

The Role of Fiqh al-Aqalliyat in Building Racial and Religious Harmony in Sri Lanka: A Descriptive Study

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Abstract

Sri Lanka is a pluralistic country. Therefore, it is important to carry out reconciliation among its citizens. The doctrine of Fiqh al-Aqalliyat, which is presented by modern Islamic scholars with the help of the sources of Islamic Shari'ah to formulate the life of minority Muslims, contains necessary guidelines for reconciliation among living beings in a pluralistic environment. Hence, the study was conducted with the aim of defining the term and finding the necessary guidelines that would be put forward through this doctrine for racial and religious harmony. Secondary data such as research and magazine articles, information on books, and online materials related to the topic were examined. At the end, the term Fiqh al-Aqalliyat was defined as a set of guidelines for minority Muslims living in a pluralistic society, to approach their problems related with Islamic Jurisprudence in accordance with Islamic Shariah, by considering their circumstances, to live in harmony. It was found that the theory is based on the dual role that all people living in a pluralistic environment are at once members of the society they belong to and citizens of the country they live in; Although each group has its own traditions, it is essential for reconciliation, to be flexible in particular circumstances; And while everyone adheres to their own culture, can move towards next step of reconciliation by ignoring other traditions and avoiding being radical in maintaining individuality. Therefore, the conclusion of the study was that if the guidelines of this doctrine were properly followed all could maintain their individuality and we may create an environment where they accept other ethnic and religious groups and their cultures and live in harmony as citizens of one country.

Keywords: Sri Lanka, Fiqh al-Aqalliyat, Racial Harmony, Religious Harmony, Islam