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THE ROLE OF THE STATE IN SHAPING RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE: MALAYSIA AND UZBEKISTAN

Abstract. In modern times, experts estimate that 83 per cent of the world's population face serious restrictions on freedom of thought, conscience and religion. Persecution, repression and discrimination based on religion, belief or non-belief are a daily reality in many countries. Such disappointing statistics indicate that the issue of freedom of speech and religion needs to be harmonized. It should be recognized that the social problem of forming tolerance in the world as a whole is related to the gradual formation of new values. Interest in tolerance is relevant in many disciplines, which is well seen in many works of sociologists, historians, philosophers, religious studies and others. This article presents a comparative analysis of religious tolerance policies of two countries with unique historical and cultural contexts. The study aims to identify the principles of social features in interfaith dialogue in Malaysia, where diversity of religions and cultures is an integral part of social life. The paper will address questions such as: what are the mechanisms that promote harmony between different religious groups? what role does the state play in maintaining interfaith dialogue? This paper will also consider the legal aspect of the administrative-legal regulation of religious tolerance in both countries, where the legislative framework will be analyzed. Particular attention is paid to the differences in approaches to religious policy, thus identifying the strengths and weaknesses of each country. The study highlights the importance of religious tolerance as a factor contributing to social peace and stability, and offers recommendations for improving interfaith dialogue and legal regulation in both countries. The study aims to deepen the understanding of the role of religion in modern society and international relations, which is important for further research in this area.

Keywords: tolerance, administrative law, freedom of religion, education system, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, humanism.

MALAYZIYA VA O'ZBEKISTONDA DINIY BAG'RIKENGLIKNI SHAKLLANTIRISHDA DAVLATNING O'RNI

Annotatsiya. Bugungi kunda ekspertlarning hisob-kitoblariga ko'ra, dunyo aholisining 83 foizi fikrlash, vijdon va din erkinligi bo'yicha jiddiy cheklavlarga duch kelmoqda. Din, e'tiqod yoki ishonchsizlik asosida ta'qib qilish, qatag'on qilish va kamsitish ko'plab mamlakatlarda kundalik voqelikdir. Bunday ko'ngilsiz statistika so'z va din erkinligi masalasi uyg'unlashtirilishi zarurligidan dalolat beradi. Dunyoda tolerantlikni shakllantirishning ijtimoiy muammosi, umuman olganda, yangi qadriyatlarning bosqichma-bosqich shakllanishi bilan bog'liqligini e'tirof etish lozim. Tolerantlikka qiziqish ko'plab fanlar uchun dolzarb bo'lib, buni sotsiologlar, tarixchilar, faylasuflar, dinshunoslar va boshqalarning ko'plab ishlarida yaqqol ko'rish mumkin. Ushbu maqolada o'ziga xos tarixiy va madaniy kontekstga ega bo'lgan ikki mamlakatning diniy bag'rikenglik siyosati qiyosiy tahlil qilingan. Tadqiqotning maqsadi dinlar va madaniyatlar xilma-xilligi ijtimoiy hayotning ajralmas qismi bo'lgan Malayziyada konfessiyalararo muloqotning ijtimoiy xususiyatlari tamoyillarini aniqlashdan iborat. Ishda quyidagi masalalar ko'rib chiqiladi: turli diniy guruhlar o'rtasidagi hamjihatlikni ta'minlovchi mexanizmlar qanday? Konfessiyalararo muloqotni qo'llab-quvvatlashda davlat qanday rol o'ynaydi? Shuningdek, ishda har ikki mamlakatda diniy bag'rikenglikni ma'muriy-huquqiy tartibga solishning huquqiy jihati ko'rib chiqilib, qonunchilik bazasi tahlil qilinadi. Diniy siyosatga yondashuvlardagi farqlarga alohida e'tibor qaratiladi, bu esa har bir mamlakatning kuchli va zaif tomonlarini aniqlash imkonini beradi. Tadqiqot diniy bag'rikenglikning ijtimoiy tinchlik va barqarorlikni ta'minlovchi omil sifatidagi ahamiyatini ta'kidlab, har ikki mamlakatda konfessiyalararo muloqot va huquqiy tartibga solishni takomillashtirish bo'yicha tavsiyalar beradi. Tadqiqot dinning zamonaviy jamiyat va xalqaro munosabatlardagi rolini chuqurroq anglashga qaratilgan bo'lib, bu sohada keyingi tadqiqotlar uchun muhimdir.

Kalit so'zlar: bag'rikenglik, ma'muriy huquq, e'tiqod erkinligi, ta'lim tizimi, islom, buddizm, hinduizm, insonparvarlik.

MAIN PART

In the second half of the twentieth century, there were significant changes in world politics that influenced the self-identification of many states. In this regard, the form of state structure of the world was also transformed, the process of formation of multicultural environment in the new conditions caused the emergence of the problem of cultural diversity in the South-East Asia region in the context of globalisation.

In the modern period, the issue of multiculturalism was first considered and systematised by N. Glaser, and its legal aspect was first introduced by the Royal Canadian Committee on Bilingualism and Biculturalism in 1971 (Glaser, 1998:24). A particular feature of this policy was the development of ethno-confessional dialogue in the country with the aim of preserving cultural diversity and recognizing the right of ethnic diasporas to express themselves, govern their communities and actively participate in the life of society (Aleshkov V., 2013:5-9).

For example, this issue has been examined under the prism of self-identification of ethnic minorities in the country by authors such as S. Benhabib, A. Fleuras, A. Laden and D. Oven (Benhabib, 2002:439–465).

INTRODUCTION

In particular, while some works analyse multiculturalism through the prism of symbiosis, which is viewed from the perspective of social adaptation, namely, when ethnic groups on the same territory try to find common ground aimed at peaceful coexistence, in this case such a model of multiculturalism allows ethnic groups and diasporas to establish communication with representatives of other faiths even at the level of a small district. The second group of researchers considers the multicultural model from the position of antithesis. These studies aim to analyse religious diversity through the prism of comparing two opposing viewpoints, which look at the issue from the position of lack of similarity or difficulty in finding common ground; more often than not, such studies make it possible to find the true causes of antagonism faced by ethno-confessional minorities on the path of the multicultural model. The above methods of studying the multicultural model allow religious tolerance to be examined from the perspective of a civil approach to solving this issue that promotes peaceful co-existence of ethno-religious minorities. The above models have been applied in creating a multicultural environment

in the Malaysian public system, which is seen as an attempt by the Malaysian government to consider multiculturalism in the society as a possible factor of self-identification of ethno-religious groups. Since, Malaysia is the most prone to immigration among all the countries in the Southeast region.

Can we look at the mechanisms that promote harmony between different religious groups? In the modern period, the country has a multi-confessional environment, therefore, when considering and creating a multicultural model, the government considered this aspect under the prism of religious tolerance. It took into account both the historical past and the socio-cultural processes of the present.

Currently, there are about 180 ethnic and sub-ethnic groups in Malaysia (Embong, 2001:59–85), the majority of which are 62.5% Malay, 20.6% Chinese, 6.2% Indian, as for non-citizens, according to 2019 data, they are 9.8%.

It should be mentioned that on the peninsula of Malacca live local ethnic groups numbering about 150 thousand people. It is necessary to pay attention to the fact that the indigenous population of Malaysia has a large number of branches with their own form of coexistence with other aborigines formed during centuries, as for the gradual immigration, which brought to this region representatives of other nationalities, at this stage is traced a peaceful redistribution of the territory between the inhabitants. As we know from historical sources, this period was relatively peaceful.

In the modern period, modern Malaysia has developed a multicultural environment with its unique characteristics and with a peculiar belief system. In this regard, one of the elements of the intercultural environment is language, which fulfils the function of establishing norms of continuity of social communication. The country is characterised by socio-cultural tolerance, which is characteristic of a multicultural environment. Language plays a key role in ensuring mutual understanding as language practices promote mutual understanding and rapprochement. In modern Malaysia there are several languages in circulation such as Bahasa (the official language), English, Chinese (as well as dialects: Cantonese, Mandarin, Hokkien, Hakka, Hainan, Fuzhou, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Punjabi, Thai. The pluralisation of the country's linguistic environment is clearly visible in the socio-cultural norms.

The current use of 134 languages in Malaysia, of which 112 are considered indigenous languages

and 22 non-indigenous languages, demonstrates the maintenance of citizens' «linguistic rights», as well as the necessary balance between the State language and the State's obligation to use or respect the preferences of linguistic minorities, which contributes to the development of a unique linguistic environment and the preservation of linguistic diversity.

In the modern period, Malaysia demonstrates its own model of religious multiculturalism in Southeast Asia. It should be noted that in Malaysia, the predominance of Muslims in the legal field may create a false perception of support only for adherents of Islam, which is wrong, because the basis of the national policy of Malaysia is respect for religious teachings of both Muslims and representatives of other religions. Attitudes towards religious beliefs provide insight into the prerequisites for religious tolerance. In particular, studying the religious teachings of Muslims, Christians, Jews, Buddhists and other religious groups provides insight into their attitudes towards tolerance and tolerance of ethnic minorities. This, in turn, encourages religious tolerance and the harmonious development of society.

As already noted, Malaysia has a Muslim population. The rapid spread of Islam and its impact on the world has been the subject of much scholarly research in the Southeast Asian region.

Malaysia's policy of multiculturalism is based on the Quranic principles of humanism towards members of other faiths. The Quran clearly prohibits Muslims from forcing or coercing non-Muslims to convert to Islam as Islam wants people to embrace the religion voluntarily, knowingly and willingly. This is stated in Surah an-Nahl (Talib, A. T., & Gill, S. S. 2012:125), which speaks of the need to be merciful and wise towards members of other religions.

It should be noted that the right to choose is an integral part of self-identity, and in this aspect a Muslim, in accordance with the canons of his faith, should adhere to the principle of respect and understanding given in Surah al-Kafirun (Glazer, N. 1998:109).

Thus, one of the many religious groups - Muslims - adheres to the above principles of religious tolerance in Islam. In particular, the religion of Islam recognises the dignity of human beings irrespective of their religion, colour and gender: 'We have given dignity to the children of Adam (Льянов М. М., 2012:107–112). The above examples prove that the religious teachings of Muslims not only moralise the notion of tolerance, but are also an indicator of its primary basis.

Many scholars and religious scholars agree that the religious teachings of Muslims teach believers

tolerance and co-operation with both Muslims and non-Muslims. For example, the Koran states that 'close and brothers', regardless of gender, ethnicity and family ties, are people who believe in one God.

The principles of religious tolerance and harmony are also reflected in Christian teaching. When analysing this topic, it is worth paying attention to the religious teachings of Buddhism, of which there are many followers in Malaysia. According to the teachings of Buddha, each person must grow up to spiritual quests and come for hidden knowledge. Since the task to forcibly 'save' or 'straighten' people in religion was never set by Buddha or his true followers. This is stated in the Buddhist holy book Udana-Varga (Beckh H., 1911:4).

The Dalai Lama the Fourteenth emphasised that: 'democracy should not only be in the political field, but also in the field of religion. If you find something useful to you, you have the right to choose. This statement proves that Buddhists encourage freedom of creative and spiritual enquiry, which promotes tolerance, respect for cultures and religious values. The ability to acknowledge differences and treat them with patience is the best indicator of interfaith dialogue.

The Gospel of Luke (Glazer N., 1998:27-28), the holy scripture of Christians, says: 'love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, 'bless those who curse you and pray for those who spitefully use you'. This, as in other faiths, proves that in Christianity there is tolerance towards representatives of other religious beliefs.

The public policy on religious tolerance in Malaysia is based on the principle of respecting, accepting and properly understanding the diversity of cultures as 'unity in diversity (UNESCO, 1995), which has a positive impact on the understanding of peaceful co-existence of citizens in a multi-religious society.

The policy of pluralism and multiculturalism is aimed at the course of tolerance, which in turn avoids the possibility of interethnic conflicts. Unfortunately, today the lack of religious tolerance can turn into confrontation and even lead to the division of society. As an example, we can consider India, a multi-ethnic and multi-confessional country with a rich history and moral and cultural values, where the conflict between Hindus and Muslims remains a painful problem to this day. Or one of the multinational countries of South-East Asia - Indonesia, which today ranks fourth in the world in terms of population. More than 300 nationalities live on the 17,500 islands of Indonesia. This country

has also been plagued by religious conflicts between adherents of Buddhist, Hindu and Christian religions.

It should be noted that multiculturalism is an integral part of Malaysian public policy. It contributes to the strengthening of interethnic dialogue as a principle of sustainability, harmony in intercultural and interethnic relations. According to T. Folieva, this way of life promotes the development of religious socialisation, which in turn contributes to the harmonious coexistence of values and norms of different religions.

In the era of globalisation, the problem of religious tolerance and communication has acquired great importance. This process has covered various spheres of society. Globalisation is always accompanied by the formation of a new socio-cultural society, influencing lifestyles, moral and cultural values, religion, as well as eliminating barriers to intercultural communication.

Intercultural tolerance is an important factor in the interaction of subcultures. In this regard, it is necessary to consider the main forms of tolerance that contribute to the formation of intercultural communication. Since intercultural tolerance is a multidimensional concept, it is worth paying attention to such basic aspects as interethnic, interconfessional and intercultural. For historical events show a long and hard road to intercultural tolerance, as many countries had to go through the path of demilitarisation, including the countries of South-East and Central Asia.

In a broad sense, culture is a part of the cultural space, uniting various forms and other spheres of its activity, and contributing to the formation in the public consciousness of unity and mental belonging to one culture, leads to the emergence of the concept of mental cultural core. And due to this, the cultural assimilation of national values has penetrated very deeply into the consciousness of the people of this region. Regardless of the political situation in Southeast Asia, the process of immigration and cultural assimilation developed simultaneously. Actualisation of the issue of tolerance, multiculturalism, ethno-culturalism is connected with the increase of immigration flows to Southeast Asia. These immigration processes have led to cultural and ethnic formation of the society, having its influence on the structural and emotional side of life.

The state policy of civic tolerance in Malaysia, is an indicator of the society's policy aimed at peaceful coexistence of all national and ethnic representatives of the country.

Ethnic diversity is particularly appealing because the descendants of Chinese immigrants living today in

the states of Penang and Malacca were considered the most closed community in the 15th and 16th centuries. Only the Chinese living in the area assimilated with the native Malaysians, the children of such mixed marriages are called «Baba Nyonya» (Shellabear W. G., 1913:49–63). This ethnic group of Chinese descendants, who have been subjected to Malay ethno-cultural influence, and despite assimilation are very reverent and respectful of Chinese traditions, festivals and way of life. It should be noted, mixed marriages have influenced the linguistic environment of Malaysia. For example, the Baba Nyonya language is defined as a Malay-based Creole language in which folkloric works as well as dramatic and musical genres were produced in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Reshetov A., 2008).

As for the Indians, they were more open to assimilation with the locals as they were often involved in plantation work, mainly located on the west coast of the Malacca Peninsula, (in the Kuala Lumpur-Klang-Malacca area and Pinangodu Island). They currently reside in the cities of Kuala Lumpur, Ipoh and Taiping (about 40 per cent) (Kochetkova E. B., 2018:204–220).

In Malaysia great attention is paid to education, art, spiritual and moral environment and preservation of national values. Intellectual tolerance is especially honoured, which is very important in a multi-ethnic society. A tolerant and respectful attitude towards other views, ideas and opinions shapes the ability of numerous ethnic groups to avoid intolerance. Ethnically differentiated citizenship guarantees equal civil rights, unlike its neighbour Indonesia, where racial violence is often quite severe.

Malaysia's tolerance reforms are well reflected in the progressive call 'Unity is Strength', which also expresses the unity of the country's ethnic, religious and cultural diversity. This appeal practice has made Malaysia a model tolerant state in Southeast Asia (Shaklein V., 2011:249–253).

One of the factors contributing to intercultural communication is the joint celebration of public and religious holidays and festivals (St'chinskiy M., n.d.:21).

In the modern period, Malaysia celebrates both public and religious holidays and holds open festivals, which contribute to one of the important educational functions, providing an opportunity to demonstrate the achievements of all participants, thus contributing to the active unification of cultures and ethnicities. This joint activity is also aimed at preventing any kind of racial and religious intolerance, since a conflict-

prone environment arises when there is a lack of understanding of diversity, which is the equivalent of intolerance.

The joint celebration of all major holidays in Malaysia contributes to the formation of moral and value attitudes towards the peculiarities of different cultures, as well as their representatives. There is a close intertwining of historical holidays with modern public holidays, today Malaysia has developed a positive attitude towards joint celebrations.

The following religious holidays are celebrated in Malaysia:

- Chinese New Year (celebrated in the month of January or February).
- Nari Raya Puasa (the end of Ramadan).
- Christmas - (a Christian holiday).
- Prophet Muhammad's Birthday'.
- Vesak - Buddha's birthday (celebrated in the month of April or May).
- Mooncake Festival (celebrated by the Chinese community in September).
- Deepavali (celebrated by the Hindu diaspora and is considered a colourful event, as it attracts not only tourists but also representatives of other diasporas).

Malaysia's public holidays are different from those of neighbouring Southeast Asian countries. For example, a holiday such as the birthday of the King of Malaysia or a holiday dedicated to Labour Day (King V., 2009:33).

This holiday shows that whether it is a king or a citizen, their contribution to society is equal. The works of A. Tarmizi and other authors clearly emphasise the spirit of religious tolerance fuelled by the participation of all citizens regardless of religion (Talib, Gill, 2012:49–54). One of the hallmarks of multiculturalism is the culinary arts, firmly established in Malaysia. In recent studies conducted by Malaysian scholars A. Aidah, J. Anderson and others (Khalek, Mokhtar, 2017:242–249), religious tolerance is examined through the prism of food culture, which is increasingly becoming the cause of many disputes among representatives of religious groups in the country. In the works of the above researchers, food culture is covered in two aspects: firstly, food culture is considered as one of the principles of integrating religious tolerance into society; secondly, food culture is a micro-irritant that leads to mass discontent; as an example, a case is given that caused a public outcry throughout society. In 2013, during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, a popular blogger, A.Tan (Osman, 2019:286–297), posted a pork dish called Bak kut teh

on his social media page, describing it as one of the tastiest and most appetising dishes, while attaching a halal food logo to it. This post caused a flurry of discontent among representatives of all religions, who believed that this post could provoke not only discussions in the information field, but also escalate into micro-conflicts through disputes.

Food culture has accompanied humanity throughout its history, creating social spaces along the way. For example, the dominant group of Muslims has developed its own halal food culture for members of this faith group. And in the other two large ethnic representations of Malaysian society - Hindu and Chinese - preferences in this sector differ significantly, while for the former the use of so-called unclean food, which is not allowed according to the holy scriptures, is not allowed, for the latter the use of animal fats and meat of the same animals is acceptable. And for the third it is altogether peculiar to vegetarianism. As one of the ways of creating religious tolerance in Malaysian society, there is a collaboration of food industry.

DISCUSSION

Many researchers studying this issue have noted that food culture in Malaysia is a zero conflict zone. For example, the influence of Chinese, Indian, Thai and Sumatran cuisines are felt in Malay cuisine. Dishes such as mee, dim sum, noya (mee, dim sum, popua) or Indian roti flatbreads and similar dishes (roti chanai, sataui, nasi lemak, nasi campur, rendang) and others serve as proof that such culinary arts promote convergence. Quite often the above-mentioned dishes are consumed by all representatives of ethno-confessional groups in the country.

This statement was confirmed by a survey conducted in East and West Malaysia among respondents using cluster random sampling developed by R. Krezhik and D. Morgan (Krejcie, Morgan, 1970:607–610). The respondents who participated in the survey included 303 (73.9 per cent) Muslims, 58 (14.1 per cent) Christians, 41 (10 per cent) Buddhists and 8 (2 per cent) Hindus (Khalek, Mokhtar, 2022:91–112).

As the survey showed, the issue of food has a significant impact on socialisation, which in turn promotes interaction between citizens of all faith groups. In the research of Malaysian scientists Aiyedah Abdul Khalek and Ros Aiza Mohd Mokhtar (Khalek, Mokhtar, 2017:242–249), eating is considered from

the perspective of interaction through the prism of communication between Muslims and representatives of other religions in different locations (weddings, funerals, student canteens, etc.). In particular, regardless of the location, each representative of the confessional diversity of Malaysia, who has his own preferences in food, in the process of interaction does not offend the preferences of other representatives of confessional minorities in the country.

The peculiarity of Malaysian religious tolerance is that the above mentioned national holidays of Malaysia are closely intertwined with each other, during the celebrations the inhabitants of the country can see colourful costumes, performances and rituals of representatives of other religious groups, taste festive dishes of other nationalities. The festivals evoke positive emotions in all citizens of the country. Such celebrations, which reflect the culture and traditions of different nationalities, help to strengthen mutual respect between the country's ethno-confessional minorities.

Another sign of multiculturalism is art. It is reasonable to consider its variation through the example of music. Indian music in Malaysia has its own style and themes, as exemplified by Carnatic Music and Hindustani Music (Serra J., Koduri G. K., Miron M., Serra X, 2011:157–162). The Indo-Malaysian music culture is clearly influenced by Punjabi music (Kartashova T., 2016:2). The Indian music group Urban Bhangra has many fans not only in the diaspora but also in other ethnic and religious groups. The same can be said about Chinese musical art. The Chinese ensemble Hua Yu Tuan uses traditional Chinese musical instruments, but its programme includes Chinese, Hong Kong, Taiwanese, and Malay folk music. The above examples of multiculturalism are an indicator of acceptance of cultural diversity.

CONCLUSION

Summarising the above, it should be noted that in the region of South-East Asia the process of adaptation of various ethno-confessional minorities has been carried out throughout the historical period. The peculiarity of this process in the history of Malaysia is the fact that the Malaysian government adheres to the principle of multiculturalism. As this territory from ancient times was a stronghold of assimilation, which led to the formation of polyconfessionalism. The example of Malaysia is well traced multiculturalism

in the form of preservation of cultural diversity, which is created thanks to the state policy of the country that contributes to the formation of a harmonious environment. Socialisation of relations among representatives of religious groups in Malaysia reflects the concept of self-identification, equality and protection of rights of its citizens.

The modern state policy of Malaysia is aimed at preserving the diversity of cultures and developing citizens' readiness to accept different ethno-religious minorities. In particular, the country has seen a positive trend in the development of social stability and integration. Overall, Malaysia continues to evolve as a multicultural society, and government efforts to preserve cultural diversity play an important role in this process.

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