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Islamophobia in West: An Analytical Study

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Abstract: *Islamophobia is the term used to refer to the discrimination against the one who practices Islam, called Muslims. It is the combination of many things that includes dislike, terror, and prejudice towards the things that are part of the Muslim religion, including Holy places where they worship, the Hijab, The Holy Book Quran, etc. Aggressive and hateful behaviour is shown towards Muslims by burning their holy places, banning the Hijab, and badmouthing about the Prophet or something very dear to Muslims. The name Islam has linked up with the worst perception of unsafe, violence, terrorism, and tough religion with many boundaries by the stereotypes, and they are considered as some kind of inhuman from another earth. The research is qualitative, based on document analysis and the review of previously published material related to the relevant theme. It finds that there are several challenges faced by Muslims in the Western world and now the concept is on the rise with the negative use of media around the world.*

Key Words: Islamophobia, Anti-Islam, Western Media, Hate Speech

Introduction

Islamophobia has been spreading vastly over the last two decades all over the world by specifically targeting Muslims; their attire and badmouthing are circulated through social media and different campaigns. (Warren J. Blumenfeld, 2012) When we talk about Islamophobia and how it began or we can say the first decade of Islamophobia'; when the first report for published on British Muslims and Islamophobia. It was not, of course, when it began, but it made a huge difference. After that, Islamophobia was widely spread and was being talked about in public as well as considered in politics. Muslims and Islam were being attacked by many anti-Muslims, the extremists such as the personality-cum-politician Robert Kilroy-Silk and 'Will Cummins'. Many documentaries were made and are still being made in which the Muslims were portrayed as violent and terrorists. (Chris Allen, 2011) As they are perceived as millions of harmful people who dominate the whole world are surely the thread for non-Muslims, and they are impatient, intolerant, and insecure. It makes them behave this

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way. Whenever they come across any person who follows Islam and is Muslim, their perceptions are already making them aware of them. That's the phobia that exists in social as well as in political issues. (Martin Martín-Muñoz, G, 2010)

According to some anti-Islamists, Islam is considered a violent religion, and when it comes to women, it is portrayed as oppressive and anti-feminist. Man is shown as the cruellest towards them; they are not allowed to make any decisions, unlike any other religion. But the reality is very different. It is Islam that enlightened the rank of the women. It is a false statement and inappropriate regarding Muslims, and due to these wrong talks, as a result of it, many feminists in the Islamic societies got influenced and brought ideas to make this cause work out. When such women came forward, it portrayed a bad image which caused anger and controversies among Muslims themselves. (Hasan, M. M. 2012)

If we talk about the research for the U.S, each year, thousands and thousands of offensive and violent things take place. They were counted as the number greater than 160 Muslim-American terrorists and attackers in 10 years since 9/11. Because of the events of barbarity and violence, Muslim-American terrorism suspects were brought to national attention through the media as well as the government system. A large worldwide amount of Muslims reported the mistreatment of them by the west. A huge percentage of a lot of western countries shared their sentiment, saying that the west shows no respect to the Muslims and their societies. (Beutel, 2010)

As a result of Islamophobia, the relations between the Muslim World and Europe, most importantly Political and social relations, were badly affected, and as a result, whenever any terrorism or attacks take place in London, Madrid, and many other places, those are directly associated and referred to Muslims as if they are involved in doing so. Different political parties in Europe, such as Front National in France, were really loud and conveyed the message to their people that Muslims are a threat to Europe. The political relationship between the Muslim World and the countries of the Muslim World got worsened. (Laitin, D. 2010)

Islamophobia after 9/11

It is being said by many sources that the wide-spreading quickly, the concept of Islamophobia is getting acceptable socially in this modern world. It is great harm, and the consequences that it results in are even worst. It is extremely dangerous for the peace of the world. To understand and explain Islamophobia, we come to see different historical events, the event of 11th September. Here, the main role is played by media; which plays the main role in presenting the negative images of Muslims in front of the whole world. It is the reason it is continued till the date. (Allen, C. 2016)

The very important event that had a great impact is the one that took place on 11th September 2001. Decades have been passed, but it is still having a great impact on American Muslims. The media and policies implemented by the governments in the US lead to discrimination, harassment, and many things faced by Muslims in the United States. (Ali, 2017) In 2017, ex-president Trump banned citizens from seven main countries in the Muslim World. Refugees were banned from stepping into the country, which is also known as the 'Muslim Ban. The anti-Islamic shows the great hatred and the Islamophobia in the US is found in abundance and is very normalized, the discrimination due to different policies implemented.

The attacks of 9/11 had an extreme effect on the American culture as well as the political landscape. These attacks made them worry about a powerful Muslim enemy which could not be stopped from destroying the freedom and the values of the western culture. Due to all this, not only the United States was afraid and in fear of this 'Islamic threat', but also Europe had to face its fears. (Green, 2019) Because of all the global terrorism and the increasing number of affairs that had been happening on the soil of Europe, worries and concerns of the people about the internal security and the western values being in danger because of an increasing number of Muslim residents and immigrants also increased.

Islamophobia and Social Media

Islamophobia is so common, and we witness such

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things nearly on an everyday basis. Recently the great Islamic Scholar Dr. Israr Ahmed's official YouTube channel was removed, which was followed by millions of Muslims and had more than 3 million subscribers. His content is said to be anti-Semitic. Many of his followers came in front and claimed that he was the man of truth, he never said anything against anyone he always motivated his followers to gain an education. The journalist took an interview of Khaleed Hassan, known as The Jewish Chronicle report. (Maisah, 2022) It was aid that the site repeatedly ignored his request when he reported the content having hatred for Jews. Furthermore, Dr. Israr's content contains offensive portraying of Jews as one place they are shown as Satan. YouTube took the step of removing two of his channels.

Being abusive towards the Muslims, attacking physically or verbally the sacred places, people. Targeting those who have religious identities. For example, the women covering themselves in Hijab or Naqab. Different types of policies are attached to the Muslims directly or indirectly affect them and their freedom. Bans wearing scarves in schools, ban building mosques etc. The threats that may be online and the abusive behavior towards them. (Cipriani, 2019) Categorized and discriminate against them when it's come to the jobs, providing good services, education, and many more things. The media coverage showed and labeled the Muslims as terrorists. Islamophobia is now a very common phenomenon.

It's about July last year in 2021, Lawrence Pintak is the researcher who has a team hired for the spreading of hate speech and bad mouth words against Muslims. In their tweets and this campaign, they had mentioned the name of Umer and more than half of the tweets were so offensive and anti-Islamic using bad language and spreading hate speech. It came to know that the accounts were specially made for posting against Muslims and do the acts related to Islamophobia and offensive conversations on Twitter. (Shahnin, 2021) Out of thousand accounts, only 20 accounts were said to be genuine, otherwise, all the accounts were bots or the fake ids of people.

The students of Georgia State University 2017 studied the media coverage difference. The difference is how much coverage is given to the attacks associated with the name of Muslims and how much coverage is given to the ones by the others. It was concluded that 44.9% more coverage is given to the attacks by Muslims. And if we talk about terrorist attacks, 35.7% more coverage is given to the Islam associated, and media coverage is very less when it comes to non-Muslims or the white men. (Dickey, 2012) Around 15 headlines were running on the case of the white man and 105 headlines when done by Muslims. These results were the conclusion of the survey about the attacks in the US which took place between 2005 and 2015.

Almost whatever information related to Islam as well as its followers in the west side countries all came from the higher use of media. According to different studies, it has been said that over 1/3 of the population in the west mainly have their beliefs on the TV or the social media for all their information about Islam and Muslims. After the 9/11 terrorists attack, the mass media coverage about the incident resulted in universal awareness about the religion Islam and its supporters and followers. And because of the mass media consumption, a huge amount of people are now knowledgeable about Islam and Muslims, but what people in western countries and societies are aware of due to media are the media-generated Muslims as well as the media version of Islam. (Rane, 2014) However, A key topic is how widespread such visions are recognized and what consequences they have for factors playing as well as worldwide interactions.

In some workplaces, Islamophobia is becoming increasingly visible. In social media environments, the first signs of this crisis began to emerge. People have become accustomed to sharing everything on social media as the internet and interactive media have expanded. Those who are exposed to Islamophobic behavior at work publish a variety of social media posts. Even in Muslim societies, anti-Islamic posts are very common. Employees' exposure to Islamophobia was assessed in the context of the workplace and social media in this study. (YEL, 2021) Furthermore, postings on social media that indicate Islamophobia do nothing to

address the problem. The effect is also immediate because the shares on social media are quick.

Islamophobia in the West

In western countries, it has been seen how strong the wave of 'Islamophobia' is. In America and the other European counties too, Islamophobia is at its extreme. It's at a level where even if someone seems to have an appearance as Muslim, they are suspected, victimized, and had to face extremely worst treatment. They even reached the point where they started 'Anti-Islamic' campaigns in which they burned the Holy Quran, attacked the mosques, even disrespected the Holy Prophet (PBUH), and abused, attacked, and harassed Muslims verbally as well as physically in different western countries. European Islamophobia Report (EIP) covers all the European countries, so it exposed the western countries and all their intolerable and negative conduct that they have towards the Muslims. (Sadia, 2022)

A report known as 'The Runnymede Trust report' on Islamophobia was published in Great Britain in 1997. This report is now known as the very first and significant contribution in the field of Islamophobia. It was such a work which made a great influence on the upcoming similar works of that time. In that report, Islamophobia was defined as the hatred toward Islam or Muslims or the fear of Islam and Muslims. (Helbling, 2012) The report even differentiated between the concepts of open and narrow perspectives on Islam. It holds a former view that sees Islam as either being very ideological and hostile or to be very rigid or unchangeable.

Since 9/11, it has been identified according to different studies that in the US 160 plus Muslim-American terrorist distrust and offenders and it's only a small part of all the numerous acts of brutality which take place in the US yearly. Because of the collection of events of barbarity and violence, Muslim-American terrorism suspects were brought to national attention through media as well as the structured government system. A worldwide large amount of Muslims reported the mistreatment of them by the west. (Gallup) A huge percentage of a lot of western countries shared their sentiment, saying that the west shows no respect to the Muslims and their societies. Cultural, political and religious opinions are what affect the interactions with one another. The fear of Muslim hatred is often seen in the field of politics or it is also seen n cultural aspects as well.

Misrepresentation about Islam

Islam has been traditionally 'outcasted' as a religion in the west and is commonly associated with negative media portrayals, terrorism, and extremism. After the universal increase in the acts and discussions against Muslims, after 9/11, there was a simultaneous growth in the Muslim population. According to the descriptive analysis, empirical research on young Muslims has increased significantly in the past 5 years, mainly in the education sector. Some important and repeated subjects of 'Islamophobia,' were obtained from NVivo's word-count frequency output. Studies on varied explications of Islamophobia, especially for younger Muslims, The content study of these topics revealed discussion methods used by Muslim youth, harassment in institutes, and gender-specific components of Racism and Islamophobia. (Farooqui, 2022)

Originally the media has a demanding and unique responsibility that they have to report the unprejudiced and fair ongoing or new stories. But when it comes to the topic and question of Islam, global media is criticized for overlooking or missing out on the ethical issues and stories. After The Cold war ended, most of the western media's attention was diverted toward Islam, considering it a disruption in the global order. The western media have even launched a coordinated campaign that is against Islam and is known as a campaign against terror. (Haque, 2012) Although Islam is a religion that is rapidly growing in the west has many misconceptions about it because of it being misrepresented by the media as well as its ignorance and preconception when in reality Islam is a peaceful religion and it does not encourage any terrorism or barbarity.

Racism is increasingly being regarded as a form of Islamophobia. According to new findings. The

probability of Anti-Muslimism appearing as racism based on religion or culture is frequently ignored. Although anti-Islam prejudice and anti-Muslim racism are often confused, the two are essentially distinct. We can better examine, uncover, and critically evaluate Islamophobia if we make this distinction. It is discovered that, while anti-Islam prejudice suggests a discriminatory rejection of an essentialized concept of Islam, it views culture or religion as a personal decision and allows Muslims to convert or integrate. (Lauwers, 2019) As a result, it varies from anti-Muslim racism, which believes that Muslim identification and the negative attributes associated with Islam are inherent and unchanging.

Islamophobia presents itself in a variety of ways, including physical, political, cultural, linguistic, and other manifestations of hatred and fear of Islam and Muslims. From a language perspective, various words have been coined to maintain stereotypes against Muslims and their faith. Expressions that link Islam, which in Arabic means "peace," with beliefs and activities that the religion and practicing Muslims disapprove of are freely used. Islamic violence, Islamic fanatic, Jihadists, and radical Islam are all phrases that have been used to describe Islamic terrorism. (Mohideen, 2008) To reply honestly to linguistic Islamophobia, known Islamophobic things extracted from Internet publications must be analyzed.

The U.S. Islamophobia Network

The US-based network supporting Islamophobia is presently made up of at least 37 groups, and their main goal is to encourage hatred or prejudice against Muslims as well as Islam. Apart from those 37 groups, there are 32 more additional groups whose major goal doesn't seem to appear only as spreading and encouraging hatred towards Islam and Muslims but it supports and exhibits the Islamophobic themes which also make up the out core of their network. The groups working in the inner core of this network are closely connected. (Saylor, 2014) They encourage and promote the terror against Islam and its followers. In the United States, there is a widespread fear of the Islamic religion and its followers, and then they are benefitted from the large salaries in return for this.

The extensive literature in the developing discipline of Islamophobia Studies has focused on Islamophobia in what many people regard as the "West" in a geographical sense. Or, at the very least, Islamophobia was examined through the lens of Western political forces, which represent powers based there, such as US foreign policy, even though its breadth extends to countries like Iraq and Afghanistan. Muslims are a minority in the country. Many 'Western' countries have less economic and political strength as a result of this. However, even in countries with a substantial Muslim population, Islamophobia has the potential to have a huge influence. (Hafez, 2019)

The popular belief that anti-Muslim and anti-Islam attitude is more prominent on the European Union's eastern edge has some reality (EU). Yet, Islamophobia has been made a political issue in the regions of Italy as well as Austria, Eastern and western gap looks to be narrowing. Islamophobia inequalities between the East and the west are sometimes exaggerated. In terms of content, the Islamophobia debate on the EU's west side as well as an east side alongside North America and as well as other places around the globe is identical. (Kalmar, 2018) On both sides of the former Eastern Border, charges of terrorism, immigrant crime, or an intention to turn Europe into an Islamic nation and remove its Christian heritage are aimed at Muslims in general.

Role of the Islamic World in Combating Islamophobia in the West

The innovative role of the heads of Muslims and the impact of Islamic culture are also explored, which might be a help to combat prejudices against Islam and its adherents. According to the research, the fundamental cause of Islamophobia, in terms of historical significance, is that westerners are afraid of Muslims. The world is ignorant of Islam's essential principles and goals. They have very little, if any, knowledge about Muslims. This factor is a major contributor to the rise in anti-Muslim sentiment in the west. Men with beards and women

wearing hijabs are labeled "inferior" and "terrorists" based only on their physical appearance. (Abbasi, 2021) All of these skewed perceptions can for sure be eliminated if all the Muslims in the entire world come together & make courageous moves to do so. Circulate Islam's true message of tolerance, cooperation, fairness, and brotherhood.

Many news organizations in the US claim to be receptive to religious discourse that is both fair and accurate, but few do so to a high standard. Prejudices, stereotypes, fear, and hatred have been brought to light through fair and balanced reporting. This type of religious representation in the media is concerning because it promotes fear and conflicts rather than promoting unity and respect and tolerance. Newspapers have been studied because they are important sources of information. Despite the advancement of developing technology, due to unethical newspaper outlines, this question has been put up that if reporters are the main cause of spreading more benefits than drawbacks when they report the affairs and topics involving religion. (Hassan, 2021) This is the reason that the press, in the US, tends to stress discrimination in the media to draw attention to the religion, making the general public vulnerable to reality distortion. Indeed, the media's portrayal of Islam in the United States has become a contentious topic.

New Zealand: Christchurch Attack

A 29-year-old Australian national, Brenton Tarrant targeted two mosques in the city of Christchurch, which is located in New Zealand. His motive behind the attack was to kill as many Muslims as possible. He martyred a total of 51 Muslims in two mosques, and he even planned to burn down the mosques which he targeted, but he failed because the authorities detained him. He live-streamed the gruesome attack on one of the social media platforms.

When security authorities interrogated the attacker, they found out that he was an Islamophobe and he was a right-wing extremist. His main purpose was to wreak havoc among Muslims and wanted to spread as much damage as possible. This enabled New Zealand to revamp its policies and gun laws to avoid these kinds of attacks in the future. The attacker was sentenced to prison for life. New Zealand is a country that is rich in culture and diversity. (Sullivan, 2020) So that enabled its native citizens to spread peace and love among its Muslim citizen and people who were immigrants. They showed affection and stood out for the victims. New Zealand also took measures to create new laws for anti-terror and hate crimes for different ethnicities.

Muslims around the world feel suffocated just because various powers are making things harder for them to go through every day. There are barely any human rights for Muslims and it is difficult for them to maintain their identity. There are approximately 1 billion Muslims and they are being treated as "Others" as if they are a threat to humanity. They are being discriminated and they are tightening them to go through everyday life. Islamophobia is on the rise every day, and several Muslim countries are unjustly being captured by the non-Muslim forces, for example, Palestine is being captured by Israeli forces over land. Unarmed and innocent Muslims are killed on a very large scale. Most countries such as Burma, Yemen, Kashmir, and other areas of the world are forcefully occupied and the reason is clear, and that is the Islamophobic mindset. (Sadia, 2021)

Recognition of Islamophobia

Former Prime Minister of Pakistan, Imran Khan passed a bill in the United Nations on behalf of the OIC (Organization of Islamic Corporation) to recognize that Islamophobia exists and should be well taken care of. To which the UN finally recognized the issue and decided against it. A total of 193 members sitting in the World body agreed with the decision and further commented that it is the right of every human being to have the freedom to practice his religion. The resolution was accepted on March 15 (When the Christchurch shootings occurred in New Zealand) and it was indeed a historic moment for all the Muslims around the world. (Al Jazeera, 2022).

Findings

Following the 9/11 tragedy, in which some extremists attacked the World Trade Center and other significant locations in the United States, The term Islamophobia, was developed. This is widespread hate of Islam, particularly in Europe, where hundreds of Muslims have been labeled as terrorists. Many countries like New Zealand took steps to adopt new anti-terror and hate crime laws for various ethnicities. China goes on to say that, they are healing these Muslims and that Islam is an ideological ailment. Western media recently reported that China, unlike the United States and other Western countries, is not murdering terrorists but rather transforming them into ordinary humans. In India, Muslims face terrible discrimination and hatred, even to the point of being killed. Women who wear a hijab or niqab endure a significant burden in Western countries since they are a native depiction of Islam, and as a result, they face discriminating and demeaning comments from the public.

In the West, Muslim women are often the victims of prejudiced and biased judgments. Religion, gender, equality, migration, and the way Muslim women dress are all examples of discrimination. Hijab or Niqab (Veil) has become a powerful symbol of hatred and terror, which is entirely distorted. Hate crimes have skyrocketed, primarily in Britain and Paris, and the majority of victims are Muslim women who wear Hijab/Veil. Hijab has a parallel image of Islamophobia in the west since most people believe that Muslim principles are backward and primitive, posing a danger to the fast and progressively Western values. The media also portrays women who wear a hijab or a niqab as being in danger of being a threat to society. The media is exploiting these women by depicting them as mistreated and pushing the completely incorrect notion that Islam is the problem.

Parts of Europe are dangerous places for Muslim women, with estimates indicating that up to 80% of women were harassed or made nasty comments simply because they wore a hijab. Former Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan noticed the issue of Islamophobia and began to speak out against it, calling on all Muslim leaders to come up and say that we should all work together to eradicate Islamophobia from the world.

Conclusion

Islamophobia is the term used to describe discrimination against Muslims or those who practice Islam. Islamophobia has risen rapidly over the last two decades all across the world by explicitly targeting Muslims, their clothing, and badmouthing is communicated through social media and various initiatives. When they come across someone who follows Islam and is Muslim, their perceptions already make them aware of them. Many sources claim that the concept of Islamophobia is rapidly growing and becoming socially accepted in the current world.

Islam is viewed as an aggressive religion, while women are characterized as controlling and anti-feminist. It is a misleading and incorrect comment about Muslims, and because of these inaccurate talks, many feminists in Islamic societies were affected and brought ideas about how to make this cause succeed. Since such women came forward, they created a negative picture, which sparked outrage and controversy among Muslims. Because of the massacres and bloodshed, Muslim-American terrorist suspects were brought to national notice by the media and the government system.

Because of Islamophobia, ties between the Muslim World and Europe, particularly political and social connections, have suffered. As a result, whenever terrorism or attacks occur in London, Madrid, or elsewhere, they are immediately identified with and addressed to Muslims as if they are involved. Different European political groups, such as France's Front National, were outspoken in their message to their constituents that Muslims are unquestionably a threat to Europe. Muslims in the United States endure discrimination, harassment, and other issues because of policies imposed by governments in the United States. The anti-Islamic demonstrates significant hatred and Islamophobia in the United States, and it is quite normalized, the racism due to many laws established; being

disrespectful to Muslims, and physically or verbally harming sacred places and individuals. The media portrays and identifies Muslims as terrorists. Muslims differ from one another, and they are known to be transnational people. The contrast between how much focus is paid to assaults linked with the name of Muslims and how much attention is paid to those by others. When it comes to terrorist attacks, Muslims receive more attention than non-Muslims or white people.

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