

Trends in Political and Social Extremism in Pakistan: A Case Study of Musharraf Era 2002-2008

Abstract

This article focuses on the extremism in Pakistan, specifically in its political and social context during General Mushraf era from 2002 to 2008. It provides deep insight to Pakistan's political and social setup and their flaws which ultimately contributed for the extremism. Where it highlights the role of major political parties of Pakistan in political system, it contextualizes the rationale behind the political extremism. Similarly, it not only highlights the factors behind social extremism but also provide the comprehensive analysis of Pakistani society. The second part of this article furnishes the strategy of Government of Pakistan to cope with the extremism.

Key Words: Political extremism, Social extremism, Political parties, military rule, Madrassas

I

Pakistan has been unsuccessful in creating a steady and clear multi-party political system and a proper government system ever since its independence in 1947. The independence Act of 1947 gave power to the component associations of both Pakistan and India to structure their individual establishments and to advance an independent opinionated society. The government parties in Pakistan never had the same opinion as regards their inside functioning. The essential constitutional rights including freedom of thought, expression, belief, faith, subject to law and communal ethics were assured in the 1947 Constitution and in the Objectives Resolution of 1949. The existence of political parties and public representation were recognized in the Constitutions of 1956 and 1962. Moreover, the 1973's constitution has provided federal form of government, parliamentary rule and articulated the fundamental rights of citizens.¹ The exceptions and qualification of political candidates requires that a government employee cannot join any political party and no political party shall encourage denominational, cultural or provincial abhorrence. Furthermore, every party whether in rule or not have to justify the means of its assets generation and the judicious constraints forced by regulation for the sovereignty of Pakistan. Additionally, all the parties have to hold intra-party elections to elect the members for various positions.

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Democratic Eras in Pakistan

The following eras define the democratic rule in Pakistan; the periods in between reflect the Martial laws of the reign of undemocratic forces. Muslim League has ruled from 1947 to 1956, Oct 1957 to December 1957 and 7th December 1971 to 20th December 1971. Awami League and the Republican Party were in power from 1956 to 1957 and 1957 to 1958 respectively. Pakistan People's Party was the first democratic government in Pakistan which successfully completed its tenure from 1971 to 1977. The PPP government came into power in 1988 and Benazir Bhutto was the prime minister of Pakistan but her government lasted only for two years and it ended in 1990. After the failure of PPP government PML (N) came into power in 1990 and their government ended in 1993. The PPP government came back in power 1993 to 1996 and the history repeated itself and their government failure brought PML (N) back in 1997 and it ruled for two years. The PML (N) government was suspended in 12th October, 1999 when Musharaf imposed martial law in the country. PPP has ruled from 2008 to 2013 and it was the second time in Pakistan's history when a democratic party has successfully completed its term. In May, 2013 election PML (N) won the largest number of seats and Mian Nawaz Shareef became the 18th Prime Minister of Pakistan. Hence, it can be concluded that out of 66 years freedom, since Pakistan witnessed only thirty seven years democratic governments. From 1951 to 1958, in seven prime ministers were removed from their office. The rest were the years that saw the rule of Army in Pakistan (almost 29 years). Similarly, from 1985 to 1999, all five prime ministers of the era were dismissed from their offices. Out of the twelve national legislatures, nine were dismissed prematurely.

The previous consecutive authoritarian governments embraced a plan of de-politicization of political parties. To de-politicize the associational dominions, consecutive military regimes held non-party elections. Governmental structures in technologically advanced countries are categorized by highly structured parties and aim towards united accomplishment for the betterment of their countries. First and foremost party discipline is obligatory in governmental systems, because nonconformity with the party policies could affect the government. Parliamentary system requires the executive and legislative members to agree upon issues.² Theoretically speaking, opposition parties want to maximize their power in a system dominated by the majority. Furthermore, the opposition party discipline is more likely to be effective if the party or parties perceive that they can eventually gain a majority.³ The existence of a real opposition acts as a restraint on those who are in power. Overtime, consensus between the government and the opposition parties in fact helps to establish the democratic norms and rules.⁴

Military Dictatorships in Pakistan

In 1958, President Iskandar Mirza suspended the 1956's constitutions and with the support of Pakistan Army, he imposed martial law. Ayub Khan exiled him and on October 1958 Ayub Khan took control of government. to General Muhammad Yahya Khan who became the Chief martial law administrator and President of Pakistan. In 1971, Yahya Khan handed over government to Bhutto, who became the first civilian chief martial law administrator and President. In the 1977 elections, Bhutto proclaimed his victory but the opposition party Pakistan

National Alliance (PNA) demanded new elections and criticized the results as fraudulent. The PNA leadership was arrested by Bhutto government. Political instability and restlessness was increasing in country. Military removed Bhutto from government and General Zia-ul-Haq took control. He became the President and banned all political activities in country. In a flight accident Zia-ul-Haq died on 17th August 1988. In 1999, Mian Nawaz Sharif Failed to replace General Pervaiz Musharraf as chief of army staff. General Musharraf has seized power from Nawaz Sharif. In 2001 Musharraf became the President and he resigned from government in 2008 after a movement was about to be started form his impeachment. 2008 elections witnessed the success of the PPP headed by Asif Ali Zardari.⁵ In Pakistan's history, only two elected government could complete its constitutional terms from 1971 to 1977⁶ and PPP from 2008 to 2013. These two governments had completed their full five-year term in the government unlike the previous ones that had ended before their expected time. Many critics have called this accomplishment of the PPP government as a momentous victory for Pakistani democracy. But due to its failure in addressing the most important issues in Pakistan, the public rejected PPP in the elections of 2013 and gave a heavy mandate to PML (N) this time. PML (N) had been in the opposition in the previous government. The issue with Pakistani political system is that it is dominated by wealthy landowners, and their rich industrialist foils. Hence a full term of five years is really hard to accomplish even if there is no military intervention. The main purpose of these wealthy industrialists and land owners remain to gain access to national capitals, which can then be shared among their associates. When in control, feudal Pakistani officials are so scarcely attentive on the allocating and ingesting of support that they have only little concern in trade with the countless universal glitches that outbreak the nation. Their dearth of concern in the welfare of their nation is reflected in the fact that only a few of them pay revenue dues. Their extremist approach is reflected in ignoring the serious issues. The condition is so immoral that, regardless of the point that Pakistan uses only a little currency on civic learning or well-being. Regardless the latest five years of successful democracy of the PPP regime the Army should be given credit for not interrupting the democratic rule. Already in the Musharraf's era the country has faced a chief Pakistani Taliban rebellion in the clannish regions and in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Musharraf could not prove himself to be a better leader than his civilian forerunners, and also his pronouncement to join hands with the United States in the war on terror ascertained Musharraf's unpopularity in the Pakistani community. Hence, the current Army leadership remained unwilling to rule in the country once again. In addition, ordinary Pakistanis seem to have finally recognized that, however incompetent their civilian rulers might be, the army is not the answer.⁷ It is believed that the political parties in Pakistan are based on cultural lines. For instance, PPP represents Sindh, PML-N represents Punjab, the ANP previously represented Khyber Pukhtun-Khwa, and MQM represents Karachi, which has the largest Muhajir population. Similarly, the BNP represents Baluchistan. Though the parties claim to be national parties, representing the whole country, but it is seldom the case.

Political Extremism the Greatest Threat to the Stability of Pakistan

Pakistan has to face both the internal and peripheral pressures. Religious fanaticism and political radicalism are one of the major internal threats to Pakistan.

Hardly there is any party in Pakistan that can be called a national party representing all. Most of the political parties belong to and represent only one or two provinces. The role of major Pakistani political parties to better comprehend political extremism in Pakistan is discussed in the following section.

The Role of Pakistan People's Party (PPP) in Strengthening Democracy

PPP has a solid connection with the rural common people of Sindh and also a few achievements in urban areas of Sindh. Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) is a scheme that earned for them great compliments from the underprivileged masses of the rural Sindh. Bhutto's legacy is most sympathetic for PPP and the murders in Bhutto family are also helpful for party to gain support from the certain areas of Pakistan. PPP has demonstrated the weak management in its previous reign. Majority of the political leadership of PPP are involved in corruption cases. The heir to the Bhutto legacy, Bilawal Bhutto has less association with the common supporters of PPP and the general public. The success of PTI has become a big challenge for party and in May, 2013, out of 272, PPP could secure only 31 seats in the parliament. From the Punjab PPP has been almost vanished.⁸

The Pakistan Muslim League (N) and Political Process

PML (N) currently enjoys the status of being the most popular party of Punjab. PML (N) symbolizes the wealthy, manufacturing class of Northern Punjab. The party mostly represents the land and industrial units' wrong class whose main aim is the progress of industry. Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto promoted nationalism during the 70s and in 1991; Nawaz Sharif's government through 12th Constitutional amendment had marked 115 units to privatize. The second Bhutto government also expanded the PML (N) agenda of privatization. The wave of privatization continued in the second government regime of PML (N) in 1997. The positive achievements of Nawaz Sharif's regime had been the nuclear blasts in 1998, the construction of a Motorway between Islamabad and Lahore, the remodeling of the city Lahore, and the expansion of industrial sectors mostly in Punjab. Punjab being the largest, most educated and most influential province is a strong point for PML (N). In addition, it has the support of some religious circles and foreign governments. The main weakness of PML (N) is that it has not done anything complimentary for the government servants and for the education sectors as regards taking education to the South Punjab and especially to far flung areas of country. In May, 2013 elections PML (N) is the ruling party in the federal government and it has a great opportunity to prove it by performing well in other provinces of Pakistan alongside Punjab. In 2013 elections PTI has emerged as a serious threat for PML (N). PTI has proved itself to be the second largest political party of the country. Now PML (N) will have to meet the expectations of the people regarding solving the issues of load shedding, CNG, and inflation otherwise PML (N) will lose all ground in the political standing of the country.

Role of MuttahidaQuami Movement (MQM)

MQM has educated candidates mostly from the middle class and they have a solid and operational infrastructure. Hence, they have a strong discipline

within the party structure. The previous mayor of Karachi had done astonishing work for the city. Within Karachi and adjoining cities, the party has been successfully mobilizing groups of young and working class Urdu-speaking people both men and women alike.⁹ Altaf Hussain the founder of MQM who has been living in London for more than two decades. They are often seen making coalition governments which originate the dissatisfaction for MQM in other parts of country. Critics stated that his party showed a readiness to use violence to fight for power. Altaf Hussain and MQM have long been blamed for having an illegal armed wing and in Karachi it is thoroughly involved in criminal economy of and land theft drugs.¹⁰ MQM strategies and policies can bring many positive changes in the country if correctly for the betterment of society. MQM remained partner with many federal government (since late 1980's, 1988-1990, 1990-1992, 2002-2007, 2008-2013) and it kept its influence also over Islamabad city.¹¹ PTI is a big threat for MQM as in May, 2013 elections PTI has emerged as a second largest party in Karachi. British newspaper claimed that Altaf Hussain was worried about PTI's Popularity in Karachi and if PTI increase its efforts in future then it can get further achievements.¹²

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and Political pluralism

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf emerged as main opponent to PMLN's at national level. The PTI chairman, Imran Khan has been in politics for the past 17 years. Imran Khan fascinated the urban, educated and young population. The party still has some old and traditional feudal personas but still PTI claims to be a new party which will bring change in Pakistani political system. Imran Khan now in the ruling scenario in KPK has to prove himself in actual governance. Many would say that attacking the PPP for five years has been easy as compared to the task of effective governance. Imran Khan's compassion reflected in Shaukat Khanam Hospital is the main dynamic strength for PTI. He has efficaciously organized the youth of Pakistan and got their vote of approval for PTI which was a new and in experienced party. PTI is often accused of lacking restraint and discipline. Many PTI workers are young and they lack political vision being new in the field. PML (N) is an old and experienced party and it is a big challenge for lacking restraint and discipline. Many PTI workers are young and they lack political vision being new in the field. PML (N) is an old and experienced party and it is a big challenge for PTI. A great positivity for PTI is that it has never been tested as a ruling party before. People like the party due to its slogans and promises. The recent elections in May, 2013, PTI got a major share in the elected percentages.¹³ Metropolitan sections particularly the youth in Pakistan have high hopes from PTI. Now that they are a ruling party in Khyber PakhtunKhuwa (KPK), they have to do a lot to prove them which will not be easy owing to the poor security issues in KPK. PTI has to deliver effective policies in KPK to success in next elections of Pakistan.¹⁴

Rationale behind Political Extremism

The poor policies of political leaders in Pakistan are a major reason of political extremism in country. A few policies of these political parties that cause frustration within the country are stated below.

i. Slogan of Islam as Tool for Politics

Many political parties are often seen upholding Islamic Nationalism, as a result of which Pakistani society has certainly developed into a more conservative society. The government inflexible control in Pakistan has directed the nation on Islamist routes. The policy making by militant governments under the garb of Islamisation has also reinforced the general public to give backing and funding to them for their political objectives. The politics of Islamization enhanced narrow-mindedness, intolerance and aggression in society.¹⁵

ii. Weak Administration of the Government

Weak or poor management of the state affairs by the ruling parties is one of the main reasons of immoderation in Pakistani society. Although the Pakistani administration tries to alter the existing ways but success is still far down the road. The dictatorial political culture in Pakistan is in essence a factor for creating and promoting lawlessness in society. There is a feudal system within the political system of Pakistan which leads the society to extremism when the promises are not fulfilled and a wall is implanted between the government and the common people. Government deficiencies sometimes motivate those to adopt vehement means to get rid of their feelings of dispossession. Hence, this sense of dispossession may be considered for extremism in Pakistan. Balochistan, in particular and the tribal areas are just two examples of that. Various factors have promoted a political culture of conflict and dissension in Pakistan. Oppression, lack of justice and politico-economic inequalities are strong contributing factors towards extremism and militancy in the country. Pakistani governments have not yet been successful in addressing these issues of discrimination which have aggravated the critical situations in Pakistan.

iii. Lack of Good Governance

In Pakistan, there is a lack of a practicable leadership which has aggravated the situation of dealing with security matters, fanaticism and viciousness in the public. This crises-ridden political tradition of Pakistan also damaged the peaceful and pleasant political and social environment of the society. The citizens lack trust in political leaders and organization. In such a situation, any call for a resort to radical means carries greater attraction for some people. As a result, such scenario also provides fertile and dynamic ground for extremism to grow.¹⁶

iv. Uncertain Policies by the Politicians

The political personas in Pakistan keep on changing their political affiliations from one party to another. Various politicians so far have switched their party commitment many times and this trend is increasing. For instance, Arbab Khizer Hayat is in politics since 1996 and he has switched his party allegiance almost 14 times. Many other politicians have also done this frequently and this trend is growing in Pakistani politics. Mr. Hayat belongs to a landowning family and has gone from the Pakistan Tehrik-e-Insaf (PTI) party to Pakistan People's Party (PPP) to Pakistan Muslim League-N (PML-N). Similarly, Nabeel Gabol, elected to the assembly in the troubled Lyari (Karachi) switched to the MQM, shortly before the parliament dissolved in March 2013. Many MPs switched from Pakistan's peoples party to Pakistan Muslim League (N) before

elections, 2013.¹⁷ All this shows that very often, political interest has been preferred over state interest in Pakistan.

In Pakistan the semi-feudal social order, legacy and affiliations play a huge role in dominating the political system. Joining a party on the basis of family affiliations is also very common along with the fact that candidates select that party that has highest chance of winning the elections. Such categories of tendencies are encouraging self-centeredness and lawlessness in policymaking. Candidates choose to be a part of those parties which have a high chance of being elected. Display of honour and morals is needed in this regard. They should now start thinking of saving their country.

v. Issue of Tolerance and Patience

Political intolerance and absence of harmony has so far caused many problems in Pakistan. Unfortunately, patience and tolerance in politicians is still hard to find which is constantly resulting in unrest in the country.

vi. Conflicts among Political Parties

There is a great deal of discord among the political parties of Pakistan. They never agreed on a common standpoint regarding any problem faced by the country such as extremism, electoral issues and role of courts etc. Never find any harmonized viewpoint when it comes to solving them. The ruling political parties never care about the rights of the people. They keep on neglecting their basic rights. Hence, all the important matters remain unattended and feelings of unrest among the masses prevail. The issues such as poverty, illiteracy, terrorism, hunger etc. still remain and no political party cares. It is required in the pressing times and the political parties should work harmoniously to fulfil their promises they make before elections.

vii. False Propaganda against the Opponent Parties

In Pakistan there is a trend to do negative campaigns against the opponent parties. In spite of doing positive campaigns for themselves, they are found degrading other political parties in the advertisement campaigns. Instead of showing what they have done in their earlier periods in office over the country they constantly degrade their opponents. Secondly, spontaneous blackmailing of the nation is also very common among the political parties. They keep on using the murders of their ex-leaders as a weapon to get sympathy votes. Such negative campaigns are made on television ads, print ads, social media etc. A better way for the political parties would be to highlight their own strategies for economic welfare progress instead of exploiting negative campaigns against their opponents.

viii. Political Parties Based on Ethnic Bases

In Pakistan the political parties belong to certain ethnicities and they keep on representing those racial groups before and after elections. Some belong to Punjab, some to Sindh, some to Khyber Pukhtun-Khwa, some to only Karachi, and some to Baluchistan. Hardly, there is a political party that can be said to represent all the four provinces of Pakistan. The winning parties after being elected focus on the development of their own cities and provinces. Hence, a sense of deprivation rises among citizens.

ix. Unrealistic Statements by Political Parties

The political parties in Pakistan are always found making high claims of prosperity that will be achieved once they get elected. But once they are actually elected they forget all their promises. The first thing they say after being elected is that the treasury is empty. Not only the political parties, but also the military governments are found doing the same when once they come into power. The Promises of national prosperity are kept on being forgotten even in the army rule. Moreover, due to certain anti-terrorism policies made by the civil and army rule both, terrorism is only seen multiplied over the last few years in Pakistan.

In conclusion, extremism has emerged as a major challenge for Pakistan. Ever since Pakistan's independence in 1947, the subsequent Pakistani governments have failed to formulate a translucent governmental party structure. Many statespersons are using the name of 'Islam' for their political gains and these political affairs behind the garb of the so called Islamization have further increased the clashes. In Pakistan both the democratic and military governments have failed to address the domestic issues. This failure has led the people of Pakistan to a sense of deprivation which consequently is harmful to Pakistan's stability. There has always been a lack of sustainable leadership in Pakistan. The parties lack moral and ethical values. Candidates are highly likely to join those parties which have a good chance of coming in power after the elections. The promises are all forgotten when once the power is achieved. For instance, the last 5 years of the previous government were spent in avoiding the general public as much as could be done. To cope with extremism it is mandatory for the government to become role models for the people so that the common people can follow their leaders and display values such as forbearance, strength and harmony. The need of hour is to formulate a new policy to fight against all the domestic problems so that make people to believe on the power and goodness of a democratic government in Pakistan.

Trends in Social Extremism in Pakistan

Right from the inception, both the civil democratic and military governments have remained in power. The Political turmoil and instability resulted in regular disintegration of civilian democratic governments and many prime ministers of Pakistan either expelled or resigned. This political instability paved the way for first martial law in Pakistan. For maintaining stability in Pakistan the only way is the rule of law and justice. The personal interests of political leaders, military interference, injustice and unfairness, political instability and discrimination are also few factors behind the failure of governments in Pakistan. The nation constantly deceived in the name of democracy and they had lost their trust on democracy as over the time civilian governments in Pakistan has made the lives of the lower class pathetic. The greater share of state resources is enjoyed by the richer segment of the society while the poor people are deprived of their basic rights. The gap between the upper and lower class is getting wider day by day and it has created a gulf between two distinctive classes in Pakistan. For a common citizen it is so hard to get justice as the justice system is pro-rich. The police in Pakistan join together and practically support criminals instead of helping the deprived people. Due to all these reasons the deprived people take law in their own

hands to eradicate their tormentors and dislike privileged class whilst the upper class does not bother about the neglected class and this is enhancing lawlessness in the country.

Here we will discuss some important factors which are promoting 'social extremism' in Pakistan.

The Foundation of Social Extremism in Pakistan

The poor social and economic conditions, unemployment and lack of freedom of expression in Pakistan are major causes behind the growing number of extremist organization and groups. Furthermore, these extremist groups are no longer depending on state for their financial support and as a result they are becoming more economically influential and self-sufficient. The people will join different extremist groups until Pakistani government will not pay attention to financial benefits for citizens especially for youth, who are getting frustrated by the policies of state. The present condition of the rural areas of Pakistan depicts a miserable picture as they are deprived of basic facilities of life.

The Human Development Index report ranked Pakistan at 146 out of 187 countries and territories for the year 2012.¹⁸ In Pakistan, sectarianism and socioeconomic differences are the greatest threat to stability. The existing circumstances present an encouraging atmosphere for extremism. A quick statistical survey discloses noticeable deprivation in this case. The net enrolment rate in the overall school attendance is 57 percent and about 40 million of the common people lives in poverty; 400,000 newborn babies die per annum because of diarrhea¹⁹ and only 37 percent of the population is part of the working labour force.²⁰

i. Poverty as a factor for Social Extremism

In recent times, poverty has become a serious problem in Pakistan which gives rise to many other social problems. The issues like increasing hopelessness, depression, lack of interests in national issues and mistrust on government²¹ are the consequences of poverty. Pakistan is one of the 43 developing countries at have been seen poverty rising as a result of the recent global financial crisis. About sixty percent of the total population is earning less than two dollars a day and the average total family income amounts to \$429. Thus, 64 million fair people were living below the poverty line in 2008, compared to 35.5 million in 2005, a shocking statistic out of line with the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). About 50 percent of the rural population some 65 percent of the total population is defined as poor. Even urban poverty is significantly higher than that in other regional countries.²² Almost two thirds of the population and 80 percent poor citizens live in rural areas and the majority do not have access to basic facilities of life.²³ The gap between urban and rural poverty is increasing. According to the Economic Survey of Pakistan FY2008-09, the headcount index increased to 36.1 percent in 2009 from 33.8 percent in 2008. According to the World Bank report twenty one percent of the total population lives below the \$1.25 per day in 2013.²⁴ Inflation has an immediate impact on poverty and has been in double digits since 2007, increasing to 23.7²⁵ percent in 2008-09, and 21.3 percent in 2010 which is an alarmingly high figure.²⁶ Moreover, the rise in inflation was mainly due to the rise in food prices which particularly worsen the poverty situation because food

price inflation hits the poor hardest. Rural poverty can further be linked to inadequate infrastructure and lack of economic opportunities and resources, while urban poverty remains lower than both overall and rural poverty because of relatively easier access.

Pakistan has achieved a growth rate of 6 to 8 percent in the first seven years of the last decade but such a high growth rate could not eradicate poverty and failed to produce a trickledown effect as the positive effect of the national growth was biased towards the richer segment of the country.²⁷ This discrimination further leads to the depression and frustration among deprived citizens. Especially, the tribal areas in Pakistan are a prominent example of such a critical situation as they have always been deprived from their basic human rights like employment, education, social and economic developments and strong government institutions. The 60 percent population of FATA lies below the poverty line and it is the most backward region in Pakistan. Moreover, this has played a leading role in the growing militancy in the region.²⁸

ii. Factor of Illiteracy and Social Extremism

In democratic procedure, there is a direct link between education and democratic norms through media, books, journals, current affairs and newspapers etc, education enables citizens to be aware of their rights and duties. Generally speaking, illiteracy and the contents of education are considered as main causes of extremism and conflicts but when we apply these criteria for Pakistan the situation seems bleak. The literacy rate in Pakistan improved to 59 percent in FY2011-12 from 58 percent in Fy2008-09 with annual growth rate of 1.8 percent²⁹ but every year 45 percent primary school children drop out of school and the World Bank report asserts that nearly half of the adult population of Pakistan cannot read plus the net enrolment rate in Pakistan is lowest in the south Asia.³⁰ Over time, the net enrolment rate is improved but it is still far away from the ambitious 100 percent target to be achieved by 2015. According to the Economic Survey of Pakistan FY2010-11, 42 percent of the population has no formal education and only 4 percent has degree level education while many other possess degrees without attending any university. Between the two extremes, 38 percent of the population is below matriculation level with 11 percent having education up to matriculation and only 5 percent up to higher secondary level.³¹ The literacy rate in Pakistan is attributed to the low level of investment in the education sector and poor education institutions setup as the government of Pakistan spends only 2.6 percent of its GDP on education. Children dropout rate at elementary level is about 45 percent while one-fourth of the elementary school teachers are untrained.³² Moreover, basic infrastructure in many schools is missing and 37.7 percent schools up to elementary level are without boundary walls, 33.9 percent without drinking water facility, 37 percent without washrooms and around 60 percent without electricity.³³ There are also differences among districts in the provinces. Although in Punjab the average literacy rate is more than 56 percent, but in underdeveloped districts like Rajan-pur it is 28 percent, in Muzaffargarh it is 33 percent, in Dera Ghazi Khan it is 37 percent and in Rahim-Yar-Khan the literacy rate is 38 percent. These districts suffer from province, literacy rate is high in urban areas as compared to the rates. Similarly, in other provinces, literacy rate is high in urban areas as compared to the rural areas. Unsurprisingly, there are also remarkable differences between the

provinces. In Baluchistan there is an overall 62.82 percent illiteracy rate and 90 percent of the rural women are illiterate.

According to official data in FATA the female literacy rate is only 3 percent while the male literacy rate is 29.5 percent. Such a huge gap in the educational division among male and females has created a deeply polarized and depressed society. Consequently, with little understanding of the true principles of Islam, there is a greater chance of being misguided by the radical ideologues. Such a serious consequence is in line with an empirical survey of 1,050 FATA residents. Out this sample, nearly 45 percent of the respondents thought illiteracy is a main factor responsible for the current religious extremism in FATA.³⁴ The authorities inadequately supervised the government's educational institutions and learning and teaching techniques are also poor. Only people having enough money can afford decent schooling. Because of poor standards of education in government schools the students are ill-prepared for good jobs and this should be considered a big threat which is promoting extremism in society³⁵. Unemployment is increasing because of poor education system in Pakistan which forcing our youth to become the target of different extremist groups as they have limited economic opportunities. Our educational set up also suffers from poor syllabus, corruption, lack of facilities in institutions which is enhancing intolerance in the society. The extremist groups are exploiting these weaknesses for their own purposes. For poor state affairs the government is also responsible as the management is ignoring its responsibilities.³⁶

iii. Unemployment and Its Link with Extremism

According to some latest facts, unemployment has been considered as one of the major causes behind the spread of terrorism and extremism in Pakistan.³⁷ Pakistan is a state with a median age of around 20 years and it is estimated that currently around 104 million people in Pakistan are below the age of 30. During the FY2011-12, out of the total population 121.01 million people are of working age and the share of employed labour force is 53.8 million.³⁸ According to Pakistan bureau of statistics the unemployment rate in the first quarter of 2013 is 6.3 percent. The population growth rate for the FY2012-13 is 2 percent and the fertility rate is declined modestly. In present circumstances it is expected that Pakistan will attain 5th position in the world in term of total population till 2050.³⁹ This demonstrates that in future there will be a large labour force in Pakistan. The situation can get worse if the government cannot provide proper education, living facilities and employment opportunities to the youth. The Pakistani youth lacks access to the employment and basic education. Poor economic and social conditions and growing militancy are causing dissatisfaction and frustration mainly amongst the youth in conflict-hit areas.⁴⁰ Generally frustration and disappointment with economic, political, societal realities, causes insurgencies where citizens feel deprivation and helpless due to poor setup.⁴¹ Eventually this dissatisfaction and frustration transform into violence just like a situation which we can observe currently in Pakistan. In Pakistan behind the joblessness there are some factors such as corruptions, lack of new industries, poor governance and lack of opportunities. Furthermore legal and illegal immigration are also undeniable factor which has become common place and it is affecting militancy.⁴²

Indisputably for large number of frustrated, dissatisfied individuals the extremist economic offers can overpower the consideration of other citizens. Therefore, due to unemployment the educated people including youngsters are enabling to recruit. The need for legal and respectable employment amongst the young segment of the society should not to be ignored as due to religious beliefs these persons are not combating against the country but rather they are reacting against the failure of politicians and state.

iv. Role of Corruption in Social Extremism

In Pakistan corruption is a major dilemma that is a prime obstacle in economic development. Particularly, corruption deeply rooted in the government sector which is discouraging the honest and hardworking people. According to a latest report by Transparency International, in most corrupt States of the world Pakistan has been number 42. Corruption is widespread from clerics to senior officers and bureaucracy. Furthermore, according to the Global Competitiveness Report (2007-2008), after bad governance and poor infrastructure of bureaucracy corruption is the third major problem with is preventing companies from doing investment in Pakistan.⁴³

v. Denial of Women Rights

As a developing country, Pakistan has to cover a long mile before it stands beside all the developed countries. In Pakistan, The women make more than half of the total population of the country, but sadly they are not treated well. The rapid rise of extremism has made the lives of women in Pakistan miserable and oppressed more than ever before. Women in Pakistan are the most disadvantaged group as they are deprived of their basic democratic, political and economic rights. In all parts of the country (Sindh, Punjab, KPK, Balochistan and FATA) women are still threatened by inflexible and rigid traditions and customs and killing in the name of honour, social and economic discrimination, vehemence, prejudiced regulations and sexual harassment are common issues being faced by women. Women education and still prohibited in most parts of the country and they have become a common target of violence for the native militant groups who want to establish Taliban style government in Pakistan.

In order to scare women and to make them stay in their homes the extremist groups attack the women's educational institutes, public places and shopping malls. Women are not even allowed to go to markets unaccompanied. Extremism has grown because of the war on terrorism and in many areas women are not permitted to take part in the political activities and they are sometimes even stopped from casting their votes in the elections. Hence, the participation of women has almost become invisible in socio-political activities in the areas controlled by the fundamentalist groups in Pakistan. Even in the Musharraf regime women could not get their basic right of free and equal education despite of all the claims being made about legislation to protect women rights. The previous democratic government of PPP also made similar claims to improve the condition of women but these statements could not be materialized even after five years of democratic government. Although, legislation against sexual harassment at work place has been introduced but to cater the socio-economic and political rights of Pakistani women a constitutional step is needed to implement properly. The days

are gone when an individual was considered as a mean and the state as an end. People were ethically, religiously to the interests of citizens the interest of the state had given more value. But in the modern and democratic system all political activities and policies revolves around the interest of citizens. This is the reason that democracy has been defined as government of the people by the people and for the people and states interests and individuals both are important for the progress of a country.

Historically, it has been proved that the states can managed their crisis easily only when they give priority to its common citizens over elite class while in the states where the common people are deprived of their rights and basic facilities they lagged behind the world in terms of economic, social and political development. At present, the main focus of democratic states are individuals and common people but irony is that many people in the third world countries have strata are in a bargaining position. Pakistan is also one of those countries people have monopolized each and every opportunity of life. This is the main reason that as compared to the other countries of the world, we as a nation lack many positive points. There are combinations of factors those are causing extremism in Pakistan, rather than any one single feature in turn these factors are pushing people mainly Pakistani youth to join the radical groups. It is clear today that political and ideological factors drive the process of extremism in Pakistan whereas social and psychological ones facilitate it. It is a fact that poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, violation of women rights all these factors are causing extremism in Pakistani society. Social and economic problems of Pakistan are making the ground more fertile for extremism and terrorism. The poor government policies, poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, deprivation of fundamental rights and lack of freedom of expression in society, all these factors are also promoting extremism in Pakistan. Pakistani governments are failed to address these social and economic issues. As a result these extremist groups and organization are becoming more independent and financially strong especially since they are not depending on state for their financial assistance. Unless, the state will not come up with financial incentives for common people especially for young people, the ranks of the extremist groups will continue to fill up by common people. It is the need of time to sort out Pakistan's internal issues and policies should be based on tolerance and moderation to cope with extremism. Drastic reforms are needed in education, economic, political, religious and social fields of life.

II

Government of Pakistan's Strategy to cope with extremism

The government has applied numerous strategies and modifications to deal with the threat of extremism. The government of Pakistan (GOP) has endorsed enterprises across important segments such as education, media, economic growth and safety. However, the governments' record on confronting extremism has been varied, presenting countless tests together with partly control capability, civil-military division, and local government all imitations, contradictory planned objectives, and in addition to the hurdles in trade and industry. Furthermore, consecutive Pakistani administration have depended on the support of certain religious political groups for political support which has reserved the motivation and aptitude of the government in devising healthy

strategies that have impact on the religious assemblies. Some of the efforts made by the government of Pakistan to challenge extremism are presented as follows.

i. Reforming Religious Institutions

President Musharraf in 2008 issued the madrasa Registration Ordinance to control the state's self-ruling madrasa structure. The organization barred schools from teaching fundamental syllabus and made mandatory for all madrassas to get themselves registered legally. As per official statistics, the majority of the 20,000 institutions in Pakistan have been listed.⁴⁴ Even then the educationalists protest that the registering procedure does not have correct methods.

In 2008 reorganizations also made it compulsory for madrassas to make the syllabus more efficient and to include liberal arts and science in their set of courses. Though the Madrasa educationalists were originally unconvinced to implement these modifications, however in 2010 with an agreement with the IttehadTanzeemat-i-Madaris Pakistan (ITMP), an understanding was developed to administer the application of reforms in madrasa core curriculum. One of the major points of the agreement requires the madrassas curriculum to be free of any text which endorses violence of extremism. In spite of the measures delineated in the agreement, advancement has been deferred allegedly due to governmental complications.

ii. Economic Progress

Economic growth is regarded as a crucial factor to confront fundamentalism. But Pakistan has not been quite successful as regards economic progress in the last few years. Electricity and petroleum deficiencies increase in prices and low investments in businesses are major causes of economic disparities.⁴⁵ The role of economic development in conflict regions such as FATA and Baluchistan as keys to stabilizing the region was recognized in October 2008, by the Pakistani Parliament in a 14 point resolution on anti-terrorism. This in turn insisted the administration to improve local commerce settlements. The government has also insisted that the U.S should bid substitute vocation enterprises.

iii. Better Power Restructurings

Proficient policymakers realize the role of good governance in defying fierce activism. Pakistan's aptitude for devising operational counter terrorism strategies have been repressed by the lack of healthy autonomous organization and poor civil-military associations. Pakistan has witnessed the endorsement of significant modifications during President Zardari's regime. The 18th amendment to the Constitution of Pakistan bill in 2010 reversed many of the debated alternations disseminated under previous presidents of Pakistan. The bill mitigated the influence of the President in disbanding the assembly one-sidedly and decentralized national offices in education and health subdivisions, so that reserves distribution could be enriched. The extension of the Political Parties Act to the FATA proved crucial towards integrating the remote constituency into the conventional socio-political domains of Pakistan.⁴⁶ Anti-corruption reforms along

with these creativities have strong dimensions to develop the governmental setup of Pakistan.

Mass Media

The traditional Pakistani media has thrived in the Musharraf regime which led to media revolution and transforms the media from being controlled by the state to a varied and privatized segment. The development of the media in Pakistan is by and large acknowledged as a constructive aspect in sensitizing the general public about the national security matters. When Taliban rebelled in Swat in 2009, the media raised awareness and became critical of this dissent. However, it is required that media should follow principles and liability ethics to diminish melodramatic reporting and to inspire accountable, reporting.⁴⁷

Civil Society Level Efforts to Counter Extremism

The civil society of Pakistan should take up the responsibility along with the wide-ranging government-led policy to face extremism. Various civil society organizations have made efforts to raise awareness and counter fundamentalism at both the domestic and foreign levels.

Civic Sentience Movements

It is believed that public awareness regarding violent extremism should be raised to authorize the Government with the suitable legislative principles to cope with the extremist terrorizations efficiently. Civil society organizations have been making use of various awareness raising campaigns such as media programs, community conventions, discussions, art work promotions, virtual entreaties etc. Such movements reflect the positive face of a country that is constantly trying to resist extremism.

The following sections present examples of civic enterprises and their limitations.

Discussions and Interactive Sessions at Conferences

Seminars and conferences regarding anti-terrorism campaigns are usually organized by civil society front-runners to generate plans for countering terrorism and also to gather funding and to organize various sections of the population. The leaders of civil society recognize the value of public support and believe that without the public support the military and civil regimes cannot take appropriate crucial action.⁴⁸ Secular sets of societies have also been initiating enterprises to ensure peace and temperance to support the rule of law in the country⁴⁹. In educating students and young professionals the youth of Pakistan are also playing comparatively more noticeable part.⁵⁰

Role of Traditional Media

Traditional media such as newspapers, television programs, movies, and music have been used by the civil society organizations to propagate anti-terrorism chronicles to the Pakistani community. Organizations such as the Institute for War and Peace Reporting (IWPR) are some of the organizations that are involved in teaching journalism to citizens. The institute for War and Peace Reporting (IWPR) works in 42 madrass throughout Pakistan, including troubled areas such as Swat, Karachi and FATA. Their schemes have educated around 4,000 secondary school

students in elementary journalism. Movies and documentaries have also been successful in countering militant propaganda. A few examples of such movies are Shoaib Mansoor's *Khuda Kay Liye* and Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy's *Children of the Taliban*. *Khuda Kay Liye* earned profitable success in Pakistan which showed a wide-ranging reverberation of counter-narratives to extremism and terrorism.

Role of Social Media

Social media is a podium on which public awareness campaigns can be carried out easily. For instance, any social injustice very readily finds its way to be critiqued on social media. Extremist actions also get criticized on social media.⁵¹ At present more and more Pakistani youth make use of the social media such as Twitter and Facebook to endorse peace enterprises. Pakistanis have been getting influenced by online petitions to adopt heterogeneity and concord among diverse beliefs, religions and cultures. In the same way, Face book pages have been recently encouraging the Pakistani youth to take part in various marches against targeted killings in Pakistan and raising their voices on other socio-political issues.

Finally, the government of Pakistan is trying to cope with extremism but it is a big face that civilian and military government could not eradicate the radicalism in the country. Social factors such as poverty, unemployment, and illiteracy are provoking people to join extremist groups. Furthermore, our politicians are living extra luxurious life and almost all governments failed to address the basic issues of citizens. There is need of some vital practical actions especially on government level. Extremism cannot be controlled in the society until and unless the government provides basic facilities of life to all citizens. Moreover, our leaders should adopt simplicity and all resources of state should be utilized for the welfare of general public.

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