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AN EXPLORATORY STUDY ON THE DYNAMICS OF RELIGIOUS EXTREMISM IN PAKISTAN

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KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
Extremism, Madrasa, Violence, Minorities, National Security	Although domestic terrorism has long been a global threat, many countries have only just started developing systemic policies to tackle the root causes of religious extremism. Studying front-line countries like Pakistan is critical to understanding how to tackle the challenge effectively. Despite Pakistan's war with anti-government rebels like Pakistani Taliban, Pakistan has struggling for more than decade to resolve theoretical aspects of those problems. Since the key majority of nefarious activities in Pakistan are carried out by entities that promote religion and justify Islam. It is vital that extremist drivers should be eliminated from Pakistan and other countries. We understand theological element. Ethnic minorities have targeted and harassed often by the religious fundamentalist groups for years. Unless the state avoids this trend, state will soon base itself on the prevailing narrative of extremism; it will only provide Sunni living space while restricting the limits of religious beliefs of minorities and living as free citizens. Most sensitive issue of Pakistan national security is extremism.
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INTRODUCTION

In the material world human life is known as the most important tangible asset. The loss of innocent life is seen in Islamic society as the destruction of all mankind, or it will save one's life. For past two decades, world has occupied by extremism, fundamentalist, and terrorist ideologies that threaten society (Ghumro, et al., 2017). Even though the deviation from a standard or specification is an "extreme" collective term, the element is not sufficient basis for explaining threat to security (Baqai, 2011). Extremism, in this definition, means being done in way that is done in the event of particular political and religious agenda or under such two-pronged acts. When these ideas and beliefs take shape and implement many plans and patterns, they lead to a state of fear and terrorism, influencing and not ready to accept the differences in acceptance. State radicals are individuals or groups that promote

violence to further other people beliefs, philosophies/moral convictions. Pakistan madrasas are seen by foreign actors as source of extremism like United States and its European allies (Khalid, 2014). Madrasa is Arabic word, meaning school; yet, there is no clear definition of the term madrasa (Bashir & Haq, 2019).

Although domestic terrorism was a global threat for a long time, many countries are now implementing systemic policies to address causes of religious extremism. Studying front-line countries like Pakistan is crucial to understanding how to respond effectively to this challenge. Pakistan has begun a war against anti-Taliban militants while ideological aspect of such threats has been struggling for more than 10 years (Malik, et al., 2019). Given that religious groups are responsible for all extremism in Pakistan, country needs to address drivers of extremism in the transparent way. Extremism affected country has changed its approach to the fight against terrorism and violent religious extremism which is evident in NAP of 2015 (National Action Plan). This establishes the weaves key political priorities and contributes a systematic strategy of force with a strategy of soft power (Yaseen & Naveed, 2018). Although, initiative has achieved political legitimacy to some extent, government has failed to promote its peace keeping agendas and counter terrorism measures. Yet, steps have been taken by Pakistani civil society to fill the gap in this area. Also, achieved modest success among the numerous civil society organizations to resolve the religious aspect of violence around him.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The government's efforts to reform religious schools (madrasas) are related to the history of spread of violent religious extremism. In 1950s & 1960s, General Ayub Khan suggested some reforms for Islamic schools (madrasas) which were generally overruled by all political entities. These reforms were designed to improve the resource and economic situation proposed by General Zia al-Haq, whose Deni Mandars national committee. Although, the thousands of new Islamic schools are being promoted across the country, scholars have rejected these suggestions. The madrassa sector's neutral growth has caused concern by Benazir Bhutto's government. The PPP government closed registration of new madrassas in 1994 as a consequence. At that time, registration of madrassas by the government was legally necessary for registration with the government under the Act 1860. Hundreds of unregistered Islamic schools have appeared in years that followed. In 1999 re-registration, many Islamic schools against intervention of government. President Musharraf realized many reform proposals at beginning of 21st century, including 2002 Voluntary Registration and Control Regulations and 5-year, \$113 million programs to incorporate secular subjects into the Islamic school curriculum.

Such activities earned bit of rash and lost funding and support. While madrassas remained largely lysed by sphere of control or power of government(Pakistan: Madrasas, Extremism and the Military, 2002). In 2005, the government introduced changes to Act on Registration

of Association, which mandates all Islamic schools to register annually with government, subject to financial audits and ending militancy and sectarianism. In 2005, the government introduced changes to Act on Registration of the Association, which mandates all Islamic schools to register annually with the government, subject to financial audits and ending militancy and sectarianism. The government has tried best to engage constructively in the implementation of the measure with National Madrasa Oversight Board (ITMD), but the contradictions already existed hindered the talks and many madrassas opposed the new rules and regulations. A few years later, ITMD and Interior Ministry signed an agreement to collaborate jointly on crucial issues, including curriculum reform and registration. After the agreement, the government reported a total of 8,656 schools, bringing the number of registered Islamic schools to 14,656, which is still below the more than 35,000 currently believed to exist (Dawn, 2011).

Religious Extremism

There are several reasons why conservatives resist violent religious extremism as opposed to physical security, loss of religious legitimacy and traditional and customary adherence (Malik et al., 2019). As a result, a more active role is required to use a larger deal of social capital to turn the religious conservatives into a role that can only be achieved through building trust and stable mutual relationships through a long and detailed process. Not only at the mutual level, but also at the government level, this strategy is essential. Most madrasa leaders fear the government will use national action plan to justify the decision and, for historical reasons, their madrassas will be attacked. Instead of listening to and recognizing the interests of these stakeholders in Islamic schools, government officials have often tried to push for rigorous reforms, including a total ban on Islamic schools in some areas. The extremism is critical that brings certain undesirable consequences for the concerned countries. This is counterproductive and will impede long-term solutions and strain tensions already (Mahsood, 2017).

Combating Hate Speech and Extremist Content

A new education policy was adopted by Pakistan in 2009 that include provision excluding from teaching materials controversial materials targeting any religion or minority (Nicole, 2014). The government ordered the concerned departments to take tough action against individuals who spread sectarianism on social media or mobile phones in November 2013 (Tribune, 2013). Social media is monitored to recognize controversial statements capable of helping in sectarian conflict and taking action against those who share those messages. Through October, National Plan of Action's effective monitoring of progress reported that some 9,400 musketeers had been arrested for spreading the sectarian hatred. About 6,504 cases were reported against religious leaders in Punjab, 1,647 in Sindh, 1,286 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and 47 in Balochistan (Zahid, 2015). According to a recent survey by Ministry of Interior and Narcotics 2,337 hate speech cases have been reported, 2,195 arrests have been made, and 73 shops have been closed. Similarly, 9,164 cases were registered, 9,340

people were arrested and 2,452 items of equipment are seized for misuse of loudspeakers. In addition, these laws led to arrest of JUI-F leader Mufti Kifayat Ullah, with "inflammatory rhetoric" (Zain, 2015) and launch of international hate speech campaigns in 45 districts of Punjab and KPK (Dawn, 2015).

Penal Justice System in Pakistan & Pakistan's Role in Extremism

Before the National Plan of Action was implemented, Pakistan criminal justice system was facing grave challenges in resolving problems of dealing with violence incidents. Around 5,000 alleged terrorists and suspects were arrested by Operation Karachi, most of whom will trial four counter-terrorism trials (Imtiaz, 2014). While struggling with a large number of cases, witnesses and prosecutors are often threatened, making it impossible for those cases to be prosecuted. 2014 Pakistan Protection Act seeks to address this issue by firming witness protection, judges, and other related judicial personnel (Asad, 2014). While those pressing issues persisted after the National Action Plan was initiated, no significant change had occurred (Zeeshan, 2015). There was a close connection between religious extremism and status of Pakistan as an Islamic state. From then on religious history and philosophy have become standard, and in dealing with different circumstances religious dogmas have become the language of society. So, when we're researching extremism in Pakistan, our research focuses on religion. Most academics study extremism where research focuses on politics, and when they discuss the issue in their home country, they discuss extremism in the religious context (Ahmad, 2007).

Modern Extremist & Political Extremism

Now that most modern extremist and terrorist groups receive the micro and macro-level support from deprived, isolated, vulnerable and angry minorities within the State, as well as from those with good relations on weapons, the speed of communication and global influence, which makes them even more dangerous, These small groups are gaining the increasing strength and prominence (Botticher, 2017). Political extremism is pushing the people of Pakistan to take divisive path due to lack of confidence between the people and politicians (Montero, 2007). Social interaction between the public and the political leaders is changing conduct in society. The Pakistani public lacks confidence in our politicians because the elected leaders have broken their promises repeatedly. Even the fundamental problems of ordinary citizens have not been resolved by the Pakistani Government, all of which promote a radical approach.

The general public feels robbed of their fundamental rights, and they are trying to find new ways of meeting life's needs. Public leaders and people communicate with a social system, and that's why, within a system, they affect one another. The reality that we have recognized from our social environment is political extremism. Our political leaders' ideals and personalities are strengthening political extremism within Pakistan. the politicians have not addressed citizens fundamental problem and general public has lost faith in them. The

public at large thinks they don't have any government advantages like food. Sometimes that sense of institutional incompetence and marginalization causes powerful efforts to move away from the sense of the disenfranchisement. Thus, our domestic environment and the character of our politicians influence Pakistan's policy, and that sense of deprivation in Pakistan is causing extremism.

National Security of Pakistan

Terrorism and extremism are the most complex issues of national security in Pakistan and need to be tackled by effective policy formulation and implementation. Such concerns affect not only international affairs but also domestic stability leading to social instability and terrorism. Legislation requires exchange of information and exchanging best methods to manage them properly, since these problems represent a varied and complex national security threat. Social interaction between the public and the political leaders is changing conduct in the society. In this regard, the Pakistani public lacks confidence in our politicians because the elected leaders have broken their promises repeatedly. Pakistan is at the crossroads as a result of suffering of this violent extremism which poses a serious threat to its socio-political peace. In this connection, only peace can bring about social harmony, and violence, fear, and devastation can lead to insecurity, pressure, and weakening of the different institutions (Hafeez, 2008).

Afghan Taliban Support & Various Forms of Extremism:

During the 1990s, when Pakistani strategic planners in the hopes of keeping India out of Afghanistan supported Afghan Taliban, radicalism intensified because Pakistan allowed them to use their tribal territory as haven (Malik & Zhilong, 2019). The side effect is that tribal people have become radicalized, where the militants have gained the considerable influence and formed their own, Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) in 2007, which started opposing U.S. operations in Afghanistan and also against the military operations of the Pakistan in FATA. They commenced suicide bombing of civilians and troops. We are Islam Deobandi edition, and have close ties to the Jamita Ulema-Islam in Pashtun (Joshi, 2019). Extremism is a multi-dimensional, various phenomenon that discusses different definitions of extremism. In this connection, the famous scholar Moonis Ahmar has divided extremism in Pakistan into different types. Extremism in Pakistan can be divided into different types: Class extremism, Racial extremism, Sectarian extremism, Gender extremism and Religious extremism (Hasan, 2005).

Tough Challenges

The Government of Pakistan faces many difficulties in addressing the religion of violent extremist organizations. Perhaps critically, there is no legitimacy at all for the government to properly control those at risk of radicalization. Several Pakistani sources highlighted the question, and were even recognized by the Interior Ministry itself. The ministry claimed that "religious scholars, teachers, educational institutions, and media are key partners in

nationwide news creation and dissemination. "Constructive collaboration with Pakistan's civil society ([Johnston et al., 2016](#)).

DISCUSSION

Recently Pakistan was ranked 3rd in the Global Terrorism Index of Institute for Economics and Peace, and the country's terrorist occurrences have also involved religious minorities ([Dawn, 2014](#)). Talibanization in Pakistan has largely posed threat to the ethnic minorities of the region. While majority of Pakistanis are victims of terrorist attacks, religious minorities, especially Ahmadi, Shia, Christian and Hazaras, are being targeted by militant and religious clusters ([Ispahani, 2013](#)). Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LEJ) is a banned militant group engaged in shia attacks while Jedullah Hazara is involved in Shia brutal treatment. TTP is Pakistan's most infamous militant group, not only in violence on Christians but in all major Pakistani cities as well. Many minority communities, especially Hindus, leave for safe land. Between January 2013 and June 2014, 3,753 Pakistanis, especially Hindus, yielded their passports, and long-term visas granted for travel to India ([Mansoor, 2014](#)). [Gregory \(2012\)](#) referred to several well-known anti-Christian attacks including the 2002 assault on Christian church in Murree, 2002 murder of seven Christian employees at welfare agency in Karachi and 2004 execution of two underage girls.

Massie was murdered in Lahore, Samuel Masih was killed in 2004 for blasphemy, Christian social worker was killed along with his driver in 2005 in city of Peshawar, and a Christian stonemason was attacked in 2006 by mob. A Christian youth gang-raped by 30 people for declining to adapt to Islam, one mob, among other incidents, burned down more than 40 houses in Gojra in 2009. Such events lead to belief that ferocity against Christians is not restricted to area or community ([Gregory, 2012](#)). Violence towards minorities always goes hand in hand with their settlement. In Sindh, where Hindu minority is founded, oppression incidence is lower than in Punjab, against Christians. Therefore Punjab is conservative than Sindh ([Fuchs & Fuchs, 2019](#)). A prominent example of such cases was kidnapping of Anjali Kamari at the age of 12 and consequently she was forced into exchanges and marriages. Parents of Kumari in Sukkur's hometown of Kumari claim Kumari is a 12-year-old minor who is unable to marry and convert to another faith ([Memon, 2014](#)). It is also believed that economic and social fronts have chosen to deliberately change religion of the majority in Islam, and gain more opportunities ([Forced Marriages & Forced Conversions in Christian Community of Pakistan, 2014](#)).

CONCLUSION

Although terrorist violence in Pakistan may have diminished in the recent years, violent extremist religious groups have become the cornerstone of Pakistani society. In order to combat this threat more security measures are needed. This needs profound changes in society, religion and politics. Though some dispute that the attempts of Pakistan's most violent extremists to reduce their religious identity are inadequate to overcome conflict's

religious aspects. While conservative religious institutions often stand in way of reform, some promising signs of change exist. Minorities, particularly Christians, played a vital role in Pakistan's development during the 1947 liberation movement. The Christian educational institutions in Karachi and Lahore represented Pakistan which inspired country's freedom and innovation, while Hindus living in the border regions decided to live and participate in Pakistan's development. Pakistan needs to take the practical steps against these factors, political, financial, religious, economic and the psychological powers and extremist views, to take these drastic steps.

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