

SPORTS AS AN AGENT OF DERADICALIZATION: PAKISTAN AND THE WORLD

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ABSTRACT

The contemporary world has confronted with many security challenges in which the phenomenon of radicalization is worth mentioning. The nation states are taking kinetic means to root out radicalization but less attention is paid to the non-kinetic means such as the sports to address this issue. This paper aims to analyze the stirring role of sports to deradicalize the radical segments of various societies and bring peace which is contributing to the development of any state. It also lays down three levels of sports activities (i) community level (ii) University/college level (iii) Madrassa level. This paper unfolds that European societies have maintained peace by engaging their youth into sports activities and various countries are using sports as a method of deradicalizing their youth. Present government of PTI in Pakistan is prioritizing sports to engage youth in sports and promote cohesion among society. This paper concludes with the argument the bringing madrassas under ministry of education in Pakistan will help promoting sports and inclusion of advanced curriculum. Paper offers compelling argument to follow some of the deradicalizing models adopted by various countries through sports.

Keywords: Deradicalization, Sports, Europe, Pakistan, Youth, Society

Introduction

Radicalization is a process in which an individual or a group of individuals hold extreme religious and political views, poles apart from the mainstream society. It is a multifaceted phenomenon. A radical person is likely to entice the fellow members of the

society towards extremism by justifying the use of violence to gain religious, socio-economic and political goals. A person with radical ideology holds anti-social views which may have troubled the whole populace and trigger chaos in the society. The menace

of radicalization grew into limelight after the tragic incident of 9/11. Neither developed nor developing states are devoid of radicalization. In the West, the radicalization is on the basis of race or ethnicity as the radicals are slaying the non-Europeans such as the Africans, Muslims, Asians and Hindus. While in Muslim world specifically the Middle East, Pakistan and Afghanistan, the terrorist groups are radicalizing youth to take up weapons against the infidels and the ally states of the United States. The recent terrorist attack on a Mosque (March 19, 2019) in New Zealand has once again shaken the world to take up tough measures against the radicals even in developed society. Pakistan has fought a prolonged war against terrorism as a frontline state and that is why it also faces the issue of radicalization. The most common method to eradicate radicalization in any society is the military resolve. All the efforts of the states to resolve through kinetic means such as the military operation have ascertained to be futile. There is a need of the hour to deradicalize the extremists by engaging them in non-kinetic activities such as the sports and

other skill based activities. The involvement of radical youth into sports activities will not only help to transform anger into a positive energy but also keep them busy and passionate to earn fame and livelihood by contributing towards national cause.

Contribution of sport in a society

According to Greek antiquity philosophy, an unhealthy human being is more susceptible to diseases. If broadly taken, it also refers to psychological disorder and radicalization. Therefore, an inactive human who stays away from sports activities is at the risk of health problems. Even science has verified that physical activity such as sports makes a person healthy and productive for society. An inactive person is likely to turn out to be sick and a burden on a society. Nations, who have inactive population and least sports activities in their society, are lagging behind compared to the other states in national development (Charlotte Van Tuyckom & Jeroen Scheerder, 2010). Sports are basically perceived as healthy endeavors. It is a healthy, joyful and social activity. In today's world, sports

are getting prominent at local and international level while challenges of security are more from individuals and group of individuals in the form of terrorist groups. The developed states of the world have more advanced sports infrastructure than the developing states. The events of sports have become a vital policy of the developed states (Seippel, 2019). It is claimed that sports not only helps to defeat diseases but also generate a positive attitude in a society which reduces crimes (Paul Downward & Simona Rasciute, 2011). Moreover, participation in sports restrained the youngest member of society to get involved in criminal and violent goings-on. If an individual spends his time in an organized environment under the supervision, he might not have attracted to the criminal deeds. Sports help an individual to reduce aggression without harming others. Moreover, those who are involved in sports have less time for a felony. Most of the sports clubs encourage pro-social behavior among the participants (Michael Mutz & Jürgen Baur, 2009). Referring to Elias, sports have multiple functions to play. An individual learns self-control, res-

pect of an opponent and rule of consultation from a referee. Secondly, the stadium gives space to the participants and spectators to execute the aggression against the opponent by shouting slogans and value the views of an opponent.

Besides, the stadium, there are only a few spaces like traditional festivals where individual's transgression is tolerated by society. In this way, sports can contribute to civilizing an individual and monitoring violence in the social order (Dominique Bodin & Luc Robène, 2014). Moreover, sport also provide a way to the players and peoples to communicate with the peoples of different cultures, values and traditions to get a better understanding of each other and mend the differences (Maguire, 2011). Scientific research proved that sports are good for physical and mental health and reduce stress and depression. However, in the recent era, sports are perceived as a tool to reduce crimes and radicalization. Active participation in sports will restrain an individual to commit a crime and involve in illicit activities. Sports in conjunction with education and other activities

have become a crucial part of the rehabilitation of radical individuals (Marsden, Knott, & Lewis, 2017). European states chalked out sport policies after WWII for grooming their youth along healthy psychology and shun bellicose behaviors. The policy of European states was to engage as many citizens as possible in the sports activities to make a progressive society after the war. Sport became a leisure bustle in Europe with the passage of time which ultimately led the development of war-torn states to rise at the horizon of power (Charlotte Van Tuyckom & Jeroen Scheerder, 2010).

For that reason, the promotion of sports has become the top national agenda of many Western states. Sports can be a very effective tool to promote tolerance and peace by taking along the people of different religion, culture and social backgrounds across the world in a playground. The basic moral code of sports such as the discipline, teamwork, fairness, and to tolerate an opponent can tie together solidarity and peaceful co-existence across the world. Moreover, through sports, the issue of international

concern specifically terrorism, radicalization and violence can be reducing. In the same way, sports such as the ping pong diplomacy also brokered peace by resolving contentious issues among the nation states. The tournament between the United States and China paved the way to establish diplomatic relations in the 1960s. Similarly, a sport has the potential to reduce the sentiments of radicalization and maintain peace in the states which are becoming the victim of this phenomenon (Augustine Ejiofor Onyishi & Femedein Timipre Okou, 2016).

Sports as a tool of Deradicalization

Sports activities have become one of the major modules of Deradicalization. States are making provisions to use soft measures like sport in order to achieve the target of Deradicalization. A sports-based program of rehabilitation of radicals is a useful way of engaging them in a healthy activity, who is standing apart from the families, friends, relatives schools and communities. It will also succor to form a positive approach of radicals towards society. El-Said and Harrigan (2013) are of the view that the

Deradicalization program of Muslim states, grounded on soft measures is quite effective in comparison to the kinetic means such as the military operation and imprisonment. Nigeria, a victim state of the terrorist group al-Shabab has introduced an 18-month strategy of Deradicalization of prisoners prepared by the Office of the National Security Advisor and Nigerian Prisons Service to root out extremism from the country. The strategy of Deradicalization includes motivational interviews, religious reforms, cultural training, art and sports (Cara Richardsons, Paul A. Cameronb, & Katherine M. Berlouis, 2017). Similarly, the Deradicalization program of Saudi Arabia is considered one of the successful to root out fanaticism. From 2004 to 2010, around 4000 contributors were reintegrated in Saudi Arabia. Following the pathway of Nigeria, the Saudi program also comprised of sports besides, religious education, art therapy, professional training and counseling to deradicalize the participants. Similar kinds of programs are in progress in the Middle East, Europe and South East Asia for the terrorist, neo-Nazis and militants (Stern, 2010).

In the Austrian capital city of Vienna, a political scientist Alexander Karakas and a boxer Karim Mabrouk initiated a program known "Not in God's Name in 2015 to reduce the tendency of extremism from the Muslims, migrated from the Middle East in the wake of terrorist attack carried out by the Daesh. By 2016, more than 20 Muslims and Christian have become part of this program. This podium aids the diverse cultures to placate the sentimentalities of hatred and tolerate each other. Somalia has also faced the challenge to bring back the members of the terrorist group Al-Shabab in the mainstream social setup. Somalia's "Youth for Change" program is directed to socialize 6000 radicals including the members of Al-Shabab over and done with art, counseling and sports. It was found that sports diminish belligerence of contributors. In 2014, a recommendation was also tabled in the Parliament of European Commission to thwart extremism through sports (Cara Richardsons, Paul A. Cameronb, & Katherine M. Berlouis, 2017).

United Nations Organizations initiatives to promote sports for Deradicalization

The United Nations Organization (UNO) has also become conscious of the persisting issue of radicalization. Following the model of Deradicalization of the Western and Middle Eastern states, it has articulated to include sports to diminish the extremism from the world (Crime, 2018). The Secretary-General of the UN submitted a report "UN Action Plan on Sport for Development and Peace in 2006 (UNO, 2018). On August 23, 2013, UN announced to celebrate an International day each year on 6th April for the development of sports and peace in the world because April 6 is also the opening day of the Olympic Games in Athens back in 1896. The UN did acknowledge the influence of sport to bring peace in the world (Date, 2019). A consensus to make collective efforts for the prevention of extremism and crime by engaging youth in the positive activities was built up in the 13th UN Congress on crime prevention and Criminal Justice in 2015. As a result, the member states approved the "Doha Declaration" in

2015 to reduce radicalism by fetching youth in sports activities. The United Nations Security Council passed a Resolution 2250 in 2015 to bring the role of sport in the limelight. More emphasis is given to be acquainted with the causes of radicalization instead of mechanism to reduce radicalization. The existing literature indicates that sports not only cultivate a progressive attitude in a state but also helps an individual to learn skills for the development of the economy. In this way, sports benefit an individual to pursue a career which will keep them out to commit illicit doings.

The 2017 Kazan Action Plan (2017) is the latest development of UN to foster international cooperation and increase the capacity of states, government policies and different international stakeholders to endorse sports for the maintenance of peace in the world (Crime, 2018). The rudimentary purpose of Action Plan is to inspire the nation states, UN, NGOs, member of civil society and the business community to make provisions to use sports as a gizmo for the development and peace (UNO, 2018). The Kazan Action Plan is an expanded

program of UN to include the entire stakeholders of sports, 100 experts from the government, UN, NGO; academia and sports societies. The KAP was approved by around a hundred states in 2017 at the Sixth International Conference of Ministers and Senior Officials Responsible for Physical Education and Sport in New York. The KAP is a comprehensive policy of UN to eliminate barriers in the way of sports activities and improve the health and well-being of marginalization (UNESCO, 2018). Furthermore, United Nations General Assembly also adopted a resolution known as “sport as an enabler of sustainable development on December 3rd, 2018. It was introduced by Monaco to reaffirm the notion that sports are one of the basic instruments to sponsor peace and tolerance in the world which is hit by hard by terrorism and extremism (UNESCO, United Nations General Assembly acknowledges important role of Kazan Action Plan in advancing sport for development and peace, 2018).

Radicalization in Pakistan and Rejuvenation of Sports

The menace of radicalization gets worse the security of Pakis-

tan at a greater extent. It is challenging to understand the configurations of radicalization in Pakistan because Pakistani society is heterogeneous and is at odds religiously, linguistically, ethnically, ideologically and politically. These fault lines in Pakistani society are bloating the tendency of intemperance among the youth. Moreover, illiteracy, economic deprivation, madrasas, political demotion and injustice have also enticed the youth to stand up against the state by involving in illegal actions. By and large, sectarian split between the Sunni and Shias is one of the major causes of prevailing extremism in Pakistan which had reached on its peak level during the reign of General Zia ul Haq. The Islamization policies of General Zia ul Haq such as the Zakat Ushr Ordinance (1979), the Iranian revolution and Afghan war (1979) seeded the gushes of radicalization in Pakistan. The Pak-U.S nexus against terrorism has ascended extremism (Mujtaba Rathore & Abdul Basit , 2010). The slaying of former Governor Punjab Salman Taseer, Maulana Hassan Jan and Meshal Khan are some of the signposts that show that violent radicals have margi-

nalized the liberal voices. That is why Pakistan needs to develop a counter-extremist policy to incorporate soft measures of imparting kill based education and engage youth in sports activities. The goal to deradicalize the radicals is impossible to achieve only relying on the hard measures. Pakistan has not yet developed a comprehensive soft strategy for the Deradicalization of the extremist populace of society. The U.S experience in Afghanistan and Iraq indicates that extremism could not have been rooted out by the use of kinetic means. In 2009, Pakistan delineated a comprehensive policy to root out extremism such as the:

- Madrassa Reforms
- National International Security Policy 2014
- National Action Plan 2014
- Pakistan Protection Act of 2014
- Military operations (Zarb-e-Azb, Raddul Fasad)

Moreover, the government formulated a team, comprising of religious scholars, psychiatrist and doctors to carry out the process of Deradicalization in Swat through counseling, career training and education, family gath-

ering, cultural programs and sports event (Basit, 2015). Deradicalization is a long term security task. The state has turned blind eyes to resolve this issue through a comprehensive soft policy and bring back the radical segments of society in the mainstream social setup to make this country more progressive and peaceful. It is alarming that More than 80% of terrorist attacks are carried out by the youth but the government is intended to resolve this issue by using hard power. Although, Operation Rah-e-Rats (2009) carried out by the Pakistan army has lessened the presence of terrorist in Swat (Fayyaz, 2017). But the main problem of Deradicalization of the members of terrorist groups who are in prison and under trials in military courts. Neither National Action Plan nor Pakistan Protection Act of 2014 takes account of lax procedures such as the sports to deal with the radicalization. The negligence of policy makers towards soft measures is one of the basic flaws to root out radicalization from Pakistani society.

Sports at the Community level

In 19th century, sports became the elementary component of

social discourse in Europe. However, girls were far away to take part in sports events because they were not entrusted to take the challenge of competing in the games. Consequently, only boys had the privilege to get physical as well as formal education. It was compulsory for the schools to include the subject of physical education in the syllabus. Europe states are on the go to introduce sports at the community level through the formulation of sports policies. In 1975, EU member states ratified "The European Sport for All Charter" to provide the facility to sport to all the members of the community regardless of gender. The recent "Year of Education through Sport 2004" initiative of EU attempts to make use of sports for health, education, social interaction and development. The European Council is optimistic with this initiative to encourage all the citizen of states to join sports for the greater cause of development and peace (Hartmann-Tews, 2006). Similar to EU states the United States is also well-known for sports such as basketball, football, volleyball, golf, car racing, skating, athlete, swimming, boating, surfing, gymnastics, tennis, etc. For most of

the U.S citizen's sports is the best activity to spend time. From 2001 to 2002, around 54.4 million of U.S. snowboarder, skiers of U.S visited ski areas (Clifton D, Bryant & Craig J, & Forsyth, 2005). The role of sports to benefit society in physical and emotional health has been recognized by the states.

However, since 1990 sports have seen a contributor to the society in the U.K and other developed nations of the world. Besides hosting the mega international sports events such as the London Olympic Games (2012) and Glasgow Commonwealth Games (2014) U.K has also advanced sports infrastructure at the community level to bring cohesion in the society. England has founded a sports association "Sport England" to take care of community-level sports. In U.K sports are considered an enabler of the regeneration of society. From the PM John Major's government (1990) onwards sports have been recognized as a gizmo to progress the community. Sports have to play an intrinsic role in the regeneration of society because chipping in sports surges self-esteem in an individual which

helps him to develop a pro-social attitude that may lead to the reduction of crime (Davies, 2016). Inclusion of radicals in society is a challenging task for the policy makers of a state. In this scenario, sports are perceived as one of the vital tools to reintegrate the radicals in the inclusive environs.

In the west, community level sports are supposed to be one of the basic factors of social inclusion (Hebe Schailleé, Reinhard Haudenhuyse , & Lieve Bradt, 2019). Australia is also engaging youngsters in sports-related activities to keep them away from fanaticism and endorse community resilience. It will also put restrain to develop anti-social behavior. A Lebanese Muslim Maher, who participated in the “More than a Game” program and a Jewish student Aaron meet at the ‘Peace Dialogue’ made arrangements for a practice match between the Jewish and Muslims players. The success of match led the foundation of MUJU team comprising Muslims and Jewish players to take part in the Unity Cup (Amelia Johns , Michele Grossman , & Kevin McDonald , 2014). Community-based sports not only engage the society in a

healthy activity but also integrated the diverse segment of society which ultimately reduces the crime delinquency (Matthew Nicholson, Kevin Brown , & Russell Hoye, 2014).

Unfortunately, Pakistan is far behind than the developed states to progress community-based sports infrastructure. However, some non-government agencies in collaboration with the international partners like the government of U.K and private stakeholders are taking inventiveness to make known to sports at the community level in Pakistan. DOSTI is one of the noteworthy initiatives of removing barriers in the promotion of sport in Karachi to bring social cohesion among the youngsters. The mission is working in partnership with government organization such as Departments of Sports, City Police, City Administration, Chambers of Commerce, schools, sports clubs and civil society to engage school going and out of school youth in a healthy activity for better social understanding. The program aims to resolve conflict and bring peace by the way of sport. Moreover, youngsters will learn the skill to adopt sport

as a profession. The British high commissioner assists the local sports organizations in coaching. The program encourages all members of the community to participate in sports irrespective of their skills and background. In addition, the platform of DOSTI also arranges different activities for the mobilization of community means of support (COUNCIL, 2014). After Sindh, the podium of DOSTI has been founded in Punjab as well with the assistance of different stakeholders. DOSTI has been set up in the eight government school in the Muzaffargarh district in 2016 to promote sport for conflict resolution and take along peace (PWS, 2016). The British Council Pakistan organized a football match between the team of DOSTI and Mehran Women FC during the visit of 5 Parliamentarians in Pakistan to overview the soft approaches such as the sports in countering extremism.

The Director of British Council Peter Upton remarked on the DOSTI program that only table talk is not enough to resolve the issue of an extremist. However, sport addresses those issues which cannot be resolved by the talks only. It helps children to

communicate with others and forge their differences through sports (Pakistan, 2015). This is the only program in the notice to develop the sport at the grass root level. Most of the Pakistani cities are out of the playground or stadium and people are not getting appropriate facilities to spend time in a healthy activity. If they are away from the playground, they are likely to spend time in heinous activities to express their anguish. In Pakistan, golf, riding and car racing is only enjoyed by the elite class and poor can only talk about it. Pakistan needs to develop sports infrastructure at the community level to get engage the ordinary populace in a physical activity which will keep them away from radical approach and make them a contributor towards national cause.

Sports at the educational level

Children spent most of their time in an educational institution. Educational institutions are an important agent of socialization to pass on culture and norms to the next generation. In the past, educational institutions were considered nurseries of sports. That is why; educational institutions can play a vital

role to promote sports at the grass root level. Moreover, educational institutions provide communication through sport for socialization (Faheem Ullah Khan, Syed Zia ul Islam , & Salahuddin Khan , 2016).

The international community has raised concern over the poorly managed education system of Pakistan. According to the experts, the poor quality of education makes the young populace a soft target for the radical groups. John Brennan, advisor of counterterrorism at White House in 2009 also confirmed that the extremist groups exploited the vulnerabilities of the education system and offer free education to the impoverished children and slowly and gradually radicalizes them. Referring to Pakistan's National Education Policy (2009), three institutions like government school, private school and madrassa are working parallel to provide an education which is creating inequality in the society. Referring to the Western onlookers the curriculum of government schools is creating intolerance among the students. According to the report of Sustainable Development Po-

licy Institute (2003) the textbooks of government school like Urdu, Social Studies, English and Civics contains the material which is contrary to the ideology of democratic Pakistan. The curriculum contains odium material and encourages religious bigotry, discrimination of women and minorities. Anti-Indian sentiments are also prominent in the curriculum. Pervez Hoodbhoy a notable scholar published in the *Foreign Affair* that Pakistani madrassas alongside school are promoting the sentiments of jihad, martyrdom among the students (Bajoria, 2009). On one side the curriculum of the school is verified by the international community as ghoulish, on the other side, there is no such policy announced by the government to make compulsory the physical education of the students like the European states. The syllabus of school and non-participation in the games is likely to make them violent and the anti-social. Physical activities have become the elementary need for a progressive society. Participation in sports activities makes an individual an active member of society. Without active and healthy

populace no state and organization can govern efficiently. Sports also create a conducive environment of learning in an organization.

The Soviet Union and the German Democratic Republic have founded many boarding schools for the children to get education and sports training side by side. Soviet Union established athlete's boarding schools for the youngster soon after WWII. Later on, USSR began to institute special schools during the reign of Nikita Khrushchev for the talented children not only represent soviet at the international games such as the Olympics but also make surety to win the games (Metsä-Tokila, 2002). Subsequently, Soviet worked out to involve children in sports and physical activities at the school level, unfortunately those countries realized importance of sport in the wake of WWII whereas such kind of boarding sports schools are still invisible in Pakistan and that is why the educated youth is also aligning towards radicalization. It is evident from the case of Noreen Leghari, a medical student who joined hands with Daesh to become a suicide bomber

(Digital, 2017). There are multiple examples of youth who owed their allegiance to extremist and terrorist groups.

Sports Policy of Pakistan for educational institutions

The waning culture of sports events had a wakeup call for government of Pakistan in 2005 to make some revisions in the sports policy. The people have lost their interest in sport due to the cease of sports events in Pakistan. The basic purpose of the amendment is to introduce sports at the grass root level and give an opportunity to the young players to play at the national level. Most of the playgrounds and stadium are in deteriorating condition. The policy aims to hold club base sports events at the local and federal level. Moreover, national sports tournament comprising all the provinces will be arranged by the National Federation. The Sports Board of Pakistan will organize national level sports tournaments, assist in the selection of the team, construct a new stadium and provide funding. The Education Ministry will craft a sports cell to look over the sports events at the intermediate level. The

policy makes compulsory for every school to take part in 4 games while college has to create 6 teams of different games (Board, 2005). Despite the announcement of sport policy, most of the public, private schools and madrassas are lacking the facility of playgrounds. The students are encouraged to memorize the school lessons rather than taking time for sports. Participation is still considered as wastage of time by most of the people including the educational institution. The government needs to construct playground in schools and properly supervise the sports events to make the students have and hearty because they are the future of Pakistan.

Sports at the Madrassa level

In Pakistan, the poor families enroll their children at the religious schools known as "madrassas" because these institutions provide the facilities of boarding free of cost. Most of the madrassas are not registered and are left free to work accordingly. In addition, the madrassas curriculum is grounded on religious education like Quran, Hadith and Fiqe. They have no knowledge of modern subjects

like Science, Mathematics and English. The curriculum of madrassas shaped the personality of students as conservative who stands against the modernism of ideas. In 2004, the report of 9/11 commissions affirmed that religious school of Pakistan serves as the hub of extremism. The policies of General Zia for the Islamization of Pakistan and Afghan war played a leading role in the radicalization of madrassa students. These madrassas were funded by the U.S. and Saudi Arabia to encourage students for jihad against the Soviet Union. Most of the radicals who joined Taliban in 1990 were educated from the madrassas of Pakistan. However in the wake of war against terrorism, Pakistan has introduced policies to reform madrassas but with little success.

Madrassa Reform

Former President of Pakistan Pervez Musharraf publicized "Madrassa Education Board Ordinance", in 2001 to include the subject of English, Computer Science and Mathematics in the curriculum of madrassas. Later on, "Registration and Regulation Ordinance" was promulga-

ted to encourage the madrassas for registration and get government funding. The PPP government also pledged to introduce madrassa reforms to subdue the sentiments of radicalization. Despite the government efforts of registering the madrassas, around 500 madrassas approved to accept the new reforms to modify the curriculum. The U.S is also assisting Pakistan to bring reforms in the madrassas curriculum. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID has granted Pakistan \$682 million to modify the curriculum since 2002. In 2009, The United States Congress approved a bill to provide \$1.5 billion non-military grant to Pakistan every year to bring together a modern curriculum for the religious, public and private school (Bajoria, 2009).

However, after the attack of Taliban on APS in 2014, people began to raise voice to reform madrassas. The investigation report of the Peshawar terrorist attack indicates that 7 terrorists stayed at a madrassa prior to the carnage. Although it is illogical to blame all of the madrassas for extremism it is also a

fact that the prominent members of terrorist groups such as Baitullah Mehsud (Chief of TTP), Hakimullah Mehsud, Maulana Asim Umar (Chief of al-Qaeda's South Asian Branch) were alumni of different madrassas based in Pakistan. Madrassas and mosques have become an important network of religious parties, terrorist groups and sectarian organizations. Sectarian militant organizations and religious-based political parties have towards the madrassas to get massive support of the populace. Referring to the Wiki Leaks, Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states transferred \$100 million to the madrassas of Deobandi and Ahle-Hadith annually (Basit, 2015).

The Pak army is also making efforts to reform madrassa in order to subdue radicalization in Pakistan. On 29 April 2019, Director General of ISPR, Major General Asif Ghafoor announced in a press conference to bring around 30,000 madrassas under the control of Ministry of Education. Pakistan has to spend 2 billion Rupees to reform madrassas. However, 1 billion Rupees are required annually to operate the madrassas. One of the major bre-

ackthroughs of reform is to include the contemporary subject in the curriculum of madrassas. The curriculum of madrassa will be overlooked by the Ministry of Education. Islamic education will remain to be the part of syllabus but the hate content will be removed. The basic aim of reformation is to moderate the madrassa students so that they could have also pursued the profession of doctors, engineers, IT, etc like the students of public and private institutions (Ahmed, 2019).

The PTI government led by Prime Minister Imran Khan is also taking initiatives to mainstream madrassa through the engagement of students in the sports activities. Peshawar Zalmi, a franchise of PSL founded the first ever madrassa league of sport through Zalmi foundation in Peshawar on 28 August 2018. The Zalmi foundation assists the madrassa students in sport. The Madras league invited 12 teams to play cricket match to entertain the madrassa students and bring religious harmony among the students. Pakistan's minister of Religious Affairs, Noor-ul -Haq Qadri stated that the PTI government is keen to promote sports

activities to diminish the negative image of madrassa as the breeder of extremism and make society more progressive.

A well-known Pakistani cricketer Shahid Khan Afridi also commented that sports play a vital role to put an end to violence and extremism. The sports events endorse peace in society by engaging the youth of different background. The terrorist attacks have heralded the sports events in Pakistan because such kinds of activities united the diverse segment of society in a stadium. He further elaborated that the students of madrassas, colleges and universities are the citizens of Pakistan and their participation in sports will keep them away from violent activities. Sports can be used to endorse religious harmony among the different sects. Mushtaq Ahmed, a former cricketer of Pakistan also appreciated the Zalmi Foundation for introducing sports in the madrassa. The KP director general of sports, Junaid Khan told the *Dawn News* that the government of KP provides accommodation and facility of transport to the players free of cost. He further stated that the KP government intends to construct a

playground in the entire districts of the province to encourage youth to take part in the sports activities which will keep them away to commit illicit activities. Moreover, the KP government also aims to introduce different games in madrassas such as the kabbadi and volleyball beside cricket. The sports events are likely to spread peace and subdue extremism across the country (Ashfaq Yusufzai & Shahbaz Butt, 2018).

Government initiative for the promotion of sports

The Higher Education Commission (HEC) and Pakistan Sports Boards are working together to establish a sports university at a sports complex in the capital city Islamabad. The university will facilitate the players and promote sports culture in Pakistan. The player from across the country can get guidance from the university to get excel in their particular game and leadership quality. The university will also facilitate the player to work in a team and tolerate the opponents. Director General of PSB Dr. Akhter Nawaz informed that land for the construction of university has been allocated. HEC has appro-

ved the establishment of the University. The sports university will invite the renowned sportsmen, lecturers to assist the Pakistan player in their respective games and introduce the latest trends of games to them. The university will be comprised of conference rooms, playgrounds, stadium, lecture halls and food court. Moreover, the university will also begin workshops to train the local players and coaches (Gul, 2017).

The MPA of PTI and President of Sports and Cultural Wing Fazal Elahi have told the reporters on 29 of April 2019 that the manifesto of PTI indicates to give equal rights in sports to the tribal youth. The PTI government has founded Sports and Culture Wing in the tribal district. The government appointed Saeedullah Orakzai as President, Khadija Kubra as vice-president, Maria Orakzai as finance secretary of the Sports and Cultural Wing. The players from remote areas of the tribal belt will be given an opportunity to play at local, national and international level in each game. The tribal belt has suffered severely from terrorism and as a consequence, the youth

was left behind in every field of life. The Sport and Cultural Wing will give them an opportunity to overcome deprivation and represent their areas at the platform of international mega sports such as the Olympic Game (NEWS, 2019). The argument established that sports play a vital role in deradicalization of any society by utilizing energy of youth into a positive mode.

Conclusion

Countries confronted with the challenges of terrorism and violent extremism are employing kinetic measures but that is not a long term and sustainable solution to counter violent extremism and terrorism. Even the deradicalization policy of any country needs to involve softer measures including sports activities. If sports are included into curriculum and different levels i.e. Community level, educational institute level and madrassa level sports are made compulsory activity then it certainly is likely to address challenge of radicalization in Pakistan. History reveals that developed countries have utilized potential of their youth in academic and sports activities. The present government of Pak-

istan Tehreek-i-Insaf is determined to rejuvenate sports activities in Pakistan. Resumption of sports will contribute towards national fame at international level on one side and utilize youth energy into productive physical activities. That will pave way for deradicalizing through sports in Pakistan.

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