

THE SOCIO-POLITICAL DANGER OF MISSIONARY ACTIVITY AND PROSELYTISM

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Abstract: This article scientifically analyzes the essence of missionary activity and proselytism, their impact on social life, and their socio-political risks. In particular, the influence of missionary activities on youth consciousness, national values, and the principles of religious tolerance is highlighted. In the context of globalization, the increasing spread of various religious ideologies and ideological influences has made the issue of proselytism highly relevant. The article also examines the role of spiritual and educational measures, legal mechanisms, and civil society institutions in preventing the negative consequences of such activities.

Keywords: missionary activity, proselytism, religious security, ideological threat, religious tolerance, youth education, social risk, national security.

Introduction

In the modern era of globalization, the expansion of ideological threats and religious influences has made issues of social security increasingly important. In particular, missionary activity and proselytism are considered among the factors that may negatively affect social stability in certain regions. Although freedom of religion and freedom of conscience are fundamental characteristics of democratic societies, attempts to misuse these freedoms for various interests are sometimes observed.

Missionary activity refers to efforts aimed at spreading a particular religious doctrine among representatives of other faiths. Proselytism, on the other hand, refers to targeted attempts to convert followers of one religion to another. Since these activities may sometimes contradict the principles of religious tolerance, they can create socio-political challenges.

The Essence of Missionary Activity and Proselytism

Historically, missionary activity has emerged as one of the forms of religious engagement, carried out by different religious organizations to spread their beliefs. Such activities are commonly implemented through religious education, distribution of literature, charity programs, and social services. Proselytism is considered a specific direction of missionary work aimed at converting individuals from one religious belief to another. In some cases, social needs, economic difficulties, or psychological vulnerability of individuals may be used to influence religious affiliation. Such practices, especially when conducted secretly, may contribute to social tensions and conflicts. According to researchers, missionary activity not only influences religious views but may also affect cultural and national identity. Therefore, this issue should be analyzed not only from a religious perspective but also from social and political dimensions.

Social Risks of Missionary Activity and Proselytism

One of the major dangers of missionary activity and proselytism is its potential negative influence on religious balance within society. Sharp contradictions between religious beliefs may become a source of social conflict. This issue becomes particularly significant in multiethnic and multireligious societies where maintaining social harmony is essential.

Firstly, missionary activity may significantly influence the worldview of young people. Due to

limited life experience and strong curiosity, youth are often more vulnerable to ideological and religious influences. The spread of religious propaganda through the internet, social networks, and digital communication platforms further intensifies this process.

Secondly, proselytism may negatively affect national values and traditions. In some cases, changes in religious affiliation may alter family relationships, attitudes toward customs, and social interactions. As a result, family disputes, social alienation, and spiritual crises may emerge. Thirdly, illegal forms of missionary activity may create distrust among citizens. Hidden religious campaigns and unauthorized propaganda methods may lead to anxiety and uncertainty within society.

Political Risks of Missionary Activity and Proselytism

In certain cases, missionary activity and proselytism may be connected to political interests. Throughout history, some states and organizations have used religious influence as an instrument of geopolitical strategy. As a result, missionary activities have occasionally taken on political dimensions.

The strengthening of religious influence may contribute to political instability in some societies. Religious-based divisions may intensify social fragmentation and weaken national unity. Furthermore, the politicization of religion may increase the risk of radicalism and extremist tendencies.

In addition, missionary activity is sometimes interpreted as a tool of foreign ideological influence. This situation is closely related to national security concerns and requires governments to improve legal regulations regarding religious activities.

Protecting Youth from Ideological Threats

Protecting young people from the negative influence of missionary activity and proselytism remains one of the important challenges of modern society. In this regard, the role of the family is crucial. Families should instill national values, religious tolerance, and moral principles in children from an early age.

Educational institutions should also pay special attention to promoting ideological immunity, religious tolerance, and awareness of national traditions. Moreover, involving young people in scientific, cultural, and creative activities can significantly reduce vulnerability to harmful ideological influences.

Developing critical thinking skills regarding religious information distributed online is another urgent necessity. Strengthening information literacy can help young people resist manipulation and misinformation.

Conclusion

In conclusion, missionary activity and proselytism remain significant socio-political challenges in contemporary society. Reducing their negative consequences requires strengthening legal mechanisms, improving spiritual and educational programs, and increasing the ideological awareness of young people.

Furthermore, adherence to the principles of religious tolerance and mutual respect among different faiths plays a vital role in maintaining social stability. Enhancing religious literacy



among citizens can serve as an effective tool for ensuring national security and protecting social harmony.

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