

REVIEW OF LITERATURE ON EXTREMISM IN PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

The anti-liberal narratives have not only been dwarfing the status of minorities as citizens but also made Pakistan, in a position where Islamism has eliminated political liberalism, a norm which is a combination of social, political and ideological plurality (Siddiqi 2011a). Whereas non-state entities like Lashkar-e-Taiba [LeT] and other militant outfits 'are presented not only as normal in Pakistan but also part of indigenous growth', political liberalism has not been allowed to grow due to Islamism drive (Siddiqi 2011a). Radicalisation in Pakistan manifests itself all across society, whether political parties, religious organisations, sects and society at large. Ayesha Siddiqi in a piece in The Express Tribune wrote in 2011 that the issue in Pakistan is not merely militancy but radicalism at large. "While militancy translates into violence against pockets of people, radicalism destroys a society internally" The liberals have not come forward as zealously to propagate their narratives as the extremist zealots breed and reproduce their rendering. The consequence is the Pakistan society sitting as a whole at the edge of the 'jihadi Frankstein' The Business Standard quotes an important data from Pakistan Institute of Peace Studies Report 2023, whereby, an increase in violence in Pakistan was up by 17% over the previous year 2022 (Business Standard January 4, 2024). Following review of literature shall be helpful for scholars who intend to study extremism and violence in Pakistan particularly post 9/11 incidence.

KEYWORDS: Review Literature, Extremism, Pakistan

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Pakistan has been in a state today where the willingness to use or support violence is not just an aberration but a normal phenomenon. Right from its inception, radicalisation, violent extremism and terrorism in Pakistan have been in an evolutionary process and have reached a stage of vicious circle (Ahmed 2017: 63). Ever since then, anti-secular narratives and the forces working upon those narratives have been at the forefront of giving direction to the political processes in Pakistan. In-turn, they have been successful so far, in setting orthodoxy; causing tremors and ruptures quite frequently (Ahmed 2017: 63). The anti-liberal narratives have not only been dwarfing the status of minorities as citizens but also made Pakistan, in a position where Islamism has eliminated political liberalism, a norm which is a combination of social, political and ideological plurality (Siddiqi 2011a). Whereas non-state entities like Lashkar-e-Taiba [LeT] and other militant outfits 'are presented not only as normal in Pakistan but also part of indigenous growth', political liberalism has not been allowed to grow due to Islamism drive (Siddiqi 2011a). Radicalisation in Pakistan manifests itself all across society, whether political parties, religious organisations, sects and society at large. Ayesha Siddiqi in a piece in The Express Tribune wrote in 2011 that the issue in Pakistan is not merely militancy but radicalism at large. "While militancy translates into violence against pockets of people, radicalism destroys a society internally"

(Siddiqi 2011b). The liberals have not come forward as zealously to propagate their narratives as the extremist zealots breed and reproduce their rendering. The consequence is the Pakistan society sitting as a whole at the edge of the 'jihadi Frankstein' (Siddiqi 2011b). The Business Standard quotes an important data from Pakistan Institute of Peace Studies Report 2023, whereby, an increase in violence in Pakistan was up by 17% over the previous year 2022 (Business Standard January 4, 2024). Following review of literature shall be helpful for scholars who intend to study extremism and violence in Pakistan particularly post 9/11 incidence.

Writers like Ahmed Rashid and Zahid Hussain prefer to confine their work in the confines of post 9/11 developments, while, others such as Hussain Haqqani and Hasan Abbas have rooted their analysis in historical perspective, narrating noteworthy events and policies since the independence of Pakistan. The following survey of literature covers the brief canvas of concepts, actors, events and the State responses.

Syed Manzar Abbas Zaidi's *Taliban in Pakistan: A Chronicle of Resurgence* (New York: New Science Publishers Inc, 2010) studies the dynamics of Taliban insurgency in Pakistan post 9/11 to reflect that the insurgency was not confined to a single theatre, but transcended the boundary between Pakistan and Afghanistan with Pashtun factor playing the major role. The American short sightedness of confining its actions on Al Qaeda, concentrating more on Iraq after the quick victory in

Afghanistan over Taliban worked perfectly in favour of Taliban elements. The events in Tribal areas post 9/11 were overlooked by the Musharraf establishment as mere local events and the building collaboration between Al Qaeda and local militants were just not deciphered by his regime. The book very lucidly narrates the events leading to Talibanization of Tribal areas of Pakistan and how the State turned a blind eye towards them. For example, when the activities of Abdullah Mehsud and Baitullah Mehsud were troubling Pakistani State, they were termed as only 'local' preachers.

Zahid Hussain's *Frontline State* (New Delhi: Penguin, 2007) reflects on the trivial issue of Pakistani army and the intelligence services as thoroughly penetrated by jihadists and the then government of General Pervez Musharraf coming into power through support of radical Islamist groups, such as those fighting in Kashmir. His decision to support US in War on Terror thus brought Pakistan to war against itself. The book illuminates the strength of ISI in the power arena of Pakistan. Jihad and obsession with India were the two tenets that none of the regimes, democratic or military, could relinquish. The book throws light on how the about-turn in the wake of 9/11 incident was so fast that the decision was taken by a few people belonging to military-ISI circles. This is how Pakistan became once again, the strategic partner of US and a frontline state.

Zahid Hussain's *Scorpion's Tail: The Relentless Rise of Islamic Militants in Pakistan-And How It Threatens America*: (Simon and Schuster, 2010) is a more specific account of Musharraf's ordeals post 9/11 in dealing with terror and extremism. It narrates General Musharraf's military incursions against Al Qaeda in Pakistan and the retaliation against his forces. While Kazha Punga incident convinced General Musharraf of the need to create a fast reacting force to counter Al Qaeda, the presence of Americans in the operations led to a sharp violent reaction against his forces leading to their demoralization. The author deals with the ideological fascination of Pakistan with the Islamic State concept, irrespective of the regimes.

William Maley's *Fundamentalism Reborn/ Afghanistan and Taliban* (ed.) (London: Hurst Company, 2001) throws light on the rise and fall of Taliban. It analyses in details details of Pakistani diplomatic support, soliciting funding, and arranging training for the Taliban fighters.

Stephen Cohen's *The Idea of Pakistan* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2004) reflects on the dilemmas faced by Pakistan today. The author unfolds theoretical and conceptual debate focusing on the very basis of Pakistan's creation in 1947 in the name of Islam. The book is also an attempt to peep into the future of Pakistan exploring whether the State of Pakistan is

doomed for failure and in what form? It narrates various milestone points which have shaped the state, Pakistan is in today. For example, one, the important leaders craving for separate Pakistan, viz, Mohammad Ali Jinnah and Iqbal had a very religious overview in mind for the possible future state. Pakistan's strategic position in the Cold War parlance and the equations resulting after the end of cold war never subsided. Even when America lost interest in Pakistan after 1989, China found it as a conduit for fulfilling its power desires in Islamic world. By the time of 9/11, the author puts, Pakistan had slipped into extremism. Overall, the book is a lucid description of Pakistan through the historical lenses with the prediction that in future, Pakistani parties may take an independent stand from the Army's on political and strategic issues.

Ahmad Rashid's *Descent into Chaos* (London: Penguin, 2008) criticizes the American Policies towards South and Central Asia. According to the author, these policies led to rise of extremism in both the regions. However, the author opines that Pakistan's Afghan policy leading to unholy alliance between state, religion and non-state actors can also not be exonerated. The author submits that just after a year of Musharraf's so called U-turn towards Taliban, it was pretty clear that it was only for short run and that too was a strategic move.

Mohammad Amir Rana's *The Seeds of Terrorism* (London: New Millenium, 2005), narrates the events from which the Afghan jihad started in 1979 upon Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. The invasion caused the alliance between American intelligence agency, CIA and Pakistani intelligence agency ISI, to defeat communism. The success against the Soviets provided extremists the agenda of freeing the Muslims from the American, Israeli and Indian oppressions. The Taliban were created by ISI and CIA. The author also covers important developments in Pakistan and Afghanistan in the aftermath of 9 /11 incident. The focus of his work happens to be the activities of militant organisations operating in Pakistan.

Hussain Haqqani's *Pakistan between Mosque and Military* (Lahore: Vanguard Books, 2005), provides an overview of important events taking place in Pakistan since its independence. The subject of this work is alliance between Islamists and the military in Pakistan. He identifies these two important institutions empowered to shape the events in Pakistan throughout its history. Haqqani highlights the traditional concept of national security of Pakistan military which led to certain choices, including the use of religion as a sole source of cohesion in a multi-ethnic society like Pakistan.

Hasan Abbas' *Pakistan's Drift into Extremism* (M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 2005), is a historical account of political regimes of Pakistan and their own shares into letting Pakistan drift into

extremism. Starting from Independence to General Pervez Musharraf's Presidency, the book narrates various events, becoming crucial points into the choices Pakistan made.

Mohammad Amir Rana's *Gateway to Terrorism* (London: New Millennium, 2003) is a kind of an encyclopaedia on terror funding, recruitment, training and networking of extremist groups in Pakistan.

Mohammad Amir Rana's *A to Z of Jehadi Organizations in Pakistan* (Lahore: Marshall Books, 2004) has detailed analysis about the religious extremists-jihadi world of Pakistan. Not only does it attempt to outline the structure of militant jihadi organisations but also explores the funding sources and other minute details.

Satu P. Limaye; Mohan Malik and Robert Wirsing's (ed.) *Religious Radicalism and Security in South Asia* (Honolulu, Hawaii: Asia Pacific Centre for Security Studies, 2004) is an edited work consisting of 16 chapters which is an indepth analysis of Security issues related to South Asia, particularly India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. The chapters related to Pakistan cover issues ranging from Pakistan's terrorism dilemma to its anti-terrorism regime to sectarianism and clash between State and non-State actors.

Surinder K. Sharma and Anshuman Behera's *Militant Groups in South Asia* (New Delhi: Pentagon Press, 2014) is a lucid and updated sketch of active militant groups belonging to South Asian region.

Alex Schmid and Gary F. Hindle (ed.), *After the War on Terror: Regional and Multilateral Perspectives on Counter-Terrorism Strategy* (London: Rusi Books, 2009) is an edited work with chapter contribution of authors such as Alex Schmid and Rshmi Singh, Richard Barnett, Abdel Bari Atwan, Max Talor and Raphael F. Perl. Overall, the collection of chapters outline the complexities and nuances of threat of Islamic terrorism.

Robert M. Hathway's (ed.) *Education Reform in Pakistan: Building for the Future* (Washington: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 2005) is a collection of essays by Shahid Javed Burki, Christopher Cadland, Tariq Rahman, Michelle Ribound, Ahsan Salim, Ishrat Hussain etc. on the challenges facing Pakistan in the education sector. The book is relevant in the backdrop of 9/11 Commission's report and discusses about the direct linkages between Pakistan's religious educational institutions known as madrasas and international terrorism.

Robert Hathway and Wilson Lee's (ed.) *Islamisation and the Pakistani Economy* (Washington: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 2004) is a collection of essays

on Pakistani economy in order to understand economy of an Islamic nation.

Malala Yusufzai's *I am Malala: The Girl Who Stood Up For Education and was Shot by Taliban* (Weidenfield and Nicolson, 2013), in collaboration with Christina Lamb is a powerful and inspirational memoir of young girl Malala Yusufzai, which gives a first hand account of Talibanisation of Pakistan's North-West Frontiers. Yusufzai narrates, how Mullah Fazallulah's Islamisation campaign was leading to destroying the basic right of education to children, particularly, girls.

C. Christine Fair's *The Madrassah Challenge: Militancy and Religious Education in Pakistan* (Washington D.C.: USIP Press, 2006) is an academic enquiry into role of madrasas in militancy. The author argues that some madrasas in border areas of Pakistan may particularly be engaged in some militant activities, including in suicide bombings.

There are various articles helpful for an insight into various issues related to extremism in Pakistan. For example, C. Christine Fair and Seth G. Jones' (2009), article "Pakistan's War Within" in *Journal Survival*, Vol. 51(6): 161-188, is an important insight into Pakistan's counter-terror approach post 9/11 and the reasons why the militants' activities directed their focus within Pakistan as Musharraf's operations proceeded. One of the reasons cited by the authors for the war reaching within Pakistan was Musharraf's embrace to "good" jihadis as they were focused to fight elsewhere, mainly India.

Hussain Haqqani's article (2006), "Weeding out the Heretics: Sectarianism in Pakistan", in *Current Trends in Islamist Ideology*, November 1, 2006 issue. The article is an academic expression of evolving sectarian dimensions in the internal social landscape of Pakistan and its ramifications in other spheres. It also emphasizes on the role of Islamist parties, particularly, Jamait-i-Islami and Maulana Maududi's role and Pakistan being declared Islamic Republic as the important terminals in development of current sectarian divide and violence scenario in Pakistan.

For those who want to research on extremism in Pakistan would eventually find it difficult to define the terms such as extremism and terrorism. For this aspect, there is article by Diana. B. Baisagotava, Saken T. Kemelbekov, Diana A. Smagulova et al.', (2016), article, "Correlation of Concepts "extremism" and "terrorism" in countering the financing of terrorism and extremism in *International Journal of Environmental and Science Education*, Vol. 11(13): 5903-5915. The authors submit that these terms are different but interconnected and that is why there are definitional problems. The article states that terrorism is an extension of extremism and its next step.

Alex P. Schmid's (2004) paper, "Terrorism-The Definitional Problem", in *Case Western Reserve Journal of International Law*, Vol. 36 (2): 419, states as to how lack of definition of the term 'terrorism' by the United Nations stains the organisation's image and encourages continuation of double-standards by its member states and hence leads to inability of the UN to devise an effective counter-terror strategy.

Alex P. Schmid's (2014) research paper "Violent and Non-Violent Extremism: Two Sides of the Same Coin", *International Centre for Counter-Terrorism* (The Hague) is a good account of ongoing discourse on violent and non-violent forms of extremism. The author submits that categorising non-violent extremism as moderate and non-harming will end up building non-effective counter-terror policies as the difference between them is only that of extremism by 'pen' and extremism by 'bullet'.

Peter Neumann's (2017) report on "Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalisation that Lead to Terrorism: Ideas, Recommendations, and Good Practices from the OSCE Region", *International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation* (King's College, London, Report),

Ashok Behuria (2004), *Shia-Sunni Relations in Pakistan: The Widening Divide*", in *Strategic Analysis*, Vol. 28(1): 176. The author examines the uncomprehensive approach of General Musharraf regime on Shia-Sunni sectarian tussle which has led to many violent incidents over the historical period in independent Pakistan.

There are monographs and reports covering wide range of issues. For example, monograph titled "Religion as the Foundation of a Nation", No. 36 (2014), IDSA, New Delhi by P.K Upadhyay, mentioned about the origin and evolution of extremism in Pakistan.

The monograph "Pakistan's Islamist Frontier: Islamic Politics and US Policy in Pakistan's North-West Frontier", by Joshua T. White (Centre for Faith and International Affairs [CFIA], 2008), looks into intersection of religion and security issues in Pakistan, the interaction between Islamic politics and the State in historical perspective and the rise of Neo-Taliban insurgency in the border regions of Pakistan.

The background paper on "Sectarian Conflict in Gilgit-Baltistan" (2011) by Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency, Islamabad addresses the sectarian issues of Gilgit-Baltistan from the historical perspective of sectarianism in Pakistan.

There is report tracing the sectarian divide in Pakistan "State of Sectarianism in Pakistan", International Crisis Group (2005), Asia Report No. 95. Reporting on ground, ICG finds that

although post 9/11 incident, there is a close overlapping between internal and external jihad, yet, the priority of sectarian militant groups during Musharraf regime happened to be weeding out internal 'apostates'.

Ashley J. Tellis' article "Pakistan and the War on Terror: Conflicted Goals, Compromised Performance" (2008), Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, tracks the dilemmas Pakistan faced under General Musharraf post 9/11 when it had to join War on Terror with a heavy heart. In the beginning of the course it even wanted America not to destabilize the Mullah Omar regime as the Taliban were created and nurtured by Pakistan. When out of no choice, Pakistan had to join the alliance its operations were never fully committed true to the cause due to very same compulsions. General Musharraf's selective approach and the sectarian groups' network with wider jihadi networks promoted by the Pakistan state itself in pursuance of its proxy war agenda against India, were sure to end in failure as far as eliminating sectarian violence in his own country was concerned.

Seth G. Jones and C. Christine Fair's "Counter Insurgency in Pakistan", *Rand Corporation Report* (2010) is an elaborate narration, narrating Pakistan's militant challenge directly linked to Pakistan's military operations post 9/11, the Report points out that after 2006, Pakistani militant groups have established archipelago of micro-emirates, imposing *sharia* across the large swaths of Swat and Pushtun belt in general. The militants, criminals, trans-national terrorists in Pakistan have adopted networked structures to operate; giving autonomy to local militants. Rise of Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan [TTP], the authors submit, directly coincided with Pakistani military operations in FATA and the US Drone strikes.

Thus, there is thus plenty of research material on major strands studying extremism and violence in Pakistan.

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