

Pakistan's Ahmadi Inquisition

Date : 2nd June 2018

In the 15th Century, the Catholic Monarch Ferdinand II and Isabella I of the Spanish Empire established a particular panel or tribunal of 'inquisition' which worked till the 19th Century. It was a panel that aimed to 'decontaminate' Catholic orthodoxy and religious unification among the Christians in the Empire.

Steadily, the rulers came under the influence of the pope and an institution of the 'Grand Inquisitor' emerged. In the 16th Century, the clergy and the priests were appointed as the judges of the inquisition tribunals, and the church became the symbol of power that determined the faith and beliefs of the people.

This eventually led to the hegemony of the pope. Individuals suffered horrible punishments during the Inquisition. Some stern punishments included physical torture, starvation, hanging from the arms, and life imprisonment.

One of the key objectives of the Spanish Inquisition was to eradicate religious differences in the Spanish society and to amalgamate the nation. Brutalities during the inquisition gave a sense of unrest among the Jews and Muslims in Spain.

This rigid strand of the Spanish Catholic thought led to the society becoming radicalised under the aegis and supervision of the state. Both state and church had a mutual, vested interest in doing this. Now sadly, this dark episode of Spanish history is repeating itself in Pakistan.

The Islamabad High Court's interference in personal matters of religion or its efforts to determine the faith of citizens is contrary to Pakistan's constitution and Jinnah's vision for the country

The national and international political forces used the 'religion' card to destabilise Pakistan. The establishment was also allegedly involved in supporting religious extremists to execute its policies. India's RAW, the CIA and Mossad in Israel all used radical groups to perpetuate terrorism in Pakistan.

According to a NADRA report presented before Islamabad High Court's (IHC) Chief Justice, Shaukat Aziz Siddiqui in the case of the Election Act of 2017, there are 167,000 Ahmadis in Pakistan. 10205 Pakistanis, meanwhile, have converted to Ahmadiat while 6000 of them moved abroad on new passports.

One's religion and faith is a private issue, but the IHC tried to make official matters pertaining to faith and made it mandatory for every citizen "to get their identity with authentic particulars" by declaring his

or her faith and belief. According to the court, no Muslim is allowed to appear as a non-Muslim while no non-Muslim can appear as a Muslim.

The court also ordered submitting an affidavit based “on the definition of Muslim and non-Muslim” as per article 260(3)(a)(b) of the Constitution to get a CNIC, birth certificate, and passport. This raises the question of why the state should force an independent citizen to profess his or her faith.

The court interfering in personal matters of religion or its efforts to determine the faith of citizens is also contrary to Pakistan’s constitution. The contents of the IHC’s order are also against the spirit of Mr Jinnah, the founding father of Pakistan.

Such orders also affect nationalism in Pakistan, and become the reason for a rising tide of hatred and difference between religious communities and sects. Such a strand of ‘officialised Islam’, moreover, also creates a sense of insecurity among minority communities like Ahmadis because Pakistan’s courts are taking decisions according to the wishes of extremist ‘*mullahs*’, which stands against the ethos of a prosperous Pakistan.

The orders of the IHC will also further marginalise the Ahmadiya community. The state and the court’s efforts to codify Islam are producing disastrous consequences, since several *Khatm-i-Nabuwat* conferences and seminars were held in Punjab in the wake of this court order. These conferences passed many resolutions against Ahmadis that stipulated the strict implementation of anti-Ahmadiya laws.

In Sialkot, a religious extremist and an alleged PTI political worker Hamid Raza led a mob on May 23, 2018 during the night of Holy Month of the Ramazan that demolished a historic Ahmadiya *Baitul Zikar*. Raza later thanked the state elements such as the DPO, the DCO, and municipal corporation officials for helping them in demolishing the worship place.

Ahmadis are also facing increasing threats and marginalisation in professions and jobs. An Ahmadi, Safian Ahmad in the Punjab Prison Department, for instance, and a female teacher in Kot Momin are facing severe difficulties in this regard. Ahmadis are also in a constant state of insecurity and anxiety despite all the contributions they make to Pakistan.

Last week, in Chak No 368 Khumbi District Layyah, an issue occurred among Ahmadis and non-Ahmadis when Ahmadis wanted to bury the dead body of an Ahmadi in a joint grave yard. This is yet another example of the state supporting anti-Ahmadiya activities which is leading to a sharp rise in the challenges Ahmadis face in Pakistan.

In the present paradigm, the Pakistani judiciary, particularly the IHC has failed to take action against elements that hold *dharnas*, and their extremist and anti-state statements and activities. Despite the orders of the higher judiciary, the leadership of the *Tehreek-e-Labaik Ya Rasool Ullah* has still not been arrested which is a substantial taint on Pakistan’s judicial system.

Read original post [HERE](#).