Examining Religious Coexistence: Perspectives from the Quran and Hadith in the Context of Bangladesh

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Abstract
Historically, Bangladesh has been home to numerous religious minorities, such as Buddhists, Hindus, Sheiks, Animists, and Atheists. It made a significant contribution to the continuation of social, political, and religious concord among people of many religious views after the liberation war. In varied communities like Bangladesh, religious concord is especially dependent on religious cooperation. This study used a mixed-method approach to investigate the dynamics of religious cohabitation in Bangladesh, depending on Islamic texts, particularly the Quran and Hadith, to provide background. In this study, the concepts and ideals that facilitate peaceful coexistence among various religious groups in Bangladesh are examined through an analysis of pertinent passages and teachings. The study also evaluates Bangladesh’s current state of minority groups’ social, political, and religious rights. The study’s conclusions add to the conversation on religious coexistence and provide useful advice for promoting interfaith harmony and understanding in Bangladesh and elsewhere. The outcome demonstrates that Islam places a strong emphasis on treating minorities and individuals of all religions with respect and decency. Bangladesh is a multicultural country that is suitable for coexisting peacefully with individuals of different backgrounds. Regardless of caste or religion, people here are kind and considerate of one another. At times conflicts are seen between Muslims and non-Muslims as people think most of them are personal and political provocations.

Keywords: Religious Coexistence, Bangladesh, Quran, Hadith, Interfaith Harmony

INTRODUCTION
A crucial aspect of social harmony is religious coexistence, especially in multicultural societies like Bangladesh. The nation suffers issues with religious conflict and violence, which raises concerns about the dynamics of cohabitation within its community despite its long history of religious tolerance and interfaith cooperation (Milshi et al., 2022)(Bakar & Haqqi, 2022). This research article uses Islamic scriptures, particularly the Quran and Hadith, to shed light on the complexities of religious cooperation in Bangladesh (Kadri & Kirin, 2022)(Fahrizi & Zubir, 2022). The term co-existence is applied to living with others based on full respect and tolerance to their natural varieties of characteristics (Sweta et al., 2022)(Ramadhan, 2022). There are many definitions given by different scholars from different perspectives (Glikman et al., 2021)(Djalal, 2022). However, it generally indicates the following meanings: firstly, to have nonviolent relations among different thoughts; secondly, a strategy of peaceful living with other races or religions with no major dissimilarities; and thirdly, to exist together with mutual respect and tolerance (F. B. H. Ismail et al., 2022)(Rahayu & Nurrohim, 2022). Co-existence also applies to living together and accepting dissimilarities or differences in terms of cultures, traditions, rituals, identities, and natures, avoiding all conflicts and chaos with others to sustain a pleasant atmosphere (Nurani et al., 2022)(Khotijah & Fadal, 2022). Peaceful co-existence among religious minorities is a very intrinsic quality of a society where religious plurality is welcomed and diversity is

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accepted (Rozy & Nirwana AN, 2022) (Anam, 2022). Since the religious authority acknowledged the idea of plurality, people of different religions are appreciated (Adiansyah & Yahya, 2022) (Wahid et al., 2022).

Islam is a faith that values compassion, tolerance, and respect for the beliefs of others highly. As long as the government upholds the rights of each group and allows them to enjoy those rights, people of different religions living in harmony with one another will not encounter any problems (Mohammad & Ilkhom, 2018) (Muhajir & Tulic, 2022). The basis of peaceful coexistence with adherents of other faiths is the Islamic values of justice, equity, and intercultural understanding. The Quran, the sacred book of Islam, contains numerous passages emphasizing the humanity that unites all people and advocating for courteous interactions with those who practice other faiths. For instance, Surah Al-Hujurat (49:13) states:

\begin{align*}
\text{یَا‏النَّاسَ‏إِنَّا‏خَلَقۡنَ‏‏مُۡنَ‏‏ذَکَرَ‏‏وَُّ‏‏ثَی‏‏وَ‏ُّ‏‏قَبَآئِلَُ‏‏لِتَعَارَفَ‏‏وَُّ‏‏اِنَُّ‏‏اَکۡرَمَ‏‏عِنۡدَ‏اللُِّٰ‏‏عَلِیۡمَ‏‏خَبِیۡرَ‏‏أَنَّ‏اللَُّٰ‏‏عَلِیۡمَ‏‏ّ}
\end{align*}

Meaning: O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted.

The second verse promotes respect and collaboration across various communities while highlighting the basic equality of all people similarly, the Hadith, a collection of the words and deeds of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), offers more advice on cultivating friendly ties with those of different religions (Fadil et al., 2022) (Abdoulaye & Rozy, 2023). The Prophet's encounters with non-Muslims are highlighted in several Hadiths, which show his generosity (F. H. Ismail et al., 2024), compassion, and desire to have a conversation with them (Date, 2020) (Rozy, 2023b). According to a well-known Hadith, the Prophet once stepped raised in honor of a deceased person, affirming their humanity and dignity, and was informed that the funeral was a Jewish funeral (Smith, 2017) (Fadli, 2023).

Understanding the variables promoting religious coexistence in Bangladesh, especially in light of Islamic teachings, is the research subject this paper attempts to answer. Although religious violence and bigotry against minority groups have not always existed in Bangladesh, the country has a long tradition of religious tolerance (Sule, 2023) (Munandar & Amin, 2023). Thus, the primary question guiding this research is: What are the fundamental concepts and tenets of Islamic literature that promote harmony between Bangladesh's diverse religious communities, and how do these values and principles line up with the country's democratic style of governance?

The primary objective of this research is to examine the dynamics of religious cohabitation in Bangladesh by utilizing a mixed-method approach that combines insights from Islamic scriptures, empirical data, and socio-political analysis (Limbong et al., 2023) (Abulmajd, 2023a). The study particularly seeks to accomplish the following objectives:

To investigate pertinent Hadith and Quranic verses that highlight the values of respect, tolerance, and harmonious cohabitation between various religious communities.

To evaluate the state of religious coexistence in Bangladesh as it stands right now, taking into account sociopolitical issues that affect relations between faiths and the defense of minority rights.

To offer recommendations and practical consequences for promoting social cohesion, interfaith harmony, and understanding in Bangladesh based on the study’s findings.

By addressing these objectives, the study seeks to contribute to the discourse on religious cohabitation and offer decision-makers, religious authorities, civil society organizations, and the international community useful guidance on promoting inclusivity, peace, and harmony in Bangladesh and abroad.

RESEARCH METHOD

In this study, we employed a mixed-methods approach, using information from both qualitative and quantitative sources. A thorough examination of earlier research studies and papers on “Examining Religious Coexistence: Perspectives from the Quran and Hadith in the Context of Bangladesh” was done to collect qualitative data for the study (Nirwana AN, 2024) (F. H. Ismail et al., 2022). Relevant findings were then
incorporated into the analysis. Self-administered questionnaires were also employed to gather quantitative data (An et al., 2024) (Suud et al., 2024). A random sample of one hundred two participants, from various religious people in Bangladesh Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, and Christian were given the questionnaire (Aprianthoro et al., 2024) (Alam et al., 2024) (Kirin et al., 2024). Through the integration of findings from both qualitative research and quantitative analysis, this approach allowed a comprehensive knowledge of religious coexistence in Bangladesh.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

DEFINITIONS OF RELIGIOUS COEXISTENCE

When two or more groups coexist, they respect one another’s differences and find peaceful ways to resolve their disputes. “To maintain peace with others despite differences, especially as a matter of policy,” is what it means to “exist together at the same time or in the same place.” Coexistence is defined as “peaceful coexistence of groups with different faiths, ideologies, and backgrounds, based on mutual understanding and tolerance” (Halimatul maryani, 2020) (Islam, 2018). The term “religious coexistence” describes the harmonious coexistence or interaction of people, groups, or cultures from many religious backgrounds in a common area or social context (Suraya Sintang, 2014) (Romadhona et al., 2023) (Wan Zahari et al., 2022). It means not using force or attempting to control or dominate another on the basis of their beliefs, but rather treating individuals with dignity, accepting one another's religious differences, and accommodating their diverse practices, beliefs, and customs (Muhtadin et al., 2023) (Ridha et al., 2023). The foundation of religious cohabitation is accepting religious variety and encouraging cooperation, tolerance, and understanding among followers of different religions (Rozy, 2023a) (Nurfauziah et al., 2023) (Mujiburrahman et al., 2022). This creates an atmosphere in which people can openly practice their beliefs without worrying about discrimination or reprisal (Abulmajd, 2023b) (Aswindasari & Marhamah, 2024). A different study (Alibhai, 2019) (Haidari, 2024), states that religious cohabitation is commonly understood to be the active involvement and positive acceptance of difference (Tarman et al., 2024). In a study (Navvab, 2018) (Yuhanida et al., 2024), Realistic justification and religious teachings that strive for peaceful coexistence and tolerance of adherents of various religions describe religious cohabitation.

However, coexistence refers to the coexistence of several religions, safeguarding social harmony and encouraging communication in countries with numerous religions (Mohammad & Ilkhom, 2018) (Hartafan et al., 2024). Therefore, religious coexistence is the understanding and acceptance of one another’s faiths as well as cultures by people of different faiths and cultures living in the same location and time (Rohman et al., 2024) (Alhaj, 2024). There are two ways that religious coexistence might arise: cohabitation between different religious groups, or external religious coexistence, which denotes harmony and togetherness within the same religious community (Mukrimun, 2023) (Abidin, 2023). When both religions are firmly entrenched in a society, religious harmony will be achieved (Bano et al., 2023) (M.R.F. Afra & M.M.A. Abdullah, 2023).

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES ON RELIGIOUS COEXISTENCE IN ISLAM

The first ever written constitution in the history of the world set the best example for the establishment of peaceful coexistence among different religious groups not only in the history of Islam but also in that of mankind (F. Muhammad, 2023) (Irba, 2023). It was executed for 10 years (622-632 A.D.) under the leadership of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and aimed at governing a multi-religious pluralistic society (Gashaw Ayferam Endaylalu, 2018) (Hoir, 2023). Different religious communities (Jews, Pagans, Christians, and Muslims) that showed enmity towards one another for several centuries became parties to the pact and started living together in a single society, peacefully (Hasanah et al., 2024) (Thaib, 2024). Prophet Muhammad (SAW) executed the charter as a leader of a minority (Alfi et al., 2024) (Fuadiah et al., 2024) (Prasanti et al., 2024). The charter had 47 clauses and it formed a sovereign nation-state with a common citizenship for every individual of all communities (Damayanti et al., 2024) (Syaripah et al., 2024). The charter protected the fundamental human rights of all citizens, including equality, freedom of conscience, and freedom of religion. It said: The Jews shall have their religion and the Muslims their own (R, 2024) (Dewi et al., 2024). Each must help the other against anyone who attacks the people of this document (Akbar et al., 2024) (Nurfazri & Agustin, 2024). They must seek mutual
advice and consultation and loyalty is a protection against treachery(D. Muhammad et al., 2024)(Mahmudulhassan, 2024). A man is not liable for his ally’s misdeeds(Ramdani et al., 2024)(Apriliani et al., 2024). The wronged must be helped (Shittu, 2013)(Sukmawati et al., 2024). According to the treaty, everyone enjoyed the freedom to adhere to any religious belief and practice his justice system. It considered Muslims, Jews, Christians, and heathens as one society working for the welfare of all(E. Rahmahwati et al., 2024)(A. M. Yahya et al., 2022). The charter abolished the tribal structures that had formerly been based on blood and kinship and brought belligerent tribes of different religious, ethnic, and geographical origins together(Wahid et al., 2023)(Andri Nirwana et al., 2024). It acknowledged religious freedom as a fundamental right, being the first document to incorporate it in the constitutional history of the world(Anwar et al., 2024)(Mahmudulhassan et al., 2024). The treaty extended protection to life, property, belief, liberty, and religion to all(Sukisno et al., 2024)(Waston, Mutthoifin, et al., 2024). It offered equal rights and responsibilities to all citizens(Nirwana et al., 2024)(Waston, Wiranto, et al., 2024). “The charter replaced the traditional tribal kinship with a new social order and created a nation-state with a new social fabric (Islam, 2018),(Ibrahim, 2020),(Rahman & Memon, n.d.).

Once upon a time, the Sakif tribe appeared in the court of the Prophet (PBUH), they stayed near the path dome of the mosque. When it is time for prayer, a man will say, O Messenger, it is time for prayer. They are a group of non-Muslims, they are in the mosque. Then the Prophet (PBUH) said, “The land is not defiled because of the Muslims” (Musannaf Ibn Abi Shayba, Hadith: 8576).

Getting to know other locals may be accomplished via the village road. Non-Muslims and individuals of all faiths alike must be treated with respect and decency(Anurogo et al., 2023)(Anurogo, 2023). Towards a neighbor who does not follow Islam, consideration and compassion are required(Tobroni et al., 2023)(Ali & Maga Sule, 2024). Being kind and understanding with a neighbor who does not practice Islam is essential. Islamic teachings place a high value on maintaining neighbors’ rights and developing close familial ties. (Clark, 2013),(H. Muhammad & Abdullah, 2023).

The Holy Qur’ān and Hadith clearly state to preserve relations despite being non-Muslims. In one verse, Allah says:

وَأَنَّ هَذِهَ عَلَىٰ أَن َحُمْرَ كَّبِيْرَ مَنْ لَبِّيْنَ لَكَ بِعَمْلٍ أَنْ تَطْعِمْهَا وَصَنَّاعَهَا فِى الْدُّنْيَا مَعْزُوْفًا وَأَنْ تَعْمَلْ وَۡ اَنۡتُبِعُ مَا رَأِيْتُ مِنْ أَطَابُ الْبَيْنِ ۡثُمَّ تُخۡلَف٥

Meaning: But if they endeavor to make you associate with Me that of which you have no knowledge, do not obey them but accompany them in [this] world with appropriate kindness and follow the way of those who turn back to Me [in repentance]. Then to Me will be your return, and I will inform you about what you used to do. (Surah Luqman 31: 15)

According to a Hadith narrated by Asma bint Abi Bakar (RA):

عَنْ أَسْمَاءَ بْنَتِ أَبِي بْكَرِ الصَّدِيقِ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا قَالَتْ قَدَمَتْ عَلَى أَمِي وَهِيَ مَشَرَكَةٌ فِي عَهْدِ رَسُولِ اللهِ صَلَّى الَّذِي صَلَّى عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَأَذَّنَتْ رَسُولُ اللهِ صَلَّى الَّذِي صَلَّى عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمُ قَلَتْ قَدَمَتْ عَلَى أَمِي وَهِيَ رَاغِبَةٌ، فَأُلْقَيْتُ أَمِيَّ قَالَتْ: “تَعَلَّمُ صَلَى أَمِّكَ”

Meaning: Asma (RA) says: My mother came to me while she was still a polytheist, so I asked the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), “My mother, who is ill-disposed to Islam, has come to visit me. Shall I maintain relations with her?” He (ﷺ) replied, “Yes, maintain relations with your mother.” (Bukhari, Hadith: 2620)

Religious cohabitation, in which several religious sects coexisted under Islamic administration, is abundant in Islamic history (Moaddel, 2002)(S. Rahmawati et al., 2024). The Umayyah and Abbasi caliphate teams, which is among others, were early Islamic ruler teams that exemplified religious tolerance and pluralism (Rothman, 2019)(Armita et al., 2024). The basis of relationships between faiths is the Prophet Muhammad’s Medina Agreement, which established the norms of respect and coexistence between Muslims, Jews, and Christians(Novrizal & Manaf, 2024)(A’yun Tamami et al., 2024). Additionally, non-Muslim minorities were granted protected status in Islamic countries under the concept of “dhimma/ضمًا,” which guaranteed their freedom to practice their religion (Arzt, 2002)(Suri et al., 2021).
SIGNIFICANCE OF RELIGIOUS COEXISTENCE IN PERSPECTIVES FROM THE QURAN AND HADITH

Islam gives people equal human rights and dignity irrespective of religion and caste. In several verses of the Holy Qur'an, Almighty Allah has encouraged mankind to be bound by the bonds of human values and world brotherhood. It is mentioned in the Holy Qur'an,

"أَيُّهَا النَّاسِ إِنَّا خَلَقۡنَاكُمۡ مِنْ ذَرۡيَةٍ وَأَنثىۡ وَجَعَالَتَكُمۡ شُعَوۡبًا وَقِيَامًا لِتُؤۡمِنُوا لِلنَّارِ إِنّا لَنَرَحِمُ اللَّهُ عَظِيمًا."

Meaning: O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted. (Surah Mumtahana, verse 60:08)

Islam teaches prioritizing liberal and humane values toward all individuals, emphasizing the equality of all people. In the Hadith-

"إِنَّ رَسُولُ ٱللَّهِ صَلَّى ٱلۡلَّهُ عَلَیۡهِ وَسۡلَمَ مُرۡتِبًا بِهِ جَنَازَةٍ فَقِيلَ لَهُ أَيُّهَا جَنَازَةُ يَهۡوَدٍ فَقَالَ إِنِّي نَساَءٌ.

Meaning: The Prophet (PBUH) once witnessed a deceased being carried beside him. Then he stood up. He was told that it was the body of a Jew. Then he said, 'Is it not soul?' (Sahih Bukhari, Hadith: 1312)

According to the holy Quran and Hadith, we realized some points here:

Freedom of Religion and Predominance of human values: Islam has given freedom to people of all religions to practice their religion. Unless it harms the freedom of people of other religions. Almighty Allah says,

"لا إِخۡرَاجٌ فِی الۡقَلۡبِ إِلَّا ﴿ۡفَمۡنَ يَكُونُ ﴾ فَمِنْ ﴿ۡبِالۡقِسۡطِ﴾ ﴿ۡوَيۡمَنِ ﴾ ﴿ۡتَرۡغِیبٍ﴾ ﴿ۡفِي ﴾ ﴿ۡبِالۡعَرۡضِ﴾ ﴿ۡوَلَا ﴾ ﴿ۡمَسِیرَةٍ﴾ ﴿ۡأَرۡبَعِینَ﴾ ﴿ۡمِنَ الۡأَرۡضِ﴾ ﴿ۡفَإِنَّهَا إِنَّهَا لَمۡغَرِیبَةٌ﴾ ﴿ۡوَلَا ﴾ ﴿ۡعِلۡمُّ﴾ ﴿ۡبِهِ﴾ ﴿ۡيَّمِينٍ﴾ ﴿ۡأَطۡلَعَ الطَّاغِتُ﴾ ﴿ۡوَتَأۡلَمُ نَفۡسَهُ﴾ ﴿ۡفَتَمَّ ۚ إِنَّهَا﴾ ﴿ۡفَإِنَّهَا لَمۡغَرِیبَةٌ﴾ ﴿ۡوَلَا ﴾ ﴿ۡعِلۡمُّ﴾ ﴿ۡبِهِ﴾ ﴿ۡيَّمِينٍ﴾ ﴿ۡأَطۡلَعَ الطَّاغِتُ﴾ ﴿ۡوَتَأۡلَمُ نَفۡسَهُ﴾ ﴿ۡفَإِنَّهَا﴾ ﴿ۡفَإِنَّهَا لَمۡغَرِیبَةٌ﴾ ﴿ۡوَلَا ﴾ ﴿ۡعِلۡمُّ﴾ ﴿ۡبِهِ﴾ ﴿ۡيَّمِينٍ﴾ ﴿ۡأَطۡلَعَ الطَّاغِتُ﴾ ﴿ۡوَتَأۡلَمُ نَفۡسَهُ﴾ ﴿ۡفَإِنَّهَا﴾ ﴿ۡفَإِنَّهَا لَمۡغَرِیبَةٌ﴾ ﴿ۡوَلَا ﴾ ﴿ۡعِلۡمُّ﴾ ﴿ۡبِهِ﴾ ﴿ۡيَّمِينٍ﴾ ﴿ۡأَطۡلَعَ الطَّاغِتُ﴾ ﴿ۡوَتَأۡلَمُ نَفۡسَهُ﴾ ﴿ۡفَإِنَّهَا﴾ ﴿ۡفَإِنَّهَا لَمۡغَرِیبَةٌ﴾ ﴿ۡوَلَا ﴾ ﴿ۡعِلۡمُّ﴾ ﴿ۡبِهِ﴾ ﴿ۡيَّمِينٍ﴾ ﴿ۡأَطۡلَعَ الطَّاغِتُ﴾ ﴿ۡوَتَأۡلَمُ نَفۡسَهُ﴾ ﴿ۡفَإِنَّهَا﴾ ﴿ۡفَإِنَّهَا لَمۡغَرِیبَةٌ﴿

Meaning: There shall be no compulsion in [acceptance of] the religion. The right course has become clear from the wrong. So whoever disbelieves in Taghut and believes in Allah has grasped the most trustworthy handhold with no break in it. And Allah is Hearing and Knowing. Sahih International.” (Surah Baqarah, verse 256)

Doing justice to all: No one should be deprived of justice because of religious identity - the Qur'an warns,

"ۡيَّهۡوَدٍ إِنَّهَا إِنَّهَا لَمۡغَرِیبَةٌ﴾ ﴿ۡوَلَا ﴾ ﴿ۡعِلۡمُّ﴾ ﴿ۡبِهِ﴾ ﴿ۡيَّمِینٍ﴾ ﴿ۡأَطۡلَعَ الطَّاغِتُ﴾ ﴿ۡوَتَأۡلَمُ نَفۡسَهُ﴾ ﴿ۡفَإِنَّهَا﴾ ﴿ۡفَإِنَّهَا لَمۡغَرِیبَةٌ﴾ ﴿ۡوَلَا ﴾ ﴿ۡعِلۡمُّ﴾ ﴿ۡبِهِ﴾ ﴿ۡيَّمِینٍ﴾ ﴿ۡأَطۡلَعَ الطَّاغِتُ﴾ ﴿ۡوَتَأۡلَمُ نَفۡسَهُ﴾ ﴿ۡفَإِنَّهَا﴾ ﴿ۡفَإِنَّهَا لَمۡغَرِیبَةٌ﴾ ﴿ۡوَلَا ﴾ ﴿ۡعِلۡمُّ﴾ ﴿ۡبِهِ﴾ ﴿ۡيَّمِینٍ﴾ ﴿ۡأَطۡلَعَ الطَّاغِتُ﴾ ﴿ۡوَتَأۡلَمُ نَفۡسَهُ﴾ ﴿ۡفَإِنَّهَا﴾ ﴿ۡفَإِنَّهَا لَمۡغَرِیبَةٌ﴿

Meaning: O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm for Allah, witnesses in justice, and do not let the hatred of a people prevent you from being just. Be just; that is nearer to righteousness. And fear Allah; indeed, Allah is acquainted with what you do. (Sura Al Maida 05:08)

Safety of Innocent People: Islam says to ensure the safety of all people who are not criminals. Allah Almighty says:

"اَنۡثَمَا يَتَهِیَـمُّ ٱللَّهُ عَنَّ الۡبَـنِیۡنَ ۚ فَلَأۡلَآمُّ فِی الۡدِیـنِ وَۡحَرّجُوهُم فِیٰ دِیارِ ۡمُـکَرَمَ وَطۡهَرَوا عَلَیۡنَآ أَخِرَاجُهُمۡ إِنۡ تَوۡلَیۡلۡهُمۡ وَۡمِنۡ تَوَلُّیۡلۡهُمۡ فَرۡلِئِسۡکُمۡ فِی الۡطَّلُومَهۡنَ.

Meaning: Allah only forbids you from those who fight you because of religion and expel you from your homes and aid in your expulsion - [forbids] that you make allies of them. And whoever makes allies of them, then it’s those who are the wrongdoers. (Surah Mumtahina 60:08)

Protection of life and property: Non-Muslims who live in Muslim countries by the laws of the state or come to Muslim countries with a visa, must ensure the protection and safety of life and property. According to Hadith:

"عَنْ عَبْدِ ٱللَّهِ بْنِ عَمْرٍوٰ رَضۡیۡلَ ٱللَّهُ عَنۡهُمَا ﴿ۡعَنَّ الۡبَـنِیۡنَصَلِیۡلَلۡهُ عَلیۡهِ وَسۡلَمَ فَۡـلَآۡ فِی ۖ فِیٰ زَۡرَائِعِ ۡالجَّۡنَّةِ وَۡانَآرۡخِیبَهَا تَـبُعَتْ مِمَّنۡ فَتۡلُ مَعَاهُدَا﴾ ﴿ۡمَنۡ﴾ ﴿ۡسَلَّمَرۡأۡتَبِیۡعِنَا عَالِمًا﴾

Meaning: Narrated by Abdullah bin Amr (RA), The Prophet (ﷺ) said, “Whoever killed a person having a treaty with the Muslims, shall not smell the smell of Paradise though its smell is perceived from a distance of forty years.” (Saheeh Bukhari, Hadith: 3166)
Maintaining Social Relations: Islam enjoins maintaining good relations with all neighbors, Muslims and non-Muslims. But the condition is that this relationship cannot be an obstacle in the way of faith and Islam. Allah says:

اَلۡیَوۡمَُ
ا حِلَُّ
لَک مُ
الطَّی ِب ت ُ
وَُ
طَعَام ُ
الَّذِیۡنَُ
ا وۡت وا
الۡکِت بَُ
حِل ُ
لَّک مُۡ
وَُ
طَعَام ک مُۡ
حِل ُ
لَّه مُۡ

Meaning: This day [all] good foods have been made lawful, and the food of those who were given the Scripture is lawful for you and your food is lawful for them (Sura Maida 05:05).

In conclusion, Muslims should treat everyone equally in all societal activities, refrain from discrimination, establish cordial relationships with all other social groups, and uphold their commitments and covenants by Islamic law (Faisal Purnomosidi et al., 2024) (Suwardi et al., 2024). Muslims are taught through this code of conduct the best social behaviors that uplift society, promote virtue, deter injustice, and above all strengthen coexistence amongst the various groups of people who inhabit it (Aderibigbe et al., 2023), (Abdur Rahman, 2011).

RELIGIOUS COEXISTENCE IN BANGLADESH

Bangladesh’s previous has been highlighted by a protracted heritage of religious tolerance and harmony. Diverse religious communities coexisted and contributed to the cultural fabric of the region from the earliest civilizations in the Bengal region to the medieval era of the Sultanate and Mughal power (Hossain, 2012), (Chaney & Sahoo, 2020) (Hidayat & Ashiddiqi, 2019). The interaction of Hindu, Buddhist, and Islamic influences is reflected in the syncretic traditions of Bengali literature, music, and art, exhibiting an inclusive and respectful ethos (Diana et al., 2024) (Hartati et al., 2023). In addition, hopes for secularism and religious tolerance propelled the Liberation War of 1971, which resulted in the establishment of Bangladesh as an independent nation (Noor et al., 2009), (Uddin, 2020).

Graph 1

Considerable amount of communal harmony in Bangladesh

Graph 1 shows that most people think that Bangladesh has a considerable amount of communal harmony. Bangladesh continues to grapple with the complexities of religious coexistence within its society. Results show that Bangladesh is a multi-religious country with Islam as the majority religion, followed by Hinduism, Buddhism, and Christianity (Amrin et al., 2021) (Indriastuti et al., 2022). While Muslims constitute the majority, significant religious minority communities contribute to the nation's social fabric. Despite occasional tensions, Bangladesh has a tradition of interfaith harmony and coexistence. Many Bangladeshis participate in each other's religious festivals, fostering a sense of unity and mutual respect (Minhus & Huie, 2021).
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Graph 2
The reason for the persecution of minorities in Bangladesh

Graph 2 shows most people believe that Bangladesh has faced challenges related to religious tensions and violence. Sometimes attacks targeting religious minorities, and occupying their land sporadically in recent years, raising concerns about religious extremism and its impact on social cohesion. The graph shows that 61.3% of people believe this is political and 27.5% of people believe these are personal issues. Only 2.5% of people believe that the current persecution of minorities is only due to religion and 8.8% believe they are under attack for other reasons such as social or extremists.

The Bangladeshi government has taken action to prevent radicalization and safeguard religious minorities, and it has denounced religious extremism and violence. There are security protocols in place to protect houses of worship and religious assemblies. Legal action has been taken against people and organizations who spread radical beliefs (Iannaccone & Berman, 2006)(Muthofin & Fahrurozi, 2018). Bangladesh’s Constitution forbids discrimination on the basis of religion and protects religious freedom (Inskip et al., 2016),(Hjerm et al., 2020)(Hernawan, 2019)(Indriastuti et al., 2022). Nonetheless, there have been cases of persecution and prejudice based on religion(Khaled, 2021), especially directed towards minority groups like the Hindu community(Rizka et al., 2021)(N. Yahya et al., 2022). Human rights organizations are still fighting for the advancement of religious freedom and the defense of religious minorities (Stahnke Robert C., 2005)(Waston et al., 2023). The world community has taken notice of Bangladesh’s religious harmony issue. Human rights organizations and foreign governments keep a careful eye on events and push for improved protection for religious minorities as well as the encouragement of interfaith harmony and tolerance (White, 2012),(Council, 1966).

CONCLUSION

Utilizing the lessons of the Quran and Hadith, this study has, in the end, offered insightful information about the dynamics of religious coexistence in Bangladesh. The results highlight how important it is to advance the tolerance, mutual respect, and understanding that are stressed by Islamic values among many religious communities. Bangladesh has a long history of religious plurality and interfaith cooperation, notwithstanding sporadic difficulties and conflicts. This is due to its secularist attitude and cultural legacy. The study emphasizes how crucial it is to defend human rights, such as the right to freedom of religion, and to stop acts of violence and extremism motivated by religion. Bangladesh should bolster its commitment to social cohesion and religious harmony by supporting inclusive government and tackling socio-political variables that fuel religious tensions. As we move forward, policymakers, religious leaders, civil society organizations, and the global community must work together to protect the rights of religious minorities, promote interfaith discussion, and cultivate a culture of peace. Bangladesh can continue to lead the world in religious coexistence initiatives by fostering an atmosphere of mutual respect, understanding, and collaboration. In the end, Bangladesh’s religious tolerance will only succeed if its citizens work together to respect the values of justice and compassion that
Islam and other religions defend, welcome diversity, and celebrate individual differences. Bangladesh can achieve its goal of a peaceful society where people of all religious origins can coexist in harmony by working together and showing mutual understanding.

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