

## Review of the Islamic Ideology Council: Encouraging Islamic Principles and Social Change in Pakistan

**Hazrat Bilal**

PhD Scholar, Department of Islamic Studies, HITEC University, Taxila Pakistan.

Bilal.yousafzai@riphah.edu.pk

### **Abstract**

The Council of Islamic Ideology is a constitutional body that advises the legislature whether or not a certain law is repugnant to Islam, namely to the Qur'an and Sunna. The paper looks at the way IIC takes the lead in dissemination and also the contributions made by the IIC in social reform in Pakistan. It refers to its lineage and propagating the role of IIC in law review under the jurisdiction of Islam and Human rights as well. The paper is focused on the effect of IIC on the legislative overhaul in many areas of the life of modern Pakistani society, pointing both at Islamic values making progress and the obstacles of navigating social reforms facing the evolution of the country. The interest's critiques of the IIC's expected consequences are also on the table, such as narrow perspectives of Shariah that may weaken the social development. Through presenting a balanced view of the IIC's role, this article will hopefully aid in getting a well-informed understanding of it in how it operates in advancing Islamic values and social reforms.

**Keywords:** Islamic Ideology Council, Pakistan's Legal System, Social Reforms, Islamic Values, perspectives of Shariah

### **Introduction**

The Islamic Ideology Council (IIC) was established in 1962 through the Islamic Ideology Council Act. It is one of the main institutions to suggest that the government should enforce the laws that it considers to be in agreement with the Islamic ideology outlined by the Quran and the Sunnah (Naveed, 2021). The council primarily constitutes of the government appointed scholars/experts in Islamic philosophy/Islamic jurisprudence in charge of scrutinizing laws proposed unto the Parliament and advising if they are compliant with the laws of Allah. The other objectives of the IIC, such as strengthening the Islamic character of legislation, values in society and providing direction in matters of faith (Naveed, 2021), are discussed as well. The work of the IIC commends the independence of Pakistan from the shackles of man-made laws by upholding the Islamic ideals that the state aspires to attain.

However, being a creature of religious authority and the spectrum of social reform in Pakistan is a contention that has harbored in the face of the IIC. It is stated by critics that oftentimes the council's interpretations of Islam reflect the conservative and the narrow-minded world-view. Which results in the conservative opinions on such issues as women rights, the issue of minorities and the freedom of religion (Iqbal, 2007). The council's power over legislation has also been questioned for hindering progress reform and also for making unfair assumptions (Zubair, 2016). Unlike the promotion point according to which the IIC is essential for the country to keep its Islamic identity and the founding principles (Naveed, 2021), supporting it is a cause of certain controversy. According to this view, the council goals include maintaining the core Islamic values that enhance moral standards and societal ethics (Iqbal, 2007).

The main focus is the research of the activities of the IIC and its outcomes as concern of the Islamic values and the programs of social reformation in Pakistan. Through investigation of the mechanisms of legislative activity, fatwa issuance and moderation of public discourse on religious matters, the study searches to offer critical assessment of the actual level of social progress in Pakistan resulting from the work of the IIC. Furthermore, the study is aimed at the survey of the views of the representatives of the different stakeholder groups, including government, religious officials, non-governmental agencies, and the general public, towards the appropriateness and effectiveness of the IIC in terms of upholding Islamic values and bringing social reform to the country in particular. The purpose of study is to unfold the IIC's activities which basically draws an idea about impact of this entity on political and social dynamics of the country. The research contributes towards the knowledge of the relationships between religion, governance and social change in context of the Islamic state.

### **Mandate and Functions**

The Islamic Ideology Council (IIC) of Pakistan works within the constitutional validity framework and is defined mainly by the Islamic Ideology Council Act 1962 (Naveed, 2021). This specific law confers to the Council the right of examining and advising the government on whether the current or the new legislations are in line with Islamic rules and principles, which are to be obtained from the Koran and the Sunnah. The role of IIC also includes making suggestions to avoid domination of laws and policies by non-Islamic traditional methods in the Muslim countries of the world in diverse areas namely family, education, finance and

administration (Zubair, 2016). This legal mandate will highlight the important role played by the IIC in determining the landscape of legislation of this country while ensuring its compliance with Islamic dictates.

The formation of the IIC reflects the Islamic scholar's specialists and jurists who are selected by the government on the basis of their religious qualities and knowledge pertaining to the Islamic jurisprudence (Researcher, 2021). Generally, these ecclesiastical officers are well grounded on both Islamic religion and law, having well-earned degrees from revered religious institutions and donning decades of experience in both religious scholarship and jurisprudence (Iqbal, 2007). Even though the council members with their different kinds of qualifications define the bounder of their elaboration, the group as the whole is assumed to be providing the informed discussions and decisions on issues of Islamic ideology and legislation.

The working processes of the IIC is guided by a systematic approach that involves review, evaluation and proposal to any existing law that needs to be changed as per the Islamic principles. The council's meeting schedules are always planned every now and then to discuss the bills, whether those are from the government or referred to it, looking at their Islamic elements (Zubair, 2016). Each explanation session begins with scholarly debates between the members, which involve quoting from the primary Islamic sources and classic Islamic law on the legality of the chosen law. At the end of the thorough analysis and experience-based recommendation, ICC will prepare some drafts and submit it to the government administration for the consideration and potential use in making laws (Naveed, 2021). Therefore, the clear procedural framework for legal issues guarantees the dedicated process of the council and its comprehension with Islamic principles which will respectively broaden the country's legal foundation.

### **Promoting Islamic Values**

The Islamic Ideology Council (IIC) of Pakistan as a significant entity, serves the purpose of developing "Islamic values" with key texts of Islamic being Quran, Sunnah and Ijma'(consensus) matter. (Iqbal, 2007) These values cover a wide spectrum of religious, ethical and societal agreements and rules that people and society in general respect and follow in order to regulate the conduct and the behavior of individuals and society according to the Islamic principles and teachings. The IIC cogitates on improving social justice, equality, benevolence, and value of social morality along with their correlation in the modern multifaceted Pakistani society. The process

of debate and documentation leads the council to be a major exposition and reflection of values that serve as the anchor of the national ethos.

The IIC utilizes specific recommendations which encourage the application of Islamic values amongst the state institutions through legislative guiding principles. In 2013, the council rules that DNA testing could not be used as a primary proof in rape cases, but be used as a supplementary proof, they later said it can be used as the main evidence. A very notable area of attention here is banking reforms which is very much validated by the council's recommendations on the fine-tuning of leading Islamic banking and finance philosophies (Naveed, 2021). The suggestions summarize the approaches including eradication of interest based transactions (riba) and introduction of profit sharing arrangements (mudarabah) in order to guarantee that businesses practice ethically allowed financial norms (Iqbal, 2007). Further, the IIC works on family law amendments as the institute proposes legislation that is in line with the Islamic teachings on marriage, divorce, inheritance, and selection of guardians (Zubair, 2016). The aim of the council is to find solutions of problems like polygamy, child marriage, and family rights in the light of Islamic jurisprudence that in result would lead to equality, consideration and justice within Islamic family.

Besides that, the IIC also suggests solutions, which targets the practices causing deterioration of the ethical standards of the society of Pakistan. These programs include the institute of mass media content regulation which contains promote the culture of modesty in dress as well as behaviour and the society avoid to do something which is not shariah compliant. By propounding of religious thoughts on the position of cultural and social norms, the board try to develop a sense of moral consciousness and responsibility among the people encouraging them to follow Islamic religious laws in both private and public sphere (Iqbal, 2007). Nevertheless, the implementations of these recommendations are inconsistent, determined by a multitude of factors such as the political dynamic, the general public's acceptance, and the effectiveness mechanisms.

Finally, IIC's recommendations contributes enormously in the formulation of the laws that are made in order to put Islam dominant in Pakistan. The Council does this by writing a constitution and articles of faith that will guide the incorporation of Islamic elements into the management of the state and social practices. It hopes to reinforce the country's Islamic identity and moral fabric. Nevertheless, this plan can be ineffective for actualization of Islamic values due to the

limitation such as the involvement of political will, the gradual acceptability of the society, and the effectiveness of institutions for its implementation.

### **Social Reform Initiatives**

The Islamic ideology council of Pakistan (IIC) adopts a reform-oriented approach by scrutinizing social issues from perspectives in line with Quranic principles which involves the implementation of different policies related to poverty alleviation, education and women empowerment. The council's role in social domain is more than just an adoption of Islamic values related to present day problems. The council in its teachings tries to bring two issues at one platform i.e. aligning societal values with Islamic norms. Similarly, to endeavor to be against poverty, the IIC portrays the practice of zakat, which is an Islamic religious philanthropic activity, as one of the most effective measures in the fight against socioeconomic inequalities and poverty (Alam, 2017). Moreover, the trusted council stresses the necessity of social justice and wealth and resource sharing in accordance with Islamic principles of social justice and kindness (Ahmed 2018). Via the recommendation of the IIC, there has been a desire for philanthropy culture and community support that is aimed for improving the condition of the society's least fortunate members.

The remedies that the IIC prescribes, with the end in view of improving the social aspect of Pakistani society, contain a versatility of initiatives designed to promote constructive social change in general. An Islamic perspective in this case could be identifying and suggesting the elimination of child marriage (the present practice which is almost in direct contradiction to Islamic teachings on consent as well as protection of minors (Rasheed, 2020). The Council advocates about legal amendments/reforms to increase the minimum age of marriage, in line with the Islamic teachings (principles) which highlight the wellbeing and rights of children (Hussain, 2019). Also, the IIC outlines the necessity of having gender equality in education to pave equal ways for education of boys and girls (Saleem, 2018). The council advocate for laws and policies that upholds women education rights and dismantles the gender imbalances in schools for the enrichment of women education and achievement in their socio economic status.

Likewise, under the IIC's agenda for social reform, societal change is constrained by the presence of other factors such as the level of political will, the degree of societal acceptance and the capacity of institutions to implement the reforms. In spite of any advisory that the council may have asked for in terms of upholding Islamic ideals and principles, their achievement is something that other actors should take cognizance of (Alam, 2017). Beyond this, the conservativeness instilled both in the society and bureaucracies will be the factors stood in the way of the IIC's course of initiating transitional plans (Ahmed 2018). For the secondly, the effect of these activities may be diverse across of the Pakistan regions due to regional inequality in economy development and regional cultural habits.

In brief, the Council's Islamic social reform in Pakistan approaches furnishing a concerted attempt to tackle the conventional society problems with the Islamic perspectives. The council invites for law amendments and legal systems that conform to the Islamic principles of cooperating with the disadvantaged. Such measures are critical to ensuring a better life and well-balanced society for all. Nevertheless such measures run the risk to be ineffective because of a number of factors, namely, political disagreements and the prevalent societal perceptions and the depth of construction of the society, bringing to the fore the complexity of the vision into practical solution amidst societal problems.

### **Critical Analysis**

The existence of Islamic Ideology Council (IIC) in Pakistan employs both beneficial factors as well as drawbacks in its implementation of Islamic ethics and the execution of the projects on social upliftment. To begin with, the council contributes a lot in defending the country's Islamic background and in ensuring that its Islamic identity remains dominant and resolute (Saleem, 2019). The IIC promotes mutual collaboration and seeks to create an atmosphere of harmonious and uninterrupted tradition by making its advisory services grounded in the Islamic principles. Additionally, the council's work to bring forth suggestions on social inequality reflects commitment to the values of social equality and sympathy a cornerstone of Muslim religion (Ahmed, 2018). The IIC share their concern with the authorities and relentlessly make efforts to formulate that focuses on the well-being of underserved communities so that the society can become more egalitarian with a prevalence of inclusiveness.

In spite of this, the IIC's actions in the area of Islamic values and social reform are not always free from censor and criticism. Some will see it as a form of extra lock-in rendering Islam as a religion, devoid of any shared culture and traditions (Rasheed, 2020). The main objection against IIC's activities is the possibility this institution could promote the ultra-conservative interpretation of the Islamic law. Indeed, it is something that in most cases affects the rights of women and freedom of thought (Hussain, 2019). Also among the limiting factor is resistance exerted by particular secular segments of society which hold the liberal word of Islam and the idea of separation of religion from state problems.

The IIC must walk carefully to adjust regional canons with the stipulations of a contemporary civilization. The council will thus have the task of meeting the Islamic conventions while simultaneously encountering modern social realities (Alam, 2017). Bringing to equilibrium monistic acts of conserving faith and upholding societal changes proves to be a challenge to be addressed with a wide range of viewpoints and combined interests of everyone. Moreover, the IIC should pay attention to whether recommendations help both population and the diverse social needs (Saleem, 2018). Navigating the course of these obstacles require the application of a subtleness mode of the art that entails appreciating religious teachings and respecting the rights of all human beings.

The Islamic Ideology Council's importance in introducing the deep-rooted Islamic values receives mixed feedback meaning some contentment's and disagreements. As a result it is a force for confirming self-identity and the amelioration of social inequality but there are drawbacks in that it can lead to rigid interpretation of the scriptures and can limit progress. The IIC should find an ideal median which reassembles the various religious values to the modernity's changing needs. The end result should build up the society which accommodates the inclusion, plurality and equality.

### **Conclusion**

In summary, the Islamic Ideology Council (IIC) of Pakistan has undoubtedly assumed a prominent part in molding Islamic values and orienting society towards social improvements. The IIC Muslim Identity and Social Justice in Modern Societies project features therefore recommendations established on the basis of Islamic Shari'ah which aid in stabilizing religious identity and eradicating any social imbalances and injustices existing within the community. Yet,

the governments often argue that they exert too much control and undermine the social progress which was so painfully achieved. After carrying out the research, researchers should find whether the IIC is effective or not in its attainment of its objectives and whether it is capable of future role of molding the Pakistani society. Investigations further can require to consider the council's efforts in networking with wide range of the actors, its results on issue of implementation, and its readiness to accommodate the changing society as well as its dynamics. Moreover, the paper will suggest further studying IIC's function in promoting dialogue and collaboration among the religious leaders, policymakers, and civil society organizations, which can present the clear picture of the position of IIC in Pakistani society from wider angle.

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