

# **Exploring the Social Well-Being of the Hindu Minority in Khuzdar District, Balochistan- Pakistan**

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**Abstract:** This study investigated the social well-being of the Hindu minority in the Khuzdar District, Balochistan, emphasizing the experiences of educated and illiterate male youth. This study used a qualitative, phenomenological research approach, conducting 13 in-depth interviews to examine the social elements and community efforts influencing the social well-being of this minority group. Data collection was driven by purposive sampling to capture the lived experiences of the Hindu minority. The theory of social capital provided a theoretical framework for examining the processes of social exclusion and marginalization experienced by this population. The results indicate substantial obstacles, such as fear of forced conversions and blasphemy, inadequate governmental policies, and insufficient backing from national and international entities. The concerns, together with social obstacles, hinder the Hindu minority's access to resources and opportunities, hence limiting their society's acceptability and involvement. The research highlights the immediate need for specific governmental actions and community-led efforts to overcome these obstacles. By recognizing and resolving the distinct barriers encountered by the Hindu minority, stakeholders may strive to cultivate an inclusive society where religious minorities can fully participate and contribute to national development.

**Keywords:** Social Well-Being, The Hindu, Minority, Khuzdar, Social Capital.

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## **1. Introduction**

Social well-being includes happiness and social achievement. Freedom to interact with others is another aspect of social well-being. Social well-being includes reaching one's full potential, feeling pleased and satisfied, having some control over one's life, having a purpose, and having meaningful relationships. A stable environment allows a person or organization to grow and flourish. Research shows that cheerful individuals are more productive at work, learn better, create more, are more pro-social, and have better relationships. Well-being is linked to career, personal, and interpersonal success. Also, a longitudinal study shows that children's health and happiness predict adults' future health and happiness. Well-being improves physical health,

lifespan, and job performance. Higher life satisfaction and well-being have been related to better national economic performance and results in both sectors. This shows how social well-being affects personal and societal prosperity Rugerri, [1].

Every person is born with equal rights and dignity. Despite current technical, social, and educational advances, people still face bias because they identify differently and have different beliefs Bughra, [2]. Social well-being may be linked to living standards and quality of life. Social well-being examines life quality to understand community needs. Social well-being includes objective and subjective well-being, which are separate perspectives on the level of life. Religious perspectives, behaviors, morality, and culture are greatly influenced by religion. Social well-being shapes their worldview, comforts them in times of sorrow, and gives them hope that things will improve. This shows how social well-being shapes worldviews.

One of the most significant elements affecting quality of life is well-being. It is assessed using objective and subjective community quality-of-life indices. In addition, academics from various fields are increasingly interested in subjective well-being and quality of life. All modern civilizations aim to improve people's well-being since it indicates how they value their lives. Multiple factors might affect residents' well-being, and several research has linked subjective well-being to social connection and partnership activities. Social connections boost well-being by promoting belonging and lowering depression Yolal, [3].

Accepting that well-being is socially formed and goes beyond psychological identity is more important. Keyes's five-dimensional model of social well-being covers numerous elements. The fifth social well-being factor is social integration, or feeling like part of a group. Social acceptance means including everyone in society. The idea that everyone can improve society is called social contribution. An optimistic outlook on society is social actualization. Social coherence requires social knowledge Keyes, [4].

On the other hand, it is also widely believed that the Islamic Republic of Pakistan was founded to house Muslims throughout the subcontinent. Buddhist, Hindu, Christian, and Sikh principles originated in Pakistan. Before the subcontinent divided, Pakistan was a Jewish nation for an extended period. Each religion must have its traditions, customs, rituals, cultures, languages, communities, and creeds. Religious minorities makeup 3.7% of the population yet are typically seen as violent.

Some religious minority groups and individuals have significant wealth, yet most lack access to education, sanitation, transportation, and health care. Occupation discrimination may include

kidnappings, forced conversions, blasphemy accusations, target killings, and attacks on minorities' holy places of worship by perverted extremists and non-state actors, as reported in the media. Because of this, their lives are miserable, and they are always afraid of the future. In many religious minorities, holy blasphemy-related killings are common. Around 62 people have been hanged for blasphemy since 1990. A total of 39 blasphemy charges were filed against 359 people in 2013, including 40 on death row Mirza, [5].

On August 11, 1947, Quaid I Azam declared that all ethnic minorities in Pakistan were entitled to certain freedoms and privileges. The 1973 Pakistani Constitution also guaranteed special access to minority religions. This clause permitted minority faith political organizations to work in administration and public service. The Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (2017) reports that 3.7% of religious minorities.

Malik, [6] said that several minority groups have been in Pakistan from its inception. Religious nations and minorities were allocated 10 seats on distinct election ballots as per Pakistan's 1973 constitution. This was executed to accommodate minority groups. Furthermore, 5% has been earmarked for employment and 2% for further education. Pervaiz Musharraf's electoral reform allocated 10 out of 342 members in the national parliament for minority faiths, enhancing political rights. Provinces possess unique seat allocations—three seats in Balochistan, four in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, eight in Punjab, and ten in Sindh. Pakistan has long been classified as a third-world nation. The exodus of British colonists from the subcontinent on August 14, 1947, positioned India on the global stage.

The largest province in terms of territory, skilled workers, resources, and biodiversity is Balochistan. Christian, Sikh, and Hindu minorities dominated the province before the subcontinent's split Bakht & Begum. Hindus, Sikhs, and Christians were most affected by security fears and had to depart for India. Christians, Hindus, Ahmadis, Parsis, Sikhs, and Baha'is are a significant minority in Balochistan. This is especially true in Quetta, the provincial capital. Quetta's population is varied in language, race, and religion. The region's Muslim and non-Muslim population is estimated at 2.5 million. Religious minorities have several challenges to empowerment, including protecting their fundamental rights and promoting justice, peace, tolerance, and harmony with the dominant population, notably Muslims Changezi, [7]. The 2017 Pakistani census found 88,854 minority individuals in Balochistan, 0.72 percent of the total population. Balochistan has 12,246,275 Muslims, 99.28% of the population. Demographically, 99.72% of rural residents are Muslims. Urban areas have a 98.12% population density. Hindus

comprise the largest minority group, with 45,625 (0.37%). With 33819 (0.27%) of the population, Christians are the second largest minority. The Ahmadi population is 2113, or 0.02%. Khuzdar, a Balochistan district, is recognized for its natural beauty and diversified population. Most people are Muslim; however, Hindus, Sikhs, and Christians are also present. In Khuzdar, 3,542 persons are minorities.

This research examined the complex aspects of social well-being among the Hindu minority in the Khuzdar district, a region characterized by considerable social difficulties and religious marginalization. Social well-being, a complex concept, includes individual pleasure, the quality of interpersonal relationships, community involvement, and the overall feeling of belonging within a social context. In the context of the Hindu minority, it is crucial to comprehend the unique socioeconomic issues affecting their well-being, especially given their marginalized position inside a primarily Muslim country. The current research mainly focuses on subjective measures of social well-being, like education, policy access, and educational possibilities, often overlooking the subjective experiences that influence the reality of minority groups. Prior studies have mainly concentrated on the psychological welfare of religious minorities, emphasizing concerns such as depression, anxiety, and general mental health. Nevertheless, these studies have often neglected the complex interaction between social factors—such as community support, social networks, and cultural practices—and the widespread anxieties related to forced conversions and blasphemy accusations. The documented occurrences of coerced conversions, especially involving young girls, highlight the pressing need to investigate the impact of such societal pressures on both mental health and the overall social cohesiveness and feeling of security within the Hindu community. This study aims to clarify how social dynamics and community-driven activities might enhance the social well-being of the Hindu minority by addressing these disparities. Furthermore, this research seeks to expand the knowledge of the experiences of the Hindu minority. Therefore, guiding interventions that foster resilience, reinforce community connections, and improve social satisfaction aim to clarify the routes to a more inclusive society that prioritizes and protects the social well-being of all individuals, irrespective of their religious affiliations.

## **2. Theoretical framework**

Social capital theory has been applied to analyze the Hindu minority's social well-being in the Khuzdar district and provide essential insights into society. To understand social well-being, one

must study the Hindu minority community's internal structure, beginning with bonding social capital. Social interactions in a society shape its relationships, trust, and values. Understanding the Hindu minority community's relations with Khuzdar society requires studying bridging social capital. Community engagement and its impact on education, healthcare, and economic possibilities may be seen in the relationship between the community and government services and local groups. This section examines how the community interacts with the social environment and accesses external resources and services. Moreover, social capital theory helped to explore social capital and community engagement with essential organizations. Research on the Hindu minority's civic, community, and government engagement shows the complex linkages that improve their well-being. Understanding how social capital connects helps people understand how the Hindu minority participates in decision-making and acquires resources that affect their well-being. The three parts of social capital theory—bonding, bridging, and linking—provide a complete framework for studying the Hindu minority's social well-being in Khuzdar district. This analysis's nuanced insights help us understand communal dynamics and offer practical ways to improve the Hindu minority social capital, enhancing their social welfare in Khuzdar.

### **3. Methods and Materials**

This research used a qualitative technique to investigate the social well-being of the Hindu minority in the Khuzdar area. This technique, facilitating comprehensive comprehension, was considered suitable for exploring the lived experiences of the kids within this minority community. The research is based on nominalist ontology and an interpretivist, anti-positivist epistemology, positing that social reality is formed via cultural and social interactions. An exploratory study design was used owing to the topic's novelty and the intention to examine individuals in their natural environments. The study's universe is Khuzdar, concentrating on the Hindu community, representing a minor fraction of the district's demographics. The young, aged 15 to 29, were chosen as the unit of study because of their specific susceptibility to social marginalization. A non-probability purposive selection method was used to pick respondents, with the sample size established at the saturation point—when no further information surfaced from the interviews. The data collection used an unstructured interview guide, allowing the researcher to explore several facets of social well-being as seen by the participants. In-person interviews were performed, yielding comprehensive insights into their social situations.

Thematic analysis was used to examine the data, facilitating the discovery and evaluation of reoccurring themes. The procedure included data familiarisation, coding, topic formulation, and the final composition. Ethical issues were meticulously adhered to, guaranteeing confidentiality and cultural sensitivity. Field experiences highlighted difficulties establishing confidence with respondents, especially women, owing to local security issues and artistic conventions. The research encountered constraints stemming from its narrow geographic and demographic scope, dependence on qualitative methodologies, and the omission of female participants, limiting generalizability. Notwithstanding these obstacles, the research yielded significant insights into the social well-being of the Hindu minority in Khuzdar.

#### **4. Results**

Exploring the Hindu minority's social well-being in Khuzdar requires contextualizing the various historical, social, political, and cultural variables that impact their lives. The Hindu minority in Pakistan, especially in Balochistan, has long faced forced conversion, blasphemy accusations, and structural marginalization. This research examines how government policies, social narratives, and established hierarchies like the caste system and biased schooling contribute to the community's disadvantage. It also investigates national and international organizations, community-led initiatives, and changing cultural norms to improve social well-being. However, biased media representations and the "we and they" narrative perpetuate societal division. While cultural events build resilience and patience, the group faces a social identity glass barrier that limits egalitarian treatment. Understanding how these elements interact is essential to developing solutions to break down barriers and increase Hindu minority inclusion and well-being.

Forced conversions refer to the act of compelling someone to convert to a different belief system via the use of physical, emotional, or psychological harm. Forced conversion and blasphemy are happening in Pakistan, which is a nationwide issue, especially for Christian and Hindu communities. Forcefully, teenage girls are kidnapped and converted to Islam. Forced conversion and blasphemy affect the social well-being of religious minorities. They cannot have healthy relationships with other communities and cannot function appropriately in society.

We have no fear of forced conversion. We are safe and feel secure regarding forced conversion. In Khuzdar district, from my birth till today, neither I see forced conversion of Hindus from Hinduism to another religion nor any blasphemy. There were two or three cases of average religious conversions in which they changed their religion by choice. Blasphemy is a significant

issue in Pakistan country, but it is good to say that in our community, no case has been registered against us, nor have we faced vandalism from mobs since I remember. My parents shared everything about their era with me but had no blasphemy cases. Forced conversion and blasphemy are hot issues in Sindh and Punjab because the religious minority population is high, but in the Khuzdar district, we are in low numbers.

Considering forced conversion, the Movement for Solidarity and Peace [8] presented a report according to which, in Pakistan, the majority of the Hindus reside in the Sindh region, in which forced conversion is rapidly happening. In Punjab, Christians are also facing forced conversion and forced marriage of minor girls. The tale of forced conversion is painful and an immense tragedy for the family and the victims who face this type of insane act. The story of forced conversion is painful and a tremendous tragedy for the family and the victims who face this type of insane act. While conducting the interview, another respondent shared that:

Blasphemy and forced conversion did not happen in our community. I have never heard of it in Khuzdar. When I was in school in the sixth and seventh classes, Muslim students used to tease me from a religious point of view. They labeled me as Kafir (Non-Muslim), but I consider it a childish act. We were unconscious and irrational, but now people are conscious and do not face discrimination. We have religious freedom and are safe in Khuzdar City. If I have heard of or experienced any forced conversion or blasphemy case, then I could tell you about the sense of fear regarding forced conversion and blasphemy. A decade ago, one female converted her religion and accepted Islam, but I do not know if she was transformed by her will or forcefully converted to Islam. She belonged to a low-income family and had no food to eat. She went to another religion in search of well-being, but the fact is that we hear about her, and our females observe her. She is in a harsh time. She is not satisfied with her decision, but she is married and cannot come back to her original religion. There have been no cases of forced conversion since in the Khuzdar district, nor have our females been kidnapped for marriage.

On the other hand, there is no Forced conversion happening in the Khuzdar district, but the fact is that it is still affecting youth, and they have trouble regarding forced conversion. Hindu minorities' especially female youth are becoming victims of forced conversion. The most important thing for a human is family, and losing someone's family is a colossal tragedy. Based on religion, conversion of belief is not as easy as it is narrated. The family becomes

Dysfunctional due to loss and do not become able to sustain relationships; they face social exclusion. Regarding forced conversion as one respondent said:

Everyone should remain in their original religion because they strongly bond with their biological family. It should not be broken. We feel fear of forced conversion word and think of our females when we hear about forced conversion. We are in contact with our females and acquire their conditions. Due to forced conversion phobia, female education was affected, but now we are at peace. There has been no blasphemy issue. Forced conversion brings immense pressure on families, especially on females. Mostly, the victims of forced conversion are females, and males are equal to none. You will not hear a Hindu male is converted to another religion. At 16 and 18 years, minor girls are converted to another religion. In this age, they struggle for education and become victims of forced conversion.

Many bills have been presented in the National Assembly but have not been accepted due to religious extremism and public reaction. Government policies and programs that work as fuel for the public without any discrimination of religion. Policies and programs also promote social well-being. The present study has examined the influence of government policies and programs on the Hindu community in the Khuzdar district. It is mandatory to explore the perception of the Hindu community and whether government policies and programs are available to the Hindu community. While interviewing a respondent regarding government policies and programs, he said:

Plenty of government policies and programs are made for minority communities, but they are appreciated when implemented in society. Recently, the previous government provided us with an electricity transformer and a water tube for the whole community. Somehow, little funds were given to our community, but the influential individuals utilized them for their interests. Poor individuals submitted their forms for funds but have yet to receive them. We need a government policy that is appreciated and practical. Our community does not expect government institutions to assist their community. Because government institutions do not support us. We have no hope that government institutions will pass any policies that will be effective for us and that our requirements will be fulfilled. The Hindu community, by itself, tries to solve their minor problems. It has not happened till now that the Hindu community, for their needs, protested or closed roads or shops, which is very common among other communities. We have a sense of respect for how government institutions treat us in society. There is a lack of social.



Integration in our community, so no one gives us considerable attention. We are divided, which causes others to neglect us.

Social policies and programs are useless if the implementation is impossible. Since its inception, there has been no room for religious minorities. They have to bear the brunt of anger, discrimination, vandalism, and religious extremism. As one respondent expressed:

There is no implementation of social policies and programs in our community. Many bills have been passed regarding the forced conversion of minor girls and the marriage age to 18. However, forced conversion is happening in the Hindu community, and people are living a miserable life. Such as, Punjab law accepts 16-year marriages, and females are kidnapped and forced into marriage in Punjab instead of Sindh due to age relaxation in marriage. We now reside in the primary market of Khuzdar City, a lively and densely populated area inside the city's center. I have lived in my town for the whole of my 26 years. In this sphere, I do not see any assistance from the government policies and programs that address our issues. Perhaps the policies and programs of the government are supporting our community in other ways, but I need to find out what those other methods are. We solve our difficulties and earn our living through much effort. There is no foundation in the law. At the present moment, we are the only ones who are building our temple in the neighborhood. No assistance is available to young people who want to advance in society and obtain a better position. Everything that we are doing is being done by ourselves alone.

Analyzing the impact of community initiatives and their contributions to society helps individuals to have social well-being. In this regard, a respondent was interviewed and said:

We have a limited population in the Khuzdar district, and Panchayat is an old community initiative comprising the Hindu community. This community initiative is monitored by our elders, who can fulfill all our needs and work to improve society. Whenever our community faces societal problems, the panchayat tries hard to solve them immediately. Every individual in our community is energetic and willing to contribute to the development of the community. A recent example is that we built a temple in our community. No external institution did not support us.

Concerning this, the researcher interviewed a respondent who was a member of a panchayat and worked for the well-being of the Hindu Community as he stated:

Krishna Trust is the only organization that works for the well-being of the Hindu community in the Khuzdar district, and it works in every city where Hindu minorities live. For example,

widows in our community are supported, low-income families are assisted during their children's marriage, especially for females, and Trust arranges cultural events and festivals. Those students who are financially weak are also supported by trust. Krishna Trust is working in our community as an organization. This trust helps poor people in our society, and this trust also supports the marriage of females belonging to low-income families. Patients are also supported when in need. Social identity, a factor that often causes stress among religious minorities, is a barrier that needs to be overcome for our community to participate fully in society. The social identity is creating troubles for the Hindu minority because today, where there is power, there is authority. In this regard, while interviewing respondents, one of them expressed:

If we see social identity, overall, our identity affects us, and within the community, social identity is also a problem in how we present our identity to other people. Those people who respect and pay attention are rich and have power in their hands. He does not need to show his social identity because everyone accepts them and if he is a capitalist. In our community, human and social capital are essential to social identity. People with capital face no type of difficulty, and they live a smooth life. Those people do not need to present their social identity in front of others. We consider ourselves Baloch when society accepts us, but the matter is that we are not given prestige in our society. However, I can express my ideas about my social identity. In that case, I consider myself a Baloch because I belong to Balochistan, which means motherland for all people of Balochistan without any distinction of culture and religion. Before presenting religion, we should consider our motherland's identity. Everyone needs to show their social identity before religion.

Religious minority groups are marginalized because of their unique religious identities. Furthermore, individuals belonging to religious minority groups face institutional discrimination based on their identification Ali, [9]. If someone wants to know the ground reality, one must ask the individuals who face problems due to their social identity. Similarly, another respondent said:

We are Hindu, and it is our social identity. Due to social identity, Hindu people face many societal problems, especially from religious scholars of other communities. They have no patience for us and do not bear our community. In Sindh, many Hindus are forcefully converted to Islam. Muslims claim that people, by their will, change their religion, but the fact is that they are forcefully converted. We do not have peace in Pakistan generally. Due to social identity, people in Sindh migrate to India daily. However, in Balochistan, we are in peace; we are

relaxed. Now, the situation is changing in Balochistan, too; recently, a Hindu religious scholar was shot dead in Khuzdar, who was in charge of our community temple.

The obstacles encountered by Hindu youth at educational institutions, especially in areas with a considerable Hindu populace, such as Khuzdar, are complex. Hindu students face challenges that hinder their academic experience and reinforce structural biases, such as conflicts between dietary requirements and institutional food systems, as well as a lack of flexibility for religious rites. These issues go beyond the academic sphere and influence their cultural identity and feelings of safety, particularly on the welfare of Hindu girls in areas where forced conversions are a concern. For this purpose, the researcher asked respondents about education, and one respondent said:

Engaging in educational activities outside the community is a significant obstacle for us. We need to endeavor to cultivate a feeling of comfort in another community. There needs to be a standardized meal system at educational institutions, resulting in limited options for students. More equitable opportunities for students to participate in educational sectors must also be created. Furthermore, an established meal system needs to be in place. There is a need for more individuals in our community who have finished their schooling. We need the female to go outside our residence and seek more education. Female education is not provided in our community. The majority of women in our community need to be educated. Some young women are pursuing education at a basic level, such as matriculation or the FSC. Parents have a certain degree of insecurity with their daughters. They express concern about the possibility of their daughters developing romantic attachments to boys from other social or cultural backgrounds. Moreover, the community needs more excitement, which contributes to the underprivileged access of young women to education. Women stayed in their hometowns to get an education. Education is not considered significant for our female population. Around a decade ago, our investors underwent formal schooling and then pursued careers as medical professionals. However, we now can get advanced education. Within our cultural context, more motivation must be needed to pursue professional degrees such as MBBS or other viable alternatives. Within my locality, there needs to be more women professionals in the medical sector and a need for more persons actively seeking professional degrees.

Mesti, [10] views literature as a tool for forming opinions, along with it, the prejudiced ideas against the Hindu minority that are included in school texts. The educational system in Khuzdar encounters considerable obstacles, namely in ensuring fair and equal chances for religious

minorities within society. Gender differences worsen these problems, as females face both hesitation and restricted opportunities for education outside their hometown. Our town's educational ratios still need to be higher than others. This is primarily due to a lack of accessible opportunities and resources. As a respondent expressed:

The educational system in Khuzdar is a complete failure. It is impossible to refute the reality that the individuals living in the Khuzdar district live in socially disadvantaged places. The school system is only accessible to those who are wealthy, and those who are economically disadvantaged are unable to get an education since there are no educational opportunities available to people in our community. Compared to other communities, we have a lot to acquire. In our communities, there is a reality that our girls experience dread when venturing outside of their hometown to gain an education. Terror causes this fear. While the education ratio for females is relatively low, the education ratio for men is rather high. However, when we consider the education ratio of our town, we discover that our educational ratio is lower than the academic ratios of other communities. We cannot meet our quota, which is already low, since we need the education necessary to do so. Furthermore, we are denied the opportunity to fulfill our quota because we need the opportunities.

Ali & Mukherjee, [11] claimed that there are few studies examining how Pakistani school curricula affect majority-minority relations, with the bulk concentrating on textbook content and the systematic otherization of religious minorities. The “we and they” narrative exists within the Hindu community and between others. Some of the Respondents shared that this narrative exists in society. Most of the time, this narrative discriminates and marginalizes them. They feel lower in status and come from another planet. Intentionally and unintentionally, most of the people in the society use this narrative for the Hindu minority in the Khuzdar district. Shockingly, most people do not understand why they use this narrative. The 'We and They' narrative, a dichotomous perspective that separates 'us' from 'them ', significantly contributes to social segregation. This narrative, when perpetuated, harms the social well-being of religious minorities, leading to the creation of divisions and the marginalization of these groups within societies. It often results in discriminatory policies and restricted access to resources, hindering the full involvement and integration of religious minorities into society. To understand the impact of this narrative, the researcher posed a question related to it, and the respondent's answer was revealing:

In the past, when people in Khuzdar were more traditional and had a lower level of education,

the "we and they" narrative was practiced. However, the situation has altered since then. People are well-educated and aware that religion has no bearing on societal responsibilities. Every single person is of equal value and significance to society. The narrative of "we and they" continues to exist on a micro level, which we believe to be a natural aspect of life. Most of the other communities are cooperative with us.

The dominant narrative of the "we and they" often contributes to feelings of isolation and unease, which hinders social relationships and sustains a sense of division. Incidences such as word selections, even when used for respect, strengthen these sensations of distinction. Regarding this, as one of the respondents expressed:

In Khuzdar city, I experienced the "we and they" narrative from other communities. I have limited Muslim friends, and I cannot be comfortable with everyone in different communities. When we book an Auto, the driver always asks where to go Saet (a traditional vocabulary used for Hindus in Khuzdar District). They told us with total respect, but the word Saet alienated us, and we felt we were not part of society.

The way the media portrays minorities is often how people view them. They already have an established reputation in the community as extremists and zealots. The study looked at how the media distort minorities-related information. Religious minorities are not fairly represented in Pakistani print media, which demonstrates prejudice against them. Among all other religious minorities, Christians are overrepresented, while Hindus are underrepresented in Pakistani print media. Regarding Pakistani Hindus, the print media in Pakistan has been relatively mute. As a social institution, the media may lead to inequality and the dominance of a particular group. Minority identities in society are shaped and constructed by the media, which also commonly normalizes and takes these for-granted identities Batool, [12]. The media is biased when it comes to religious minorities in Pakistan. For this purpose, the researcher asked questions related to media, and one of the respondents said:

It is a game of power in society, whether in the media or something else. Once, the News showed that an actress had lost his shoes, which became a headline. On the other hand, we live in harsh conditions, and no media presents us on their platforms because we are powerless and not crucial to the press. The Hindu community is presented on media platforms one or two times a year when we celebrate our cultural festivals, such as the Hindu community celebrating Holy and Diwali. I am trying to remember any media present in their mainstream channels, specifically the Hindu community of Khuzdar. I have never seen any content on social media related to our

community from the Khuzdar public, which affects us badly. Unfortunately, our community is experiencing many troubles due to the lack of media coverage. Our security protectors are our enemy. However, no one cares.

The media is seen as a crucial instrument for portraying the picture of the world to the public; it is accountable for shaping public perception, whether positive or negative. It is impossible to dispute the mainstream media's ability to shape attitudes, perceptions, and opinions about other people. A society's minorities are an integral component. It is impossible to overlook minorities' participation in society. Minorities serve in every aspect of society and make a valiant attempt to participate in development processes to improve the perception of their nation. Furthermore, the media's responsibility is to present the truth without biases regarding race, ethnicity, or religion. A respondent was interviewed who shared:

Electronic and print media do not present our community in the mainstream media. We do not expect help from print and electronic media. The media presents the religious minority of Pakistan as they are living in a better state and living a safe life, and fundamental rights are given to religious minorities. Our social problems, such as the forced conversion of minor girls and blasphemy in Sindh and Punjab, are not present in the media. The media shares only one side of the coin, and we are in intense condition. They only share what is in favor of their interest. I use social media from an educational and entertainment point of view. We are not politically active, nor is my near circle. We do not share any content on social media. I have never seen any content regarding us or related to the Hindu community. In my 24-year life, I have not experienced any content in social media from Khuzdar individuals, which emotionally or psychologically disturbed us.

The caste system and its effect on the social well-being of Hindu minorities because it maintains its impact on social welfare and determines the availability of resources and opportunities within the Hindu community. Caste-based discrimination may perpetuate disparities in education, employment, and healthcare, impeding the overall welfare of marginalized communities. It is essential to learn about it because people who are affected by it can share it better. In this regard, as one respondent said:

The community's caste system is ancient but has lost value over time. When Hindus were the rulers of the sub-continent, it was valuable, but now, they are not in a ruling position and are in minor numbers—the Khuzdar caste system, which is less effective than in the past. If a person goes back one or two decades, no one is ready to get a job in the municipal community. The

reason was that people could not perform low jobs in society. Society would consider it less prestigious, but the picture has changed. Everyone wants a job in a municipal area because the unemployment rate is very high, and people have no choice but to work in municipal towns. The caste system mindset does not exist now.

Moreover, in modern society, there has been a notable change in people's opinions and beliefs on caste, with several groups distancing themselves from the old social rankings based on caste. The formerly inflexible divides enforced by the system of castes have progressively diminished, leading to the emergence of more comprehensive and logical thinking among individuals. Today, the focus is on promoting unity and respect for one another, going beyond caste divisions, and cultivating a feeling of common concern and coexistence across groups. In this regard, one of the Respondents expressed:

The caste system does not exist in the Hindu community. People consider themselves Hindu in the community. We have lived in Balochistan for centuries, so the caste system has faded. Our ancestors were along with the Khan of Kalat and Bugti chiefs. Balochistan has two types of Hindu communities: vegetarian and non-vegetarian. Vegetarians (Shakahari) do not eat meat, and non-vegetarians eat meat. The meat of cows is haram in the Hindu community. People only eat chicken, mutton, and fish. The caste system is effective when there is a vast number of Hindus living in a community. The reality is that the Hindus are living in a minority. On the other hand, in the Hindu community, furthermore, every class wants to live with the same class. Some people contact out of their caste to eat or gather. The majority of our community wants to live with the same class.

Cultural festivals enhance community social well-being by developing a feeling of belonging, solidarity, and cultural pride among participants. These activities allow participants to engage with their cultural background, enhance social connections, and foster a shared sense of identity. Cultural festivals foster inclusivity and social cohesion by honoring various traditions and practices and promoting mental and emotional health among participants. In this regard, as one of the respondents said:

Khuzdar City has been our home for the last hundred years, and throughout that time, the Hindu community has not encountered any difficulties celebrating our cultural events. The Hindu people get support from Muslim communities around Khuzdar when they observe cultural festivals. However, the frequency of such occurrences is lower than in other provinces. There is just one thing that differentiates our community from the Muslim community, and that is religion.

On the other hand, we are deeply ingrained in the social fabric of our society. Everyone is a member of society. Every moment of life is spent on our will, and we celebrate important occasions whenever needed. When we celebrate our cultural festival, close friends from the Muslim community celebrate festivals. We give them sweets, and during Eid times, we take sweets from them. I am doing my MBBS and once celebrated Diwali with my Muslim friends in college. I enjoy Muslim festivals, too. Just like at Eid times, Muslims go to picnics, I also go to picnics. Muslims eat meat; I also eat meat on Eid times.

Furthermore, cultural festivals unite communities to celebrate heritage, yet limited resources pose challenges to inclusive participation, emphasizing the importance of accessible infrastructure for all to enjoy. It is a fundamental right to enjoy their culture and practice it thoroughly. Concerning this, as one of the respondents expressed:

All individuals at my institution participate in the celebration of several cultural events that I coordinate. Only a few folks from Khuzdar join in celebrating our cultural events. The Hindu community only has access to social support from other communities. Furthermore, people actively engage in and get pleasure from their cultural celebrations. Communities may freely participate in festivals without limitations since they are entirely costless. Other communities do not provide financial aid so that the Hindu community can celebrate events freely. The community has a minimal place when celebrating cultural events, so it faces challenges. The Hindu population is high, and we need more places for the population because we cannot celebrate our cultural events in an open place. More places must be, which is a massive challenge for the whole community.

According to Yolal et al. (2016) [4], Communities host festivals for various purposes, such as highlighting their cultural heritage, boosting their city's reputation, drawing in tourists, and offering additional cultural entertainment options to residents, thus enhancing their quality of life. Festivals and events provide chances to enhance social connections and relationships and are likely to have a distinct impact on boosting inhabitants' happiness and enjoyment of life. Festivals not only have beneficial economic effects on local communities, but they also produce significant socio-cultural advantages for host communities. These benefits include fostering community cohesiveness, strengthening family bonds, promoting social interaction, preserving cultural traditions, and providing entertainment. In addition, inhabitants engage in local festivals to fulfill various purposes, including amusement, curiosity, education, aesthetic enjoyment, social interaction, personal growth, self-expression, and validation from others. Participants'



favorable encounters with festivals are expected to enhance their contentment, joy, and subjective state of being.

## **5. Discussion**

This research examined the social well-being of the Hindu minority in the Khuzdar district, emphasizing the social obstacles they encounter. The results highlight the marginalization of this minority resulting from institutional discrimination, apprehensions of forced conversion, and restricted educational opportunities, especially for females. Participants said that while forced conversions are not common in Khuzdar, the pervasive fear of such incidents hinders their social mobility and societal participation. Social well-being, a complex issue, is significantly influenced by the respondents' religious identification, which disadvantages them in contact with other groups. The "we and they" narrative often renders the Hindu minority marginalized and discriminated against, exacerbating their marginalization. Educational obstacles are exacerbated by discriminatory policies, insufficient accommodation for dietary and religious observances, and a curriculum that perpetuates religious prejudices. These obstacles restrict their access to excellent education, essential for their social welfare. The research indicated that governmental policies and initiatives to assist minority communities are mostly ineffectual in Khuzdar. Respondents emphasized a disconnect between the Hindu community and national and international organizations, resulting in a lack of awareness about possible help. Community activities like the Panchayat are essential in cultivating social connections and offering support in healthcare and cultural festivals, enhancing social well-being. The media's portrayal of minorities, particularly Hindus, is limited and often prejudiced, perpetuating social biases and exacerbating the marginalization of the minority. The insufficient media focus on the genuine challenges confronting the Hindu minority intensifies their social isolation. Cultural norms in the town exhibit gender disparities, as women are mostly relegated to domestic tasks, hindering their social and scholastic progress. The research emphasizes the need for governmental policies, community activities, and media changes to enhance the socioeconomic welfare of the Hindu minority in Khuzdar. Without such efforts, this population would continue to be marginalized, with restricted chances for social mobility and inclusion into the wider society.

## **6. Conclusion**

In the present study, the social well-being of the Hindu minority in the Khuzdar district was explored and analyzed. The social factors, government policies, and community initiatives were

examined, and their efficiency was assessed by interviewing the youth of the Hindu minority and engaging in the literature review. It is a fact that social well-being is part of health, and without it, an individual is considered ill in society because man is a social being and, in every sphere of life, needs others without any distinctions of personal and impersonal relationships. The current research studied the Hindu minority of the Khuzdar district, and data were collected from male youth. Khuzdar is a developing district in Balochistan that faces various political, social, cultural, and external issues. Considering this, the well-being of religious minorities is a socio-cultural problem for Khuzdar District. Especially when religious minorities have no voice to hear; in this situation, they face plenty of harsh conditions due to their religions; they have no access to their fundamental rights. This study has engaged a theoretical framework: social capital theory and its proposition for the roadmap and the guidelines. After collecting data, the researcher noted that government policies and programs neglect the Hindu minority's social well-being. National and international organizations claim that they work for the well-being of religious minorities. However, it is astonishing that the Hindu community, especially the youth, has no idea about these organizations. Furthermore, the present study used the qualitative method and exploratory research design; the interview guide was formulated, and data was collected. After completing this study, the researcher explored different factors hindering the social well-being of the Hindu minority, and the reason is that they are in the minority, and the majority is ruling mainstream society. Along with this, the researcher observed and explored that Hindu community females are living in an intense situation due to fear of forced conversion. There is a huge gap between government officials and the Hindu community in the Khuzdar district. To sum up, Hindu minorities are living without inclusion in society and governmental policies and programs; they have faced discrimination and exclusion.

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