the Concept of Tolerance (*Hilm*):

Embracing Tolerance:

The Quran refers to the quality of *hilm*, which denotes gentleness and forbearance. Cultivating this trait in individuals encourages a more tolerant and understanding society.⁽⁴⁶⁾

Responding with Kindness:

The Quran instructs believers to respond to evil with what is better.⁽⁴⁷⁾

This principle can guide interactions, promoting kindness over hostility.

The article "The Rising Trend of Intolerance and Its Remedy in the Light of Islamic Teachings" discusses the increasing prevalence of intolerance in contemporary society, highlighting its manifestations in various forms, including religious, ethnic, and cultural discrimination. It explores the causes of intolerance, such as ignorance, fear, and societal divisions, emphasizing how these factors contribute to conflict and social unrest.

In addressing this issue, the article draws on Islamic teachings that promote values such as compassion, respect, and understanding among individuals of diverse backgrounds. It highlights the importance of the Quran and Hadith in advocating for tolerance, urging believers to engage in dialogue and foster a spirit of coexistence.

The article also emphasizes the role of education in combating ignorance and promoting empathy, suggesting that a deeper understanding of Islamic principles can lead to a more harmonious society.

To remedy intolerance, the article proposes practical steps, including community initiatives that encourage interfaith dialogue, educational programs that emphasize the significance of tolerance, and leadership that exemplifies inclusive behavior. Ultimately, it argues that by adhering to the ethical teachings of Islam, individuals can cultivate a more tolerant and peaceful world.

References:

- ¹. Dodhiya, Mohammed Reza, and Mohsen Ghanbari. "Islamic Model of Peaceful Coexistence amongst Human Beings." *International Multidisciplinary Journal of Pure Life* 9, no. 31 (2022): 93-144.
- ². Yazdani, Abbas. "The culture of peace and religious tolerance from an Islamic perspective." *Veritas* 47 (2020): 151-168.
- ³. Hidayat, Medhy Aginta, Bagong Suyanto, Rahma Sugihartati, Mun'im Sirry, and Koko Srimulyo. "Sociomental of Intolerance: Explaining the Socio Cognitive Dimensions of Religious Intolerance Among Indonesian Youths." *Talent Development & Excellence* 12, no. 1 (2020): 2215-2236.
- ⁴. Oberdiek, Hans. *Tolerance: Between forbearance and acceptance*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2001.
- ⁵. Grim, Brian J., and Roger Finke. *The price of freedom denied: Religious persecution and conflict in the twenty-first century*. Cambridge University Press, 2010.
- ⁶. Anthias, Floya. "The concept of 'social division' and theorising social stratification: Looking at ethnicity and class." *Sociology* 35, no. 4 (2001): 835-854.
- ⁷. O'Connor, Cailin, and James Owen Weatherall. *The misinformation age: How false beliefs spread*. Yale University Press, 2019.
- ⁸. Cheng, Vincent John. *Inauthentic: The anxiety over culture and identity*. Rutgers University Press, 2004.
- ⁹. Scott, James C. "The infrapolitics of subordinate groups." *The global resistance reader* (2005): 65-73.
- ¹⁰. Ahmad, Laleh. "Killing Within Communities: What Causes Collective Violence, How We Remember It, and Why It Matters." (2020).
- ¹¹. Lubogo, Isaac Christopher. "The Illusion Of Blame: Untangling the Web of Stigmatized Prejudice"" *Unveiling Betrayal, Scapegoating, and the Hidden Realities Faced By Innocent Muslims*". (2023).

- ¹² . Holtug, Nils. The politics of social cohesion: Immigration, community, and justice. Oxford University Press, 2021.
- ¹³ . Dauda, Kazeem Oluwaseun. "Islamophobia and religious intolerance: Threats to global peace and harmonious co-existence." QIJIS (Qudus International Journal of Islamic Studies) 8, no. 2 (2020): 257-292.
- ¹⁴ . Masferrer, Aniceto. "The Decline of Freedom of Expression and Social Vulnerability in Western democracy." International Journal for the Semiotics of Law-*Revue internationale de Sémiotique juridique* 36, no. 4 (2023): 1443-1475.
- ¹⁵ . Reyes, Gilbert, Jon D. Elhai, and Julian D. Ford, eds. The encyclopedia of psychological trauma. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2008.
- ¹⁶ . (Quran 4:1)
- ¹⁷ . (Quran 30:22)
- ¹⁸ . (Quran 2:256)
- ¹⁹ . Riaz, Shehla. "The Role of Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) Tolerance in Promoting Social Harmony and Unity in the Society Dr. Shehla Riaz."
- ²⁰ . Mehfooz, Musferah. "Safeguarding Places of Worship during the Prophetic Era: Assessment of Early Islamic Covenants and Their Impacts on Early Muslim Politics." Religions 13, no. 9 (2022): 799.
- ²¹ . Kirazli, Harris Sadik. "Conceptual and Theoretical Framework of Islamic Conflict Resolution and Peacemaking." In Conflict Resolution and Peacemaking in Islam: Theory and Practice, pp. 55-114. Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland, 2024.
- ²² . Akram, Ejaz. "Muslim ummah and its link with transnational Muslim politics." Islamic Studies (2007): 381-415.
- ²³ . Esposito, John L., and Dalia Mogahed. Who speaks for Islam?: What a billion Muslims really think. Simon and Schuster, 2007.
- ²⁴ . Sakalli, Özge, Ahmed Tlili, Fahriye Altınay, Ceren Karaatmaca, Zehra Altınay, and Gökmen Dağlı. "The role of tolerance education in diversity management: A cultural historical activity theory perspective." Sage Open 11, no. 4 (2021): 21582440211060831.
- ²⁵ . Andrabi, Abroo Aman. "Interfaith Dialogue: Its Need, Importance And Merits In The Contemporary World." International Journal of Academic Studies 2, no. 3 (2020): 264-271.
- ²⁶ . Bopp, Judie Judith L. "Unity in diversity: a multicultural education program designed to promote tolerance and an appreciation of human differences." PhD diss., Lethbridge, Alta.: University of Lethbridge, Faculty of Education, 1989, 1989.
- ²⁷ . Aziz, M. Nusrate, and Osman Bin Mohamad. "Islamic social business to alleviate poverty and social inequality." International Journal of Social Economics 43, no. 6 (2016): 573-592.
- ²⁸ . Religious leaders should advocate for tolerance and condemn acts of hate and discrimination, using their platforms to promote peace.

-
- ²⁹ . Beale, Sara Sun. "Federalizing hate crimes: Symbolic politics, expressive law, or tool for criminal enforcement." BUL Rev. 80 (2000): 1227.
- ³⁰ . Bensaid, Benaouda, and Salah Machouche. "Muslim morality as foundation for social harmony." Journal of Al-Tamaddun (2019).
- ³¹ . Whang*, Patricia A., and Claudia Peralta Nash. "Reclaiming compassion: Getting to the heart and soul of teacher education." Journal of Peace Education 2, no. 1 (2005): 79-92.
- ³² . (Quran 21:107).
- ³³ . (Quran 16:125)
- ³⁴ . (Quran 4:58).
- ³⁵ . Reitz, Jeffrey G., Raymond Breton, Karen Kisiel Dion, and Kenneth L. Dion. "Multiculturalism and social cohesion: Potentials and challenges of diversity." (2009).
- ³⁶ . Laurence, Jonathan, and Justin Vaisse. Integrating Islam: Political and religious challenges in contemporary France. Rowman & Littlefield, 2007.
- ³⁷ . Ismail, Ismail. "Character education based on religious values: an Islamic perspective." Ta'dib: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam 21, no. 1 (2016): 41-58.
- ³⁸ . (Quran 4:1).
- ³⁹ . (Quran 42:37).
- ⁴⁰ . (Quran 21:107)
- ⁴¹ . Kirazli, Harris Sadik. "Conceptual and Theoretical Framework of Islamic Conflict Resolution and Peacemaking." In Conflict Resolution and Peacemaking in Islam: Theory and Practice, pp. 55-114. Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland, 2024.
- ⁴² . Brooks, R. "Building resilience by shaping mindsets." Learning and attention disorders in adolescence and adulthood: Assessment and treatment (2011): 367-404.
- ⁴³ . (Quran 4:135).
- ⁴⁴ . Abou El Fadl, Khaled. "Islamic law and Muslim minorities: The juristic discourse on Muslim minorities from the second/eighth to the eleventh/seventeenth centuries." Islamic law and society 1, no. 2 (1994): 141-187.
- ⁴⁵ . Cyril, Sheila, Ben J. Smith, Alpha Possamai-Inesedy, and Andre MN Renzaho. "Exploring the role of community engagement in improving the health of disadvantaged populations: a systematic review." Global health action 8, no. 1 (2015): 29842.
- ⁴⁶ . Hossain, Khandakar Akhter. "EVALUATION OF ETHICAL VALUES TO DEVELOP GLOBAL HUMAN RESOURCE." Journal of Liberal Arts and Humanities 4, no. 4 (2023): 1-29.
- ⁴⁷ . (Quran 41:34).