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Topic: **Second Amendment in the Constitutional Development of Pakistan (1974)**

Second Amendment in the Constitutional Development of Pakistan (1974)

1.Introduction**:**

The **Second Amendment to the Constitution of Pakistan**, passed on **7 September 1974**, is one of the most important milestones in the country's constitutional development. This amendment officially **declared Ahmadis (Qadiani and Lahori groups) as non-Muslims** and introduced clear constitutional definitions of *Muslim* and *non-Muslim*.

2. Background

After the adoption of the **1973 Constitution**, the question of the religious status of the Ahmadi community became a national issue. In 1974, a clash at **Rabwah railway station** led to widespread protests by religious parties, who demanded that the state declare Ahmadis non-Muslims. Prime Minister **Zulfikar Ali Bhutto** formed a **Special Committee of Parliament** to examine the issue. After weeks of hearings and debates, Parliament decided to resolve the matter through constitutional amendment.

3. Main Features of the Second Amendment

The amendment changed **Article 260** of the Constitution and introduced:

a. Definition of a Muslim

A Muslim is someone who:

- Believes in the unity of Allah,
- Accepts the **finality of the Prophethood** of Muhammad (PBUH),
- Does not claim prophethood after him,
- Does not recognize any person as a prophet after him.

b. Definition of a Non-Muslim

The term *non-Muslim* now included:

- Christians, Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Parsis, etc.,
- And persons belonging to the Qadiani or Lahori group who call themselves Ahmadis**.**

This legally declared Ahmadis a **religious minority**.

4. Significance in Constitutional Development

a. Expanded Role of Religion in the Constitution

The Second Amendment strengthened the Islamic identity of the state. It showed that the Constitution could define religious beliefs and regulate religious identity.

b. Strengthened Parliamentary Authority

It demonstrated that Parliament has the power to address sensitive national issues and make far-reaching constitutional decisions.

c. Impact on Minority Rights

The amendment reshaped the legal status of Ahmadis and influenced their social and political rights. It also raised long-term debates about:

- religious freedom,
- equality before the law,
- and human rights.

d. Foundation for Later Islamization

This amendment laid groundwork for later Islamic reforms, especially under General Zia-ul-Haq, such as:

- Hudood Ordinances,
- Shariat Courts,
- and religious laws affecting minorities.

5. Long-Term Effects

The Second Amendment continues to influence Pakistan's:

- political system,
- constitutional structure,
- minority policies,
- and religious legislation.

It remains one of the most impactful constitutional changes in the country's history.

Conclusion

The **Second Amendment** is a major part of Pakistan's constitutional development. By defining Ahmadis as non-Muslims and legally defining Muslim identity, it reshaped the relationship between **state, religion, and citizenship**. Its effects are still visible in Pakistan's legal and social framework today.