

## ABSTRACT

This research work is an attempt to study the different modes of political participation for religious minorities in Pakistan. Political participation is essential for any identity group as they make inputs to a political system to get favourable outputs. The favourable outputs include protection of political, civil, social, economic, and cultural rights as well as freedoms. Unfortunately, there exists no substantial research on the participation of Pakistan's religious minorities in the political system of Pakistan. This research work is a humble attempt to fill this research gap as well as open new avenues for future research in this dimension.

The operation definition of political participation for this research work, after studying a multivariate literature, includes electoral and non-electoral political participation. The former covers voting in general elections of 2008, 2013, and 2018 while the latter includes protests, dharnas, demonstrations, jalsa, contacting, lobbying etc. The impact of class divisions and gender divisions on political participation of minorities as well as their social participation is also studied. Finally, perceptions and beliefs of religious minorities on the efficacy of Pakistan's political system is also analysed. This is mixed research adopting qualitative and quantitative methodology. System analysis approach is adopted using Gabriel Almond model of political system. A descriptive, analytical, and comparative method of analysis employed while data collection techniques include semi-structured interviews, unstructured observation, survey, and convenience sampling.

Results findings show that Hindus and Christians have comparatively better electoral participation than Sikhs and Ahmadis while all religious minorities have low levels of non-electoral participation. All religious minorities have low levels of trust for Pakistan's political system. Class divisions and gender divisions do impact minorities' political participation. Recommendations include re-inclusion of separate electorate system for religious minorities as well as affirmative actions for minorities especially for women and lower classes. Political parties must adopt an inclusive, pluralist, and tolerant approach for religious minorities by performing functions of socialization and recruitment. Finally constitutional amendments should be made to include minorities in cabinets and ministries.