

## Dynamics of Sectarian Violence in Pakistan: Recommendations to the Policy Makers

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### Abstract

Sunni and Shia are the major sects living in Pakistan. Both the sects lived peacefully for decades. For centuries, it was a common tradition to pray at the same mosques and to intermarry. Both the sects shared faith on the concept of monotheism and the finality of last prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H). They have diverse views on the interpretation of Islamic laws. But since last three decades Pakistan is under the serious threat of sectarian cruelty. The most regrettable aspect of the hostility is that both the sects are claiming that they are serving the religion. The killing of innocent peoples is in their view is to serve the religion. The extremist and radical tendencies portray the religion of peace into the religion of violence.

**Keywords:** Sectarianism; Shia community; Religious factions; Muslim community

### Introduction

There has always been a dispute in interpretation of religious beliefs, scriptures, anecdotes, events etc. These disputes gave birth to different groups with an orientation with respect to aspect of their religion that becomes their identity which gives birth to "sect".

Sectarianism is an act of utilizing religious means to mobilize one sect against another for political and economic gains. Or the grouping of people based on difference in opinion on various ground i.e. religious or political that leads to bigoted attitude towards the opposing sect will be called a state of sectarianism. The sectarian conflicts in Pakistan mostly refer to the attacks or violence against peoples that is motivated by antagonistic attitude towards the opposing sect.

The international encyclopedia of the social science defines sectarianism as, if different religious section or groups alienate one another with such Rigidity that each of them indicates its stance as an absolute one and is not ready to harmonize with the different views of the opposing section.

The oxford English dictionary in 1961 defines sectarianism as; normally when a group of people holds definite point of views different from others within the same religion. This word is mostly used for a "distinct orderly religious group of people having its own specific name and places of worship".

Sectarianism is a bitter problem which is facing by the Muslim Ummah since the last three decades. The menace of sectarianism is continually damaging the Muslim communities in the globe. Therefore, it is the most important topic for research. Proper research findings will help to unite and harmonized the Muslims around the globe. Thus, the importance of this topic is evident. In Pakistan, sectarian clashes are basically responsive to two major events; The Iranian revolution and the Russian invasion of Afghanistan. Since the last three decades, Shia and Sunnis in Pakistan are humiliating and

killing each other. This paper will explore the major dynamics behind the unholy war. It will help the policy makers to formulate and implement such policies that will helps to root out this social menace for the welfare of the dear homeland. Both primary and secondary data is collected while conducting this research. A major portion of this research is collected by interviews from different stakeholders. This paper will highlight the socio-political and economic factors that promote sectarian violence in Pakistan. It will also recommend the possible solution to the policy makers to resolve the problem.

### Dynamics of Sectarianism

#### Power politics

The first and foremost important factor that leads to sectarian violence in Pakistan is power politics. At local level the power struggle between different groups and institutions is blamed to be involved. The interviews alleged that some of the political leaders are the facilitator of sectarian differences for personal gains. The primary data also reveals that there was difference of opinion between the two groups. For example the Sunni group blamed the politicians from Shia community for the unrest and the Shias blamed the deobandi politicians in this regard. They blamed Shias for the power politics by saying that they are mostly in upper level power hierarchy and by this way they accomplish their interest more easily. The response of the Shia groups to the social and political problems is that they mostly remain silent at public so that to directly access to the corridors of power. Their religious institutions silently get financial support from Iran [1].

At national level the power struggle is between different political parties. There are many instances where to get electoral support from different sectarian groups the national level political parties make alliances with them. The electoral alliance in 1989 by Peoples Party with Sipa e Sahaba group and the electoral alliance of PML (N) with the same group in Jhang district are the most notable. In 2013 election, Rana Sanaullah electoral rally along with Maik Ishaq, the leader of Jhangvi group is the recent example. Per respondent, the political

struggle is reflected from the fact when Sipah-e-Shabaq chief Azam Tariq ran election against Muslim League (N) candidate, in NA 68, the PML (N) gave election tickets to Shia leaders in retaliation. It resulted in bridging the sectarian strife between the two communities. Beside this election, the ruling PML (N) always makes its electoral deals with the Sunni sectarian outfits. As we can see in 2010 when a prominent politician from PML (N) Rana Sanaullah makes electoral campaign with Malik Ishaq of Ahl-e-Sunnat Wal Jamat.

The major political parties in Pakistan, especially Pakistan Muslim League are responsible in engaging in electoral deals with Ahl-e-Sunnat Wal Jamat, despite of the fact that they publicly declared Shia as infidels. According to the interviews the politicians and rulers should be blamed who disappoint the nation and becomes failed to fulfill the vision of Quid-e-Azam. They mostly use Islam as a tool to fulfill their vicious interest. They should be made accountable for dividing the nation for their personal gains. It is also evident that in case of Pakistan, the power struggle between different stakeholders is the root cause of many problems. It is also true that Political incompetency is the major cause behind the sectarian issues [1,2]. This power politics is not only on one level. It is rather on local, national as well as international level.

This power struggle at international level is twofold. According to the primary data it is revealed that the Iranian influence is obvious, because there were cordial relations between Sunni and Shia before Iranian revolution. After the revolution, the Iranian wants to dominate the Muslim world and hence support the Shia community both economically and politically to empower the Shia community. While the Shia respondents blamed the Saudi involvement, and said that they are the facilitator of Deobandi community to promote Wahabism and hence the Shia becomes the victim of this sorry state of affair. No doubt there is an increasing struggle between Shia and Sunni to understand and exploit not only the way of local and regional power struggle, but the relations between the Muslim world and the West at large [3].

The role of power politics cannot be denied as a number of scholars hold the same views about politics. For example, it is said that Domestic politics and regional upheavals are the major factors that create sectarian violence in Pakistan. During the late 1980s and the end of the Zia government a new troika of power started. The power sharing between the three top level authorities were changed from formal to actual conduct of governance. The power sharing becomes informal. During this type of politics, three presidents, four prime ministers and one army chief was dismissed. This politics of troika leads to another coup on 12th October 1999. The power struggle is always for self-interest rather than national interests [4]. Even when local powers are gained by Islamic parties most notably in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Baluchistan, security and stability is not worse or better than those areas which is governed by their secular's alternatives. The similar religious parties are used by the regime as a vessel to show dissatisfaction when they are in opposition. This power struggle between the leftist and the rightist creates imbalance of power [5]. While at the national level this power politics is obvious from the fact that Then Punjab's home secretary, Rana Sanaullah met with Ahmed Ludhianvi, then president of SSP while at the same time the late Governor Salmaan Taseer from Pakistan people party met with the SSP secretary general, Khadim Dhillon, on many occasions. Sanaullah openly confess that he met with Ahmed Ludhianvi "twice to secure votes for the upcoming by-elections." Ultimately, the president of Sipah-e-Sahaba admits to support PML (N) candidate in Jhang's PP-82 [6].

Religious differences can only make us to understand the root cause of sectarian differences. In order to understand the real security, threat it becomes the need of the time to focus on the institutional factor and the role played by the elites in promoting Shia-Sunni conflict [7]. Power struggle in a weaker states moves around the policies of survival. It's a common tool that political and social differences is used for divide and rule policy. This strategy paves a way for the ruling elite to manipulate things in short term [8]. Sectarianism highlights the religious differences and explores "otherness", but it is always linked to resources, territory and power.

Similarly, it is also revealed by the primary data that the sectarian strife was constantly growing from 1990 to 1997. Target killing of the prominent peoples from both the sect were at its peak during this time period. But instead to hang the culprit the consecutive governments were busy to make alliances with the leaders of banned organizations and these leaders were the part of federal and provincial governments. Molana Azam Tariq was the most prominent person who is repeatedly serving as cabinet member at the time of both PML (N), as well as PPP governments. Likewise, during the Musharraf regime although, he banned a number of extremist organizations but they were operating under new names. The sectarian strife from 2004 to 2008 was at its peak and the government did nothing to resolve the issues. It is the state that sponsored jihad on the international front; these networks are encouraged inside the Pakistan. The statements by prominent leader, Shabaz Sharif, extend his conciliation to the Taliban of Pakistan and beg them to at least spare Punjab.

Viable security and firmness in the area will be attained only through the restoration of democratic norms in the country. The West should sincerely work to promote the disband militarization of Pakistan's political life through two ways, capacity building and political pressure. The pool of elites should be enlarged. Alternative centers of power should be created. It is essential for workings of democracy in Pakistan.

### Religious disparities

Pakistan can be identified as an extremely plural country which consist of numerous religious, ethno-linguistic and sectarian groups. The country is by and large composed of Muslim community. Among the Muslims, Sunnis are in majority and almost 80 percent population is Muslims, While Shia Muslims constitute 12 to 15 percent of population. A significant number of Ahmadis are also present in Pakistan which was declared as non-Muslim in 1974 by the national assembly of Pakistan. There are a number of non-Muslim minorities like Christians, Hindus, Buddhists, Calash, Sikhs and Parsis who are recognized as non-Muslim Pakistani.

The primary data collected through interviews reflect that religious segregating is one of the leading factors of growing sectarianism. They said that various religious factions antagonize each other and mirror that their faith and belief set reflects an absolute religion. They are not ready to harmonize with the different views of the opposite sect and this state of intolerance leads to sectarianism. They said that the educational institution is also responsible for creating intolerance along with the religious educational institutions. They were agreed on the point that Biasness and prejudice is circulated and disseminated against opposing sect in classrooms and mosques. Although many Pakistanis do not endorse this type of negative stereotypes, but the authorities fail to curb the hate speech and negative stereotypes. The easy availability of weapons adds fuel to the fire and provides opportunity to the extremist groups to spread violence.

Intolerance especially in religious affairs is growing since the last two decades in Pakistan. Every sect is intolerant towards the opposing sect. This state of intolerance has deeply affected the minorities of Pakistan. Everywhere there is a sense of insecurity and fear of murder. Wall chalking is always proactive against the minorities. Such wall chalking has remained a common practice in D.I.Khan in the past [9].

### Foreign factors

On a number of occasions there has been emerged evidence of involvement of foreign states in Pakistan. The different ministers of interior, army chiefs, intelligence heads and politicians have also identified foreign involvement on several occasions.

An analyst at the Jamaat-i-Islami's (JI) platform holds the view that sectarian divide and violence is sponsored by external factors. The arrangement and pattern of incidents propose that sectarian violence is organized by internal and external factors that use to convince the youth to achieve their vicious interests [10].

There are notable factors of foreign influence in effect to sectarian divide in Pakistan. The religious hegemony cannot disconnect themselves from the developments taking place in the Arab world and the Middle East. They identify themselves with some of Arab and Middle Eastern countries and consider themselves the guardian of those countries' interests in Pakistan [11]. The JI Secretary General, and Chairman, Human Rights Network, Pakistan, Liaqat Baloch, told the scholars in Turkey that Pakistan is presently facing a number of challenges because of foreign intervention in internal affairs, including the sectarian problems. He added that peace and unity could be attained by stopping foreign interference.

The identity mobilization has its genesis in the political struggle in a weak state. This political struggle within a state by different segments paves way for the externals to influence the body politic. Same is the case with Pakistan. The sectarian violence demonstrates that the power struggle at local level is combined with the interest of international actors to settle identity rift in the political process.

### The Iran Saudi proxy wars

During the interviews process mostly Deobandi blamed the Iranian involvement in promoting sectarian violence by claiming that it was an atmosphere of peace in pre 1979 era. Suddenly after the Iranian revolution, the Shia led Iranian governments started to mobilize Shia community in the rest of the world to empower them this process is still going on according to most of the respondent and they said that it is Iran that support the Shias both morally and financially to promote sectarian violence. Similarly, interviews revealed that Shia respondents mostly blamed that the Saudi Arabia to patronize the sectarian violence. They are funding the religious Maddaris as well as the jihadi militants. The motive behind this agenda is to promote Wahhabism in the rest of the world.

A United States based Pakistani researcher states that, initially the Iranian were involved in assisting Pakistan's Shia with money; this was the reason that Zia ul haq invited Saudis to help in assisting Pakistani Sunni group. Soon the Sunni becomes in a position to attack Shia minority to purify Pakistan from Shia heterodoxy. As a result, Shia community also organized themselves to tackle Sunni extremist in a same way (ICG, 2005). A specialized French scholar in Islamic affairs Oliver Roy said that the Iranian role in Shia awakening led to Sunni reaction which is violent. This violent reaction first started in Pakistan

and then escalated in Middle East [12]. Before the 1979 revolution, Shias were largely ignored by the Sunni majority in the Muslim world. It was this Islamic revolution in Iran that brought Shia clerics to power in Iran [4]. After the Iranian revolution, the Shia Muslim in Pakistan also felt empowered [13]. The similar judgment is passed by another international scholar Cistine Fair in 2015, who concludes that Sectarianism in Pakistan is the product of extra regional events, most probably the result of Iranian revolution.

Similarly, Saudi Arabia is also involved in assisting the Sunni groups. For instance, wiki leaks gave confirmation of this relationship by stating that Saudi Ambassador, Adel al-Jubeir, was showing off in front of USA Ambassador, "We the Saudi Arabian are not observers in Pakistan, we are participants." In a same manner Mumtaz Ahmad, a political scientist stated that: in Pakistan, Shi'ism becomes more concentrated, more clericalist, more amalgamated and more Iranianized, as a result of Iranian revolution. Likewise, Sunnis became, more Arabicized. It is because of the mass movement of Pakistani workers to the Arab world as well as the huge financial funding of Saudi government to the Pakistani Sunni madrassas and jihadi groups [2]. Saudi Arabia's main focus is on the spread of Wahabist ideology and also to contain Iranian growing influence in the Muslim world. Saudi government supply financial aid for constructing Mosques, Maddaris and Research centers. They also assist physical training of young boys for the future purpose of Jihad. The financial support from Saudi Arabia and United States is the major cause behind sectarian violence. The motive behind American funding was to defeat Soviet Union but the Saudi aim was sectarian and ideological [14,15].

Sectarian conflict is a strategy of Saudi counter-revolutionary process that over emphasized religious diversities and bigoted attitude that hampered the process of development of national politics on nonsectarian lines. Through religious practices and discourse, sectarian conflict in Saudi Arabia scheme includes politicizing religious diversities and inculcating a division between the Shia minority and the Sunni majority. Actually Saudis main concerns were the fear of the revolution repercussion in the neighboring Muslim states. This discerns fear engage Saudi and Iran in a proxy war for religious and political influence in Pakistan. Saudi and Iran share double advantages; both of them have petro dollars which they are using for reaching their goals. Both are using sectarian and moral appeal to prevent ready-made blocks of supports [16].

The gulf regimes and Saudi Arabia tries to balance their power both from foreign as well as domestic threats. Sunni mobilization against Iran is always used as efficient way of blunting Iran's appeal to Sunnis [17]. It always serves as an effective way in intra Sunni competition. The sectarian conflict has escalated to its new level most probably in Middle East countries, when a political activist Nimar Al-Nimar was executed. The Saudi embassy was sacked in Iran. The Saudi also expelled its diplomat from Iran. The same Saudi and Iran are busy in proxy wars since last three decades. In the coming years this escalation will continues.

### Afghanistan jihad

After the Afghan jihad, Islam is used to consolidate the Pro Islamic legislation. During this phase, many Maddaris were created. This process inculcates the jihadi culture and continues until the present day [15]. When the Russian invaded Afghanistan in 1979, several international actors use proxy wars to achieve their vicious goals. Pakistan being the neighbor country of Afghanistan receives the brunt of this event. The flood of radical Islamists from all over the world

unites in Pakistan to join the Afghan jihad. Some of these radicals established the al-Qaeda and other terrorist organizations. The extremist organizations currently are confronting with the West as well as creating instability in Pakistan [4]. The Afghanistan invasion by USSR can be contemplated as the beginning of Saudi financial aid to Sunni extremists to combat religious and political objectives. So it is a perceived fact that whenever war erupts in any country, the neighboring countries felt immediate fallout. The same case was done to Pakistan as a result of Afghan war [4]. This initial participation of Pakistan in Afghan war gave birth to extremism in Pakistan. This war was initially started against Russia and later becomes center for global war against disbelievers. It is important to note here that before Afghan war the victim's rate of sectarian incidents in Pakistan was low, after the Afghan war the extremist organizations used to attack each other with latest rifles, guns Kalashnikovs and most sophisticated devices for achieving their vicious interests. Thus it can be stated that the monster of sectarian clashes raised its head to ruin the social structure of Pakistan's society [8].

Sectarian clashes in Federally Administered Tribal belt are also fundamental because of the growing influence of Talibans in FATA as well as its border with Afghanistan. Taliban in these areas mostly target Shias [18]. In The idea of Pakistan Stephen Cohen states that the Sunni extremists basically comes out of the leaders who had experience in Pakistan's Maddaris specially in KPK and Baluchistan. They are succeeded mainly because they were getting support from Pakistan's military intelligence and various Pakistani religious political parties specially JUI [12].

### United States of America

The incident of 9/11 and the initiation of War on terror with the invasion of Afghanistan had a grave impact on Pakistan. Musharraf's commitment to join war on terror has severe implications for the overall security situation in Pakistan. The US needed to involve Pakistan due to its geo strategic position. There were also other reasons behind the purpose to involve Pakistan in this war. First the US has in their minds the previous successful alliance with Pakistan during Afghan-USSR conflict. Secondly Pakistani administrations sympathetic behavior towards Afghan Taliban feared the US that Pakistan can provide support to Taliban to prevent disaster [18]. A French researcher Oliver Roy stated that there are two events that created a huge change related to Shia Sunni relation, the revolution in Iran and American intervention in Iraq and Afghanistan [12]. America is trying their level best to create instability and to achieve their greedy interest. Much like Al Qaeda and the Islamic states is trained and assisted by USA to designed terror and to control oil rich Muslim world [19].

Wiki leaks have leaked the bitter role and realities of American state and other western countries that are playing a dubious role in Muslim world. It had exposed that American congress had passed a bill that they would financially and militarily funded those who will fight against Syrian government (ISIS) and will also assist those states who are fighting against ISIS. It is also a matter of common fact that in Pakistan the victims and the suffered people always blame America for aiding the wrongdoers. They claim that America is doing so for their agenda of Global [20].

The United States led war against terrorism has actually targeted the Muslim countries and this is why anti American sentiments in Islamic countries is very high. Some Muslim scholars even said that the Islamic world is under threat. Although terrorism is not only confined to

Islamic world but the United States and the west is concerned about growing terrorism and blamed Muslim countries for the promotion of sectarian violence. The solution does not lie in Muslim countries; there is a need of global policy. The united states were behind the scene when jihadi sentiment arose in Afghanistan to let the Soviet Union out from the Afghanistan. According to Washington post in its investigative report, almost twenty years the United States spent billions of dollars to produce fanatical books and then distributed in Afghanistan. The books were distributed in early 1980s. The United States grant US Aid to Nebraska Omaha University Afghanistan. The books were full with the importance of Jihad in Islam. These books were served as Afghan curricula of school's system. This was the starting point of radicalization of Islam. And the interests of the Arabs in the region were enhanced [15].

### Indian role in promotion of sectarianism in Pakistan

JUI (Q) leader Ajmal Qadri claims that it is India and their Intelligence agency (RAW) is involved for attacks in Pakistan based on sectarianism. "No Pakistani agency can be involved in terrorism. I am certain of that. It is RAW". He also said that the Pakistani agencies simply blame the foreign hand in promoting sectarianism, but it would be better to arrest and prosecute the culprits [10].

India had never sincerely accepted the Pakistani state and always tries to destabilize it. Pakistan intelligence agencies have acquired strong proofs of Indian involvement in aiding terrorism and instability in Pakistan. It had also acquired proofs against Indian aiding of sectarian organizations Baluchistan. Pakistan has decided to raise the issue at Global level according to Maliha Lodhi [21].

### Mal governance

In Pakistan, efficiency and effectiveness of federal and provincial government have always been a question mark. The state of poor governance creates trust deficit towards the government which creates further problems. Primary data shows a profound trust deficit in various stakeholders towards government. They claim that the consecutive governments in Pakistan are either not willing or incapable to solve the issue. For example, the root cause of every problem in our society is low literacy and poverty.

Sr. #	Government	No. of Years in Government	Total Incidents on Sectarian Base	People Killed	People Injured
1	Pakistan Muslim League (N)	09	1056	1543	2801
2	Pakistan People Party (PPP)	10	1134	1983	4060
3	General Pervais Musharraf	08	808	1622	2807

**Table 1:** Major government tenure and sectarian incidents.

The government of Pakistan failed to enhance the literacy rate and the poverty proportion has increased from 17.3 to 40 in the last three years. Good governance is an instrument of economic, political and administrative activities. But in Pakistan this very basic instrument itself is in state of collapse. The sorry state of affair is that the political

system in Pakistan is non-democratic. It is purely based on authoritarianism. This political culture influences the relations between different sects and gave birth to sectarian divide.

The Table 1 shows that none of the government could effectively handle this issue from 1988 to 2008.

In-depth analysis of primary and secondary data collected, refers to following issues in prospects of governance.

### **Government failure**

Every government in Pakistan tries to legitimize its rule with its own set of ideology. For example, Ayub presented the philosophy of economic development and modernization. Although Samuel P. Huntington said that "since world war II, no other political leader except Ayub fulfill the role of 'Great Legislator' on the Platonic or Rousseau model". Similarly, Bhutto raises the slogan of Islamic socialism and to provide basic necessities to all the citizens. Zia ul Haq sought to legitimize his military establishment through his coercive ideology of Islamization [4]. Although numerous instances of sectarian violence are claimed to be done in Ayub as well as Bhutto governments but Zia ul Haq regime is regarded as the starting point of sectarian violence. The Islamization policy initialized by Zia government mobilized the Shia community for the 1st time in the history of Pakistan and they protested in Islamabad for three days [21,22]. After that protest the government promises that their demands will be fulfilled [23].

The Shia community alleged that during Zia government the Deobandi group was the main beneficiaries. For example primary data shows that the graph of religious intolerance was continually going in upward direction. Although the policies initiated by Zia ul Haq encouraged all the religious movements but it is also a fact that Deobandi were the main beneficiaries [10]. As after the 1979 revolution, Shia mobilization was started, therefore to counter this mobilization Saudi Arabia started financial funding. This funding was given for twofold purposes, firstly to fight the anti-Soviet Jihad and secondly to counter Shia mobilization [8].

The primary data reveals that not only in D.I. Khan but in whole country the people of both sects do great care of one another till seventy. But during Zia period, especial patronization was provided to such "Tanzeems" which have been banned today. He created hatred between both sects to achieve his own interests. This was the starting point of sectarian divide. However, these allegations are fully rejected by another Deobandi scholar by saying that during the entire eleven-year tenure of Gen. Zia Ul Haq, there were peace. No instance could be claimed during his reign. And if violence started after the end of his tenure, he could not be held responsible. The government of the time is responsible to suppress the violence and to ensure peace.

Comparably the similar views are shared by the Brussels Based International crisis group in its report, the state of Sectarianism in Pakistan, during the Zia regime, bloody anti Shia riots were started and the state was silent to do anything. The major incident was of Gilgit where the shias were busy in celebrating Eid ceremony. As the Sunni scholars had not sighted the moon therefore the Sunnis still fasting. A Sunni Lashkar consisted thousands of peoples from mostly the province of KPK, attacked on Shias and killed almost 700 peoples. The report questioned, is the state of Pakistan is responsible for these killings? Because the Sunnis had travelled a long distance to reach Gilgit and the Government did nothing to stop these peoples. Likewise, during Musharraf era, the Sunnis Jihadist elements become

strong in the Northern parts of the country. It was because of the Kargil conflict and the Kashmir Jihad policy. Gilgit and Chillas becomes the training hub for the militants. However, the responses from the interviewees were contradictory to the point of Musharraf era and it was said by most of the respondents that Musharraf has adopted a policy which was clearly tilted in the favor of the Shia community.

The political interest of the consecutive government is obvious as it is interesting that these are the same persons who received huge financial funding for creating Islamic militancy during Afghan jihad and now they were striving to eliminate the same. It is even more interesting that the governments accept money for the same purpose at both the times [24]. Despite all the attempts so far have been made by the governments, the issue of sectarianism could not be resolved [25] and despite the government's repeated bans on sectarian organizations, they are operating under new banners and the government could do nothing to stop their activities instead they are becoming more active and defiant across the country [23]. It is not very simple to eliminate extremist tendencies by simply issuing executive orders. It needs a comprehensive approach in formulating, implementing as well as monitoring the policies regarding terrorism in Pakistan. The government needs to adopt such policies that could curtail the support of these extremist in Pakistan. It also must try to improve the socio economic inequalities between haves and have-nots.

It will be wrong to say that Pakistani government has done nothing to prevent the killing of Shia community but by and large they become failed to dig out the real cause of sectarian violence and to tackle the issue for long lasting peace. The Federal and Provincial government ensure protection of the special occasion and ceremonies of Shia community but in spite of this security major incident has been witnessed by the history. For example, Pervaiz Musharraf banned the sectarian outfits for a number of time but they still operate during his regime under new names. It is also evident that the incidents of sectarian clashes reached to its peak during Pervaiz Musharraf reign [6].

### **Institutional failure**

Institutional failure is a major cause for the promotion of uncontrollable sectarian violence. Almost all the respondents agreed that the institutions have failed to curb the sectarian violence. However, it is not one sided. The stakeholders conducted that employees in different institutions actually work for their sect instead of their institution. They are the workers of intelligence agencies, police and other security institution that actually facilitated flow of weapon to their group members, provided those licenses, facilitates their members in prisons and maneuvered investigation to support their sect judicial trial. The primary data shows that the Police department used to provide the killers with weapons, shelters, pick and drop facilities and safe hideouts. Some of the officers were alleged in this regard.

Sectarianism flourishes owing the continuous failure to apprehend and prosecute militants involved in sectarian violence [13]. The case of Pakistan is obvious in this regard. The extremists spread violence because they have no fear of punishment [18]. Pakistan's criminal justice system is intensely defective, ineffective, unskillful, and corrupt. It is not self-sufficient, and investigators and prosecutors lack the resources, instructions, training, and safety for triumphant prosecutions. The criminal justice system is by and large fragile and irrelevant, and the culture of exemption and indemnity, that thrives in

its place fuels further cycles of consequence-free brutality and violence [26].

For instance, a famous incident is quoted by the interviews that it was the starting point of sectarian clashes in D.I. Khan. It is said that, "About 27 years ago on September 30 1988, a very famous incident occurred when the administration tried to stop the Moharram Jaloos of Shia Community. FC opened fire on procession and because of this several peoples were killed and wounded as well as arrested by the security forces". As a result of this incident, target killings and violence broke out in the city. The new commissioner of Dera Ismail Khan Rustam Shah Mohmand took the charge. He concluded an agreement with both the communities and it was decided to change the route of Muharram processions and the administration will provide full security to the processions.

Another incident of institutional failure is of militant attacks on central jail. During that attack, terrorist released almost 150 terrorists. It was the day of July 30, 2013. The terrorists attacked and blew up the prison but the local administration could do nothing. The involvement of police institution is also accepted by a DIG, by saying that some of the police officials were involved in collaboration with the attackers. He said that the involved persons have accepted their involvement but their names could not be revealed. He said that the accused man told that three improvised explosive devices were provided to them by the police department [21].

### Lack of check on religious Madariss

Historically, Maddaris played crucial role in educating and serving the Islamic societies. Its contribution in serving the society, strengthening and transferring Islamic values are over the ages. Research has also explored a positive alliance between religiosity and pro-social behavior of human beings. No doubt Madrassas are prevailing in Pakistan since its inception but its role in serving the state and society on both social and educational level has never been controversial. After the dawn of 21st century and the event of 9/11, the institution of madrassa received prominence. In 2002, as many as 239 religious organizations were working in Pakistan, pursuing similar agendas [11]. The international media linked this incident of terror with Islamic militancy; and countless research has been published that alleged the role of madrassa in promoting extremism and militancy [25]. Pakistan's Ministry of Religious Affairs stated that there are over 18,500 registered Madaris in the country. By adding the unregistered Madaris in this regard the actual number could be as high as 50,000. Some among these Madaris are running on sectarian lines [13]. The same points are collected during the interviews. It is said that it is the Madrassa that build the opinion of their student's strictly on sectarian basis. As it is the task of the government to hold a proper check on the religious institution therefore it is said that the governments have totally failed to control the religious institutions. These tenets are rejected by the Ulemas. They claim that the Ulemas and the Maddaris have no role in the promotion of sectarian violence and quote the names of prominent Ulemas of the region like Mufti Mehmood, Molana Alaudin that they always tried to bridge the gap between the two opposing sects. Multiple reasons were suggested that why the role of Maddaris has been controversial. The teachers and the ulemas have consensus over the point that Madrassa is not the root cause of sectarian divide. Rather it is an illusion and it is the mass media that spread this illusion (Table 2).

The differences between religious political parties and sectarian or Jihadi groups should be recognized in this regard. The political parties

get vote in a democratic manner and works legally within the code and conducts of a state. While Jihadist groups use violence. However, there is a possibility of links between the two. They may the fists of the political organizations [5].

Sr. #	Levels of Madariss	Class	Duration of Education	Equivalent to
1	Ibtedaayih	1-5	4-5 Years	Primary
2	Mutawassata	6-8	3 Years	Middle
3	Saania Aamma	8-10	2 Years	Matriculation
4	Saania Khassa	11-12	2 Years	F. A
5	Aliya	13-14	2 Years	B. A
6	Almiya	15-16	2 Years	M.A Islamic Studies

Source: Wifakul Madaris Pakistan.

**Table 2:** Madariss education system vs. equivalent normal system.

### Unfair treatment of minorities

Pakistan has a long history of constitutional development. The equality in fundamental rights is ensured to all the minority groups in almost all the three Constitution. Article 26 (1) ensure that there shall be no discrimination on religious grounds, cast, sex etc. similarly article 36 ensures that the state shall provide equal safeguard and protection to the minorities. It is the prime duty of the government to ensure the rights to the Minorities in Pakistan. However, despite of these constitutional amendments the Minorities have the grievances regarding their rights.

Research shows that being minority group they are treated unequally and the government should adopt such policies towards the minority groups which can ensure their rights. It is claimed that The Pakistan government have comes have come under growing criticism that they become unable to safeguard the rights of religious minorities. About 180 million Pakistanis are Sunni Muslim. In recent years mostly the minority in Pakistan, including Shiite Muslims, Christians and Hindus have been targeted in attacks by religious extremists [27]. Some of the Sunni extremists targeted at least 25 members of a Shiite sect at Mansehra region after taking them off their buses. The human rights commission report of 2013 states that during 2013 general elections, pamphlets were distributed in many areas that direct the voters on sickly lines not to vote for the candidate belonging to minorities. The government at that time did nothing to ensure free and fair elections [21]. The wave of religious intolerance greatly affects the minorities in Pakistan. The minorities are psychologically disturbed. They have feeling of insecurity and inferiority [9].

### Problem in temperament of society

Interviews show that there is a problem in the temperament of the society. The extremists hold the views that the opposing sect is infidels and therefore they can be killed. It is a kind of embarrassing phenomena that a Muslim is killed by a Muslim because of differences in their ideologies. The following points are suggested by most of the interviewees as the basic cause of violence in any society [28].

### Lack of Islamic values in society

"A person cannot be a complete believer unless he loves for his brother what he loves for himself" (Bukhari and Muslim). In an Islamic society it is the basic aim of legislation to protect the values through protecting and guaranteeing the basic necessities of its citizens. The basic human values in Islam are life, reason, property and religion. Islam teaches us that these are the basic values and humanity cannot live without it. In Islam the state is advised to respect and protect these values in society. For example, in Islam the human soul is in high esteem. In the Quranic verses, "whoever kills a human being for other than manslaughter or corruption and mischief in the earth, it shall be as if he had killed all mankind, and whoever saves the life of one, it shall be as if he had saved the life of all mankind" (Quran, 5:32). Similarly, in Islam religion is considered as a fundamental right of every human being. Islam gives a free choice to every person to adopt a religion of his own choice. There should be no obstruction to practice any religion. As the purpose of religion is to provide peace, comfort, guidance and tranquility in life, therefore these purposes should be achieved from practicing any religion. In our society, a religion of peace is transformed to a religion of violence. In Quran 2:256; God said "Let there be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clear from Error". Similarly obtaining wealth is also a very basic and fundamental right in an Islamic society. In Islam there is complete equality and everyone should have equal opportunities to acquire wealth [29-32].

Franz Rosenthal, a prolific German scholar, writes in his book 'Political thought in Medieval Islam', "Islam is the religion that accommodates all the strangers and feel them secure. There is no single evidence in this history of Islam that shows the demands on anyone to convert from their religion." So these are the views of a Jewish scholar about the value system of Islam.

So degeneration of Islamic values leads to intersect/ethnic conflicts that leads to violence. The same is true for D.I. Khan or Pakistan in general where values of religious tolerance, brotherhood, truthfulness and honesty are swiftly ebbing away paving way for violence.

In our society if we will compare it with the value system of Islam, all the values are badly violated. For example, most of the respondent said that self-interest and greed are the common elements because of which the right to life and property is badly violated. We will see a high level of differences between haves and have not. Poverty is a major cause behind the increasing level of intolerance and violence in our society. The conservative segment from both the sects tries to prove their faith as the only correct one and to prove the opposite sect as infidels. It is the degrading moral values of our society which is leading us towards sectarianism and prejudice towards the opposing sect. The religious scholar Kokab Noorani maintained the view that how humanity could exist without humans. "Humans are not just flesh, blood and bones; they are a creation that follows certain virtues, some code of ethics and morality".

When examine Islamic fundamentalism, we should understand that Islam as a religion and Islamic fundamentalism are not the same things. Islamic fundamentals are based on peace. Islam literally means peace. So according to these teachings one should know that the best Muslim are the fundamentalist. As opposing to these teachings the extremists are totally oppose to it or deviate from the basic fundamentals of Islam [11]. According to Jalalzai in 2002, most of the brutal wars in the history of humanity have been fought in the name of

religion. These extremist believed that they are actually serving the religion [33-41].

Religious intolerance increased in Pakistan since Zia regime and his so called policies of Islamization. Zia ul haq gave a friendly atmosphere to the militant jihadist during Afghan Jihad and nurtured the seeds of kalishinkove culture. Shia- Sunni violence is the most horrible kind of violence. Several religious leaders, scholars and innocent peoples have been dead on both sides. It has tremble the whole society. The oppressor and the victim both are the Muslims. Pakistan is estimated as a nation of intolerant and violent peoples [20]. The state of religious intolerance is rooted to the extreme extent in our society that it becomes difficult to create peace and tolerance in the opposing mindsets. For Example, in December 2011 at Quetta, Baluchistan a number of Shias was targeted. According to Haji Khushal khan, bus driver, the extremists first asked from us that who is Sunni and ask our names. Then they told us to run. When they become sure that the Shias stayed in the bus, they asked them to get out from the bus and then opened fire. A common view was shared by the interviewees that there is lack of Islamic values in our society and the people are unable to understand the concept of brotherhood in an Islamic society.

In Pakistan the value system is declining day by day. Interviews show that one of the major reasons behind the decline of value system is the low literacy rate. An educated person will be more civilized. It enlightens the brain of an individual. The very basic right to education is neglected by almost every government in Pakistan. Secondly there is a lack of Islamic values in society. The negation of these values leads to unrest and violence in society. Sectarianism is not only creating violence in society but it also biting individual behavior and attitude. The fall in national values and individual behaviors and inhuman attitude in the people of both the communities is leading to violence, and this bigotry attitude creates sectarian hatred. "We should not forget that we are human beings, Muslims and Pakistanis. "We will have to sacrifice anything that tries to damage these three icons of our identity, Islam is not against desires, but stops us from blindly following vile desires that erase the difference between right and wrong from society," said Molana Kokab Noorani. So in order to get rid of the sectarian menace, we have to lift the moral character of our society and to change our mindset.

Elaine Pressman realized the concept of extremism to be greatly linked to culturally relative terms. Some views in one culture can be holding extreme and the same views will not be considered extreme in another culture. Therefore, he suggests that values and norms are complexly bound to the definition of extremism. Sectarian violence in Pakistan is greatly rooted in Indo-Persian cultural heritage which is the foundational plank of the Muslim identity in subcontinent. Similarly, an Arabist shifts is also present in this region as there were close trade relations between sub-continent and Arabs. The Arabs were imagined as the only real Muslims. This type of behavior hardened the understanding of Islam in its real scenes.

### Conclusion

It is concluded that sectarianism is an act of utilizing religious means to mobilize one sect against another for political and economic gains. It has also been determined during this research that although the perpetrators of sectarian violence may use religious relics but power struggle, political climate, cultural climate and economic gains are the major factors that leads to sectarianism.

Generally sectarian violence has seriously affected the religious, socio-economic, political as well as diplomatic businesses of Pakistan. Pakistan is a place where tribes, sectarian groups or some political gangs are more powerful as compared to central government. And this is the reason sectarianism is dramatically widening and intensifying in Pakistan. Sectarianism and terrorism had never struck Pakistan with such intensity even since its birth as it has been for the last three decades. Suicide attacks, targeted killing of religious leaders of either sect, bombing or explosions in mosques and imambargahs are continuously increasing the feelings of vulnerability in the Pakistan. This intense situation has put the entire social structure of Pakistan at stake. So, there is an urgent need to tackle the sectarian menace. But there is lack of vision and strategies to tackle sectarian menace in Pakistan.

The research highlights some major elements that lead to sectarianism. In our society the value system is badly destroyed as compared to the value system of Islam. The major causes of this value destruction are poverty & illiteracy which are behind the increasing level of intolerance and violence in the society. Poverty ignites the greed and self-interest while illiteracy creates conservative segments in the society and specifically the society like Pakistan which is an extremely plural country which consists of numerous religious, ethno-linguistic and sectarian groups, the conservative people from both the sects tries to prove their faith as the only correct one and prove the opposite sects as infidel which is leading towards sectarianism. These degrading values of society affect the moral values of Islam and people are unable to understand the concept of brotherhood. The negation of these values leads to unrest and violence in society.

This research shows that there have emerged big gaps between religious institutions and the state. A previous research by Talbani in 1996 showed that for centuries, madrasa played a crucial role in serving society and state. It also showed that the religious institutions have been contributory in preserving society, strengthening and transferring Islamic values over the generations. With the passage of time the poor religious education system defeated by modern political thoughts and as a result a gap is created between religious institutions and the state affairs and as a result Madarassas role is confined to religion only. This isolation of Madarssas from state invites the non-state elements i.e. foreign ideological actors which funded the Madarssas for their ideological as well as political interests. So the Madrasa build the opinion of their student's strictly on sectarian basis. The data shows that the consecutive governments in Pakistan are either not willing or incapable to solve the issue. The very basic right to education is neglected by almost every government in Pakistan because of which religious education system is creating intolerance in the society.

## Recommendations

An unfortunate combination of vested interests, misplaced government policies and discriminatory laws has drastically reduced the scope for a religiously tolerant state and society in Pakistan. The corrupt politicians used the name of Islam to divide the nation for their personal benefits after few years of the creation of Pakistan.

As Sectarian Extremism in Pakistan is a multifarious issue. So, there is an urgent need to tackle sectarianism. The real root causes of Sectarian Extremism that I explored in my whole research and discussed in previous chapters that would be taken as a reference to

suggest the viable options to tackle the sectarian menace. My recommendations may be as follows.

### Recommendation to Ulemas

- The Ulemas should try to eliminate the misconceptions about various sects.
- They should try for censes building.
- They should avoid irritating speeches.
- They should promote brotherhood through Quranic injections and Sunnah of Prophet (SAW).
- In case of emergency, it is the duty of the religious scholars to come forward and control people of their own sect.

### Recommendations to the State

- It is obligatory on the government and the law enforcement agencies to control law and order situations.
- State institutions must have detailed evidences about potential threats.
- Intelligence institutions must be coordinate.
- Para Military forces should be given proper training with regard to identification of potential threats and controlling the mob.
- The intelligence agencies should have thorough information about suspect terrorist and must keep eye on their movement.
- As D.I. Khan is an area which is near to FATA, therefore state must raise the security performance so that the sense of security could prevail.
- Policies of the state should be balanced towards both the sects.
- The imam of religious Madaris should be appointed by the state through proper selection system.
- Ulemas of different school of thought should be frequently made to sit together and generate censes on prevailing issues.
- Government should ban such literature that promotes hatred against any sect.
- Government should take initiatives so that the religious activities like Muharram processions should be kept to their Imam Bargahs.
- The government must take initiatives to tackle the issue of poverty, unemployment and governance.
- As the root cause of every social and political problem is illiteracy, therefore it must be completely exhausted from our society.
- Judiciary should be free from political influence so that proper justice system can be implemented and those who are guilty must be hanged.
- State should initiate rehabilitation projects, so that the effected of sectarianism could be rehabilitated and their basic needs can be met.

### Recommendations to civil society

- Civil society should work to promote trust in society.
- Media, journalist organizations should create awareness about the religious relics and practices of different sects.
- Civil society should support state institution for maintaining law and order.
- It should identify potential threats so that state institutions can take actions.
- Civil society organization should launch such projects to create harmony between different sects.

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