
ZIA-UL-HAQ AND THE RISE OF RELIGIOUS EXTREMISM IN PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

Pakistani society faces the scourge of religious extremism. It has turned into the most challenging issue. Though Islam is deeply rooted in Pakistani society, but power politics, militarization of extremist elements and the instrumental use of Islam led to its aggressive expression. It was Zia-ul-Haq who greatly radicalized the Pakistani society with the obvious aims to legitimize his dictatorial rule. His rigid and dogmatic interpretation of Islam led to the birth of extremism, intellectual obscurantism and fundamentalism in Pakistani society. His religious policies have changed Pakistani society from a moderate into a society hijacked by the religious fanatics. Pakistan experiences the worst law and order situation, incongruity, instability and insecurity mainly, as a result of extremism initiated by Zia-ul-Haq's regime. It gave birth to both violent and non-violent religious organizations in Pakistan. The main objective of this paper is to highlight the genesis of extremism in Pakistani Society; explore the role of Zia-ul-Haq's policy of Islamization of state and society in the proliferation of religious extremism in Pakistan; and its implication for the Pakistani state and society.

Keywords: Islam, Islamization, Extremism, Zia-ul-Haq, Military Dictatorship, Pakistan

INTRODUCTION

Islam has played a pivotal role in the creation of Pakistan. The forerunners of Pakistan Movement appealed to the religious sentiments of the Muslims in British India, which proved instrumental in strengthening the Pakistan Movement. Although the creation of Pakistan was the result of multiple factors e.g. political, socio-cultural and economic, the fact remains that the *raison d'être* of the emergence of Pakistan was only Islam. The aspiration to preserve and foster Islamic values was the main justification for a separate state. Quaid-i-

Azam, Mohammad Ali Jinnah (the founding father of Pakistan) once said, “Our religion, our culture and Islamic ideals are our driving force to achieve independence” (Ahmad, 1960:242). At another occasion, he uttered the details of the Islamic system of government which he wanted to establish in Pakistan in these lines: “I cannot understand a section of the people who deliberately want to create mischief and make propaganda that the constitution of Pakistan will not be made on the basis of *Shariah*. Islamic principles are as applicable to life today as they were 1300 years ago. Islam is not only a set of traditions and spiritual doctrines but a code for every Muslim which regulates his life and conduct in politics and economics and the like. Only the *Quranic* injunctions control our behaviors in society and politics. In other words, the rule of democracy is indeed the rule of *Shariah* law (Ahmad, 1964:408).

This shows that the demand for an Islamic state has its roots in the Pakistan Movement itself. There is a general agreement on it but when asked for definition and interpretation, one is confronted with multiple answers. Though it was generally agreed that Pakistan would become an Islamic State, the conflict arose between the *Ulema* (Islamic scholars), who wanted to see Pakistan a full-fledged Islamic State and apply all those principles and means which existed 1400 years ago and those who considered that the adoption of old precedents was not compatible with Pakistan’s struggle to find an important place for itself in the modern world. Quaid-i-Azam, made no secret of his conviction that nothing was more revolting to him than a country ruled by a body of landlords and capitalists in conjunction with the *Ulema*. These elements had not formed even the second or third line of leadership in the Pakistan Movement to be the legitimate claimants to state power. The government of Pakistan had, therefore, to be the government of its common people (Ahmad, 1964:408). Since 1947, the Islamization of Pakistan has not only been sustained by the religious political parties but more so by the mainstream political parties and the military who have always used the religious card as a convenient tool to garner public sympathy for their policies and secure legitimacy for their regimes. Though Jinnah was in favor of a modern democratic state with limited power to the *Ulema*, the elites have always used the religious political parties and have used Islam as an instrument by civilian and military dictators to legitimize their regime

and realize their political objectives. In 2002 election General Pervez Musharraf carried the religious political parties into the mainstream of state politics to gain support for his military regime. The *Muttaehida Majles-e-Aamal* (MMA) comprising of six religious political parties got 50 National Assembly seats in the parliament in the 2002 general election. The MMA alliance also made government in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and coalition government in Balochistan. They exploited Islam as a tool for gaining power in Pakistan while the left wing or modernists utilize Islam for consolidation of their regime and legitimization of their government. It is hard to believe that the extremists are struggling for Islam and contributing to the sponsorship of Islam as religion.

Despite the fact that the *Ulema* started their struggle soon after independence in 1947 to transform Pakistan into an Islamic state, they were not in a position to gain mass support for their mission. It was the ruling class which started a process of giving Pakistan an Islamic identity. However, till 1977 all official measures in this direction were superficial with the objectives to legitimize authoritarian rules and keep the clergymen contented. The religious forces started playing a vital role in Pakistani society since 1970. They have provided the framework through which the country has defined its national interests and provided velocity to its national and international politics (Naser, 2001:37). When General Zia-ul-Haq started the process of Islamization, the religious political parties began to move to the central stage of Pakistan's politics. It changed bureaucratic customs and introduced Islamic judicial structure (Baxter, 1985:66). Zia claimed that he had been divinely inspired and embarked on an assignment to Islamize Pakistani state and society with the full cooperation of the *Jamaat-e-Islami*. Zia-ul-Haq politicized Islam and pretended to make it a guiding principle of statecraft, which no head of state or government since 1947 had ever done. The Pakistani society has dipped into more extremism. This study highlights the genesis of extremism in Indian society and its drift into Pakistani society. It analyzes the Islamization process of Zia-ul-Haq and its effects on Pakistani society and shows that Islam has always been used as an instrument for realizing political gains in Pakistan. The paper concludes with some recommendations and policy guidelines to be realized by the government.

GENESIS OF EXTREMISM

Extremism means holding acute religious and political views or taking of extreme action on the basis of one's thinking. When these visions and ideas are transformed into deed, many strategies and plans are formulated and executed. Extremism is an absolute resistance to rational thought in the field of religious teachings (Javaid, 2011:282). The execution of one's extreme thinking creates state of fear and terror, which pressurizes the opponents to accept what they are not ready to accept (Khalid, 2014:23). Extremism is manifested in the refusal of question and research in religious teachings; intolerance to divergent belief and dissent; opposition to modern knowledge and technology; preservation of economic and social status quo; endorsement of political misuse and exploitation; dominancy over personal explanation of divine laws; and suppression of women and reducing them to inferior position and neglecting or restriction of female schooling.

Extremism has two perspectives: Western and Islamic. To Muslim scholars, it is the "act of reforming society in accordance with own vision of Islam and use of violence to achieve the goals" (John, 2007:84). In other words, to impose one's beliefs, values or ideologies on others through force and excluding minorities in a Muslim state from public life through fomenting hatred or force. According to Western perspective of extremism, it is a phenomenon in human interaction; firstly, rivals are identified and after that psychological attitudes based on negative feelings towards these rivals are developed (Kilp, 2011:24).

There are many causes of religious extremism, but in finding its root cause, the most significant factor that grasps the attention is the failure of orthodox to appear and grip the challenges of modern time. In ancient times, all powers in the Muslim society were in the hands of clergymen. But when the centers of advanced educational learning shifted to Europe from the Muslim countries and the industrial revolution and renaissance took place then the gap between modern knowledge and old knowledge (held by the orthodox clergymen) widened with the passage of time, the orthodox clergymen failed to compete with the modern times causing enhancing disappointment among them, which ultimately led to religious extremism.

The misery of the old schools of thoughts increased with the

beginning of English language among the Muslims of Subcontinent. The scope and growth of modern knowledge through English soon made the syllabi of *Madrassas* irrelevant for the running of the modern state. This factor led to hatred towards modernization in the mind of clergyman. Ultimately, this hatred led to extremism in British India. When failed to tackle this issue, the fundamentalist elements took up the means of violent struggle for the realization of common welfare and interests of the Muslims of British India Sub-continent (Javaid, 2011:283). But in reality the welfare, well-being and interests of the Muslims had never been their objective. Their exclusive objective was the protection and enforcement of their superfluous doctrines which they advocated in the name of Islam, which are, in reality, against the true spirit of Islam. This phenomenon led to the Pakistan independence movement which promised a re-birth of an Islamic state on the model of the State of Medina founded by the Holy Prophet Mohammad (PBUH).

Soon after independence of Pakistan, these groups realized the challenges to their theological hold in Pakistan. Dogmatic approach and ground realities sought to implement a socialist setup in Pakistan rather than an ill-defined conservative version of Islam propagated by orthodox clergymen. Islam was the core factor behind the mobilization of Indian Muslims during independence Movement. Being a political party, Muslim League presented a ground for combination of Islamic beliefs with the political concerns and interests. This combination was objected by the *Ulema* (religious scholars) of Subcontinent, though they joined Pakistan independence movement in the later phase wishing for Islamization of state. Later on, they divided into different religious groups in Pakistan (Ali, 2010:122-129).

Another important factor involved in promoting religious extremism after independence was the Iranian Revolution in 1979 which led to extremism in the *Shia* sect. They considered it as their own triumph and victory. They sought and struggled to introduce it in Pakistan to resolve their ancient scores (Javaid, 2011:284).

ZIA-UL-HAQ 'S ISLAMIZATION AND RELIGIOUS EXTREMISM

General Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq imposed martial law after July 5, 1977 coup d'état and remained in power till his death in the plane crash on August 17, 1988. He showed his intention to Islamize Pakistan on September 1, 1977. He said in a public pronouncement

that “A presidential form of government closest to Islamic principles with *Amer* or president elected by the whole nation is suitable for Pakistan. The elected president will be responsible before state legislature. The board of advisors (*Majlas-e-Mushawrat*) consists of the *Ulema* having unimpeachable character shall guide the president by the consensus of opinion (*IJMA*). The President will be counterchecked by the Prime Minister and the Prime Minister by the National Assembly (Kaushik, 1993:54). This policy gave a hope to clergymen of playing a dominant role and having more and more power.

Zia’s Islamisation agenda had political, social and economic aims. The political justification was essentially aimed at the legitimization of his regime which was not popularly elected one. The social aim was to obtain the support of the religious political parties and agree to their demands for an Islamic state. The economic objectives were to apply Islamic banking practices and achieve an equitable distribution of wealth among the people with financial aid from the Arab countries (Chengappa, 2004:4). This process of Islamization was used as a political weapon. Again, he wanted to form a strategic front against the former USSR which had attacked Afghanistan in 1979 (Ahmar, 2008:1).

Zia’s era is deemed to be the most critical period for the rise of religious extremism in Pakistan. In this era the extremist and radical fundamentalist elements acquired power and sources to push their agenda and to challenge the authority of the state. The unnecessary support for the religious elements and parties steadily weakened and destabilized the authority of state and appeared as the driving players in all type of decisions-making and policies of Pakistan (Khalid, 2014:29). Zia-ul-Haq relied on the *Jamaat-e-Islami*’s and *Deobandi* interpretation of Islam to impose his will on state (Saigol, 2016). This course of action projected frustration and sense of insecurity in the mind of other sects.

General Zia’s Islamization process was composed of ban on obscene advertisements, promotion of music was discouraged, *Azan* (call for prayer) was aired at the times of prayers on TV arrangements for noon prayer were made in the government institutions and offices. *Hajj* rites and its sermon were broadcast live ban on smoking in public, eating, drinking and shutdown of food markets during Ramzan,

Ehtram-e-Ramazan Ordinance was issued. To induct Islamic spirit and thinking in students, all textbooks were reviewed and un-Islamic materials were removed from textbooks. Islamiyat was made compulsory in all types of educational institutes, Arabic was also introduced from sixth to eight Classes, religious institutes were officially supported and its degrees were recognized. To implement Islamic economic system *Zakat* and *Ushar* Ordinance was issued on June 20, 1980. According to it, from all saving accounts 2.5% *Zakat* was deducted every year on the first *Ramzan* and *Ushar* was collected from those landowners whose land produce more than 948 kg wheat. Industrial Corporation of Pakistan and House Building Finance Corporation (HBFC) were dictated to eliminate usury, saving Bank accounts were converted to Profit and Loss Sharing (PLS) accounts. The Qadianies were forbidden from using Islamic identity, the law of evidence (*Qanun-e-Shahadat*) now required two women to testify in place of one man's, women's blood compensation (*Diyat*) was made half that of a man's, women's participation in sports and games were restricted and bounded them to cover their heads in public and on state television. Drinking and selling of wine was banded in 1977, to eliminate the ascendancy of western culture high officials were bounded to wear Pakistan's national dress on important functions and address in Urdu. An Ordinance issued on June 15, 1988 declared *Sharia* as the supreme law of Pakistan, to implement Islamic criminal law and decide whether the law enforced is Islamic or un-Islamic. *Sharia* Court was established which had the status of High Court and comprised of High Court judges and some well-known *Ulamas*. Four punishments stated in the Holy Quran as "*Had*" were implemented by means of an ordinance issued on 10th February 1979 stipulating cutting of hands for theft, hundred lashes/stoning for adultery, eighty lashes for drinking wine and for false allegation of adultery, besides an ordinance on blasphemy law was introduced in 1980. Petition against these penalties could only be filed in *Sharia* Court. Likewise, a *Majlis-e-Shura* composed of 50 members was established in December 1981 to help in building an Islamic society and expedite the process of Islamization. Many *Jamaat-e-Islami* party members were also appointed in government institutions to ensure the continuation of his program and agenda after him.

The Islamization of Pakistan produced religious organizations

and empowered the clergy who asserted themselves sturdily in the political matters of the country. Most of them believe that their goal of Islamization of Pakistan cannot be attained unless they achieve the ruling machinery of the state (Ali, 2010:101). The *Mulla-Military Alliance* which existed since General Ayub Khan's martial law reached its peak under General Zia-ul-Haq and the religious groups turned into an essential part of state machinery. The motto "Islam in threat" was assumed and propagated against the USSR's attack on Afghanistan. Now it is a glittering fact that United States concerns were behind this propaganda. The Afghan war was exploited as a tool to fight a proxy war against USSR in Afghanistan which militarized Pakistan in disguise of the Holy War. They were assigned a new task by Zia-ul-Haq to fulfill CIA's interests on the wake of the then USSR's attack on Afghanistan in December 1979. These groups fought CIA proxy war in Afghanistan against the former USSR in disguise of Holy War. They got full material and strategic support from America. The extremist religious groups attached high importance and aspirations to the newly originated function and made the best use of it. Consequently, slowly and gradually this proxy war crossed the Durand Line and shifted from Afghanistan to Pakistan. His support of Afghan *Jihad* against the USSR attack got only grudging sympathy in the West but gave birth to militancy, extremism and terrorism in Pakistan (Mortimer, 1991:11). Millions of Afghan refugees were allowed by them to take refuge in Pakistan. At that time, it was welcomed by Pakistani people, showed extraordinary tolerance and took pride in having the spirit of Islamic brotherhood (Korson, 1993:125-126) but now they are burden on the society of Pakistan.

Madressas (religious schools) were used as nurseries for the attainment of political objectives. Throughout Pakistan, five thousand *Madressas* were established and the Islamization of state and society started to be materialized with *Jihad* (holy war) included in the syllabi of educational institutions. These institutions were receiving generous overseas funding to brainwash and recruit *Jihadist* fighter to be used as a mercenary for completing their agenda in disguise of *Jihad* (Shah, 2012:319). The topic of *Jihad* primarily targeted Communism. United States and some other Arab countries provided arms, funds and religious literature, which were utilized without any restraint in Pakistani *Madressas*. An amount of \$5.1 million was paid to the

University of Nebraska, Omaha by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) from 1984 to 1994 to design and publish text books to encourage *Jihad*. Overall, approximately \$13 million of such text books were distributed among Afghan refugees settled in Pakistan's educational institutions and *Madrassas* (Azam, 2014:107).

It resulted in to two worst developments inside Pakistan. Firstly, the spread of heroin and Kalashnikov culture, and secondly, increasing *Talibanization* of Pakistan with the resultant culture of militancy, violence and extremism throughout Pakistan. The extremist groups were used to destabilize and undermine constitutional political governments in 1980s and 1990s. Zia's regime witnessed a remarkable change towards extremist *Sunni* political manifestation, orthodoxy and an intensifying degree of anti-*Shia* aggressive attitudes in the society, an early mark of bloody sectarian conflict that was to follow. The radical *Sunni* backlash provided vent through the *Sipeh-i-Saahaba* which set into motion a seemingly endless series of battle and blood-bath. On the other hand, *Shia* sect, which was a politically isolated community before General Zia-ul-Haq's military regime, started reacting innovatory counter movement by launching *Sipeh-i-Muhammad* with the support of neighboring Muslim state, Iran.

Consequently, General Zia's Islamization process sponsored by *Deobandi* radicalism resulted in *Shia* activities motivated from *Shia* Revolution of Iran, which drifted Pakistan into political turmoil and chaos (Awan, & Zain, 2012:514). Under Zia's rule, Islamization of Pakistan was in fact based on *Sunni* version of Islam. This concept of Islamization was unacceptable to *Shia* community of Pakistan. They thought Zia's Islamization as a danger and threat to their communal and social placement in Pakistan. Thus, the disagreement between *Shia* and *Sunni* communities about Islamization process in Pakistan caused a large-scale sectarian hostility. These developments made the activist groups stronger to such a degree that none of the later governments could decrease their influence and pressure (Abbas, 2007:17). Pakistani society witnessed massive sectarian violence due to the rise of religious extremism in Zia's regime. Main *Shia* leaders including Shaikh Arif Hussein Al-Husseini were killed. He was the key figure of *Shia* against *Sunni* version of Islam imposed by Zia-ul-Haq (Noman, 1989:53). In this regard, another bloody incident took place

in Lahore in when Mr. Aqai Ganji, an Iranian diplomat was assassinated by a Sunni militant group, *Anjuman-e-Sipahe-e-Sahaba* on January 10, 1991 which also affected Pakistan's relations with Iran (The *Indian Express*, January 12, 1991).

If the Islamization of state and society launched by Zia-ul-Haq is studied in detail it becomes obvious that he had launched a dual system of Anglo-Indian brand of law where *Shariah* Law was consigned a minor position. For instance, there were very strict limitations on the application of rules and decree related to *Shariah* system. The *Shariah* laws were limited only to some criminal laws. The well-known penalties were death by stoning or whipping for adultery in case of illegal sexual intercourse, amputation of hands for theft, whipping for the usage of intoxication, and death or prison punishment for blasphemy. Similarly, for the criminal proceedings only the system of evidence and proof was changed. Strict criteria of proof and evidence were upheld for the award of these punishments. Apart from this, Zia-ul-Haq also initiated two religious taxes of *Zakat* and *Usher* (Shah, 2012:315-317).

The support towards fundamentalism and extremism could be seen in Zia-ul-Haq's educational policy. On 7th April 1979, the Federal Cabinet approved National Education Policy, which banned the foundation of new English medium educational institutions and the existing English medium schools were directed to alter their medium of instructions and teaching to Urdu. A large number of *Maktabas* (primary schools) were also established (Chengappa, 2004:15). Similarly, the birth of fundamentalism and extremism can be judged by the proposals presented by Ansari Commission appointed by General Zia-ul-Haq in 1983. Along with other recommendations, the commission recommended that a female can't be elected as a head of state and any female who contest the elections for the membership of parliament should be at least fifty years old and must have permission of her husband (Rabbani, 2000:500).

Zia-ul-Haq's government deliberately made coalition between religious political parties and military. The Jamaat-e-Islami's Ameer, Mian Muhammad Tufail, was his uncle; because of this aspect Jamat-e-Islami became more valuable in that period. Along with this scenario the event of USSR's attack on Afghanistan in fact presented the institutional support to these fundamentalist political parties. Before

Soviet attack these parties had no tendency of militancy in them. During Zia's Islamization both Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) and Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) (Khalid, 2014:29-30) were assisting the parties having collusion with military. That coalition was assigned the duty to propagate *Jihad*. While doing so the basis of militancy was laid in Pakistan which later on transformed into religious extremism and violence. For the purpose of *Jihad*, these groups were provided agenda, resources and financial incentives. The combination of wealth, power, weapons, politics and religion carried havoc in the region. Both CIA and ISI trained Arab and Pakistanis volunteer to fight *Jihad* against Soviet Union forces (Khalid, 2014:29-30). This training injected both murderous and suicidal trends in *Jihadists*. The architects of this policy were un-aware of the repercussions that once this tendency was started, it would become fatal for the upcoming generations (Khalid, 2014:29-30). The USSR's attack on Afghanistan heralded a win-win period for religious extremism in Pakistan. These extremists were praised and strengthened through media promotion campaign and too much funding by local and global donors and intelligence agencies. Thus an underground global network was founded to promote and sponsor religious frenzy (Javaid, 2011:284).

It is a known fact that a struggle between conservatives and modernists was going on since independence, but Zia-ul-Haq's period made this struggle much fatal. He used Islam for political gains and implemented his policy in such a way that contributed much to the development of religious extremism. The interest-oriented people and extremists had no concerns with the golden principles and teaching of Islam, they exploited a part of Islamic principles to legalize their violent intentions of controlling society and elements of power (Mahmood, 1995:275-276). But, they could not succeed in their struggle because of the modernist community of Pakistan, the main hurdle in their way to implement their agenda. That's why they started hating them and the hatred transformed into extremism in Pakistan. This not only led to religious extremism but also caused sectarian issues. Such developments were not limited only to Zia-ul-Haq's era. It percolated downwards. With the passage of time the situation went from bad to worst and at present we bear its most crucial phase in Pakistan. In the present time extremism, terrorism and the worst law

and order situation are the most serious threats that Pakistan confronts. These internal threats are graver than external threats that Pakistan has on Eastern and Western border. Due to extremism, Pakistan has attained a poor image and dreadful name in international community. The degree of religious radicalism has made the state a special focus of discussion on religious fundamentalism and extremism (Basit & Rathore, 2010:11), which has put Pakistan's stability and security in danger.

IMPLICATIONS

The implications of extremism in Pakistan are overwhelming. The state faces a serious tide of sectarianism. The long-term damages have come in the form of forceful entry of radical and extremist associations in the politics of Pakistan. These associations demand a share in the business of the state. Interestingly, this opposite ideology desired to utilize state as a tool for the implementation of their radical doctrine which has created a dire situation in Pakistan with a conflict among fundamentalists, extremists and secularists over the interpretation of Islam. Fundamentalists and secularists consider each other's interpretation as wrong. Quaid-e-Azam's vision of Pakistan as a modern, tolerant, Islamic democratic country has been hijacked by extremist groups who have found a chance to move forwards their cause in new state (Murphy & Malik, 2009).

Ideological extremism, arose during Zia-ul-Haq's Islamization, has become a major national security threat (Gunaratna, & Iqbal, 2011:7). Incorrect interpretation of Islam has led to the rise of extremism, obscurantism, fundamentalism and retrogression. The worst costs, which Islamabad pays for religious extremism, are terrorism, sectarianism, law and order situation and fundamentalism. Pakistan has been the victim of suicide attacks, bomb blasts and terrorism because of religious extremism (Sultana, 2008:121). The most serious aspect of terrorist attacks is that the terrorists have widened their circle and have now made mosques, funeral prayers, educational institutions, civilians, women, children and students as their targets of attacks. The market places, hotels and even hospitals are not safe. According to a report published in *Daily Mashriq* (December 30, 2015), since 2001, 57000 Pakistani both civilian and security forces personals have been killed in terrorist attacks. This is

an alarming indication.

During his regime Zia-ul-Haq implemented many gender biased legislation and executive order. He had banned female's partaking in sports outside Pakistan. Female athletes and other sport teams suffered much as during his regime at least in six international and national sports events, Pakistan females could not participate. In addition to this, the appointments of unmarried females in foreign service were also banned (Awan, 2016). Zia-ul-Haq's course of action affected the advancement, empowerment and position of females in the society of Pakistan (Maskiell, 1984:12).

Islamization process also led to sectarianism. Zia's politics had produced tensions among different Muslim sects and provided space for the conservative elements to interpret the Islamic laws according to their own biases. Before Zia-ul-Haq's rule there was no major dispute among different factions and sects and the people of different sects used to freely take part in each other's religious functions, activities and affairs. Islam provided a bond to unite the Muslim inhabitants of subcontinent before and after independence up to Zia-ul-Haq's era, but since Zia-ul-Haq's era it has been misused and has led to the division of citizens of Pakistan into mutually antagonistic sectarian factions. The increasing religious intolerance and fanaticism is evident if we check the statistics of sectarian conflict in recent years. His *Nizam-i-Mustaffa* slogan in fact meant the implementation of the *Sunni Hanfi* jurisprudence (*Fikah*). Many of his enforced laws were in contradiction with *Shia* jurisprudence. Being a part Islamization process, he had issued an *Ushr* and *Zakat* ordinance mandated to collect *Zakat* from all those having savings bank account. *Shias* complained against this act arguing that this ordinance violated their *Jafarya* jurisprudence, but Zia did not notice until when in July 1980 some 15,000 *Shias* led by Mufti Jafar Husain in Rawalpindi protested against this ordinance then they were exempted from the collection of *Zakat*. But this act caused violence, bloodshed and a *Shia Alim* resigned from the Council of Islamic Ideology (Weiner, 1986:352). This law failed because the *Shia* jurisprudence has different interpretation and explanation of *Zakat*. The notion of *Ushar* was also refused by *Shias*. When anti-Shia movement began in Jhang in 1980, Zia-ul-Haq not only ignored it but perceived it as a balancing proceed against the defiant *Shia* population (Azam, 2014:101). Such

developments also led to the formation of *Sunni* and *Shia* militant organizations (Jalalzai, 2002). Sectarianism has also created a grave challenge for foreign policy of Pakistan making it difficult for Islamabad to maintain equilibrium in her relationship with her brother Muslim states like Iran and Saudi Arabia.

Religious extremism has led to fundamentalism which has been an irritant in Pakistan relations with many other countries. For example, religious fundamentalism in Pakistan is a cause of anxiety for China. As in 1992, following Muslim uprising in the Baran Town in Xinjiang in which twenty-two people were killed, China closed the Silk Road with Pakistan. She also restricted visa policy for Pakistanis in May 1999 (*The Indian Express*, January 5, 1995).

The phenomenon of religious extremism has given birth to both violent, non-violent religious organizations in Pakistan, among them 60 are violent which have been banned by Pakistan with their assets, and bank accounts are frozen (*Daily Mashriq*, June 5, 2016). These groups are involved in anti-state activities, illegitimate war in disguise of *Jihad*, killing innocent people in suicide attacks and bombing, target killings of military personals, politicians and civilians, fundamentalism, extremism, terrorism, challenging collectivity of majority Muslims by waging war against Muslim countries, inhuman attacks against non-Muslim living in Pakistan, intolerance for difference of opinions, killing religious scholars, kidnapping, looting, and plundering properties. Its activities defame Pakistan in international community.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Pakistan has been facing the worst problem of extremism posing threat to peace, unity, stability and harmony in the state. Zia-ul-Haq's regime introduced Islamization and used Islam as an instrument for attaining political, constitutional and financial objectives. His Islamization could not Islamize the Pakistani state and society because the aim was not sincere, which ultimately led to religious extremism deteriorating peace, stability, harmony, solidarity and unity of Pakistan. Suicide attacks and bomb explosions have become the daily routine in Pakistan. Thousands of women had been widowed with their children orphaned. The insecurity has also affected the economy of Pakistan. Foreign countries and their investors are reluctant to invest in

Pakistan due to the poor security situation. *Madrassas* have started dictating the state as proved in the Lal Masjid's case of 2007. The religious politics has also created religious and racial disharmony in the form of *Shia-Suni* tussle. The extremists have no concerns with the golden teachings of Islam but to legalize their personal motivations.

Pakistan is passing through an extremely critical period. The existing law and order situation is extremely hostile. Along with terrorism and violence there are many other grave problems like bad governance, declining economy, corruption, weak democratic tendency and intolerant society. But the threat and danger posed by extremists is the severest of all. The most serious aspect of terrorist attacks is that they are now targeting mosques, funeral prayers, educational institutions, civilians, women, children and students. Presently, the government, academia and the civil society have failed to develop anti extremism policy. Extremism has turned into a more complex problem which must be dealt with adopting suitable tactics. The government of Pakistan should adopt a multi-dimensional approach to address the issue. It needs a mixture of force, social uplift and negotiations to tackle this issue. Tolerance and moderation is the need of the time. At the same time the government should also initiate social, political, educational and economic reforms for the development of the citizens. For a better future to come out from this dire situation, Pakistan needs to focus on the following policy guidelines:

- a) A feasible strategy is required to root-out extremism. The civil society, political parties, media and especially religious political parties should condemn extremism and should come up with a viable strategy for combating extremism and terrorism.
- b) No extremist and radical speech should be permitted on loudspeaker. Its use should be limited only to call for prayer (*Azan*) and to religious sermon during the Friday prayer.
- c) The controversial and disputed literature of all sects and schools of thoughts causing hurt and spreading hatred including hate speeches should be strictly banned.
- d) Speedy justice is the prerequisite to make the private courts founded by the extremist elements irrelevant and ineffective.
- e) Immediate actions should be taken against *Madrassas* (religious seminaries) involved in spreading and preaching extremism and having links with extremist organizations.

- f) Reforms in the curriculum of educational institutions will also be a step forward in addressing the issue.
- g) Socio-economic issues such as illiteracy, poverty, social injustice, health conditions, human rights violations and unemployment also make the extremist feelings stronger. It is essential to win the battle of minds and hearts by addressing the socio-economic problems. It will end the trust deficit which is necessary for elimination of religious extremism.
- h) Pakistan is among the countries having lowest literacy rates in the world. According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), literacy rate in Pakistan is 55 percent. The state is standing 160th among the states of the world (Azam, 2014:121). So it is urgently needed that more attention should be paid to increase literacy rate in Pakistan in general and in the area having more germs of extremism in particular.
- i) Women rights and education should be encouraged and appreciated.

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