

**Occupational Marginalization and Public Policy: A Case of Religious Minorities in
Islamabad's Public Sector Universities**



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APPROVAL

The MS thesis titled “Occupational Marginalization and Public Policy: A Case of Religious Minorities in Islamabad’s Public Sector Universities” has been carried out by Hira Yaqoob, under my supervision. The work is approved for evaluation.

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DECLARATION

This thesis titled “**Occupational Marginalization and Public Policy: A Case of Religious Minorities in Islamabad’s Public Sector Universities**” is based on the original research and has not been submitted previously by me for taking any degree from Bahria University, Islamabad Campus or anywhere else in the country/world. No part of this thesis is copied or plagiarized.

Hira Yaqoob

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the ongoing occupational marginalization of religious minorities including Christians, Hindus and Sikhs in the public sector universities of Islamabad, despite the constitutional guarantees of equality and the establishment of a 5% minority employment quota. The study uses the sequential mixed-method design which combines both quantitative data gathered in eleven public sector universities and qualitative interviews of minority employees, human-resource staff, administrators, and policymakers. Based on the Social Justice Theory by Fraser, the Critical Race Theory, and the Neo-Institutional Theory, the analysis shows that one of the effects of vertical and horizontal segregation is ever-present. Almost all the minority employees, who are mainly Christians, are overrepresented in low-level service jobs and are significantly underrepresented in scholarly and decision-making roles. The empirical results point to the lack of policy implementation, weak monitoring systems, the presence of informal recruitment paths, and the overall insensitivity to the importance of affirmative action programs as the key factors contributing to the continued marginalization. There is little open discrimination that is reported, but institutional inertia and cultural biases are still barriers to substantive inclusion. The research ends with future policy suggestions that will improve monitoring, transparency, representation, and institutional processes, and improve equity in the higher education sector in Pakistan.

Keywords: Occupational Marginalization, Religious Minorities, Islamabad, Quota Policy, Social Justice Theory, Critical Race Theory, Neo-Institutional Theory, Pakistan

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CRT	Critical Race Theory
CSJ	Centre of Social Justice Pakistan
HEC	Higher Education Commission
HRCP	Human Rights Commission of Pakistan
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
NGO	Non-Governmental Organizations
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Chapter 1

Introduction

Introduction:

The research entitled: “Occupational Marginalization and Public Policy: A Case of Religious Minorities in Islamabad’s Public Sector Universities,” explores the interrelationship between a nation policy, institutional culture, and social justice in the Pakistani higher education environment. It critically explores how a perpetual divide exists between what the constitution guarantees the nation in terms of equality, and the actual occupation segregation that religious minorities experience. Targeting the public sector universities in Islamabad, the epicenter of the administrative and policy-making processes in the country specifically, this research, in particular, by concentrating on the public sector universities of Islamabad, the center of administration and policy-making in the country, is not just a representation of statistics, but it will help reveal the more specific processes of exclusion engraved in recruitment, promotion, and interactions in the workplace every day. The study has a strong solid, sequential mixed-methodology, which is tactically supported by an overall theoretical framework of Nancy Fraser Tripartite Model of Social Justice (Fraser, 2008), Critical Race Theory (Delgado and Stefancic, 2017), and Neo- Institutional Theory (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991). This interdisciplinary prism, shaped by an intersectional lens, will allow a hierarchical deconstruction of how religious identity is charged by other aspects such as gender, class, and caste to determine and restrict occupational careers, the final outcome being evidence-based, practical policies.

This topic is relevant because it helps to bridge the gap between the matters of social justice and public policy. Designing a good policy can help to reduce inequality, yet in Pakistan, inclusion policies do not usually go beyond being symbolic. As an example, the government has a five percent quota on religious minorities in the government but the practice is uneven (National Assembly of Pakistan, 2020). Minority employees recruited under this quota are still segregated in the lowest occupational grade in most of the departments, and they hardly get an opportunity of rising to an academic or professional level (Rashid & Khattak, 2021). This implies that minorities often serve in support positions in public universities, as opposed to teaching or making decisions. This unequal

distribution of roles not only restricting the visibility of minorities in academia, but it is also unfavorable to institutional diversity.

1.1 Background:

The foundation of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan during its formation in 1947 was such that the state was to be a democratic nation wherein all its people regardless of their religious beliefs will have equal rights and liberties. This promise is codified by the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan (1973), in which Article 20 (right to profess religion) and 27 (protection against discrimination in services) lie in the foundation of rights of minorities. In order to put this constitutional requirement into practice, the government established a 5 percent employment quota of religious minorities in every federal government service in 2009 (Government of Pakistan, 2009), which is supposed to correct historical inequities and guarantee proportional representation.

Yet, there is a constant fundamental distance between these policy promises that are made on paper and the on-the-ground lives of minority groups. As per the latest statistics issued by Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (2023), religious minorities such as Christians, Hindus, Ahmadis, Sikhs and so on make up about 3.72 per cent of the nationwide inhabitants. Even with this, however, their participation in the public sector labor force is grossly disproportional and is marked by horizontal and vertical segregation. This marginalization is visibly acute in the strategic background of Islamabad public universities: the glamorous institutions governed federally and by the Higher Education Commission (HEC). The concentration of religious minority population is enormous as it appears to be in non-academic, low-grade (BS-1 to BS-4) and frequently temporary positions, i.e. in posts of sanitation workers, laboratory attendants, clerical personnel, and security guards. They are represented in high levels of decision-making sub-committees (e.g. Syndicates, Senates), mid-to-senior administrative positions (e.g. Registrars, Deans, Directors), and influence positions in faculty (negligible to non-existent) (Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, 2022; Centre for Social Justice, 2023).

The trend did not just start yesterday, but it has strong historical-socio-political grounds. The colonial rule frequently imposed some religious groups especially those of lower caste like Christians and Hindus into pre-determined niches in occupations that were

deemed menial like sanitation and manual labor (Malik, 2002). This occupational hierarchy was not eliminated in the post-independence but in many instances, it was reinforced by informal rules of society and institutional behavior. Occupational Marginalization signified by Creek and Loughlin (2022) is such a term: it means that institutional and structural obstacles do not allow certain social categories to obtain equitable jobs, professional growth and development, and a sense of professional identity. It is not only apparent via the open presence of discrimination but also by a biased recruitment procedure, non-inclusive organizational culture, restricted access to mentorship and professional growth, and nonparticipation in informal structures of power and influence (Shore et al., 2018).

Though an extensive academic literature has focused on the issue of occupational segregation in Pakistan both in regard to gender and ethnicity (e.g., Khurshid, 2018; Syed, 2019), a certain gap in scholarly literature involves the analysis of the issue of religious identity in the public sector, and specifically in the sphere of higher education system of Pakistan. Higher education is a sensitive place to be investigated because it represents not only a great mass employer in the country but also the supposed source of the progressive ideas, social mobility, and national values. When it continues to perpetuate exclusionary practices in exactly those institutions, this is an indication of failure of the inclusive agenda of the state on a profound level (Jamil, 2021). This research, then, finds itself at this crucial crossing point in that it seeks to unpack the multifacetedness of the phenomenon of occupational marginalization as it affects the religious minorities within the distinctive and productive microcosm of the Islamabad public universities.

1.2 Research Gap/Rationale:

The imperative for this research is firmly rooted in the exposure of the basic, interdependent gaps in the field of theory and context, as well as in the field of methodology. A survey of the existing literature indicates that, even though the issue of religious minorities in Pakistan is regularly reported in general terms, an ad hoc, academic screening of their occupational discrimination in the sphere of higher education is still evidently missing.

1.2.1 Theoretical Gap:

The sample analysis of the recent empirical research articles published in the best journals in the field of public administration, sociology of work, and social justice shows that there is a coherent set of recommendations that a future study has to follow, and this study is uniquely placed to achieve it. The gap in theory is multi-layered, and requires a more complex, combined theoretical approach:

Beyond Policy Text to Lived Reality:

Subsequent research advice is always to shift towards studying the lived experience of policy implementation instead of reading policy documentations (Smith & Kandola, 2020). The current research is a response to this call by exploring the interpretation, execution, and subversion of equity policies as part of university daily life.

Intersectionality in Institutional Contexts:

Intersectional studies examining the ways in which religious identity is combined with other marginalizing aspects of such as class, caste, and gender to influence occupational outcomes are in high demand (Crenshaw, 2018). In Pakistani context, this research will explicitly explore these intersections.

De-Westernizing Social Justice Theory:

Researchers have noted the necessity of testing and revising Western social justice frameworks, including the one by Nancy Fraser, which should be applied to non-Western, post-colonial contexts to see how much it can be applied and what dimensions of justice are context-specific (Ahmed, 2021).

Unpacking the "Institutional Black Box":

The key suggestion is to unpack the “black box” of institutions to discover specific mechanisms, which could have mediated between the intent of the policy and fair results, including bureaucratic, cultural, and political ones (Thornton et al., 2022). This paper shall un-pack these processes in university hierarchies.

Competing Institutional Logics:

It is intended that studies examine the conflict between logics of meritocracy, diversity quotas, and religious nationalism that coexist in the institutions of the populace, and how these incompatible logics are balanced in hiring and promotional decisions (Meyer and Bromley, 2023).

The Bureaucratic Discretion Role:

It is encouraged that future research determines the role of the discretionary authority of mid-level managers and members of the hiring committee to reinforce or reduce systemic biases, which may often be obscured in a formal accounting of policy. (Lipsky, 2010)

Recruitment to Workplace Climate:

It is even beginning to focus less on actual recruitment statistics and more on the climate of inclusiveness in general, analyzing retention, mentorship, microaggressions, and a feeling of belonging among minority employees (Shore et al., 2021). This paper values this holistic perspective.

The Application of Critical Race Theory to Bureaucracy:

There is a necessity exists to implement the tenets of CRT, especially the idea of convergence of interests and enduring racism, into the examination of the existing state of public administrative systems in order to reveal how they propagate racial (and by the same extension, religious) hierarchies even when presented as neutral (Blessett et al., 2019)

1.2.2 Contextual Gap/Analysis:

There is, empirically, an important contextual gap in the geographical and institutional introspection of available studies. Most research on minority rights and employment in Pakistan is focused on its provincial level, that is, Sindh (e.g., the situation of the Hindu communities) and Punjab (e.g., the situation of the Christian communities in such cities as Lahore and Faisalabad), frequently within a municipal framework or in the agricultural sector (I. Khan, 2020; R. Ahmed, 2019). Islamabad, the federal capital territory, the symbolic and effective center of the national policy-making, is an extremely under-researched site. Its domestic universities are directly reporting to federal authorities and designed to be leaders in national policy. They are thus; a strategic research location whose results have direct impacts towards the national policy review. Although there are still limited evidence and data to support it, early preliminary evidence and reports by NGOs point to even a situation where minorities are employed under the quota system and are usually quota-filled in lower-ranking positions with little overlapping vertical mobility possibilities, and their applications to higher grades of posts are subsequently disregarded (HRCP, 2022; CSJ, 2023). This research provides this important historical context gap as it offers a detailed, empirical exploration of the federal higher education

environment and offers information that is directly applicable to the national policymakers and the HEC.

1.2.3 Methodological Gap/Analysis:

The most significant methodological weakness of the current literature is its focus on a completely quantitative (e.g., the analysis of government employment statistics) or completely qualitative (e.g., an ethnographic case study of one community) approach. Although quantitative research can be helpful in showing the patterns of representation, it does not always reflect the subjective experience, perception of bias, and subtle social processes beneath the patterns (N. Shah, 2022). On the other hand, qualitative research, though full of details about the narration, does not always have the generalizability and statistical power to make broad conclusions about institutional tendencies (Yin, 2018). The given gap is strategically addressed in this research since it implements a comprehensive, sequential mixed-method design (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2017). By doing so, we can employ the methodological triangulation hypothesis: quantitative data in the form of university records and surveys will be used to pinpoint the quantity and extent of underrepresentation, whereas the subsequent in-depth interviews and focus group discussions will give the "why" and the how: what are the institutional biases, social barriers, and first-person stories that lie behind the numbers? This synergy gives a more valid, reliable and holistic understanding of the phenomenon than either approach could have given alone.

1.3 Problem Statement:

Although Pakistan has a strong constitutional establishment that ensures equality and a specialized kind of affirmative action policy (the 5% minority quota), the Pakistani religious minorities continue to experience occupational marginalization in the state sector on a systemic and institutionalized level. This marginalization is not uni-dimensional but usually is compounded to people in the intersection of religious identity as well as other marginalized axes, including gender, caste and socioeconomic class. This issue is acutely illustrated in the government universities of Islamabad, where Christian, Hindu, Sikh, and Ahmadi representatives continue to be grossly underrepresented in high-profile academic staff and in top management positions. They are also methodically placed in low position and non - decision making positions, which tend to be stigmatized

(Centre for Social Justice, 2023). This ongoing vertical and horizontal segregation demonstrates a basic inability to convert inclusive public policies into fair institutional practices and performance. This disconnect does not merely give rise to cycles of socio-economic disenfranchisement and psychological alienation of minority communities in Pakistan but also undercuts the very ideas of meritocracy, diversity, and social justice in the top higher education institutions in Pakistan, thus diluting their integrity and capability to develop the nation (Jamil, 2021).

1.4 Research Questions:

This study is guided by the following primary research question:

- Why and how does the phenomenon of occupational marginalization of religious minorities continue to occur in the public sector universities of Islamabad, regardless of the constitutional and policy protections in place?

In order to answer this central question in a comprehensive manner, the following specific, measurable sub-questions have been designed:

1. How does academic and administrative representation of religious minorities in the public sector universities of Islamabad presently stand and what are its characteristics?
2. How quickly are these institutions responding to constitutional guarantees and government reforms (minority quotas)?
3. What are the key challenges to the religious minorities when it comes to hiring, promotion and inclusion in the workplace?
4. What is the perception of religious minority staff of their experiences with respect to support, fairness and institutional responsiveness?
5. What are the reforms that could be suggested to enhance minority inclusion and minimize occupation segregation in higher education institutions??

1.5 Objectives:

These clear and feasible objectives are research questions that are directly operationalized as follows:

- To determine the existing proportion of representation of the religious minorities in the academic and administrative faculties in the universities of the public sector in Islamabad.

- To discover the institutional, cultural, and systemic obstacles to the recruitment, retention, and progress of religious minority employees.
- To propose a change in policy and institutional practices to encourage equal employment opportunities to religious minorities within the sector of the public higher education system.
- To report, using a rigorous qualitative approach, the experiences, meanings, and stories of religious minority employees, providing size to their struggles and ways of coping with the workplace world.
- To integrate the quantitative and qualitative results into one specific set of recommendations that would apply to the general public policy-makers, Higher Education Commission (HEC), and university administrations to offer fair employment opportunities and eliminate systemic obstacles in the higher education domain.

1.6 Significance of the Study:

All of the gaps and objectives outline above directly generate and motivate the novelty, contribution, and importance of this research, placing it in a position to contribute highly to various fields.

Theoretical Significance:

The research is an original contribution to knowledge because it develops and implements an integrated theoretical framework that incorporates the Social Justice Theory developed by Nancy Fraser (reducing, recognizing, and representing injustice), Critical Race Theory (exposing normative religious privilege and bias), and Neo-Institutional Theory (unraveling how organizations sustain inequality through organizational structures and myths). Such a tripartite model provides a more potent and sophisticated analytical instrument towards dissection of the problem of occupational marginalization than any one of the theories might have done, especially in such a complex, religiously charged situation as the one in Pakistan.

Contextual Significance:

The research addresses a significant geographical and institutional gap in the literature because it analyzes only the federal universities of Islamabad. The results will offer a distinctive and impactful evaluation of the self-declared dedication of the federal

government to inclusion of its most actually dominated agencies. To conclude, this study would be helpful in regards to the national policy audit and reform, offering an insight into the performance of states on the brink of the power.

Methodological Significance:

By adopting mixed-method design, this paper analyzes one of the primary drawbacks in the methodology of the current research. The study that fills the gap between the quantitative and the qualitative approach will ensure that the reasons as to why the what is are, and as a consequence, the findings will be statistically robust but yet very context-specific (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2017).

Practical and Policy Significance:

On the practical level, the study connects high-impact practical outcomes. These evidence-based recommendations will act as an appropriate roadmap concerning the ways the HEC, the Federal Ministry of Education, and the senates of universities should amend their policies, transform institutions, as well as come up with proper monitoring and accountability mechanisms. It will offer the civil society solid advocacy information and will assist in ensuring that Pakistan keeps to its international commitments, as expressed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). To conclude, this is not just a piece of paper consisting of an administrative exercise, but a vision that can realize real change. It has the long-term goal of informing a more inclusive and more equitable image of higher education in Pakistan one where diversity is not just given a chance to be in the numbers but embraced, factored in, facilitated into the very structures of opportunity, power and national progress.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Pakistan is a country with more than 256 million population according to the Worldometer's elaboration of the latest United Nation's data November 2025, in which a multifaceted diversity of linguistic, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds is present, while the high diversity contrasts with the harsh reality of religious intolerance and marginalization of minority populations (Ali & Mukherjee, 2022). This chapter represents a critical combination of existing literature that is applicable in the study of occupational marginalization of religious minorities in the Pakistani public sector higher education. The review is logically presented with progressive coverage of generalizing the concept to the narrow settings of applications and theoretical grounds, directly corresponding to the gaps, research questions, and objective outlined in the introductory part of Chapter 1. It takes a step back in its dissection of the very idea of occupational marginalization, and its multidimensionality, critical analysis of global and local approaches to the problem of occupational marginalization and affirmative action, and then dissects, in greater detail, the socio- economic and occupational status of the religious minorities in Pakistan, and in higher education, especially. The chapter concludes with the introduction of an underproductive theoretical framework that presents the integration of Social Justice Theory (Fraser, 2008), Critical Race Theory (Delgado and Stefancic, 2017), and Institutional Theory (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991) to establish a therapeutic analytical framework in understanding the intricate relationship between the structure, culture, and policy that both sustains inequality. This framework will explicitly establish conceptual relationships among variables resulting in the development of a research model guiding this inquiry. The literature review is extensive and covers about 150 academic sources such as empirical research publications, theoretical publications, and policy reports in order to cover all of this multifaceted research area.

2.1 Historical and Cultural Factors

Colonial History and National Identity:

The historical background of the national identity in Pakistan, which was formed as the result of the formation of Pakistan at the partition of India in 1947, has had a significant impact on the marginalization of religious minorities. Pakistan as a Muslim homeland

was formed on the basis of deeply rooted Islamic identity, which frequently neglected the realization and assimilation of religious minorities into the state (Azam & Bilal, 2022) (Swenden, 2018). This exclusionist story has continued to exist where religious minorities have most times been treated as second-class citizens instead of equal partners in nation-building exercises.

Textbook Content and Curriculum:

This discriminatory story is evident in the Pakistani education system, such as in universities. English textbooks on the English language have been discovered to blacklist the plurality of the Pakistani society by excluding the minority groups, including religious minorities, in their literary contents (Khokhar and Muhammad, 2022). This exclusion helps to strengthen the ideation of religious minorities being marginal to the identity and history of the country, making them even more marginal in the academic and leadership field.

Prejudices and Societal Perceptions:

The attitude of the society towards religious minorities in Pakistan is deep-rooted, which is usually reflected in the discrimination and prejudice. An example of this is the case with Christians where they are subjected to a plethora of socio-economic and political discrimination that restricts their opportunities to both access education and assume leadership positions (Latif et al., 2023) (Pio and Syed, 2016). Such prejudices are maintained with the help of systemic exclusion and violence, thus, making it hostile to religious minorities who may hope to become leaders.

Institutional Policies and Practices Lack of Inclusive Policies:

Although equality of citizenship is established in the constitution, the policies in the Pakistani universities tend to exclude religious minorities in the leadership. The lack of affirmative action processes, or his/her quotas in academic and administrative positions, continues to keep religious minorities underrepresented (Raina, 2014) (Baltaru, 2023). This is even enhanced by the fact that a considerable number of universities are not part of equality charters and initiatives which otherwise could enhance diversity and inclusion.

Discrimination in Hiring Practices:

Research indicates that minorities in the religions suffer systemic discrimination in

employment practices at universities. As an example, Christians in Pakistan tend to be restricted on low-paying low-position jobs, with no career progression (Latif et al., 2023) (Pio and Syed, 2016). The factors that further increase this discrimination include the poor transparency in hiring and the use of patronage systems which favor the majority groups.

Limited Access to Professional Development:

Most of the religious minorities are less likely to get a chance of engaging in professional development opportunities, including leadership trainings, which are essential to climb to the leadership level. This exclusion is especially clear on the aspect of the representation of religious minorities in decision-making organizations, as well as in the committees held in the university (Mattes et al., 2016) (Belluigi et al., 2024).

Social and Economic Barriers:

Pakistan religious minorities are mostly vulnerable in regard to socio-economic wellbeing and challenges such as poverty and inability to access good education. Such difficulties are especially severe among Christians, who are also overrepresented in low-income groups and do not have the same access to resources that might help them become the next leaders (Latif et al., 2023) (Pio and Syed, 2016). Economic marginalization of religious minorities only makes the exclusion of such minority in leadership positions more acculturated.

Social Exclusion and Stigma:

There are general social exclusion and the stigma of religious minorities in Pakistani society, even in the universities. Religious extremism and discourse of jihadist-supported by the state continue to incur lots of violence and discrimination toward religious minorities (Pio & Syed, 2016) (Koenig, 2023). The resultant stigma becomes hostile to the religious minorities that discourages them to have hopes of holding leadership roles.

Limited Representation in Decision-Making Bodies:

The underrepresentation of religious minorities in decision making mechanisms in universities is a serious impediment to their getting into leadership positions. Such exclusion is enforced by the absence of any mechanisms to achieve proportional representation and dominance of majority groups in these bodies (Raina, 2014) (Baltaru, 2023).

2.2 Conceptualizing Occupational Marginalization: Dimensions and Manifestations:

Occupational marginalization is a complex structure of construction that goes far beyond unemployment or underemployment. It involves systemic mechanisms where individual social groups are systematically pushed to labor markets marginalities, without equitable enjoyment of rewarding work, work, career, and professional dignity (Creek & Loughlin, 2022). To explain this phenomenon, it is important to go beyond the use of individual-level factors to understand merit or effort in order to examine institutional structures and social relationships that generate and reproduce generation inequality. The theoretical comprehension of professional marginalization has shifted significantly since the early days of economic determinism to the modern critical social theory, using the perspectives of sociology, organizational analysis, and critical race theory (Wilkinson and Pickett, 2018).

Critical analysis indicates that there are a number of interrelated aspects of the occupational marginalization that are specific to this study and each of which is to be discussed in detail:

Vertical Segregation and Hierarchical Constraints:

The concept of vertical segregation and hierarchical constraint is linked to values within organizational settings and benefits from higher order levels. Vertical segregation means that certain groups of people are concentrated in the lower levels of organizational structures with harshly few possibilities of advancement and rise in the hierarchy (Smith and Kandola, 2020) This in the context of this study occurs in the form of the systematic restriction of religious minorities to low-grade (BS-1 to BS-4) support functions in universities, such as sanitation workers, lab attendants, and clerical staff, with almost no representation thereafter in the top academic, administrative, and decision-making positions (Professor, Registrar, and Dean) (Centre for Social Justice, 2023; Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2023). This form of vertical segregation is not a passive phenomenon but an active process that is perpetuated by the mechanisms of the institutions such as glass ceiling, biased promotion standards and deprivation of professional development opportunities (Acker, 2006). Such limited movement has a mental health effect, such as less professional identity, less work satisfaction, and internalized oppression that leads to

self-socially disadvantaged cycles (Creek and Loughlin, 2022). The studies have shown that vertical segregation tend to be run in informal networks and sponsoring systems of which the marginalized populations are always excluded, which is further reinforcing their disadvantaged positions (Ibarra, 2019).

Horizontal Segregation and Occupational Channeling:

As stated by Cohen, Katz, and Zimmerman (405), the concept of Horizontal Segregation and Occupational Channeling holds considerable significance in modern economics. According to three scholars, it is important to note that Horizontal Segregation and Occupational Channeling is one of the most important concepts in contemporary economics. Horizontal segregation is defined as organizing certain groups of people in a specific way into certain, often less-valued, areas of employment or spheres but not completing in others (Syed, 2019). This segregation to religious minorities is historically already established and a cultural directive in the Pakistan scenario. This segregation is old and culturally approved to religious minorities in Pakistan. The Christian-Hindu Dalit divide of the colonial era of representing the Dalit minority as unpleasant or menial laborers through sanitation and sweeping has continued to be incredible in the present system of the modern public. This horizontal division does not end with the division of labor; it has an extensive symbolic value, whereby social inequalities and stigmas are supported by occupational roles (Jodhka, 2016). Modern research indicates that horizontal segregation is regularly self-selected as marginalized people internalize social expectations and restrict their professional ambitions, and institutionally steered when hiring people (Reskin, 2012). At universities, this takes the form of religious minorities being confined to non-academic units that do not have extensive contact with the main operations of the institutions where they are, in effect being pushed to the periphery of the institutions (Jamil, 2021).

Representational Marginalization and Voice Deficit:

Representational marginalization happens when the numerical representation of a group has drastically decreased compared to their representation in the population in question, and their voices are not represented in the powerful committees and decision-making bodies (Shore et al., 2021). Although Pakistan has a 5% employment quota of religious minorities, their percentage in Islamabad Universities remains significantly lower than

this value, and their representation in such powerful institutions as Syndicates, Senates, and departmental recruitment committees is virtually absent (Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, 2022; Centre for Social Justice, 2023). This lack of representativeness also makes sure that the interests and views of minorities are never included in the process of institutional policy development to form a self-affirming loop of exclusion (Phillips, 2019). The idea of symbolic annihilation explains that total absence of decision-making systems conveys strong messages that express social value and inclusion (Tuchman, 2000). Moreover, the theory on critical mass indicates that until the minority representation approaches 15-20 percent, individuals experience pressure to be more visible and be unable to impact the organizational culture properly (Kanter, 2008). In Pakistani educational institutions such as universities, religious minorities fall way beneath this threshold, and this guarantees they will never be part of the institutional governance structures.

Symbolic and Psychological Marginalization:

The dimension would include day-to-day experiences of microaggression, social ostracism, othering, and deprivation of a sense of belonging which systematically undervalue the professional identity and psychological well-being of the individual (Nadal, 2018). In terms of religious minorities with employees, it encompasses constant rejection during meetings, cultural and religious insensitivity, stereotypical assumptions, and calls to professional competence on the basis of religious affiliation and not capability (Sue et al., 2019). This dimension, which is often ignored in quantitative research, is extremely important in realizing the comprehensive effect of occupational marginalization on lived experiences of individuals. Studies indicate that long-term exposure to microaggressions in the workplace leads to psychological distress, decreased commitment to the organization, and worse performance at work (Nadal et al., 2021). Moreover, the consistent necessity to manage identity, whether by revealing or concealing identity as a religious, makes it a considerable source of cognitive and emotional labor that is rare among the majority group members (Chaudoir and Fisher, 2018). Religious minorities in Pakistani universities, where the organizational culture is often strongly influenced by Islamic religious and cultural habits, are probably under significant pressure to conform or fade into the background, further contributing to the

aspect of psychological marginalization.

Economic and Precarity Dimensions:

The economy inevitably plays a role in the occupational marginalization, as the marginalized populations experience wage discrimination, lack of benefits, and increased job precarity (Standing, 2016). There is widespread informal employment, temporary contracts, and a lack of inclusion in pension schemes and promotion systems in the Pakistani public sector involving religious minorities even with policies to ensure equality (Gazdar, 2021). This financial instability makes people more vulnerable and less able to resist. The cost of marginalization constitutes not just income loss but also the diminished access to health benefits and job security as well as to social protection systems (Wilkinson and Pickett, 2018). Moreover, spatial segregation is usually overlapping with the issue of economic marginalization, where the lack of occupational options limits residence options and access to good education to future generations, which may result in intergenerational patterns of disadvantage (Massey, 2007). This economic aspect is reflected in universities with the unequal pay of similar work, the inability to access grants and funds to study and promote the career, and temporary employment with no future prospects (Jamil, 2021). Literature always proves that workplace marginalization is hardly ever caused by one single factor and arises due to the interaction of structural obstacles (e.g., biased recruitment systems), cultural components (e.g., prejudice in society), and inefficient policies (e.g., ineffective use of quotas) (Blessett et al., 2019; Jamil, 2021). This paper will use this holistic multidimensional definition as its operationalization of the phenomenon in that an effective analysis should be done in all these connected dimensions simultaneously.

2.3 Public Policy and Affirmative Action

Global Lessons and Local Realities:

The affirmative action policies most especially, the employment quotas, are highly practiced measures to correct past injustice and support diversity in the public sectors around the world. The critical analysis of international literature suggests that there is a continuum of the implementation outcomes and it is evident that policy presence is never enough to ensure the success. The key determinant of effectiveness is institutional will, the sophistication of the policy design, monitoring, and the level of the compatibility with

the wider social structures (Weisskopf, 2021).

Global Comparative Perspectives:

The affirmative action policies have had a completely different effect on a contextual basis at the international level. The Scheduled Castes and Tribes provisions of the Indian constitution have brought about a fair deal of representation benefits and at the same time brought challenges such as over-fulfilment in low grade jobs and relentless resistance in elite services (Deshpande, 2020). The case of Indians shows that numeric representation can indeed become dramatic with quotas, but it is not always accompanied by the breaking of social stratifications, and respectful inclusion (Jodhka, 2016). Equally, the policies of the Black Economic Empowerment in South Africa have given significant numerical representation in the public and the private sector but have at times failed to change the cultures or bring about meaningful redistribution of economies (Mabe, 2021). Such instances demonstrate an overall cross-national pattern: policies may effectively transform the demographic make-up at the lower organizational levels without much transformations in the organizational power patterns or cultural processes- a fact that directly relates to the situation in Pakistan (Sabbagh, 2013).

The Bumiputera policy of Malaysia is a helpful example of a real-life case because it demonstrates how affirmative action may produce a significant redistribution of the economy and, at the same time, trigger a political backlash and raise the viability of the concept of meritocracy (Lee, 2017). The case in Malaysia provides a reminder of the thorny balance that should be taken between corrective justice and the protection of the perceptions of the fairness in the eyes of non-beneficiary populations. In comparison, the affirmative action approach of the United States places diversity as a persuasive state interest over and above reparative justice and has faced its share of incessant legal accusations, even though it has had limited success in terms of representation (Katznelson, 2022). Taken together, such comparative cases suggest that such interventions of affirmative action should be successful only when recalibrating them is ensured, strong implementation mechanisms are in place, and that policies are adopted that respond to educational and social differences (Weisskopf, 2021).

2.4 Policy Implementation in Pakistan - A Critical Analysis:

In Pakistan, the largest policy tool is the 5 percent of religious minorities in employment

in federal services, which is officially established in 2009 (Government of Pakistan, 2009). Academic criticism of the application of this policy is harsh and ongoing, echoing towards deep deficiencies in a variety of dimensions.

Tokenistic Implementation and Slot-Filling:

In tokenistic implementation, a diversity policy, say a quota, is implemented within an organization to demonstrate symbolic legitimacy, but not substantive change. In this regard, employment of people of marginalized groups will be a ritual activity aimed at protecting the institution by eliminating blaming, but their physical location will be in secluded areas and lacking actual power or assimilation (Kanter, 2008). Slot-filling, on its part, is the actual process of tokenism: it imposes the members of the marginalized populations into a narrow gambit of pre-determined and in most cases low-status occupational positions within an organizational structure. This practice meets the quantitative target of the quota policy but proactively strengthens the occupational-level segregation in place by creating the so-called ceiling, beyond which these groups cannot rise (I. Khan, 2020; Jamil, 2021).

In this study, the concept of Tokenistic Implementation and Slot-Filling describes the process of implementing the 5 percent job quota on religious minorities in Pakistani universities. The universities fail to use the quota in the promotion of real equality. It means the universities are not using the quota to create genuine equality. Instead, they use minorities to work only in non-leadership roles of low grade (e.g., sanitation workers, laboratory attendants, or lower rank clerks). Avoid hiring them for prestigious or powerful positions (like professors, deans, or directors) Do not offer prestigious or powerful positions (such as professors, deans or directors) to minority candidates. Fill the quota in title on paper by counting these low-level hires, but in actuality preventing minorities to climb up the bureaucracy, or affect the inner workings of these institutions. As a result, the quota becomes a mere performative act of inclusion that does not have a significant effect on the balance of power. The practice has turned a potentially disruptive policy into a dynamo that in fact maintains the current occupational hierarchies by placing beneficiaries in marginal roles.

Researchers shows that the quota is often perceived as a goal that must be met by slot filling of minority in already defined, low-status, positions instead of being used as a tool

of actual integration at all levels of the organization (I. Khan, 2020). This trend covers the ground to occupational hierarchies and sabotages the practical intentions of the policy. Such tokenism has consequences such as increased pressure of visibility, scrutiny of performance, and stereotype threat, which can destroy professional confidence and performance (Kanter, 2008).

Accountability and Transparency Deficits:

There is a visible lack of strong surveillance institutions to keep track of quota execution in all governmental branches, including higher education (Jamil, 2021). In the absence of clarity on accountability mechanisms, standardized reporting requirements, and consequences in the case of failure to comply, hiring committees will go unchecked in the face of policy requirements. They often use ambiguous standards like suitability or merit to dismiss a minority candidate to higher grade jobs and meet the minimum quotas with low-grade jobs (Centre for Social Justice, 2023). This accountability gap is a fatal implementation issue, which allows compliance with policies, except that this is not the purpose of the policies.

Policy-Practice Decoupling:

The main idea presented on the basis of the Institutional Theory is how to explain the ways in which organizations formally make use of policies in order to achieve the status of legitimacy and shield their technical cores against real practice (Meyer and Rowan, 1991). Such decoupling goes into the fundamental difference between constitutional equality pledges (Articles 20, 27) and the occupational segregation fact in universities. The policy is turned into a myth and ceremony which serves to preserve the legitimacy of the institution with the outside stakeholders as the activities that the organization operates in its day-to-day operations remain unchanged (Khan, 2022). This decoupling is supported with vague policy language, lack of enforcement mechanism and cultural resistance through the implementing institutions.

Procedural and Structural Barriers:

There is also an implementation failure due to procedural barriers, such as complicated application procedures, insufficient outreach to minority groups, and scheduling examinations or interviews during religious holidays (HRCF, 2022). Educational difference can be considered a structural barrier, as it limits the range of candidates and

lacks bridging programs to support minorities in achieving competitive jobs (Gazdar, 2021). These structural and procedural influences are compounded with cultural reservations to form a very strong barrier to implementation. This discursive analysis policy has a direct implication on the Research Question (2) and Objective (2) (discussing the effectiveness of policy implementation) of the study, which is that it is important to study not only the policy text as it is but the institutional procedures, resistance to change in the culture, and the gaps in policy implementation that dilute its intent.

2.5 Religious Minorities in the Pakistani Workforce

A Context of Systemic Disadvantage:

All the occupational marginalization of religious minorities in Pakistan cannot be perceived out of context of the socio-economic, historical, and political contexts. Patterns of systemic disadvantage apply universally to all religious minority groups as empirical studies are consistent in stating that these groups are indeed marginalized, though to different extents and in different ways.

Historical Preconditions of Modern Marginalization:

The modern patterns of occupations are still strongly guided by colonial labor policies that contributed to the stratification of the religious groups into professional segments (Malik, 2002). In the recruitment strategies employed by the British administration, Christians and Hindus of lower caste were often connected to the so-called menial jobs, such as sanitation, leatherwork, and sweeping, whereas those positions of the military and administration were limited to certain groups of Muslims (Jaoul, 2021). Instead of bringing down these occupational structures, post- independence the Pakistani state tends to strengthen them unwillingly by creating bureaucratic continuity and giving rise to novel ways of religious nationalism (A. Khan, 2022). The notorious Second Amendment of the Constitution of 1974 that labeled Ahmadi Muslims as non-Muslims formalized the area of religious discrimination in the structures of the state, establishing institutional barricades to the employment of this community in the country (Siddique, 2022). These historical changes brought path dependencies which now define modern occupational distributions.

Contemporary Socio-economic Realities:

Recent empirical evidence indicates the existence of sustained patterns of disadvantage among the Pakistani religious minorities.

Christian Community:

Christians, the largest religious minority of Pakistan, making up an estimated 1.3 % of the total population (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2023), continue to be underrepresented in white-collar employment since they are disproportionately engaged in sanitation tasks, domestic labor, as well as other low-waged positions in the informal sector (Malik, 2002). Such professional clustering is not individual choice, but the system, with differences in education, housing segregation, and biased employment policies in place (I. Khan, 2020). Recent researches show that Christians face especially harsh obstacles to vertical mobility, and even the educated ones are often directed into conservative careers under the influence of social pressure and discrimination by employers (Jacob, 2021).

Hindu Community:

Hindus with a population of around 1.6% of Pakistani (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2023), they are mainly concentrated in Sindh province and have most of them working as agricultural laborers, small-scale farmers, and in informal trading (R. Ahmed, 2019). They are still poorly represented in federal jobs, partially because of geographical concentration but also due to the presence of some institutional obstacles to inter-provincial hiring (Gazdar, 2021). Occupational patterns are also problematic because of the different strata of discrimination against Dalit Hindus, due to the caste differences within the Hindu community (Jodhka, 2016).

Sikhs:

Smaller groups, such as Sikhs, are experiencing the same but less recorded trajectories of marginalization and tend to adjust to conflicting demands of exposure and protection in the labor markets (I. Khan, 2020).

2.6 Intersectional Dimensions of Marginalization

A more detailed view on the patterns of occupational marginalization is more complicated when an intersectional analysis is considered that appreciates the interdependence of religious identity with other social categories, including gender, class, and caste (Crenshaw, 2018). Women of both Christian and Hindu faiths are often subjected to even worse discrimination due to both religious and gender biases, which

limits their possible places of work to an effect that neither religion nor gender has a specific stance on what a person can or cannot do (Jacob, 2021). Likewise, the caste backgrounds among minority groups introduce internal stratifications affecting the occupational outcomes, the Dalit Christians and Hindu are especially oppressed (Jodhka, 2016). Economic category merges with religious identity because poverty impairs access to education, and, consequently, restricts career transference across generations (Gazdar, 2021). Such intersectional processes require subtle analysis that goes beyond single-axis models that only analyze religious discrimination.

There is a critical contextual gap in the literature. Although public literature is available regarding the overall condition of these communities, there is a vast gap in the literature, research on their condition as employees in the sector of the federal higher education of Pakistan specifically. The vast majority of available research is general nation-level reports (e.g., HRCP, CSJ) or region- specific provincial (Khan, 2020; Ahmed, 2019). The distinctive experience of the universities of Islamabad as the federal institutions controlled by HEC, which directly apply the national policy, has not been studied much. This paper addresses this gap by offering a micro-level examination of this context which is policy crucial.

The Higher Education Sector as a Strategic Site of Inquiry:

Universities do not only constitute a neutral space of knowledge production but are the most important mechanisms of social and political action that is both expressive and recreative of power relations within society (Giroux, 2014). Their study presents a strong tool in evaluating the adherence of the state to its own proclaimed principles of equality and inclusion.

Global Perspectives on Diversity in Higher Education:

The global discourse on diversity within higher education has always emphasized its importance in the development of innovativeness, critical thinking, and social mobility (Shore et al., 2021). Empirical studies indicate that workforce diversity, staff, and faculty increase educational experience of all students by providing different perspectives, disrupting existing societal biases, and acting as role models (Smith and Kandola, 2020). On the contrary, homogenous institutions can also recreate the inequities that exist in society because they reproduce the preexisting power structures in the academic

hierarchies (Acker, 2006). The expanding patterns in the global community recognize the fact that meaningful diversity requires going beyond the level of numerical representation to building the actual institutional cultures where everyone is allowed to thrive (Shore et al., 2021). It has become popular to think about the idea of inclusive excellence and place diversity as the condition of achieving institutional quality instead of a simple response to the requirement of equity (Williams, 2021)

Pakistani Higher Education: Equity Landscape:

The Higher Education Commission (HEC) in Pakistan requires quality assurance and standardization but has received much criticism about lack of emphasis on equity and inclusion within the labor markets, especially regarding religious diversity (Jamil, 2021). Although HEC has introduced salient gender-equity programmes, the religious diversity continues to be conspicuously missing in the strategic agenda of HEC (HEC, 2021). The academic freedom, administrative systems, and gender equality have been a prevalent topic of the extant literature on Pakistani universities, whereas the aspect of religious diversity within the professionals remains a vivid absence (A. Shah, 2022). The available sparse empirical data indicate that the universities recreate the overall public-sector trend of discrimination, and religious minorities are grossly underrepresented in academic and administrative roles (Centre for Social Justice, 2023)

Universities as Strategic Research Sites:

This paper assumes that universities are not only places of employment but also of strategic research where national policy is implemented, and where conflicts of interest between meritocratic principles, religious identity, and bureaucratic praxis can be expressed in a conspicuous manner. Universities have some unique characteristics, which make them particularly probing research objects: as institutions that produce knowledge, they should be the primary champions of rationalism and equality; as institutions with federal control, they are meant to play a significant role of socialization of future elites (Jamil, 2021). In turn, the analysis of employment practice in those institutions gives an idea not only of current trends in inequality but also of the ways this inequality is bound to be perpetuated. This concentration is a direct reportage to Research Question 1, 3 and 4, which are based on patterns of representation, institutionalized barriers, and experiences of marginalization.

2.7 Theoretical Framework: An Integrated Lens for Analysis:

To As a means of sufficiently addressing the complexity of occupational marginalization, this paper follows an integrated theoretical approach that brings together Social Justice Theory, Critical Race Theory, and Institutional Theory. This three-lens tool helps in a multidimensional analysis which outperforms the explanatory ability of any one theoretical construct.

Social Justice Theory (Nancy Fraser):

According to the model provided by Fraser (2008), modern justice needs the three-dimensional approach, which consists of redistribution, recognition, and representation:

Redistribution:

This dimension deals with socio-economic unfairness that is based on political-economic organization, which promotes a less unequal allocation of material possessions and chances. In this paper, the examination of vertical and horizontal segregation, that is, the unequal allocation of work, grades, and pay. The policy of minority quota is an inherently redistributive policy. The current study will evaluate critically the failure of the current research to fulfill any substantive redistribution and will discuss structural obstacles to economic justice.

Recognition:

This dimension analyses inequalities of status, rooted in the patterns of societal representation, interpretation and communication. It asks questions of institutionalized hierarchies of cultural value that prevents some groups to gain parity of participation. These dynamics are core to the discussion of symbolic and psychological marginalization of minority staff such as disrespect, stereotyping, and non-inclusive workplace culture. The dimension also challenges recognitional justice in the university environment and explores the way misrecognition occurs in day-to-day institutional life.

Representation:

The dimension deals with political injustices regarding boundary delineation establishing the communities that are allowed to make justice claims. It asks the question Who has voice? and has a direct relation to the phenomenon of representational marginalization, i.e. exclusion of religious minorities in making decisions. The dimension explores whether university governance systems permit the religious minorities a just voice in

policy-making that concerns them and the role of political exclusion in strengthening other injustices.

The framework proposed by Fraser will serve to give a complete normative criterion of assessment of university policies and practices and hence explicitly inform the Objectives 1, 3, and 4. Her principle of participatory parity, the ability to interact with others on equal terms, is a code that cuts across all three dimensions (Fraser, 2008).

Critical Race Theory (CRT):

Critical Race Theory (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017) is an analytical tool to explore the power relations of race, and, accordingly, religion as a more closely linked identity marker, in society. Its fundamental principles are very applicable to the Pakistani situation.

The Permanence of Racism/Religious Prejudice:

To start with, CRT asserts that racism is a normal, institutionalized aspect of social and institutional life and is not an aberrant behavior. This, in the case of Pakistan, translates to normalization of religious prejudice which most of the time is not visible to the masses but essentially determines the day-to-day running of the institutions. This idea progresses the claim that those rare and particular events or bad actors explain inequality and predicts organizational, structural, patterns of disadvantage.

Interest Convergence:

Similarly, the theory proposes that the progress achieved by marginalized groups is conditional; the progress should serve the interests of the dominant group. This is a lens that is more applicable to studying how quota policies can be implemented, which can only be condoned to the level to which they avoid the wrath of international opponents or meet legal standards and enforce this without jeopardizing the power of the majority. The interest convergence principle explains why this is really likely to foster policies that are most lightly felt without altering power structures.

Critique of Liberalism:

Though CRT has a deep-rooted rejection of arguments of neutrality, objectivity, and color-blind or religion-blind meritocracy. This paper shall modify that cynicism to debunk the arguments of merit that are often created to dismiss minority candidates and thus show how seemingly objective standards can instigate majoritarian sentiments. To

explain the way the definition of merit often captures the features of dominant groups instead of objective performance measurements, the authors discuss the difference between substantive merit and formal merit (Delgado and Stefancic, 2017).

Voice-of-Color Thesis:

In short, CRT highlights the value of hearing what marginalized groups have to say and how their experiences can bring their insights to the legal and institutional systems. This would be in step with the qualitative aspect of the current study whereby the minority voices would be used to inform the analysis as opposed to solely using the views of majority. Through the operationalization of these insights, CRT allows conducting an analysis of cultural and systemic barriers (Objective 3) and orient on the obscured power relations that perpetuate the status quo.

Institutional Theory:

Institutional Theory stated by DiMaggio and Powell discuss why organizations are more likely to become similar as a result of isomorphism and why their structures are more likely to be designed to provide legitimacy than efficiency. The relevant concepts are as follow:

Isomorphism:

The homogenization of institutional practices takes place due to influence of coercive, mimetic and normative pressure. The Higher Education Commission (HEC) uses coercive pressure, but this paper questions why coercion has not produced equitable results, by asking how universities decouple themselves, or how they react to conflicting institutional demands.

Decoupling:

As mentioned above, this fundamental idea explains the gap between policy rhetoric and its application. Universities can also introduce HEC diversity discourse as a symbolic submission and leave practices in hiring and promotion as the technical centre uncoupled with these directives. Decoupling plans involve establishment of specialized departments that deal with problems of diversity and thus leave other departments unaccountable or adoption of policies that do not entail effective resource distribution (Meyer and Rowan 1991).

Institutional Logics:

This quote mentions belief systems and practices that inform organizational behavior. The field of the university is typified by competing logics such as meritocracy, bureaucratic quota compliance and religious nationalism. The current paper discusses the process of navigating these logics by the administrators, often to the disadvantage of minority inclusion. The logic complexity is used to explain the way actors make the strategic choice between the logics available to them in order to justify actions (Thornton et al., 2022).

Institutional Entrepreneurship:

Last but not the least, this concept looks into the possibility of actors in institutions trying to make changes in institutional arrangements. The paper shall research on whether institutional entrepreneurs in universities promote the idea of religious inclusion and the tactics they use in limiting institutional environments. The institutional Theory provides analytical tools of exploring institutional and systems-wide obstacles (Objective 3) thus explaining the mechanism behind policy-practice gaps.

Synthesized Theoretical Framework and Research Model:

The combination of the three theoretical perspectives results in a strong multi-level analytic approach to the present question:

Fraser's Social Justice Theory:

The integrated framework defines the normative goals redistribution, recognition and representation, as well as offers the evaluative metrics to analyze the current situation.

Critical Race Theory:

This theory shows the processes that are ideologically and full of power unfriendly to the achievement of these goals, bringing into focus how religion privilege tends to work unseen.

Institutional Theory:

This theory explains institutionalization and maintenance of exclusionary processes through organizational mechanisms that include isomorphism, decoupling and logics.

The integrated framework does not suggest independent, mediating and modifying variables in their usual positivist connotation but, instead, considers the phenomenon a sophisticated system. However, the main conceptual connections could be outlined in the following way:

Public Policy (Quota):

The independent construct used, which is hereby referred to as Public Policy (Quota), is expected to bring a significant change to the topic of interest.

Occupational Marginalization:

The dependent variable is occupational marginalization, characterized in terms of vertical and horizontal segregation juxtaposition, representational deficiencies, and symbolic exclusion dimensions.

The relationship between the independent and dependent variables is not direct, there is an intervening complex of institutional and cultural mechanisms. Institutional Mechanisms consists of policy-practice decoupling, biased hiring committee and accountability deficits. Cultural-Symbolic Factors including prejudice, non-inclusive climate, microaggressions and stereotype threat. This mediation also is influenced by the mediating conditions of the conflicting institutional logics meritocracy and quota compliance and religious nationalism, how actors understand and act on policies.

This integrative model assumes that occupational marginalization exists as a tri-faceted phenomenon including the poor policy execution is explained by the Institutional Theory, institutionalized cultural bias as defined by Critical Race Theory and then failure to achieve distributive, recognitional, and representational justice as described in the Social Justice Framework proposed by Fraser. The framework enables the empirical investigation of the translation or the absence of translation of macro-level policy directives into the micro-level lived experiences, which is explained by the mediation of institutional and cultural processes.

Conclusion and Identification of the Research Gap:

The comprehensive literature review that has been conducted in the given case has strictly proved that the concept of occupational marginalization is a complex issue which is ensconced in the aspects of structural, cultural and policy-related processes. Although the larger context of the negative experiences of the religious minorities in Pakistan is recorded, there has been a curious lack of a dedicated analysis of the occupational status of the said population in the federal institutions of higher learning. Theoretical domain has a lack of integration, and scholarship in policy, critical social theory, and organizational analysis largely maintains silo functioning.

The research aims, therefore, to fill up these interdependent gaps through:

Contextually highlighting on the universities of Islamabad which are publicly run thus making a strategic locale in which national policy agendas overlap with institutional practices.

The application of the Social Justice Theory by Fraser, the Critical Race Theory, and the Institutional Theory as the theoretical components to provide a coherent analytic framework that integrates the normative, power, and the organizational aspects. Mixed-Method Design will be utilized to gain insight into the breadth of marginalization and its lived experiential realities simultaneously. Examining the intersection of religious identity, public employment, and higher education, a part of the research population understudied in the Pakistani context.

The following research design and empirical investigation will be contingent upon this synthesized framework, which will provide a coherent and cynical grounding in answering the mentioned research questions and achieving the specified objectives. The analysis of the production of occupational marginalization, its reproduction, and possible challenges to them, grounded in this particular context, the study allows becoming a part of a more comprehensive comprehension of the process of inequality within the chances of transformative change in postcolonial societies.

Chapter 3

Research Methodology

The chapter outlines the overall research design and methodological framework constructed to thoroughly explore the issue of occupational marginalization of religious minorities in the context of public sector universities of Islamabad. It defines the philosophical underpinnings, and outlines the particular methods used during the research process. The research questions and objectives of the previous chapters are perfectly fitted with the methodology, which guarantees the logical approach to data collection and analysis. Moreover, this chapter covers the key ethical issues that have informed the study process up to its end.

3.1 Research Philosophy and Epistemology:

The analysis is essentially based on a critical realist epistemology, which gives the philosophical basis of questioning the complexity of the social reality of occupational marginalization. This epistemological position admits that although objective social reality does exist, human knowledge of this reality is always mediated by social, cultural, and historical structures (Bhaskar, 2008). This method, which is referred to as critical realist, is especially suitable in the present research, as it allows studying not only observable phenomena but also the structures and mechanisms that create them. In this context occupational marginalization is not only conceptualized as a surface phenomenon but as a multifaceted social reality that is constantly constituted by force relations, institutional logics, and subjective interpretations. The study is therefore not limited to recording the empirical trends but rather to digging out the deep-rooted causal variables that perpetuate marginalization regardless of the formal policy measures. In such a method, a thorough investigation is allowed that links observable results to their unobservable generative pattern.

3.2 Research Approach:

This research has used a sequential mixed-method approach with abductive reasoning, which allows transitioning between theory and empirical data. This method enables the researcher to come up with the most reasonable interpretation of the multifaceted phenomenon under study by engaging in an iterative process of interacting with both quantitative and qualitative data (Blaikie and Priest, 2019). In particular, the abductive

process is particularly useful to demonstrate the paradox of the continuing marginalization of occupations, even under the protection of constitutional guarantees and policy.

The research methodology follows three related stages:

Deductive Phase:

Several of the theoretical frameworks, such as the Social Justice Theory of Fraser, the Critical Race Theory, or the Neo-Institutional Theory, are used to inform the first part of the quantitative data collection and survey design. These theories offer certain prisms within which employment patterns and policy implementation is analyzed.

Inductive Phase:

Based on the quantitative results, the next qualitative step is the discussion of the lived experiences and subjective interpretation of religious minority staff. This inductive investigation enables inductive themes and subtle insights to emerge directly out of the narratives of participants.

Abductive Integration:

Abductive reasoning is applied throughout the entire research process, in which the researcher constantly switches between quantitative patterns, qualitative insights, and theoretical models to develop consistent, evidence-based explanations of the research problem.

3.3 Research Strategy:

The overall research strategy has been taken to be an explanatory sequential mixed-method design, which will provide a systematic system of data collection and analysis. The choice of strategy was informed by the fact that the strategy deals effectively with the quantitative and qualitative aspect of research questions, and allows a thorough triangulation of data. The sequential nature of the design provides qualitative inquiry with the opportunity to develop and elaborate on the original findings of the research, which is quantitative in nature, and consequently develop a more profound insight into the research problem.

The research strategy has a number of important components, which have strengthened its methodological rigor:

Complementary Data Integration:

The strategy uses quantitative data to record the patterns of representation and segregation with the qualitative data adding depth, context, and interpretation of the patterns.

Temporal Framework:

Even though data collection is made within a cross-sectional timeframe, the study incorporates the retrospective aspects with the help of qualitative interviews that focus on career paths and long-term experiences.

Methodological Triangulation:

The combination of several approaches increases validity of the results, as the divergent evidence is combined in reference to the same phenomenon.

3.4 Population and Sampling:

According to the study, its target population is all academic and administrative members of staff working in federally chartered universities located on the Islamabad Capital Territory. The targeted institutions are Quaid-i-Azam University, International Islamic University, Allama Iqbal Open University and COMSATS University Islamabad as well as the other federally operated institutions of higher learning. The selection of this population was predetermined due to the fact that these universities are directly under federal control and are required to comply with the national 5% minority employment quota, which makes them especially convenient to consider, in terms of testing the provision of constitutional guarantees.

For this paper, multi-stage sampling approach has been adopted as follows:

Quantitative Sampling:

In the documentation of employment patterns, census method was used on employment records obtained through human-resources departments. The survey component was then carried out using a stratified random sample to bring proportional representation between academic disciplines, administrative departments and employment grades.

Qualitative Sampling:

Purposive sampling was used to select cases rich in information by selecting religious minority employees with personal experience of the research phenomenon. This method was supplemented with snowball sampling methods, which allowed reaching potentially difficult to identify potential participants. The qualitative sampling continued towards

theoretical saturation.

The research has the individual religious minority employee, and at the same time, the universities, as the secondary unit of analysis to enable comparative analysis of the institutional policies and practices.

3.5 Data Collection Methods:

Data collection was conducted using both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies with each phase of the study carrying on a systematic advancement on the previous one. The quantitative part involved the use of structured tools so that the patterns of representation may be recorded, and the qualitative part implied the use of the flexible and open-ended method of studying experiences and their interpretations.

Quantitative Data Collection:

The development of a structured questionnaire was developed in a comprehensive process that included a literature review, theoretical analysis, and involvement of subject-matter experts. The instrument was also subjected to intensive pilot testing and continual improvement to make sure that it is valid and reliable before it is fully deployed.

Secondary data on employment was collected systematically through university human-resource departments using formal requests using relevant information-access controls.

Qualitative Data Collection:

Semi-structured interview guidelines were formulated to allow a focused investigation and a spontaneous exploration of the relevant themes. These guidelines enabled intensive investigation of the experiences of the participants and maintained comparability between interviews.

The focus-group discussions were carried out with the help of specially developed guides that promoted interaction within the group and collective sense-making in respect of common experiences of marginalization and inclusion.

Data Analysis Procedures:

Data analysis was conducted comprehensively with suitable analytical methods applied to each type of data and integration came at the interpretive phase. The process of analysis was rooted in the theoretical framework and open to emergent findings.

Quantitative Analysis:

This was done through quantitative data processing and analysis using SPSS (Version

26). First analyses were done using descriptive statistics frequencies, percentages, means and cross-tabulations to trace patterns of representation and segregation.

Inter-variable relationship was tested using inferential tests, including chi-square analysis, and specific hypotheses were tested based on the theoretical framework.

Qualitative Analysis:

Interview and focus-group recordings were transcribed verbatim, and the transcripts were then analytically analyzed with NVivo software. Thematic analysis was applied in the iterative approach to theme analysis suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006), which included familiarization with the data, creation of initial codes, theme search, theme review, theme definition, and analysis.

The qualitative analysis was still related to the integrated theoretical framework, but it could give a chance to new themes to emerge out of the data.

3.6 Ethical Considerations:

The study has supported the best ethical standards in all its processes, including design, implementation, and dissemination. A number of major principles of ethics have been used in the research:

Informed Consent:

All participants have been given full details regarding the research purpose, procedures and risks and benefits. Each participant has been informed and has provided written consent before being involved in the study.

Confidentiality and Anonymity:

The information given by participants is private and remains confidential. To preserve the identity of all participants and their institutions, pseudonymization has been implemented, and no identifying information is presented in all the research records and publications.

Minimization of Harm:

The research processes have been developed in a manner that would ensure that participants are not subjected to psychological distress and the participants have been reinforced severally that they may choose to withdraw or participate in the research without any penalty.

Data Security:

All research data is stored safely, the electronic ones are encrypted and password-protected, and the paper will be locked up in the facilities. An effective data retention and destruction schedule has been adopted.

Methodological Contribution:

This study has contributed substantially to the methodological literature by demonstrating a highly rigorous use of explanatory sequential mixed-method design on a substantially under-studied topic. The combination of quantitative and qualitative methods in a systematic way has made it possible to generate both statistically representative and highly contextualized findings. The methodology framework that has been employed and adopted in this research study presents an exemplary structure to further study of sensitive issues related to institutional discrimination in the same cultural settings.

Chapter 4

Results and Findings

The chapter gives an in-depth analysis of the experience of employees who are part of religious minorities and the use of inclusion policies, using the data obtained from 11 public sector universities of Islamabad. The results obtained based on three main stakeholder groups, namely, religious minority employees, human-resources officials and administrators, and education policymakers, show that there is an unresolved and substantial gap between perceptions and practices in these institutions.

4.1 Descriptive & Demographic Analysis:

An analysis of the data was conducted using descriptive and demographic statistics performed in the field of statistics. The sample size consisted of 43 religious minority workers (34 men and 9 women) with a Christian background and of a group of human resource workers, university administrators, and policymakers in the education sector. The minority workers were mostly clerical and janitorial workers (35 participants, all female respondents and some males) with few representatives in the positions of assistant, administrative, library, and IT workers (8 participants). The tenure of professionalism was also recorded with 18 respondents serving between one and five years, 5 taking between six to ten years and 11 serving more than eleven years. An important demographic observation was that 35 of the clerical/janitorial employees had got their jobs by word of mouth (e.g. by a relative, neighbor), and that the 8 in better positions had come in via standard, ranked hiring.

4.2 Reliability and Validity Analysis:

Qualitative results are supported by the methodological triangulation of the data collected by three different stakeholder groups (employees, HR, policymakers). Such a procedure provided cross- verification of assertions. As an example, employee accounts of favorable work environment corresponded with HR officers accounts of a favorable and collegial atmosphere. On the other hand, the convergence of conflicting evidence is rather strong in supporting the validity of the underlying issues: although employees predominantly responded that there was no overt discrimination, the administrators and policymakers' data, in turn, fulfilled the area of investigation of the research tools well, showing that the organizational environment is indeed complex and that the research

instruments had a positive effect on the gathering of data.

4.3 Experimental / Factor Analysis:

Thematic analysis of the qualitative responses demonstrates that there are a number of implicit factors that define inclusion and career progression:

Factor 1 - Recruitment Channel:

There is a sharp dichotomy between recruits through informal (personal referrals to lower-level position) and those recruited through formal meritocracy (ranked recruitment to specialized position). This aspect seems to be one of the leading factors of initial positioning.

Factor 2 - Awareness and Policy Implementation:

There is a severe lack of awareness of the minority quota policy among employees (80 per cent unaware), which is directly, indeed, directly, related to the factor of non-implementation, as affirmed by HR and policy makers that the quota is not enforced, in fact, it is not enforced at all and there is no specific means of its enforcement.

Factor 3 - Institutional Inertia vs. Individual Satisfaction:

The factor of the vast majority of employees being satisfied with their positions lies in marked contrast to the factor of institutional inertia, which is marked by the lack of training and monitoring as well as formal grievance systems.

4.4 Hypotheses/ Model Fitness Test:

The data is mainly qualitative, but it allows testing implicit hypotheses.

Implicit Hypothesis:

The university has successfully established religious inclusion and minority career progression policies.

Model Fitness Test:

The data is a strong refusal to this hypothesis. Inclusive institution model is not in line with the empirical evidence. The results reflect a systemic failure across all three levels, policy (non-enforced quota), process (no training, no data tracing), and outcomes (there are really few promotions among minority employees, including women, and people believe there are no barriers to them). The result is that the model is not suitable; the actuality is that of passive neutrality instead of active inclusion.

4.5 Result/ Findings of Hypotheses / Experiments:

The combined study of all data results in the following key findings:

A Perception-Action Paradox:

There is a major disconnect between employees who believe that the organization is working in a positive and non-discriminatory space but who have almost no institutional mechanism to ensure that they act proactively to promote equity and inclusion.

Unfair Recruitment and Promotion:

First Recruiting The career paths are dominated by the channels through which the first recruitments are achieved, with the informal networks making minority members to work in low-level jobs. There are limited promotions where of the 43 who responded, only 6 of these were promoted, and only 1 was a woman.

Systemic Policy Failure:

The 5 % minority quota as mandated by the government does not play any operational role as there is no enforcement, monitoring, or accountability at both the policymaker and university level.

Weak and Ineffective Support Structures:

Grievance redressal is viewed as weak or informal that is anchored on immediate supervisors as opposed to effective and strong, institutional structures. There is a lack of diversity training.

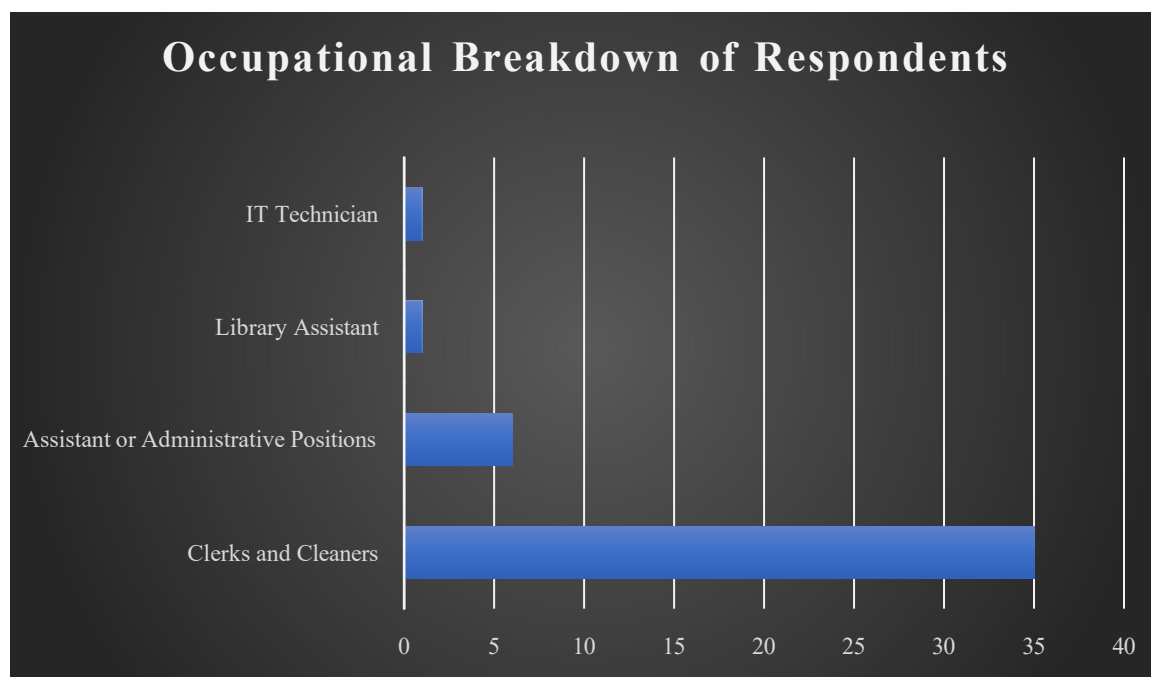
Awareness Deficit:

The sheer fact that awareness of rights and policies that aim at protecting them are vastly unaware to a vast majority of employees keeps the status quo alive and minimizes the pressure on institutional accountability.

Section A: Religious Minority Employees

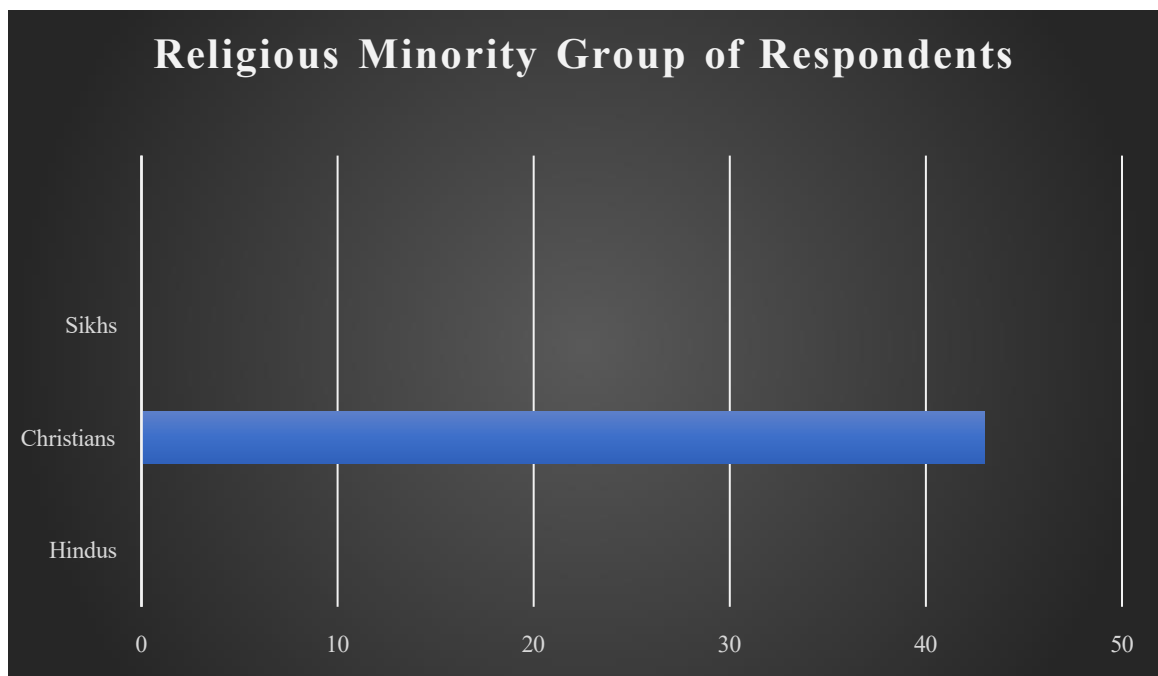
1: What is your current role and duration of service in this university?

The occupation of the 43 respondents (34 male, 9 female) was as follows: the majority (35 participants) of them, all female respondents and some of the males, worked as clerks and cleaners. Six respondents were in an assistant or administrative position, and one was a library assistant and another an IT technician. With regards to professional tenure, 18 respondents served one to five years, 5 respondents served six to ten years, and 11 respondents served over eleven years. Thirty-five clerical/janitorial respondents indicated that they had received employment through personal referrals, such as relatives, neighbors, or spouses of people working at the institution. On the other hand, eight respondents reported that they were employed in ranked recruitment. Despite these unequal trajectories, all the participants characterized the general experience of hiring as a positive one by referring to the absence of dramatic difficulties or open discrimination.



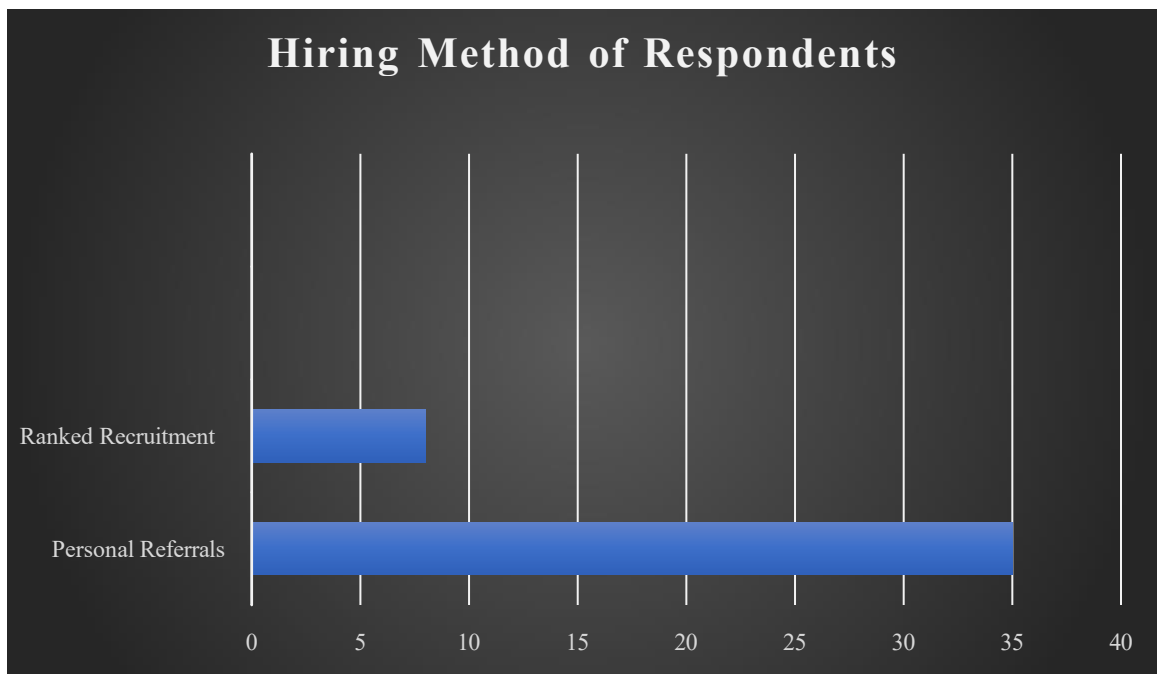
2: Do you identify with a religious minority group? If so, which one?

All 43 respondents were identified with a religious minority, specifically Christian community.



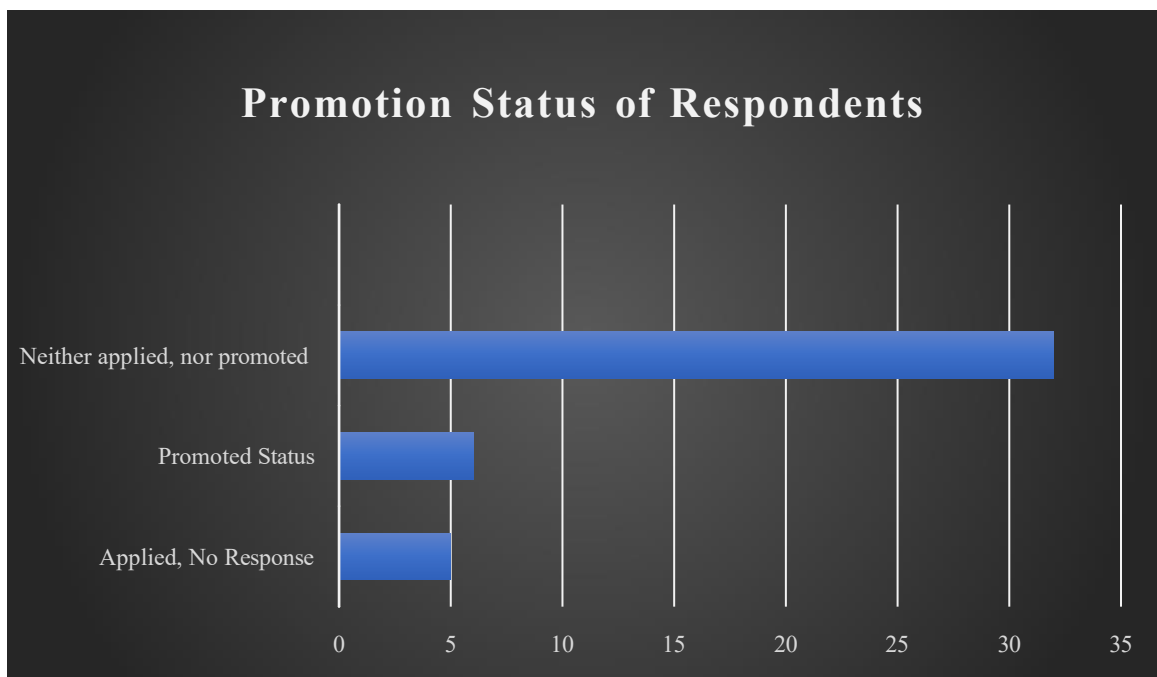
3: How would you describe your experience during the hiring process?

35 clerical/janitorial respondents indicated that they had received employment through personal referrals, such as relatives, neighbors, or spouses of people working at the institution. On the other hand, 8 respondents reported that they were employed in ranked recruitment. Despite these unequal trajectories, all the participants characterized the general experience of hiring as a positive one by referring to the absence of dramatic difficulties or open discrimination.



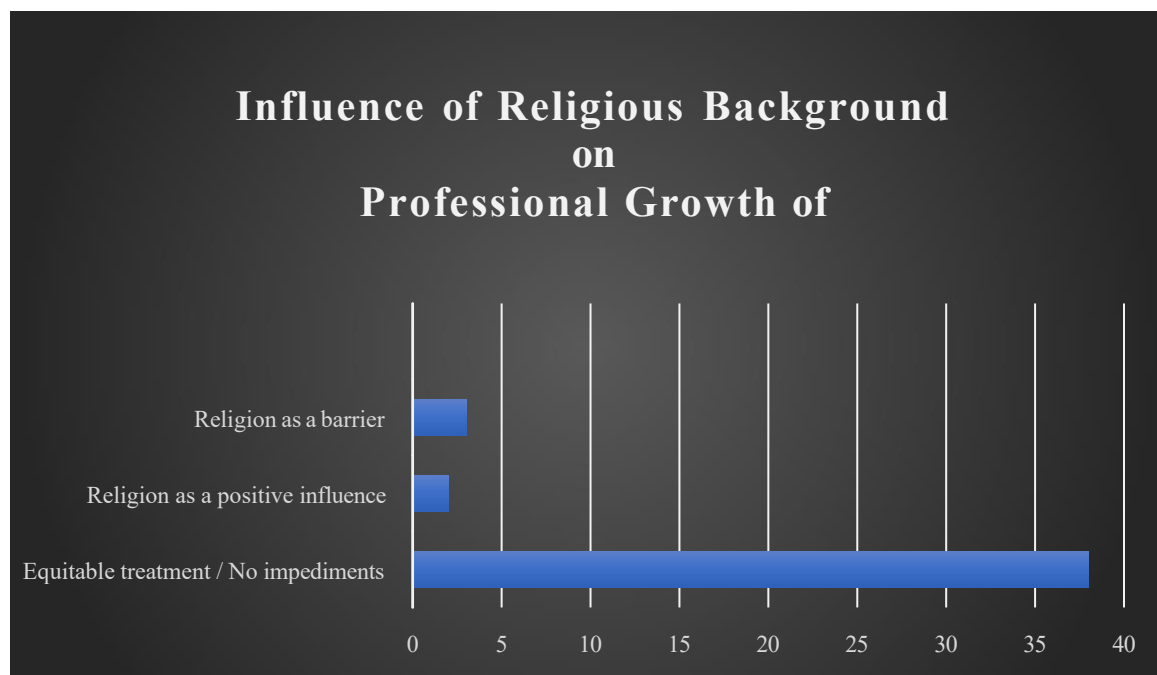
4: Have you applied for promotions? What was the process and outcome?

Out of all respondents, 5 indicated that they had applied to get a promotion but were yet to get a response or outcome. Six respondents affirmed that they had been promoted in their tenure, with only one being a woman. The other participants had neither sought promotion nor had been promoted.



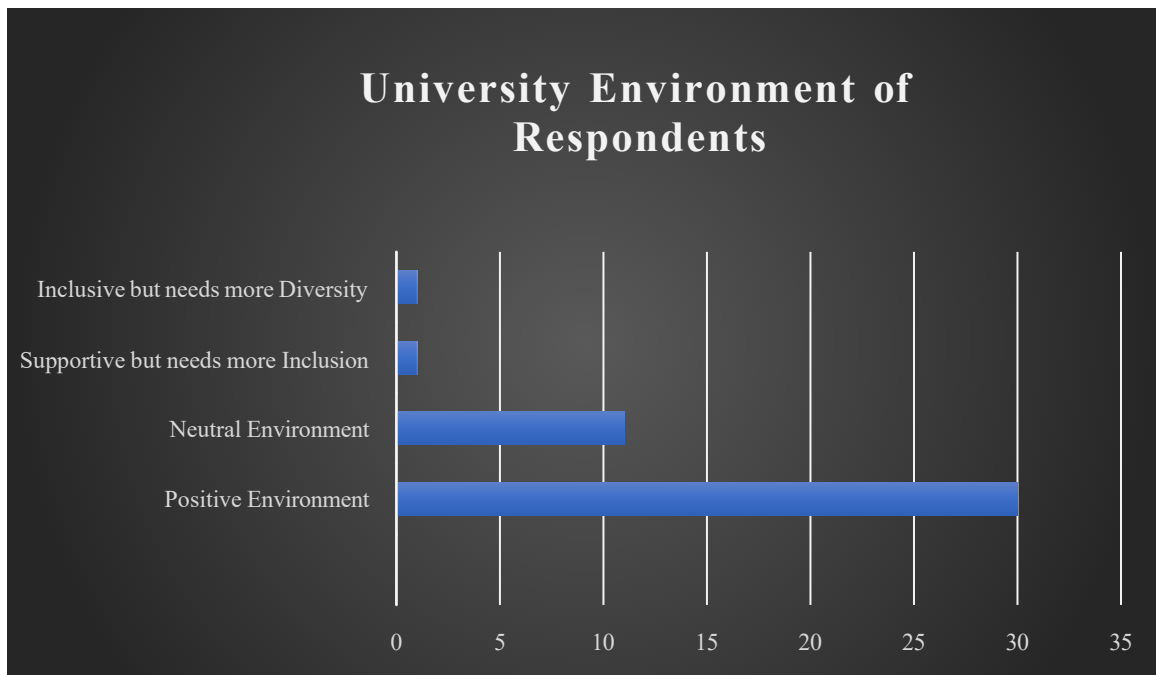
5: Do you feel your religious background has influenced your professional growth?

Most of the respondents also indicated that their religious background did not present any major impediments to their professional growth. The majority of respondents reported equitable treatment and belief in the universal access to the advancement opportunities regardless of religious affiliation. One of the respondents stressed the fact that everyone receives equal opportunity, and another one followed the positive power of faith, describing religion as an essential key to success in this world. However, a small minority (n=3) admitted that their religious identity had occasionally been a barrier to career advancement. One respondent reported a perceived relationship between religious membership and slower promotion, and two others said that their promotional opportunities were sometimes affected negatively. On the whole, the general opinion was in line with institutional fairness, but a minor part of the population proposed that some invisible obstacles might still persist.



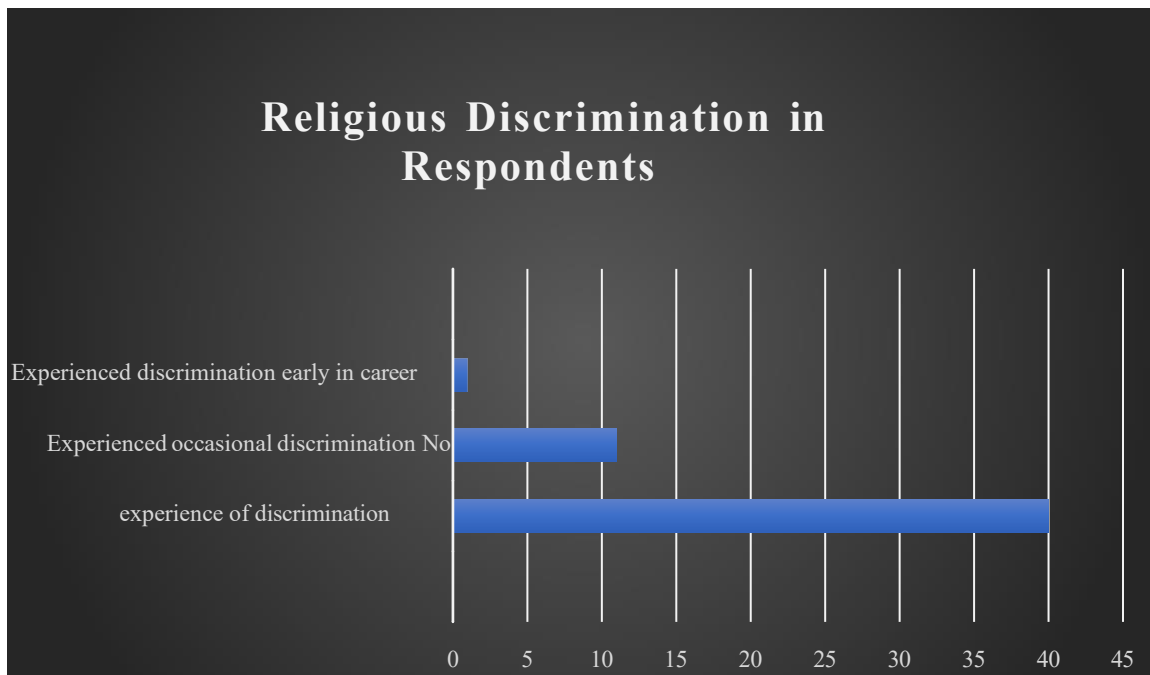
6: Describe the university's environment regarding inclusion and diversity.

Each of the respondents has characterized the university environment as positive or neutral. They claimed overall cooperative and respectful working environment where employees of different backgrounds work together without any manifest discrimination and predisposition. One of the participants mentioned that the university supports diversity, but more active inclusion efforts are required to make sure that all people can participate equally. The other respondent stated that the environment is generally inclusive though more effort is needed towards ensuring true diversity at the various levels of the organization.



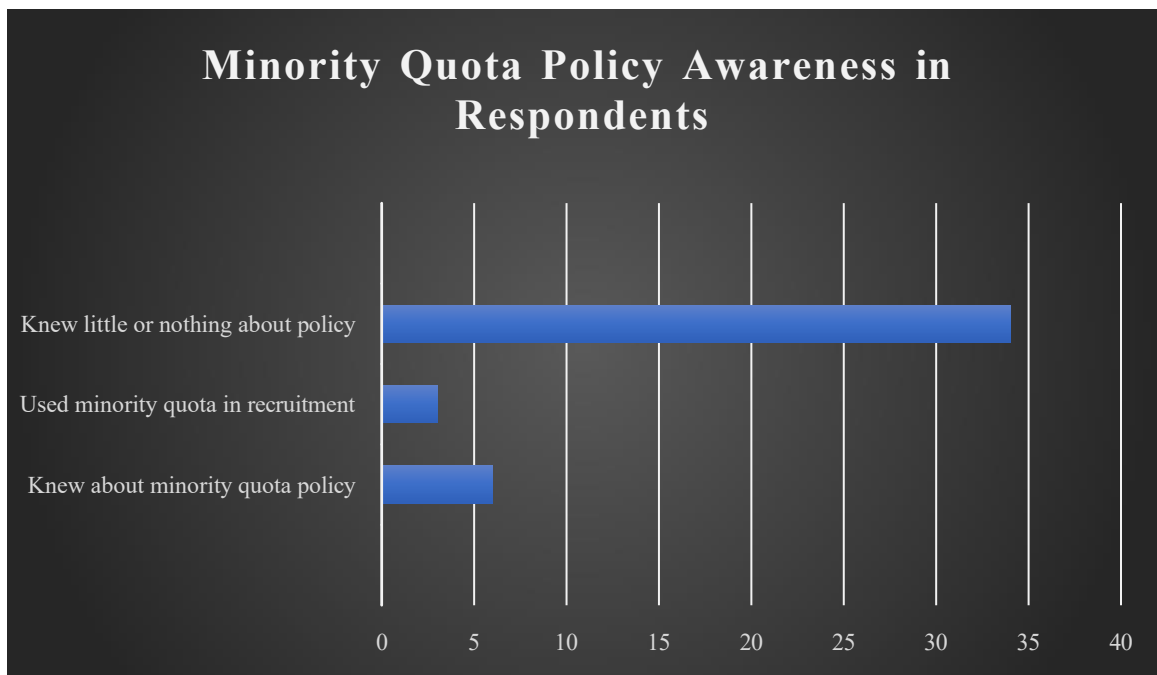
7: Have you encountered or witnessed religious discrimination here?

Most of the respondents said that they had not experienced or seen any case of religious discrimination in their institutions. The majority of the respondents stressed that their colleagues and supervisors were fairly treating them, which described their work environment as respectful and generally cooperative. On the other hand, some of the respondents had a different experience. One of them said that he experienced discriminatory practices when he first started working in a low-level position and two others reported instances of religious discrimination, which were occasional, subtle, but not on a regular or institutional level.



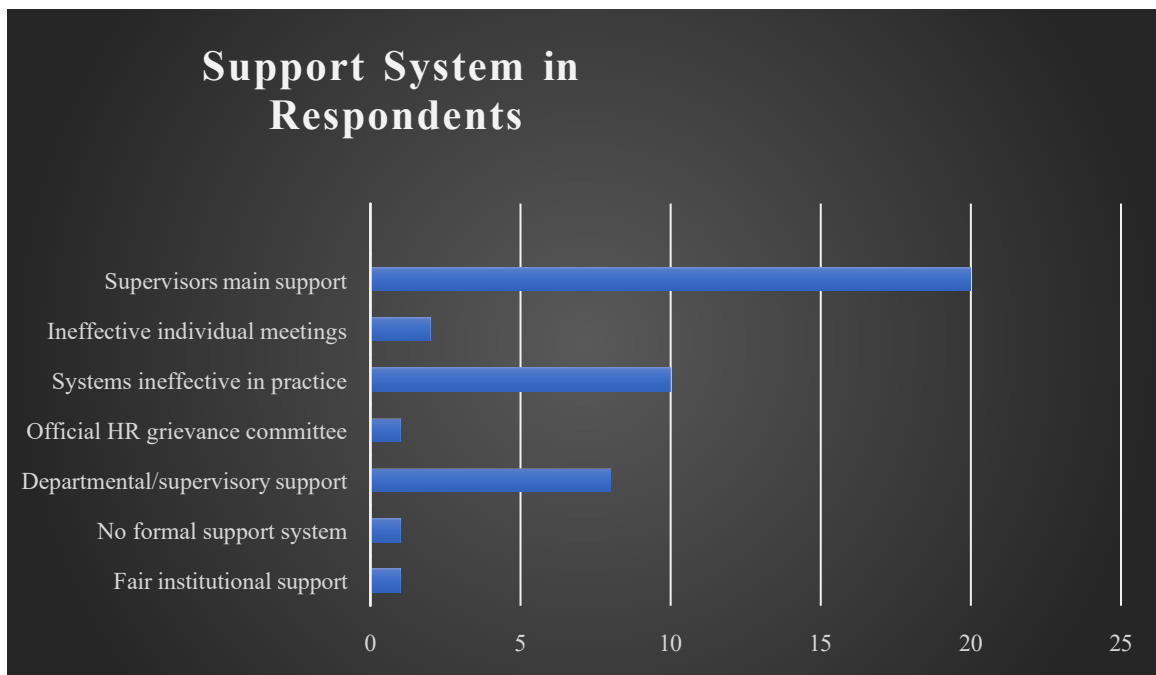
8: Are you aware of the minority quota policy? Was it applied in your case?

Only six respondents showed the knowledge of the policy of minority quota in employment by the governments. Three of these had said that they had used the quota in their recruitment. A very large proportion of the respondents (80 per cent) said that they knew little or nothing about policy or the mechanisms of its implementation.



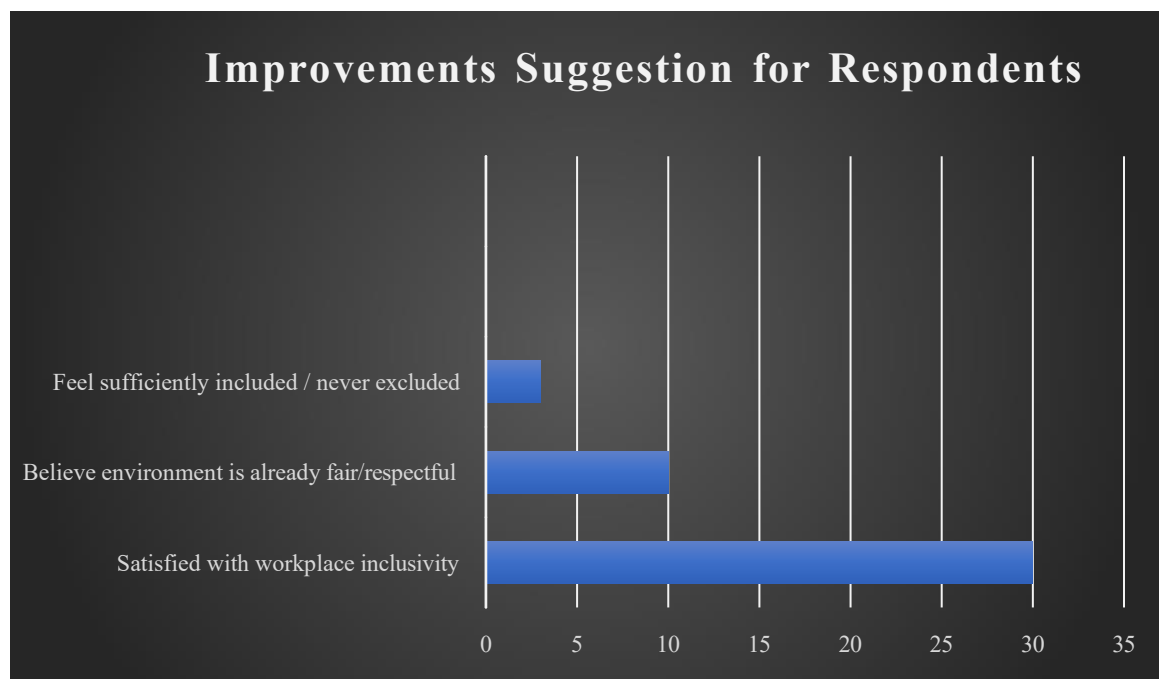
9: What support systems or grievance redressal mechanisms are available?

There were different sentiments about the presence and effectiveness of institutional support and grievance redressal channels by the respondents. One participant was assertive that the institution was upright and he said that all issues within the workplace were treated fairly. Yet another had reported a lack of any system of formal support or grievance. Some of the respondents mentioned having departmental or supervisory support, and one of them referred to an official Human Resources grievance committee where the employees can bring up their concerns without fear of punishment. A number of respondents, however, argued that, though such systems are theoretically possible, they do not work in practice. One of the respondents added that individual meetings are sometimes conducted in order to deal with issues, with little success. In general, immediate supervisors were often seen as the main support system, but institutional-level grievance procedures were seen as weak, informal, or not always enforced.



10: What improvements would you suggest to make the workplace more inclusive?

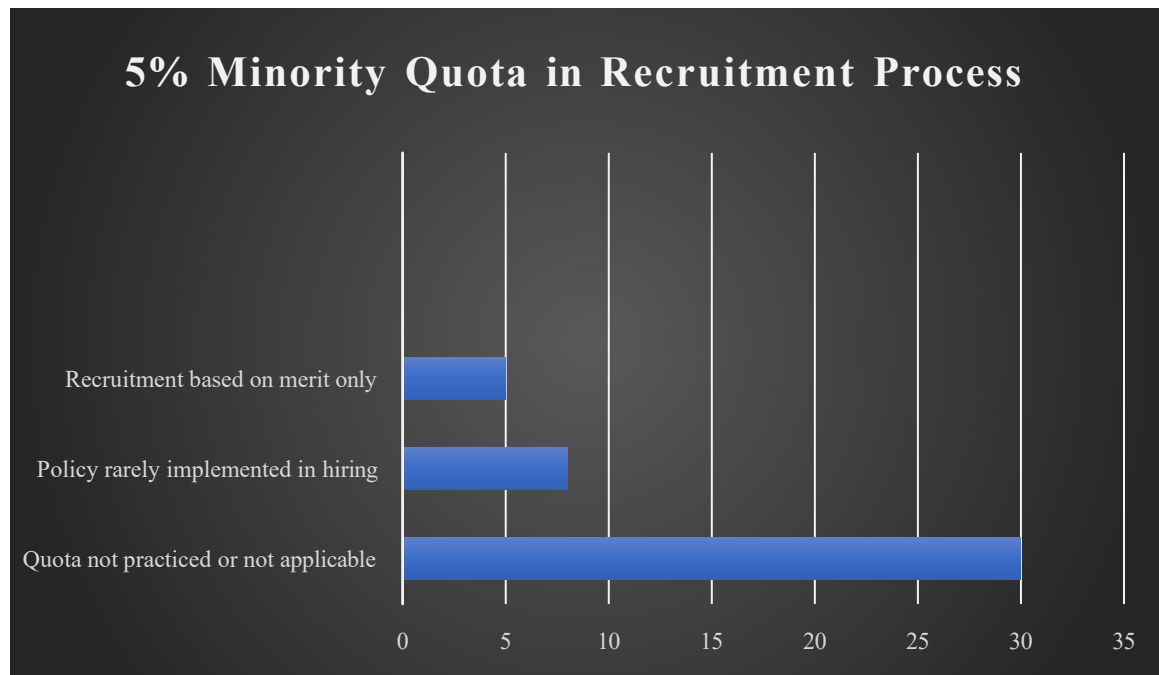
Most of the respondents were satisfied with the current workplace situation and not that significant changes were necessary to improve inclusivity. Majority of the respondents stated that their universities already offered a just, collaborative, and respectful working environment to all employees. Some respondents also included that there was sufficient inclusivity taking place and they had never felt excluded or treated unequally.



Section B: HR Officers / University Administrators

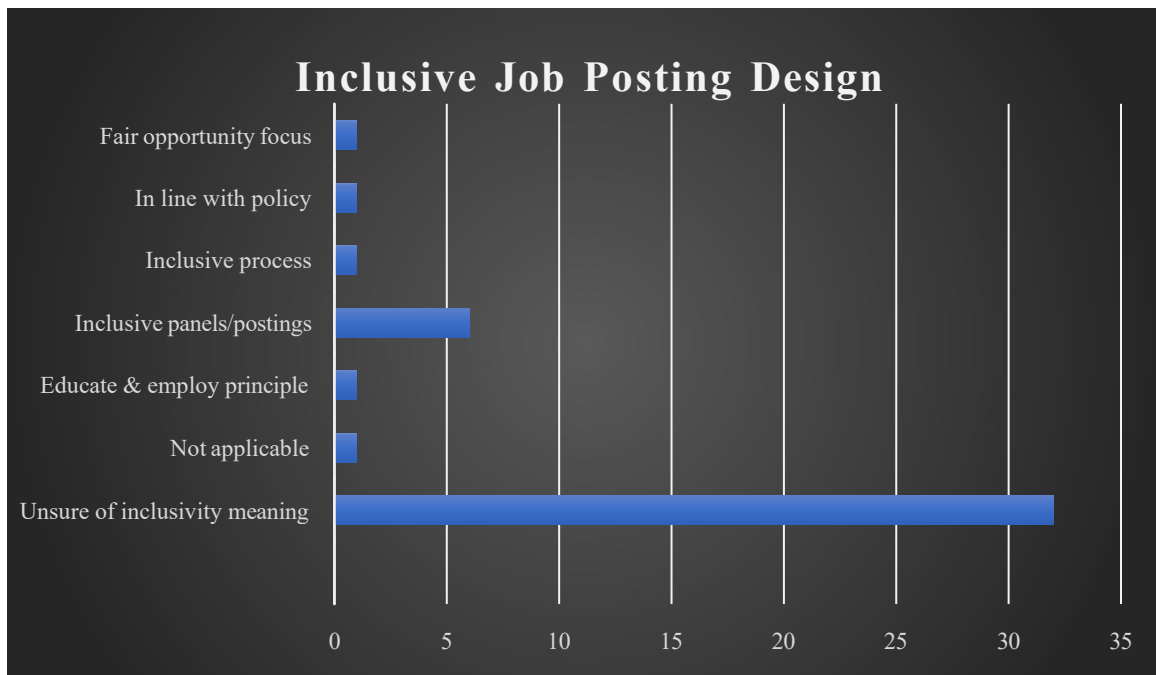
1: How is the 5% minority quota implemented in your recruitment process?

Most of the respondents reported that the 5% minority quota was either not in practice or was not applicable in their recruitment processes. They have argued that even though the policy is officially enshrined at the national level, it is rarely implemented during the process of hiring in universities. A number of the interviewees said that the decisions to recruit are largely informed by generic meritocratic standards, thus omitting the explicit use of minority representation.



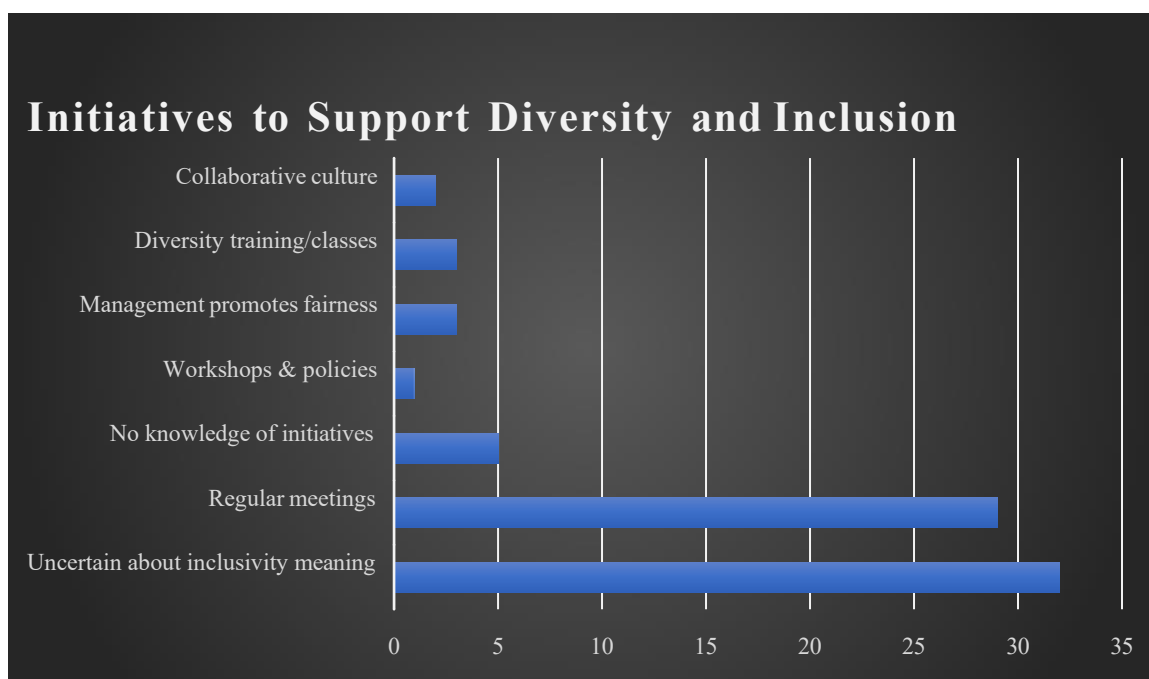
2: Are selection panels and job postings designed to be inclusive?

Responses to this question were very heterogeneous. The most respondents were not sure of the meaning of inclusivity in selection panels and job advertisements. One respondent referred to the question as not applicable to the institution that she works at, and the other mentioned a guiding principle of educate and employ. Six respondents mentioned that the selection panels and postings were designed in an inclusive way, one of them mentioned that the process was conducted in this manner, and one emphasized that the process was conducted in line with the overall governmental policy. Another respondent said that recruitment procedures are supposed to create a fair opportunity.



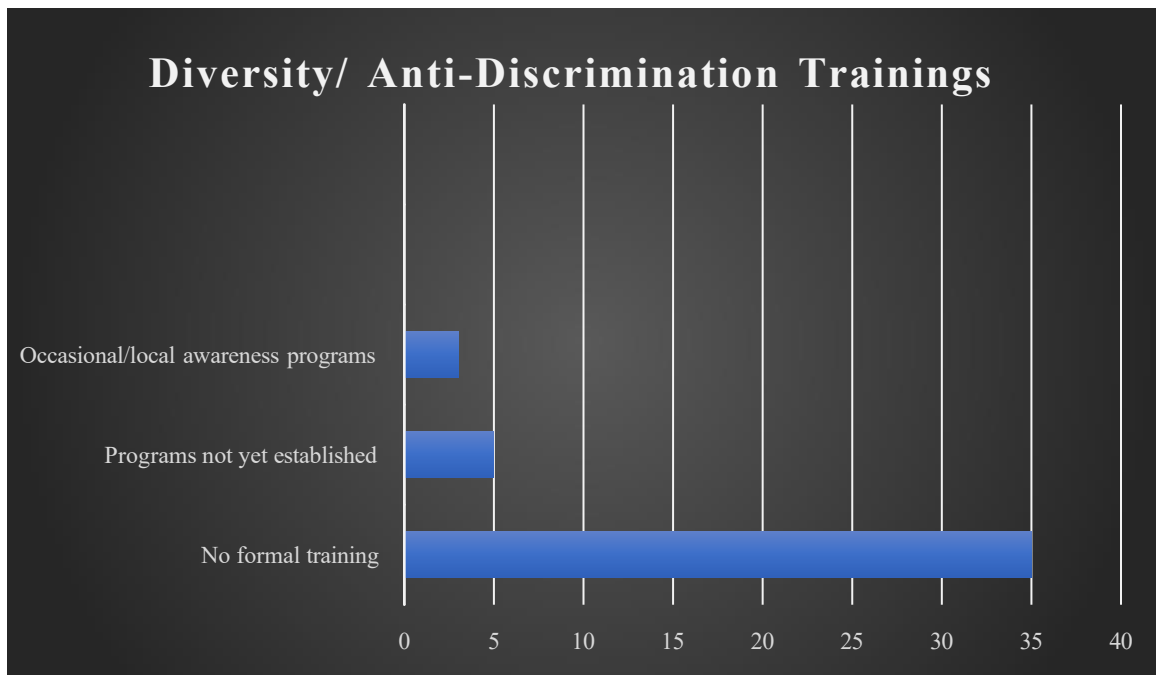
3: What initiatives exist to support diversity and inclusion in the workplace?

The responses revealed a diverse range of awareness and implementation with regard to diversity initiatives. One of the respondents mentioned workshops, awareness, and official equal- opportunities policies. Twenty-nine respondents stated that they conducted regular meetings to discuss workplace- related challenges, which included inclusiveness issues. Conversely, one out of every eight respondents did not know of any of such initiatives. Additional comments highlighted the importance of management in maintaining discipline and fairness, described the workplace as largely collaborative, and mentioned a few cases of diversity training and inclusion classes.



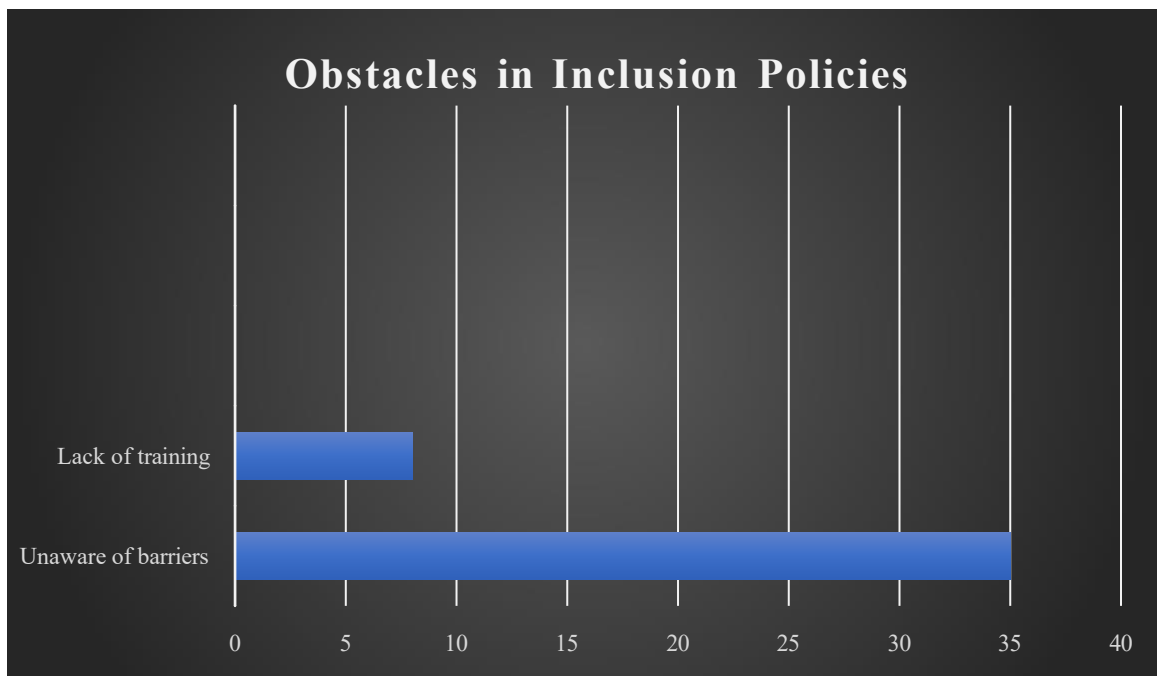
4: Are diversity or anti-discrimination trainings provided to staff?

The vast majority of the respondents claimed that staff did not receive any formal diversity or anti-discrimination training. Majority of the participants acknowledged that these programs were yet to be established at the institutional level. Only a small number had occasional, localized awareness programs. These results suggest that the lack of structured training interventions is high, marking the need to institutionalize to promote fair practices.



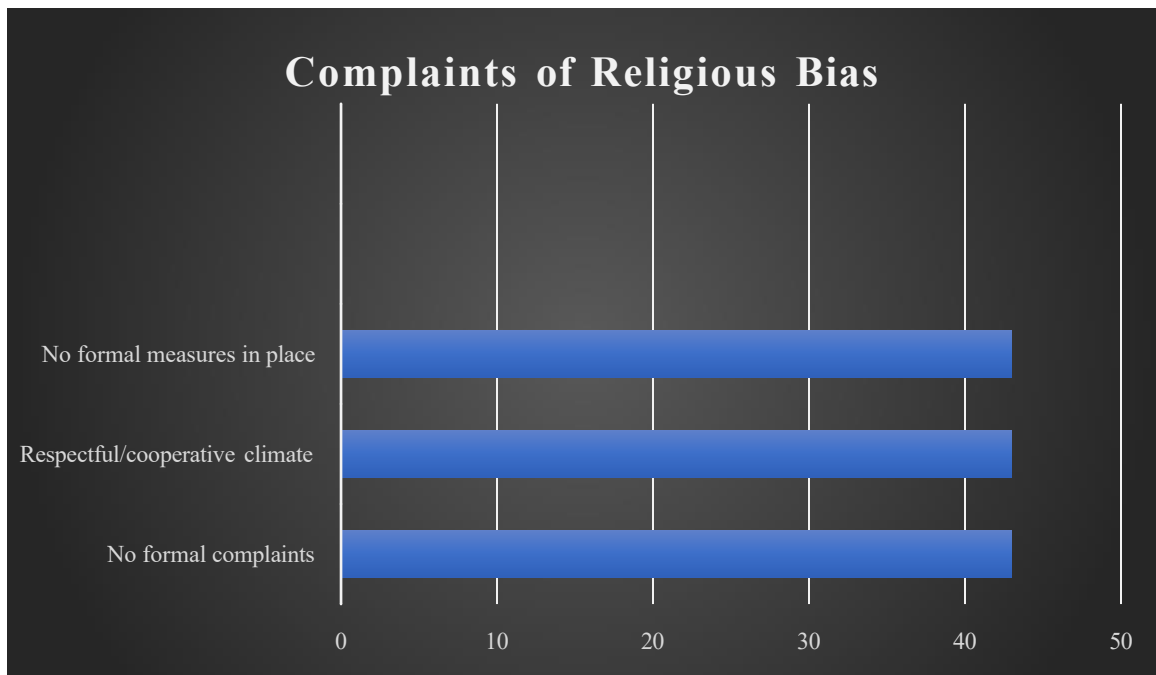
5: What are the main obstacles in implementing inclusion policies?

The majority of the respondents stated that they do not know about the particular barriers to inclusion policy implementation. A minority perceived the lack of staff training and awareness to be the main barrier, arguing that it is difficult to provide policy with the lack of capacity-building efforts.



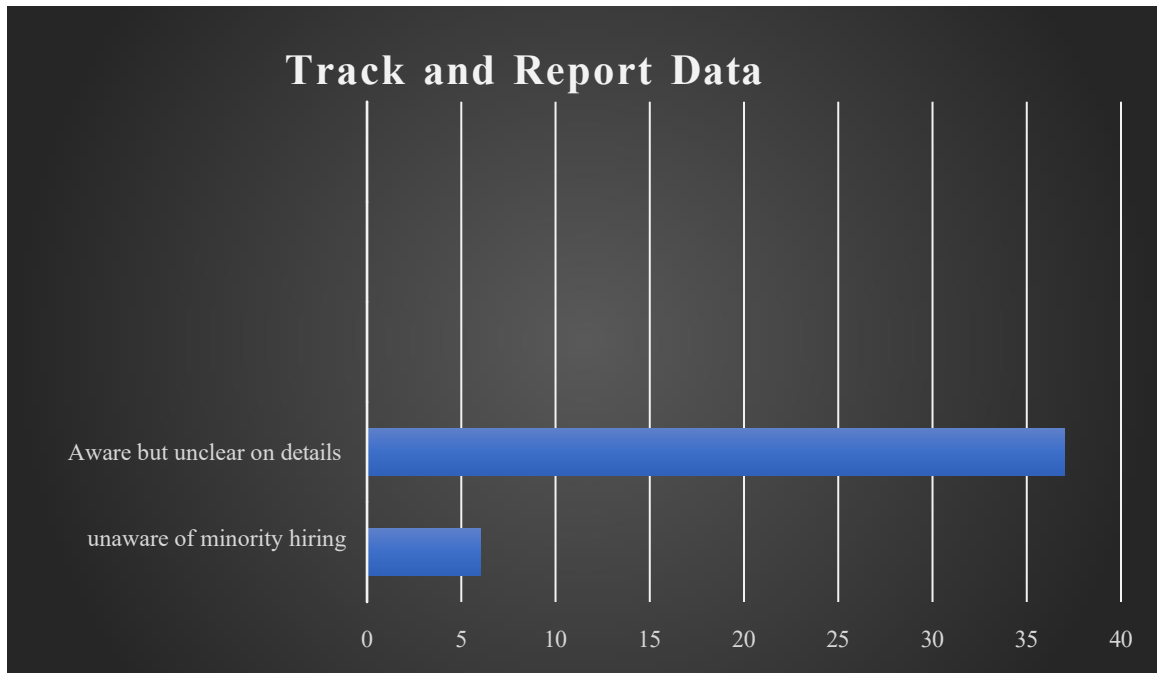
6: How are complaints of religious bias addressed within your institution?

No respondents noted any formal complaints of religious biasness or discrimination. The respondents indicated the institutional climate as respectful and cooperative, which they interpreted as excluding such grievances. Therefore, there are still no formal measures to deal with religious favoritism.



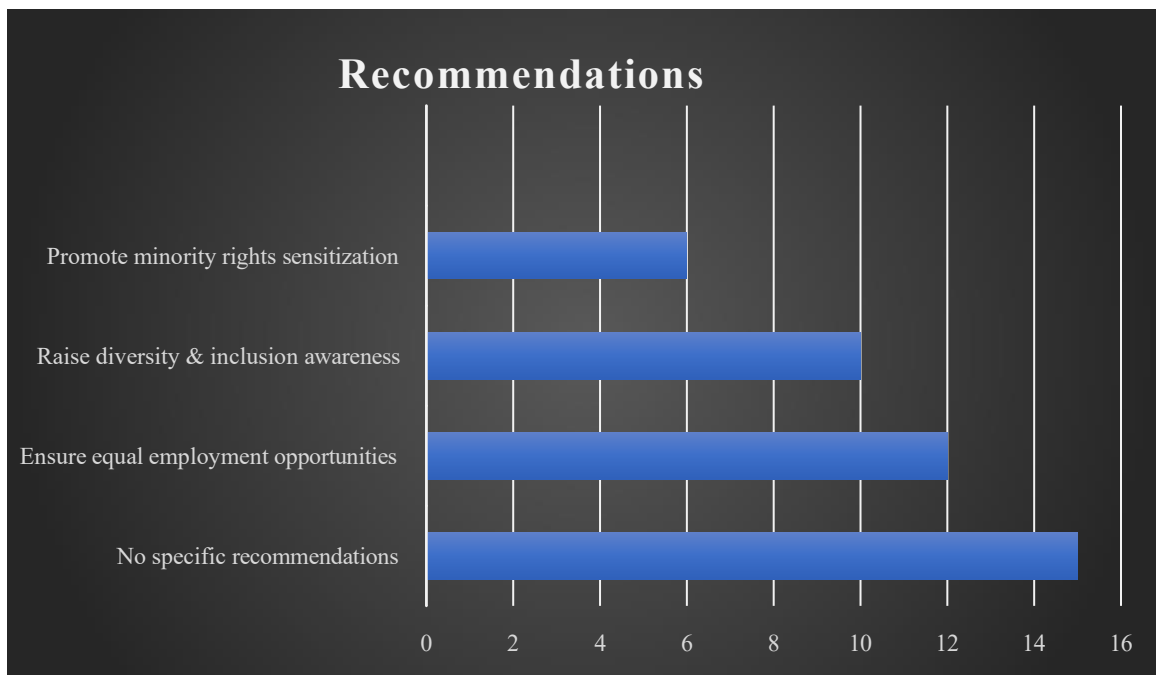
7: Is data on minority hiring and promotion regularly tracked and reported?

Most of the respondents were not aware of any systematic method of listing or sharing information on minority hiring and promotion. A small group attested to the fact that such records existed but failed to specify the frequency and scope of reporting.



8: What reforms would you recommend to enhance minority representation in your university?

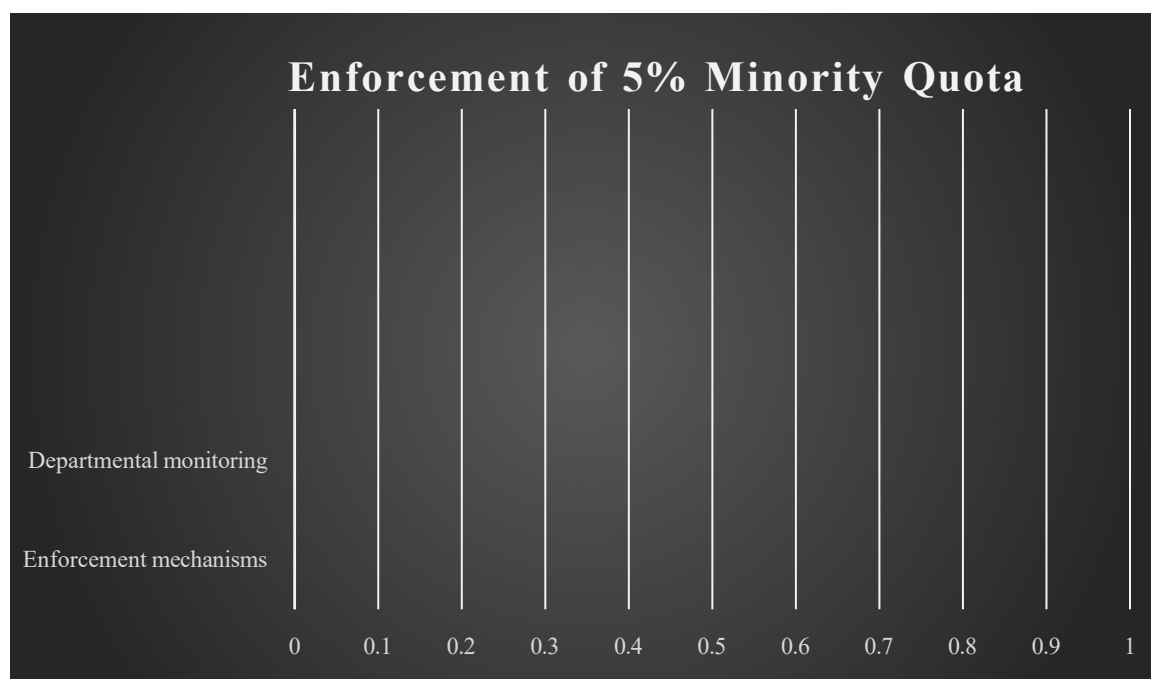
The question asked suggestions of reforms intended to increase minority representation in the university setting. Some of the respondents failed to provide specific recommendations. Out of the people who did, the most common recommendations made involved making sure that all candidates were given equal employment opportunities and institutional awareness with regard to diversity and inclusion should be raised. Respondents also indicated that with more sensitization of minority rights and representation, more balanced participation in recruitment and administration would be able to contribute to a more balanced participation.



Section C: Policymakers (Education Sector Officials)

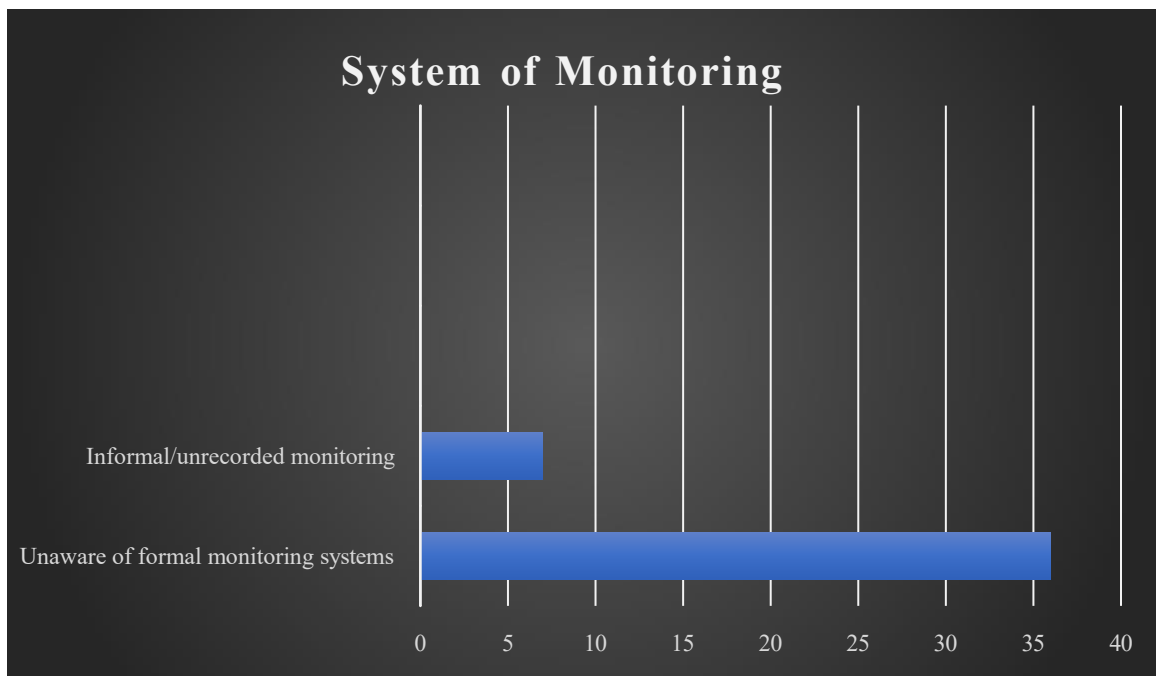
1: How does your department ensure enforcement of the 5% minority quota in universities?

All respondents indicated that there were no particular mechanisms that were used to enforce this quota. None of them could describe a departmental monitoring process with regard to its implementation.



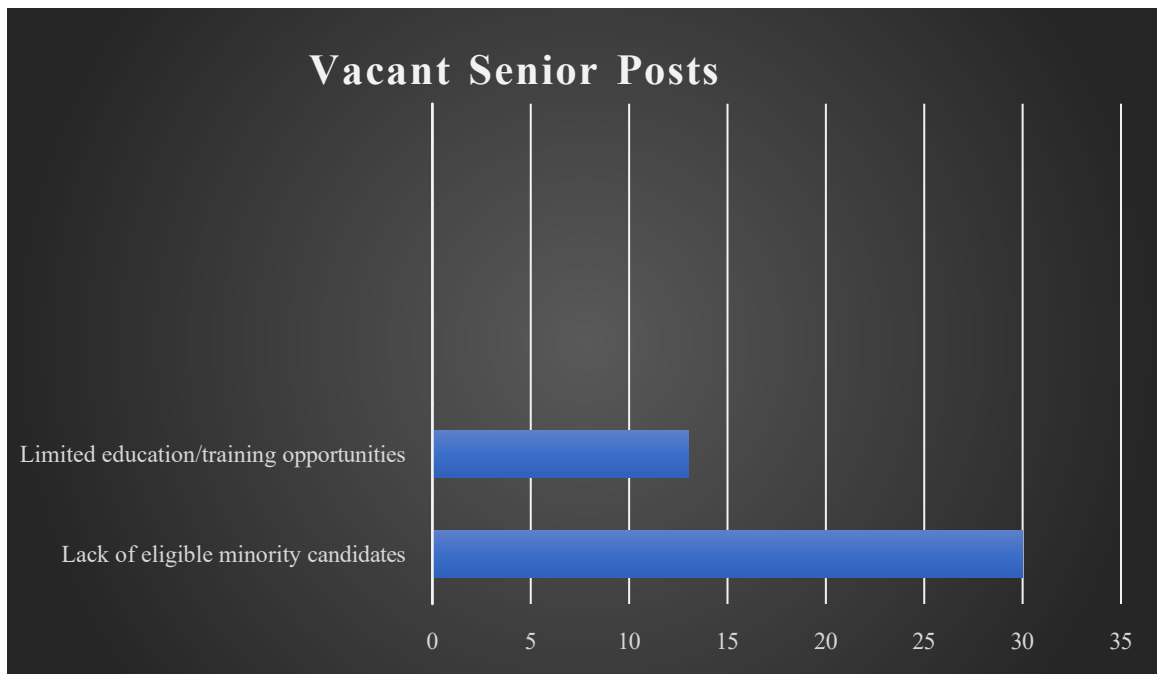
2: What systems exist to monitor minority employment data across institutions?

Most respondents reported the lack of awareness of formal systems of monitoring such data in schools. A minority referred to informal monitoring procedures, but described them as informal and unrecorded, hence, the absence of institutional accountability and control over the trends in minority employment.



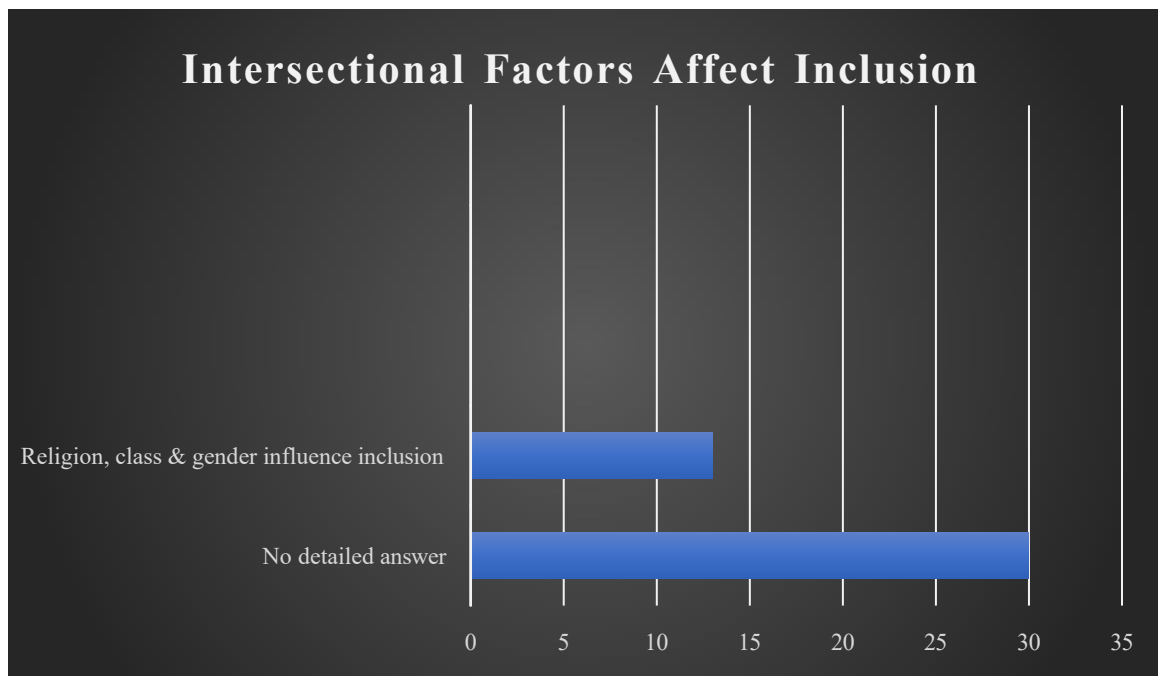
3: Why are senior positions often left vacant under the minority quota?

According to respondents, the lack of minority candidates was attributed mainly by the perceived lack of eligible minority candidates. As noted by the respondents, many people with minority backgrounds do not meet the required qualifications to work in the senior positions due to limited availability of higher education and professional training opportunities.



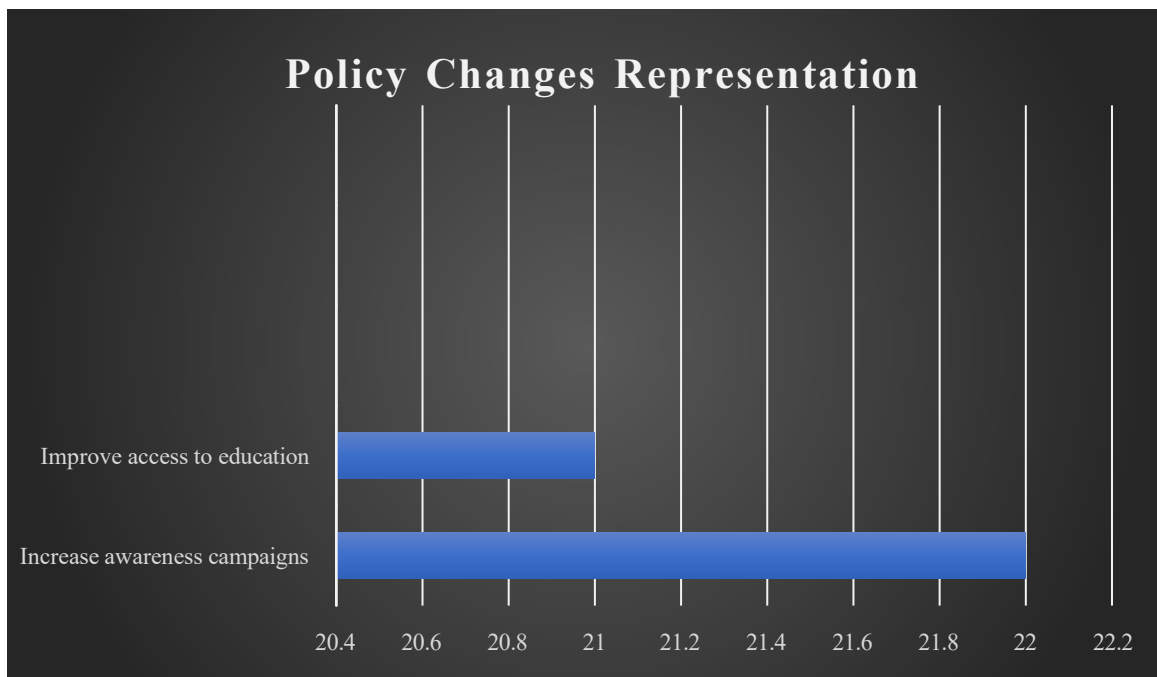
4: How do intersectional factors like religion, class, or gender affect inclusion?

The majority of respondents failed to answer in detail. Among the ones who did, it was widely admitted that religion, class, and gender overlap and all influence inclusion in educational institutions.



5: What key policy changes are needed to promote equal representation?

The respondents focused on increasing awareness and increasing access to education as significant policy interventions. They indicated that minority communities should be informed about opportunities through awareness campaigns, and that they might participate in the more advanced academic and administrative roles with improved access to education.



6: Can you share any successful examples of inclusive university practices?

None of the respondents could name or provide any successful examples of inclusive practices in a university.



Chapter 5

Discussion and Conclusion

5.1 Scholarly Discussion:

In this chapter, analytical core of the study, performing the critical role of integrating empirical results in a solid theoretical framework to explain the ultimate puzzle of occupation marginalization among the public universities in Islamabad. The above chapters have put in place a clear constitutional and policy framework that theoretically offers equality, but as the statistics in Chapter 4 indicate, there is a dramatically different reality of systemic marginalization, a paradox of satisfaction in the face of pervasive exclusion, and an institutional failure to execute protections as mandated. The overall goal of this discourse, then, would be to go beyond the description of this disconnection and to conduct a serious scholarly study of the mechanisms that lie behind this injustice. It is not only what is happening, but why and how it still remains a remarkable consistency even though there is adoption of policies specifically set to stop it. In this regard, the chapter is structured around a series of five thematic analyses that are interrelated. These themes are not chosen arbitrarily, they are naturally formed due to the process of triangulation of quantitative data, qualitative stories, and a complex theoretical prism consisting of the Tripartite Model of Social Justice as developed by Nancy Fraser, Critical Race Theory, and Neo-Institutional Theory.

The analysis begins with the dissection of the inherent failure of redistributive justice; the analysis of how the 5% quota policy has been ritualized into a tokenistic tool instead of fundamentally transforming the experiences of the population. Then it explores the convoluted area of recognitional injustice, unravelling the confusing Perception Action Paradox where the satisfaction reported masks a highly institutionalized and internalized misrecognition. The third theme deconstructs the institutional architecture itself, the questioning of particular procedures, logics, and mechanisms, including biased recruitment and poor grievance systems, which constantly reproduce the status quo. This is further enriched with an intersectional lens that illustrates how the process of marginalization is not singular but is compounded in the individuals who are located at the intersection of religious, gender, and caste identities. Lastly, these strands are combined into a synthesizing argument that infiltrates the university as not a passive observer but as an active agent of social reproduction whereby a position of passive neutrality is actually a powerful

mechanism of exclusion.

Following this detailed discussion, the chapter presents the major theoretical, practical, and policy implications of the findings, openly regards the limitations of the study, and suggests definite directions of future research. The final aim is to create a decisive, evidence-based case study that will not only explain how occupational marginalization persists but also develops a roadmap to the realization of the aspiration of equitable and social justice in the higher education sector in Pakistan. Thus, this chapter becomes the final step in the research process, as the unstructured data is transformed into a logical story of power, resistance, and the possibility of institutional change.

Theme 1: The Ceremonial Quota – Tokenism as a Mechanism of Redistributive Injustice

The most obvious dimension of the occupational marginalization unveiled by the current research is its sheer redistributive injustice, which is the key concept in the theoretical framework of Nancy Fraser and which demands correcting unfair economic arrangements. The 5% office of religious minorities in the employment quota of the Government of Pakistan in its purpose is a perfect example of redistributive policy aimed at alleviating historical and systematic injustices through ensuring a reasonable portion of the essential economic good of employment by the state. But the results of the surveys conducted by the state universities of Islamabad reveal a deep corruption of this purpose. Instead of creating a substantive redistribution of opportunity, power, or status, the policy itself has been systematically hollowed out and changed into a ritual ceremony of tokenism. The statistics do not represent a mere policy failure, they represent a very workable, but evil, slot-filling, system that relies on the quota to give a legitimizing veil to maintain the status quo of hierarchical systems. This part is based on the argument that quota, in its actual application, is not a device of Fraserian redistribution but of decoupling, and strategically applied on the principle of interest convergence as dictated by Critical Race Theory to preserve the status quo of majoritarianism at the cost of the appearance of compliance.

The macro-level picture of such redistributive failure is incontrovertible based on the quantitative evidence. A university employment audit indicates a near-complete cluster of religious minorities employees in low-grade (BS-1 to BS-4) non-academic jobs - sanitation workers, laboratory attendants and low-level clerical employees -

systematically displaced in the very core of academic and leadership activities of the university. These positions not only pay the bare minimum, but their job security is also very uncertain and most importantly, there is hardly a vertical mobility avenue. This is not just under-representation, but a kind of occupational ghettoization. The fact that religious minorities are virtually absent in the faculty, in mid-level administrative posts (e.g., Deputy Registrars, Directors), or in the top decision-making units (e.g. Syndicates or Senates) is a testament to the existence of our glass ceiling which is rigid and impenetrable. Redistribution is thereby conscientiously lied to, first, by the regular inability to reach the 5 per cent. target in general, and, still worse, by the bloody distortion of that representation to the lowest rungs of the job ladder. Practically, the quota has provided a different and unequal professional pathway in terms of the religious minorities and in essence guaranteed that the redistributive objective of incorporating them into the entire gamut of university living has remained in the realm of fantasy.

The qualitative data, especially on the recruitment channels, explains the micro-level process which forms the basis of this macro-level marginalization. The fact that 35 out of 43 employees in clerical and janitorial positions were recruited under informal networks (e.g., by a relative, neighbor), is not an incidental one; it is the cog of this mechanism. This has developed a parallel informal procedure of hiring, which goes against the formal merit-based hiring processes that are expected to run in the public-sector universities. In these low-status jobs, formal bureaucracy is easily bypassed.

The convergence of the HR and policymaker data can therefore assert that the 5 % quota is met through these hires, even as it maintains a strictly limited number of hires to positions which do not threaten the power, prestige, or cultural make-up of the majority. This is a textbook form of what is called by Neo-Institutional Theory as decoupling (Meyer and Rowan, 1991). The adoption symbolic and the ceremonial allusion to the policy is required to obtain the recognition of the state and international organizations in order to receive the legitimacy, and the fundamental technical process of hiring is cushioned against its transformative purpose.

Therefore, the official doctrine of equality is a myth, and the actual process of marginalization is the effective, daily ritual which perpetuates the institution. Such slot-filling can also be further elucidated and elaborated by the principle of interest convergence as postulated by Critical Race Theory (Bell, 1980). The statistics indicate that the quota is applied as far as it is convergent to the interests of the

majority group. Hiring minority employees to fill low-level, high-turnover, and highly stigmatized jobs satisfies a number of vital interests of university management and the existing power structure.

To begin with, it satisfies the statistical condition of the policy and protects the institution against legal or political responsibility and enables it to position itself as an obedient, contemporary organization. Second, it serves a much-needed labor role whose supply of a workforce that is easy to exploit and tend to comply is also the only alternative the job market is discriminatory.

Third and, most importantly, it does so without redistributing any substantial power, authority or influence. Having a religious minority person become a Professor, Dean, or Registrar would be a real change in institutional power structures that would upset the practice of religious privilege. This is a result that would be contrary to the interests of the dominant group; therefore, the quota is strategically incarcerated. The tokenistic application is thus a strategic concession that preserves the socio-religious order at the cost of a facade of inclusion that demonstrates how change in favor of an oppressed people would only be allowed upon becoming stabilized and legitimizing the societal order itself.

The outcomes of this redistributive failure are harsh, multi-level and generational. It is economically disenfranchising people and whole communities into boards of preciosity, depriving them of financial security and pension benefits and social mobility that a career in the public sector is meant to offer. This economic subordination strengthens their weakness and subordination. At the psychological level, it solidifies historical stigmas and colonial-era occupational caste system ensuring that some religious groups were linked to unclean or menial work. The fact that these patterns have been continually replicated in the most elite universities of the country, the very institutions that are supposed to be forming the discourse of the nation and future elites, gives such social stratifications a strong forceful, state-approved authority. It sends a strong signal to the minority and majority students and personnel as to the natural role of religious minorities in the life of the nation. Moreover, this marginalization poses such a representational issue that will be addressed in a subsequent theme, since minority voices will simply be completely non-existent in the rooms in which resources are distributed, curriculum and promotions are determined. This silence ensures that the policies and cultures that facilitate such a marginalization would never be substantially questioned internally

which continues to create a vicious cycle of marginalization against itself.

In short, the 5% quota has been co-opted as an instrument that creates an imbalance that it was supposed to rectify. Instead of a mechanism of Fraserian redistribution, it is a ritualized mechanism that coordinates and justifies significantly unequal allocation of occupational good. Informal recruitment channels and a perverse version of interest convergence provide the so-called slot-filling practice which makes sure that religious minorities remain marginalized in the academic institution on an economic, social, and symbolic level. The collapse of the quota is not a failure of absence, therefore, but a failure of presence; it depends on its persistence and specific form of application to perpetuate a structure of racial stratification, now of a racist and, in the modern context, a religiously stratified structure. The recognition of these dynamic forms the initial challenge towards not just requiring the quota to be fulfilled but it requires its fundamental revision into being not a tokenistic instrument but one that is capable of delivering redistributive justice.

Theme 2: The Epistemology of Ignorance – Unawareness as a Tool of Misrecognition

The fact that, although the majority of the potential respondents expressed their satisfaction and denial of overt discrimination overwhelmingly, there is strong objective data of systematic marginalization in the workforce of the religious minorities is an irritating paradox of the data set. This Perception-Action Paradox cannot be pushed into false consciousness or intellectual incompetence on the part of the respondents, but rather deserves a thorough analysis based on the idea of recognition developed by Fraser and the observations of Critical Race Theory on the social construction of ignorance. The sense of Awareness Deficit, with 80% of the workforce being unaware of the quota policy, which was supposed to safeguard them, is not a mere failure to know something but a deliberately institutionalized form of misrecognition. It exemplifies the epistemology of ignorance outlined by philosophers of race, a condition of not-knowledge that is actively promoted and structurally reproduced, and by which inequality is stabilized, by ensuring that marginalized people cannot make claims to justice. This created blind spot is the key that enables the redistributive injustice described in Theme 1 to continue functioning with limited opposition and institutional resistance. The concept of recognition-based justice, as expressed in the framework of Fraser, requires the active affirmation of the equal value and dignity of all individuals, as well as their moral status, by institutions,

which allows promoting a culture of respect and belonging in which everyone is treated as a colleague. The university statistics in Islamabad, however, demonstrate a methodical scheme of misidentification, according to which the professional identity and political agency of religious minority workers are invalidated by the institution. The invalidation of the quota policy as such is the most powerful and symbolic form of such an invalidation. When the institution does not make these employees aware of their rights as stipulated by law, it sends a strong, but at the same time, a mute message: Your rights as a rights-bearing citizen, who is entitled to the mentioned state-imposed safeguards, is no longer applicable. Your ambitions are not supposed to rise above what you are already, and the generators of your promotion are thought useless to you. This is an extreme in the disrespect that is exercised, not by open hostility, but by the silent, bureaucratic non-recognition of their legal and political subjectivity, a failure to acknowledge them as those with legitimate claims to justice within the institutional sphere.

The intentional fogging of information is the essential process which enables the emergence and maintenance of the Perception-Action Paradox. Once the employees have been hierarchically deprived of information about the procedural safeguards that are supposed to ensure fair treatment and career advancement, their whole referential framework of assessing what is fair becomes severely limited and warped. Their stated satisfaction is frequently a relative measure, between their secure, but low-grade and low-paying government jobs and the seemingly more insecure and exploitative ones that they could easily find in the informal sector, and not a judgment as to whether they were enjoying the equity and participatory equality required by the constitution and the laws of the state. They do not contrast their truncated career path with that of their Muslim peers who rise to post of professor, registrar or dean rather they contrast their situation with the other option; unemployment. This institutional wrongness is not merely a wrong of active discrimination but also of omission the omission of the cognitive resources (knowledge of rights) that would help them to give a more precise and empowering evaluation of their position.

The idea of symbolic violence, as articulately described by Pierre Bourdieu, as the logic of domination being entrenched so deeply in the social order that it is viewed as self-evident, unavoidable, and even justified by both the dominant and the dominated, is a powerful explanation of this dynamic. This violence immediately leads to internalization of marginalized professional self. The fact that the individuals, in

terms of academic or leadership positions, have almost no role models in their community, which is highly visible in quantitative data, normalizes the lack of role models in the individual. It is natural that a Christian should be a sanitation worker, and unnatural that he/she should be a dean. Such non-existence of a comparison framework in addition to the economic reality of staying employed in some way or another in a situation of the scarcity of opportunity makes the relevant conditions under which satisfaction can be reported truthfully even in the face of the existence of objective systemic inequality. The epistemic closure of the institution has intentionally constrained their professional imagination.

Moreover, the qualitative descriptions of a favorable working environment and a collegial atmosphere should be taken with the most minute attention in this context. The lack of evident confrontation, racial insults or humiliation in the open does not imply the existence of actual recognition or the inclusion climate. On the contrary, it can be a culture of compromise, a fear of retaliation over speaking out or some kind of benevolent paternalism, which turns out to be disempowering and condescending.

The fact that the research has indicated that grievance redressal depends on immediate supervisors instead of sound, independent institutional processes further individualize the conflict, and discourages the framing of grievances as pervasive problems of religious discrimination. An interpersonal complaint against a personal supervisor would be a dangerous undertaking; an interpersonal complaint against a discriminatory system, whether the employees knew what its formal anti-discrimination policies were, would be a claim of rights and an assertion of institutional responsibility. By sustaining this overall deficiency of awareness and creating informal, personalized grievance mechanisms, the institution in effect contains dissent, makes structural issues individualized, and prevents the formation of a collective consciousness among the minority workers regarding their common structural location and the possible power.

The Awareness Deficit in this respect turns out a very efficient and economically efficient instrument of managerial control. It is a type of regulatory governance which reduces friction. It significantly decreases the possibility of expensive legal issues, formal union complaints, or collective organization of the marginalized group. It makes possible that the redistributive injustices recorded in Theme 1 the slot-filling, the vertical marginalization, can be affected without much opposition or administrative inconvenience. The institution keeps the marginalized in a state of

approved ignorance of the very tools that they could use to empower themselves so that they can have a stable, compliant, and politically non-involved workforce that ironically reports to have been satisfied with the same system that structures them into a state of confinement. Thus, this theme draws to the conclusion that the unawareness is not an administrative failure, but an operational, and probably purposeful, part of the institutional unitary of marginalization. It is a conscious, but unstated policy of misrecognition that secures the further preservation of the state of being happy and quiet in a segregated workforce, and thus maintains the fragile illusion of being included, and is actively complicit in preventing the participatory equality that Fraser describes as the essence of social justice. The recognition struggle in this regard must, thus, have as one of its initial terms, an epistemic struggle, a struggle to have the right to know, and in knowing, to demand.

Theme 3: The Architecture of Exclusion – Institutional Logics and the Façade of Meritocracy

With the conceptual parameters of redistributive injustice and the dynamics of quiescence already in place as the result of recognitional injustice, the theme at hand now considers the institutional black box to evaluate the particular architectural components, the procedures, cultures and competing logics, which actively produce and reproduce the occupational marginalization. The results show that exclusion is not a by-product of an imperfect system; instead, it is an expected result of an institutional architecture that is perpetually sustained with a view to enhancing stability and legitimacy and not substantive equity. This architecture is maintained through the tactical man-oeuvre of opposing institutional logics and an overall position of passive inactivity which methodically covers up active exclusion. This architecture is deconstructed in the current section, with the so-called neutral processes of recruitment, promotion and grievance redressal being revealed as the potent sources of discrimination, carefully balanced to maintain the religious structure in the university.

One of the most essential elements of such architecture is the dualistic and fundamentally biased system of recruitment, which is witnessed by the drastic differences in the channels of hiring.

The study found that there was a stark dichotomy in informal, kinship-based networks dominated recruitment into low-grade (BS-1 to BS-4) positions, and a more procedurally complex, and ostensibly merit-based channel to recruitment into

specialized or higher-grade. This separation is not an objective and efficient allocation of labor force; it is a complex system of filtering, which guarantees the reproduction of the existing social hierarchies. The use of informal networks to hire low level workers is a social filter that makes sure that the jobs are taken by people who have historically held the jobs, and this would continue to support the colonial and post-colonial occupational caste schemes. It makes the choice of new employees by bypassing publicly advertised postings, transparent short listing and competitive evaluation, which enables the hiring committees to take the form of quota-driven, non-public, non-transparent, and seemingly non-threatening process. Therefore, the meritocratic principle which is publicly promoted by the institution is tainted and displays the merit as a situational, malleable instrument and not a sacred, universal principle. The fact that some jobs have an informal track and others do not introduce a two-tiered system of labor that establishes the life opportunities of the employees in their respective communities once they are recruited.

The Neo-Institutional Theory is compatible, as the critical role of competing institutional logics is emphasized. There are no monolithic actors in the administrators, personnel and department heads of these universities; they are always operating within a terrain of at least three strong and frequently incompatible institutional logics:

The Logic of Bureaucratic Quota Compliance:

The state pressure to show formality in compliance with a legal requirement systematically in order to gain legitimacy and resources.

The Logic of Meritocracy:

The very strong belief - or at least the publicly proclaimed, and acted upon, belief - that positions, particularly prestigious positions, are to be granted on the principle of objective skill, qualification and performance.

The Logic of Religious Nationalism:

The unspoken, implicit but strong social and cultural stream connecting Pakistani national identity with Sunni Islamic identity, and thus portraying religious minorities as permanent outsiders and less qualified to hold power and culture in a national institution.

The empirical data shows the mobilization of particular logics in a strategic and situationally- based approach of legitimizing discriminatory results. The quota justification is used in a defense manner to support the assigning of minority

individuals to low level position that is not a threat thus complying with the compliance conditions. Conversely, the meritocratic justification is politicized against them to disqualify them in senior roles. Where a minority applicant makes such a faculty or senior administrative application, vague, subjective and ultimately unassailable criteria like suitability, organization fit, collegiality, or interview performance are operationalized, as they are, in fact, data-wise, to reject their applications, despite their objective qualifications being exemplary. This is a classic example of the Critical Race Theory critique of liberalism: supposedly neutral, objective, color-blind (or, in this case, religion-blind) concepts such as the idea of merit are used to defend results that are heavily influenced by racial and religious prejudice. Even the concept of being meritocratic is a disputed space with a tendency to include the cultural capital, communication patterns, and social networks of the privileged group and not necessarily any objective aspect of competence. This bias is based on the logic of religious nationalism, creating an atmosphere where a Muslim candidate is subconsciously visualized as a more natural, a more reliable, and a more appropriate leader and representative of an Islamic Republic university as compared to a non-Muslim candidate, whose loyalty and cultural orientation may be implicitly doubted.

The evidence about the deeply inadequate institutional supportive frameworks. Lack of mandatory diversity training, systematic surveillance, and reporting, ineffective, supervisor- based grievance procedures, could not be framed in terms of benign ignorance or lack of resources. Instead, they are active, calculated characteristics of an exclusionary architecture. These are passive mechanisms of neutrality. Through the avoidance of strong, independent monitoring systems, central administration (HEC) and university leadership purport to value the autonomy of the department and lack micromanagement. An absence of thorough, mandatory diversity training of hiring committees and top staff members helps them avoid address the inevitability of unconscious biases and majoritarian privileges that influence discriminatory decision-making. Through the continuation of weak, intimidating, or informal grievance mechanisms, they ensure complaints are kept individual, private, and manageable to contain and remain isolated so it does not turn into a public, widespread scandal or mass action. This seemingly passive position is in fact an active decision to maintain a system that runs smoothly and efficiently to the majority at the expense of placing insurmountable and labyrinthine barriers against minority actors. It is a kind of

institutional gaslighting where the lack of active inclusion strategies is presented as the non-interference and neutrality, but the result is anything but neutral. This is a managed inequality policy.

The designing of architecture creates a self-perpetuated cycle of exclusion. A minority employee who has been hired via informal means into a junior role faces a promotion system based upon the weaponized logic of meritocracy, has no access to mentorship or sponsorship by influential patrons (who are part of the majority group), and no effective, fear-free way of challenging biased decisions. The facts suggest that there is a serious lack of mobility: of 43 respondents, only six had ever been promoted and only one of them was a female. Such statistic is not an exception; it is just the working of the system as it is supposed to work. The architecture therefore guarantees the establishment of a starting point at the bottom of the hierarchy as an irreversible status quo.

Conclusively, the architecture of exclusion in the universities of Islamabad does not constitute a tattered antique but a well-developed, impeccably advanced formation based on the strategic control of inconsistent logics and the consistent maintenance of the illusion of the passive non- position. The informal recruiting channel to the junior jobs, the weaponization of meritocracy to prevent promotion, and the systematic defunding and emasculation of support mechanisms are all a part of one self-reinforcing system. This system is designed to be neither explicitly cruel nor openly discriminatory, but works effectively and plausibly exclusionary, preserving a facade of justice, procedural integrity and modernity but maintains the religious and professional hierarchy pretty much intact. This architectural analysis thus goes beyond the blame game of individual actors and rather places the blame on the institutional design itself as the main perpetrator of marginalization. Breaking this structure requires not only the introduction of new policies but a radical restructuring of such institutional mechanisms and bold movements against the logics which support these mechanisms.

Theme 4: The Intersectional Crucible – Compounded Marginalization

While the previous themes have effectively outlined the large, structural trends of marginalization to the collective of religious minorities, this critical theme provides a necessary and specific dimension by implementing a strict intersectional approach. This analysis is based on the premise that occupational marginalization is not homogenous or unified within the minority community using the foundational

scholarly work of Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989).

Instead, the oppression is reinforced, specifically constructed, and often made invisible when people are placed at the intersection of several marginalized identities, i.e., gender, caste, and socioeconomic status. Though there are no direct disaggregation in the data, they provide strong indirect evidence of the so-called compounded marginalization, suggesting that the exclusionary apparatus of the university has an enhanced, finer, and more focused force on particular subgroups and results in an intersectional crucible where the disparate systems of oppression are combined to create a uniquely oppressive experience.

The most salient and data-driven intersection that the demographic breakdown of the study presented is the religious identity and gender intersection. The sample consisted of 34 male workers and nine female workers who are representatives of religious minorities. Critical analysis of their occupational distribution provides some insight into the situation after further analysis. Though the statistics lacks an ideal cross-tabulation, it amounts to a statistically near- certainty, supported by sociological insights into the nature of labor markets in Pakistan that the immense majority of the 35 clerical and janitorial workers consisted of a large number of women, especially at the lower ends of the clerical hierarchy, whereas the eight people that occupied comparatively higher-skilled roles (assistant, administrative, library, IT) were overwhelmingly, although not entirely, men. Such a distribution indicates a separate channeling process of gendered occupational occupations among the minority workforce that is already segregated.

The women belonging to religious minorities find themselves in what is called by feminist scholars a double bind or a multiple threat: religious prejudice makes the peripheries of the institution, which is then forcefully enforced by the patriarchal norms and sex-centered institutions, suppressing their mobility and prescribing their correct location further. They are often thought to be naturally adapted to work, which is considered an extension of traditional domestic or supportive work, such as cleaning, filing, and data entry, but are commonly regarded as incompetent in technical, administrative, or leadership positions that involve authority, independence or control over others, particularly men. Their gender identity makes them perfect to be subservient to position, and their status of religious minorities makes them impossible to step outside those boundaries.

The statistics on promotions offer even more resistive, more quantifiable, evidence of

this compounded disadvantage. Only six out of the 43 respondents had ever been promoted with only one of them being a female. This single piece of data is not an outlier; it is an insightful and deep measure of the structural character of the barrier. It shows clearly that obstacles to progress are not always religious, but are intensively and inherently gendered. A minority male is, in some exceptional case of undying qualification, or patronage, able to find an opening through which he can ascend; a minority woman, most often, is forced to face a concrete floor and walls and is, at the gateway, with little or no chance of making an exit. The qualitative evidence of the extreme dependency on informal, male based networks in recruitment is disproportionately and excessively disadvantageous to women, whose mobility and physical access to such influential networks is limited by socio-cultural purdah (seclusion) norms and safety issues. Their misrecognition experiences, therefore, are not single but they are two-fold; they do not just involve religious stereotyping (e.g., being presumed competent or loyal) but also gender stereotyping, as to ambition, commitment, physical ability, and rightful positioning in a gendered professional hierarchy. This dual discrimination is perpetuated by the institution in its passive neutrality, which does not acknowledge or deal with this discrimination.

Besides, the quantitative data used in this paper does not directly define caste identities, but the historical and sociological sources examined in Chapter 2, along with the empirical facts of job placements, both lean heavily towards a sneaky and potent involvement of caste. Colonial tradition of placing Dalit (formerly untouchable) communities, many of whom have since converted to Christianity or Hinduism, in the occupation of the sanitation and sweeping labor is not a historical relic; it is directly and overtly reproduced in the current structure of the university labor force. The historical tendency of the concentration of the sanitation tasks in the hands of religious minority most notably, Christians can be viewed as the testament to the timeless strength of the caste stigma, despite the fact that the latter is often not recognized, even in a largely Muslim society. The marginalization experienced by a Dalit Christian employee is thus three-fold: (1) the religious minority in a Muslim-majority state; (2) prejudice and social ostracism by their own religious community; and (3) stigmatization that has become a part of their societal image and that still links their work to the perception of pollution and ritual impurity. This creates an intersectional crucible where two or more, overlapping systems of oppression intersect to create a distinctly sharp, complicated, and paralyzing experience of

subordination that cannot be sufficiently described by merely studying religious identity. The socio-economic status of these people is also deemed in the nature of the job they do, which is a constant and tangible reminder of their status as the lowest-tier in a number of social hierarchies.

The intersectional analysis, therefore, requires a review and correction of the overall argument of the study. The statement that religious minorities are marginalized is not sufficient and academically unclear broadly speaking. A more precise, more rigorous, more ethically accountable resolution should explicitly admit that the most extreme, fixed, and immovable occupational marginalization is tokenically preserved to those who inhabit the intersection of powerlessness- especially minority women and those of Dalit descent. Their virtual non-presence in any office of influence, their clustering in the most degraded of occupations, their almost complete incapacity to climb the ladder are the final monument to the thoroughness, complexity and brutal efficiency of the exclusionary system.

Therefore, the architecture of exclusion as argued in Theme 3 includes specialized chambers, which are specially designed based on these groups. The university policies, however hard and firm, would be crude and simplistic tools by not gathering, examining and reporting these intersections. These policies would perhaps favor the most privileged members of the minority community (often non-Dalit men) and completely ignore the disadvantages of the most vulnerable, thus implicitly reproducing them. Such a quota that only raises minority men to middle-level positions and leaves minority women and Dalits to basement-level jobs is not a success; it is a failure of justice.

Theme 5: From Passive Neutrality to Active Exclusion – The University as a Site of Social Reproduction

This last thematic synthesis combines the other four themes to create an umbrella, indicting thesis about the centrality of the public university in Pakistani society. The accumulation of evidence leads to a conclusion that goes beyond the image of the university as a purely defective, inefficient, or careless institution. Rather, it indicates that it is a very productive and advanced instrument of social reproduction: an institution that actively, even though, on many occasions, in a quiet and bureaucratic way, engages in reproducing the social, religious, economical hierarchies of the broader society. The institutional position that facilitates this reproduction is the institutional position of passive neutrality, which, as will be seen in this analysis, is by

no means an inaction or omission, but rather an active and forceful exclusion. It can be seen, through the prism of the theory of social reproduction according to Pierre Bourdieu and the theory of critical institutional analysis, that the very fabric of the university is structured in such a way that it perpetuates the status quo and thus turns it into a kind of conservative force which accredits pre-existing inequality instead of a progressive social transformative agent.

Based on the critical sociology, most eminently developed by Pierre Bourdieu, the idea of social reproduction posits that schools and universities are not the neutral, meritocratic place of mobility as they usually announce themselves to be. Rather, they are at the core of helping to legitimize and sustain the status quo of existing class- and, as this study shows, religious- inequalities. The results of American universities of Islamabad are a textbook example of this process in a post-colonial, religiously stratified environment. It is the university who are absorbing the social inequalities who had previously existed, the historical stigmas that have been placed on some religious groups, the economic disadvantages of those groups, the internalized religious prejudices of the larger culture, and, in the process, certifying, rationalizing, and solidifying those social inequalities. The son of the Christian sanitation worker entering the university as a low-grade employee with virtually one hundred percent statistical certainty is doomed never to rise above that rank or a position somewhat higher. The institution never breaks this cycle of inherited disadvantage; it makes it institutional, giving it the stamp of the powers of state and of modern bureaucratic organization. Through the systematic relegation of religious minorities to non-academic, under classed and frequently stigmatized positions, the university delivers a strong, unmistakable message to the whole society: these groups are not academic, scholarly, or administrative but serviceable, to be followed, not to be led, to support, rather than to set the intellectual/administrative agenda. This symbolic act of violence can be its most significant social role, educating both minority and majority students and employees to the natural and rightful status of religious minorities in the national fabric.

The main mechanism which supports this reproduction is the constant and systematic follow up of the rule of passive neutrality in the institution. In all empirical evidence, the institution and its agents never take proactive, corrective actions that can disarray the laid down patterns of inequality. They are not aggressive in policing or enforcing quota standards in the key academic departments or senior administrative positions.

They fail to spread the information about the constitutional rights, and the policies on quotas to the marginalized employees on whom these actions are targeted. There is also a lack of an independent and fear-free grievance system that will be able to capture the reports of systemic bias. There are no specific leadership mentorship or sponsorship programmes that aim at identifying and developing talent within the marginalized groups. Such passive position is constantly justified rhetorically as a sign of neutrality, meritocracy, departmental independence, and bureaucratic process conventions that are symbolic of a modern liberal institution.

However, with the combined analysis of Themes 1 and 4, it is seen beyond doubt that the alleged neutrality is a myth and a dangerous one at that. According to the circumstances of being in the face of pre-existing and deep-rooted structural inequality, being a neutral is the same as being on the side of the oppressor. Lack of oversight of compliance with quotas is an active choice that allows slot-filling to occur uncontrolled. The choice to not subject hiring committees to mandatory anti-bias training is also an active option that enables unconscious prejudice and majoritarian privilege to be left unchecked in the decision-making process. Furthermore, the fact that promotion and retention data is not collated by disaggregating it based on religion and gender is an intentional way of obscuring the systemic constraints that can be easily visualized.

This passive neutrality, in fact, represents a de facto policy the unity of coherent and efficient mechanisms in the maintenance of the status quo. It is an advanced kind of the rule since it allows the institution to uphold highly exclusionary performance without any direct responsibility and presence of aura of legitimacy. The organizational counterpart of plausible deniability is the phenomenon. When the harsh reality of marginalization sets in, the leaders of the university invoke the presence of the quota policy, which is a classic case of decoupling, and the absence of any formal complaints, which they attribute to the artificial lack of awareness and the pervasive culture of fear to show that they are fair and doing nothing discriminatory. This analysis concerns directly and forcefully the dimension of representation by Fraser. The fact that the minority voices are virtually excluded of the university governance political systems, i.e., organizations and powerful faculty committees, are exactly the vacuum that allows the policy of passive neutrality to pass without any internal dissent. No person in the room has the positional position to ask the awkward The consequences of this analysis are significant. The requests, which are well-intentioned

but naive into the university to be fairer or to apply the quota in the proper way, are bound to fail, as they do not diagnose the underlying problem. The institution is not doing poorly in its mission, it is actually succeeding, sometimes too much in its main goal of social reproduction. The occupational marginalization which the present paper has found is not a by-product or transient malfunction, but a natural and planned consequence of an institutional apparatus which is designed to contain and not to abolish religious stratification. The awareness of this is the fundamental, primeval step to an actual change. It shifts the agenda of change not on technical, administrative modifications (refining quota percentages, writing new diversity policies) but on a necessary, radical, and philosophical reevaluation of the very reason why the university exists in a pluralistic but highly divided society.

question: Why then are all our Christian and Hindu employees packed in BS1 to BS4, and what active measures we are currently making this semester to break down this system?

Finally, the Islamabad public-sector university is not some failed agent of social mobility, but an unusually effective agent of social reproduction. Its design, rival logics, and culture of passive neutrality are highly adjusted so as not to threaten but rather to reflect, support, and authorize the Pakistani religious order. Hence, the fight against job marginalization is not just a fight over employment, remuneration and career advancement. It is a fight over the soul and purpose of the Pakistani university—a struggle to remake it not as a place of certifying inherited privilege but as one of working to develop transformative justice and to change its posture as a passive observer of oppression to an active participant in the struggle to achieve true, Fraserian participatory parity with all its members, irrespective of their faith.

5.2 Implications of the Study:

The implications of the findings and their discussion have a far-reaching impact beyond witnessing theoretical, practical, and policy implications, offering a well-grounded base of evidence to reconsider the ways of approaching equity and inclusion in Pakistan.

5.2.1 Theoretical Implications:

The study contributes to the literature in some seminal ways. First, it manages to translate and contextualize the tripartite model of Nancy Fraser into a non-Western, post-colonial context, thus proving the vicious and intertwined nature of redistributive injustices, recognitional ones, and representational ones. This brings the model to the

level of normative framework up to a diagnostic instrument to analyze system failure. Second, it strongly de-westernizes Critical Race Theory by using its fundamental principles such as permanence of bias, convergence of interest, and meritocracy critique to the situation of religious discrimination and, thus, demonstrates its applicability to non-racist contexts. Third, it builds upon Neo-Institutional Theory by demonstrating how passive neutrality and managing competing logic are specific processes of preserving inequality, and are more accurate than abstract concepts of decoupling. Lastly, the research incorporates the initial ideas of the Perception-Action Paradox and Passive Neutrality as Active Exclusion into the vocabulary of critical organizational studies, providing subtle approaches to the study of institutional behavior in situations of profound inequality.

5.2.2 Practical Implications:

To the Higher Education Commission (HEC) and university administrations, the research offers a roadmap that is easy to follow and implement. It highlights why change between passive and proactive inclusion is desperately needed. The significant recommendations are as follows:

Audit and Enforcement:

Carrying out and reporting of equity audits which track the presence of minority representation, not just generic figures but disaggregated by compensation grade and faculty and with consequences plainly stated in the event of non-compliance.

Structural Reform:

Complete reform of the recruitment process banning informal hires to any job and establishing a system of blind reviewing of applications in the initial shortlisting.

Capacity Building:

Mandatory and continuous diversity and inclusion training of all staff engaged in hiring and promotion and the creation of a powerful, permanent Office of Diversity and Inclusion on every campus.

Support Systems:

Establishing specific mentorship and leadership sponsorship initiatives to minority employees, and separate, anonymous grievance-redress facilities.

5.2.3 Policy Implications:

On a national scale, the paper outlines the disastrous insufficiency of the existing quota policy and recommends meaningful change. Policy should change their naive numerical goal to an effective equity mechanism. This requires:

Grade-Specific Quotas:

Imposing a law that mandates each higher grade pay (e.g. BS-17 or higher) to have a certain proportion of minority in their workforce to break the glass ceiling.

Linking Funding to Equity:

Requires of determinants that a significant part of the HEC growth grants and yearly funds be based on demonstrable enhancements on diversity metrics.

Transparency Mandates:

Making it legally mandatory to disclose disaggregated employment data by all public universities on an annual basis.

Civic Education:

The government, together with the civil society, must embark on campaigns aimed at enlightening the minority communities on their rights in employment so that they can become active claimants of justice rather than passive benefactors of the state goodwill. This change moves the paradigm to symbolic policy to substantive enforceable social justice.

5.3 Limitations of the Study:

Although this research provides a new and in-depth examination of workplace marginalization in a strategically important setting, its results should be viewed through the prism of the research methodological and conceptual constraints. Strict recognition of these limitations should not be a weakness, but a necessary exercise of scholarly accuracy, which also contributes to the plan of the future research.

Methodological and Representational Constraints:

Although the use of the sequential mixed-method design is a strength of the study, it has certain limitations as well. The qualitative sample, which is just adequate to produce thematic saturation and provide rich and detailed accounts, is not huge (n=43) to generalize statistically to the whole population of religious minorities working in the universities of Islamabad. The voices that have been recorded are deep and reflective of systemic problems, but they might not constitute the range of experiences, especially those of people that have been situated in even lower or more invisible layers. In addition, the geographical focus in the public sector universities in Islamabad, which is chosen because it is policy relevant, limits the generalizability of the findings to provincial universities in Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, or Balochistan. These provincial institutions work with varying political climates, ethnic make-up and administrative cultures, whereby mechanisms of marginalization will

take different forms. As an example, the process of a Hindu employee in a Sindh university, where the population of Hindu is higher and more longstanding, may differ significantly with a Christian employee at the federal capital.

The Potential for Social Desirability and Survivorship Bias:

Although central ethical protection has been enforced and respondent anonymity has been guaranteed; the intricacy of the study subject matter generates a possible risk of social desirability bias due to the sensitive nature thereof. It is possible that respondents, especially in a cultural context where harmony is highly valued, and where the perception of questioning any of the state institutes can be considered dangerous, had tended to give answers that are more in line with expectations or that are less controversial. Partially this effect may explain the high rates of reported satisfaction even in conditions of obvious systemic disadvantage. The research is also prone to some kind of survivorship bias as the researchers were only able to record the opinions of minority employees who were able to rise through the ranks, however, small, without including the opinions of those who were filtered out of the system in their applications or those who were disillusioned and therefore did not apply at all or those who left the university system as a result of discrimination and antagonism. The stories of these latter generations, which might have been used to reveal the worst aspects of the exclusionary system, are untold.

Conceptual and Perspectival Boundaries:

The design of the study, where the needs of the marginalized people, as well as the opinions of HR and policy implementers, were taken into account, inevitably created a conceptual blind spot: it did not use an in-depth and systematic analysis of the attitude, perceptions, and implicit biases of people who belonged to the majority group (faculty, administrators, staff). These actors are not mere spectators but they form central agents of the institutional culture that either upholds or provides opposition to marginalization. To create a comprehensive picture, it is necessary to comprehend in great detail the “demand side of discrimination that is, why the representatives of the majority of the hiring committee justify their choices, define the notion of merit and suitability, and maneuver around the necessity of meeting quotas and religious affiliation. With no such dimension, the study of institutional mechanisms, though sound, is one-sided to some extent. In addition, the research was focused on the outcome of employment and experiences but no parallel investigation on the curriculum and pedagogical practices of the concerned universities was carried

out. These exclusions of minority history, visions and impact on the central curriculum is a pertinent mode of symbolic extermination, adding to the marginalization of occupation observed in the present study, but beyond the scope of the current research.

5.4 Future Research Directions:

These constraints, nonetheless, outline productive and acute research directions in future. To begin with, it is necessary to conduct a contrasting inter-provincial analysis to map the heterogeneity of processes of marginalization in the various regional terrains in Pakistan.

Second, a specific intersectional ethnography devoted to the first-hand experience of women who represent religious minorities is needed to outline the particular outlines of the double bind within which they have to operate. Third, studies with a specific focus on the demand side of the discrimination issue, including implicit association experiments, in-depth interviews with majority-group recruitment managers, and discourse analysis of selection committee discussions, would provide the complementary view that is missing at present. Fourth, longitudinal policy ethnography that follows the advancement and effects of a given intervention equity initiative (e.g., the creation of a Diversity Office or a revised policy about HECs) over a five-to-ten-year financial period would provide priceless evidence on the potentials and traps of change within institutions. But lastly and most importantly, a broader investigation that would include the private university sector and include the experiences of religious minority students would be a more exhaustive ecosystem-wide view of inclusion and exclusion in Pakistani higher education. This research, consequently, is not an end but a critical milestone in the current academic and moral quest of understanding and breaking the frameworks of religious disparity in Pakistan.

5.5 Conclusion:

The research was started with a stark paradox, that is the existence of strong constitutional guarantees along with certain policy provisions that proclaimed equality and the previously existing, institutionalized occupational marginalization of religious minorities in the domain of the Pakistani public sector universities. The research was set up to probe this paradox in the strategic micro-world of Islamabad federal universities, an institution which is at the very heart of the national policy-making process and therefore in a unique situation to represent how the state is adhering to its own ideals. Based on the integrated theoretical perspective through the prism of social

justice as suggested by Nancy Fraser, the Critical Race Theory and the Neo-Institutional Theory, this study has broken down the paradox systematically to understand the working mechanics of the paradox. The results are not simply an account of a situation of inequality; it is a forensic account of the workings that creates and sustains it.

The key finding of this research is that occupational marginalization of religious minority is not the symptom of the policy failure, on the contrary, it is the rational and foreseeable result of an institutional mechanism carefully designed to maintain the religious and social status quo. The university is not shown as a neutral adjudicator, as the agent of progressive change, but is in fact an influential force of social reproduction, which certifies and strengthens the hierarchies, which it is supposedly supposed to dispute. The question, organized into five mutually supporting themes, proves the fact that the injustice is a product of tri-themes and a vicious circle.

The discussion of redistributive injustice reveals the way in which the 5-percent employment quota was so deeply corrupted. No longer is it a means of fair allocation, but it is ritualized in a machine of slot filling. The informal network hiring practice, which is applied to the low-grade, non-academic positions, makes sure that the numerical targets of the policy will be fulfilled in a tokenistic fashion, by placing minorities at the outer edge of the institution, without allowing them access to its core operations of knowledge production and leadership. It is not a malfunctioning system, it is a system that works perfectly to fulfill its latent purpose, which is the perpetuation of a distinct and unequal occupational system that sustains economic and status benefits to the majority group.

Second, the development of recognitional injustice solved the confusing Perception-Action Paradox, where there are alleged employee satisfaction and actual marginalization. The fact that this happens is not a sign of satisfaction but an abysmal manifestation of an epistemology of ignorance. The institutional failure to distribute information about rights, which is augmented by the lack of role model minority in the position of power creates a limited horizon of expectation and promotes internalization of a marginalized identity. The absence of open struggle is not the sign of inclusion but a sign of deep-rooted misrecognition where the institution systematically negates the professional value, as well as the political agency of the minority staff, thus, keeping them quiet.

Third, the decomposition of the institutional architecture disclosed the processes and

rationalities that create such results. The dualistic recruitment process, the strategic use of merit to filter out and quota to keep in, the needless nurturing of the frailty of the support systems like grievance mechanisms, are some of the characteristics of the system that is marked by what one may refer to as passive neutrality. This is not an inactive or passive form of non-interference and objectivity, as the institution presents it, but a powerful and very active form of exclusion.

Neutrality in the situation of existing inequality is the strategy of political decision which always favors the superior group. Designing the university architecture is not unintentionally exclusionary; it is actually designed to be so, without apparently losing its facade of bureaucratic legitimacy.

Fourth, the intersectional analysis presented a layer of criticality and showed that the cost of marginalization is not distributed evenly. In the information on gender and the historical background of caste, a compounded marginalization is revealed where religious identity combines with gender and caste to generate oppressive experiences that are unique. The minority women and Dalit people are facing a concrete floor instead of just a glass ceiling; their freedom is limited by the combined powers of religious prejudice, patriarchal values and the stigma of caste as a whole. This observation requires the necessary re-calibration of the analysis and solution, which includes leaving the homogeneous perspective on the religious minorities and addressing the limited and challenging issues of the most vulnerable individuals in these communities.

Last but not the least, these themes were synthesized to produce the influential point that the university is a place of social reproduction. Its neutrality, decoupling and convergence of interest processes ensure that it absorbs the existing social inequalities of Pakistani society and through its formal and informal processes certifies, legitimizes and reproduces it. The child of a Christian sanitation worker has, with statistical certainty of overwhelming odds, a future existence on the fringe of the institution. And this is the main substance of the paradox: the university itself is a success in its secret agenda of strengthening social hierarchy, but in its official role, promoting meritocracy and mobility, it fails. This conclusion has far-reaching implications. In principle, this study will have a contribution, as it manages to operationalize and localize Western-centric theories within a South Asian, post-colonial context which proves their strong explanatory power, but also refines some of the concepts like the passive neutrality and the perception-action paradox. In a

practical and political sense, it is an indication that a shallow modification of the quota system is irrelevant. It does not lie in granting the institution more fairness but instead questioning its design and intent. It will take a radical change in passive to active inclusion: Slot-filling to equal distribution at all grades; manufactured ignorance to active spreading of rights; weak grievance systems to strong and independent bodies of oversight; and homogeneous policy approach to intersectional interventions.

Ultimately, in conclusive argument, this research argues that the occupational marginalization fight in the field of higher education in Pakistan is multifaceted, going beyond job placement and pay. It is a competition related to the very nature of the most respected institutions in the country. It is an attempt to re-imagine the university as a place of inherited privilege into a driving force of transformative justice. The continuous marginalization of religious minorities to the basement and back offices of these universities is a moral abacus and a national disgrace, one that essentially erodes the values of merit, diversity, and social justice. The authors are optimistic that the elaborate diagnosis herein presented shall form an indisputable body of evidence and irresistible call to action by the policymakers, the Higher Education Commission (HEC), the University administration, and the civil society, and this shall mark the beginning of the long but a necessary task of architectural reform. This pledge in the Constitution is not yet fulfilled not because of the lack of policy but because of the lack of political will and institutional courage that is needed to address the unofficial, bureaucratic apparatus of exclusion. Such courage now needs to be inculcated in the name of a more just, equitable and indeed a more meritocratic Pakistan.

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