

SCRUTINIZING THE POLITICAL DISCOURSE OF THE 1980s FOR RELIGIOUS EXTREMISM

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Abstract:

Pakistan, since its independence, has seen various conflicts that are ever-growing, and extremism is one of them. Challenging as it is, the power politics that continue to use Pakistan's religion for their gameplay cause great harm to the country while benefitting themselves. Thus, many internal issues and rifts have provided a way for extremism to grow into a complex problem that is now engulfing the society we are all part of. The persistent concern has not only resulted in the decline of peace and stability situation in the state itself but also has repercussions on the neighbouring states. It is high time for Pakistan to regulate its efforts and coincide to seek unity and harmony to end the issue. The research paper aims to highlight the political discourse of the 1980s that enhanced the rise of extremism in the country. Using qualitative methods for data collection, different discourses and events are studied to explore the political factors that have potentially contributed to the spread of extremism. The research aims to analyse the political factors that contributed to the production of such a discourse that encouraged citizens to move towards extremism during the 1980s. It aims to shed light on the governance leadership that played a significant role in it so as to suggest ways, these sections can be contained and instead used to deal with the growing extremism of the present times.

Keywords: Extremism, Religious Radicalization, Political discourse, Pakistan, Zia regime

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Introduction:

Pakistan, as a country, might have gotten independence in the name of forming an Islamic state for Muslims but the downplay of the intersectionality of people coming from different areas, cultures, races, and ethnicities has made it possible for Pakistan to be defined as an ideal example of multi-layered differences and heterogeneity. These differences have caused the population, visibly based on a common religion, to be divided into a complex society of groups separated among the lines of sect, culture, ethnicity, class, and creed. Since independence, the nation has faced numerous interrelated conflicts arising from these divisions. Correspondingly, the conflicts also saw a significant role of internal and external actors in exaggerating societal divisions into a conflict. These actors are not only involved in funding radicalization and religious militancy but also in developing narratives from a small level to help give rise to extremist activities on a bigger scale.

While anti-terrorist regimes and countering extremist tactics have been successful to a great length in destroying the safe havens for Jihadist terrorists and attacking their means of recruitment, yet these procedures could only target the physical presence of extremists in the form of terrorists. The social form of extremism that gives rise to more radicalization lies in the discourses and narratives that manipulate people's minds into using tactics that may harm their kind. This research aims to study how the political leadership of the 1980s contributed a crucial role in the development of the discourse that aided in the spread of extremism in Pakistan.

Political Discourse serves as one of the means of spreading religious extremism and radicalization into society. It has helped brainwash many young minds and help political people from different backgrounds to enhance their influence on society by inculcating their ideologies in people's minds. However, the recent incidents of blasphemy, sectarian conflicts, and religious group clashes have shed light on the fact that extremism can spread as an indirect consequence of the policies subsumed by these political groups. Thus, the research paper sheds light on the governance era of Zia whose policies, as suggested, contributed to enhancing religious extremism.

Scholars and researchers have numerous quoted that the Islamization process that started during the era of Zia-ul-Haq aided a lot in the growth of religious extremism. Not only did the leadership use religion as a tool but it was also aided by religious scholars and groups of that era

in helping implement policies that would, later on, provide the necessary framework for brutalities to take place in the name of religion.

Defining Extremism:

Extremism, according to the researcher's understanding is the use or advocacy to use violent means in order to fulfil one's political and religious goals or for the mere protection of a person's belief that may essentially not be in accordance with the peace norms advocated by the society. An extremist person is a normal human being who exists in society like others but their beliefs and mode of actions on certain issues separate them from other beings. An extremist person may be identified through some common variables of opposition, intolerance, violence, and hatred towards others who hold different beliefs from them.

The European Commission defines extremism¹ as an act by an individual or a group who uses, incites, threatens with, or supports the use of violence to fulfil their ideological goals by rejecting the democratic order and values of fundamental rights. In his work "Fear and Trembling: Terrorism in Three Religious Traditions," David Rapoport² defines extremism as a syndrome marked by adherence to radical beliefs that are at odds with generally accepted values of the society and a disinclination to compromise. He identifies an extremist as a person characterized by having radical beliefs, rejection of conventional norms, and resistance to compromise with a general tendency to take radical actions.

Religious extremists in terms of this research paper are those Muslims who have strong faith in some Islamic norms for the protection and spread of which they will use harsh and violent means against even their own Muslim community who oppose them. Islamic extremism has not only given rise to radicalization and sectarianism but also has provided such believers with an excuse to mentally and physically harm others under the disguise of protecting Islam.

¹ "WORKING DEFINITION FOR VIOLENT RIGHT-WING EXTREMISM (VRWE)," EUROPEAN COMMISSION

DIRECTORATE-GENERAL MIGRATION and HOME AFFAIRS, September, 2021,

² Rapoport, David C. "Fear and Trembling: Terrorism in Three Religious Traditions." *The American Political Science Review* 78, no. 3 (1984): 658–77.

Literature Review:

The research paper majorly features information from newspapers from around the year 1977 to 1981. As Pakistan, in the year 1977 was declared to be held under the administration of military regime thus media was restricted to great strength. Daily headlines featured only the activities of military dictator Zia-ul-Haq and societal news was limited.

The year 1980s evidently saw a significant rise in Islamic extremism which was encouraged by the Islamization process started by General Zia-ul-Haq³. Zia's era was characterized by a conscious push towards the promotion of Islamic values but these practices being enforced into public life whether society or politics did not pass through a set pathway and ended up being used in a way that resulted in enhancing extremist tendencies in people.⁴

Mukherjee, in his works, highlighted that the rise of religious extremism during the year 1980s was closely linked to the political, economic, and social policies ushered by the then administrator, Zia-ul-Haq. His policies, even though, aimed at fostering Islamic principles and inculcating religion into social life to fulfil the reason, the country was separated on. His goal, as explained by him, was to consolidate the Islamic identity and values into the country but eventually led to the construction of the political discourse that led to extremism.

Shahid and Craig⁵ write that Zia's rise to power and military administration was based on the idea of bringing back the religion, Pakistan was made on. It was the reason he criticized the previous leadership governing the state and shaped the constitution and his future policies on Islamic norms. However, the writers shed light on the fact that in the long run, his steps of participating in the Afghanistan crisis and letting the influx of Afghan refugees into Pakistan as well as providing forces to fight the war led to a crisis in the society and eventually gave rise to extremist tendencies within the people themselves.

In conclusion, the literature review provides valuable insights of the situation of the year 1980 in Pakistan. It also links the policies ushered by Zia to rising extremism and helps create a bridge

³ Panjwani, Farid, and Daniel Moulin-Stožek, "Muslims, Schooling and the Limits of Religious Identity," *Oxford Review of Education* 43, no. 5 (2017): 519–23. doi:10.1080/03054985.2017.1354585.

⁴ Mukherjee, Kunal, "Islamic Revivalism and Politics in Contemporary Pakistan," *Journal of Developing Societies*, 26, 329 – 353.

⁵ Shahid Javed Burki and Craig Baxter, *Pakistan under the Military: Eleven Years of Zia ul-Haq*, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991), 212.

for leadership steps and their significant effects on the society, However, there was a need for further research to highlight how the personal actions and language of Zia-ul-Haq led to the development of extremist ideas within the people. The research paper, thus emphasizes on all the multifaceted factors that contributed to a growth in extremism and can be visualized even till this day.

Research Objectives and Methodology:

The study aims to explore the political factors of 1980 that contributed to the spread of extremism and Islamic radicalization. It analyses the role of the Islamization process ushered by Zia-ul-Haq, during his period of governance and military rule, in the provision of a framework according to which religious extremists could use any means to violate the human rights of another group. The research sheds light on the process through which a political discourse is constructed and implemented in society which helps form a loophole for religious extremists to exploit. Owing to a lack of literature on the analysis of the effect of the political discourse of the 1980s and the use of the Islamization process as a backing for extremism, exploratory research design has been used to discover the role of political factors and the way they helped extremism to grow through different factors. Correspondingly, qualitative data has been used to study the construction of political discourse through speeches of leadership and members of parties and the textual analysis of their actions through archival data from newspapers and from articles has been done to learn how this contributed to building a generation of religious extremists.

Theoretical Framework:

Religious extremism is the radicalization of any religious belief in a way that commits a person to the use of violence and harsh actions in order to perpetuate their religious norms and ideologies for power and strength. This stands as a firm example of how power politics use religion as a chess piece for their benefit.

With the application of Critical Discourse Analysis in the research, the researcher tried to analyze the use of linguistic tools for the development and implementation of an ideology to shape a narrative in the minds of people. Throughout the research, CDA has been applied as a 3-dimensional framework as presented by its primary developer, Norman Fairclough in the form of micro, meso, and macro level of development and implementation.

Firstly, at the micro level, the use of language is analyzed in the form of text and speech to explore themes of discourse generation and ideology interpretation. In this domain, we try to make sense of how different words, repetition of ideas, and shaping of narrative come into existence in the context of religious extremism. Correspondingly, it helps in exploring the factors that became part of shaping the extremist ideology during 1980.

Secondly, at the meso level, these linguistic tools are further analyzed in the context of not only how they were produced and the underlying reasons for their production but also in the context of how they targeted the audience and the way the general audience interpreted it in the process of implementation to absorb and replicate themes of extremism.

Thirdly, and finally, the socio-political interpretation and effect of language and its use by the targeted audience to increase violence and oppression of other groups by brutal actions is analyzed at the macro level. In this regard, some events occurring immediately after the 1980s are scrutinized for their link with the political discourse that helped grow religious extremism.

Historical Background of the 1980s:

Formed as an Islamic state and in the name of Islam, the second most common and significant identity Pakistanis have developed themselves part of, is being a Muslim. The process started by Muslims believing in Two Nation Theory, as being someone different from a person following a different religion and by living with whom they can follow their religion freely. This process soon converted into something more political. It transmigrated into Muslims enriching the differences amongst Islamic followers and empowering one group against another by use of violent means.

Since independence, the country has seen years of diverse but related conflicts based on religion. These conflicts are not only shaped by the identity of Muslims vs other religions but also by the different sects within Islam. They have been funded and supported by various discourses and external as well as internal factors.

In addition to this, as Pakistan ventured on its way to develop as a nation, the existential threat that was posed to it by neighbouring countries together with Pakistan's relationships with other Islamic nations added to the religious narratives within the country. Correspondingly, the surge of globalization and liberalism paved the way for the spread of such narratives with inclusion from other societies making communities have an easier path for their movement to extremism.

In 1977, Zia-ul-Haq took over the position as the chief martial law administrator and dissolved Bhutto's government in a bloodless coup. The 3rd dictator of Pakistan after assuming the presidency of the state of Pakistan started his own process of development under the banner of Sharization or Islamization⁶. Within this, he highlighted his aim to revolutionize all aspects of the state to consolidate the Islamic religion correctly in it. Claiming to be a very devout Muslim, Zia, on many occasions highlighted how his actions are influenced by his faith and how he hopes to make Pakistani society one that is by the teachings of Islam. From the very start, he blamed the secular parties for instability and thus this was the initial start of the time period for religious parties to gain more popularity in the governance system. Consequently, in 1980, Zia's regime began a phase of growing religious tensions among different sects, and it contributed to their movement towards taking harsh steps for their own religious ideologies.

It was also the time of the Iran-Iraq war alongside the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan which contributed a lot to the rise of extremism⁷ and terrorism as a backlash of Pakistan's involvement with these international affairs.

Linguistic Analysis of Political Discourse of 1980:

As discussed earlier, due to less projection about other religio-political parties and no spotlight being given to any of them during the 1980s, the research mostly features the leadership during that time.

The upbringing of any discourse and implementation of one's ideology does not come without setting the stage for it first. Similarly, it has been in the methodology of any leadership that before implementing any of their policies they provide a background context of it so to have a linkage with the targeted audience and satisfy them on their choice of policy for them to acknowledge it as the best option available. Politicians all around the globe use this methodology to have the public's narratives, opinions, and thoughts about them change to strengthen their public support.

⁶ Hashmat Ullah Khan, Jamal Shah, and Fida-Ur-Rahman, "Zia-Ul-Haq and the Rise of Religious Extremism in Pakistan," *Grassroots* 54, no.1 (June 25,2020).

⁷ Arshi Saleem Hashmi, "Pakistan Politics, Religion and Extremism," *Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies*, May 01, 2009.

Upon analysis, we also found that the leadership of Zia-ul-Haq during the 1980s also did the same thing. In order to get legitimization for his governance⁸ and strengthen his hold on the nation, Zia-ul-Haq used the most common yet complex tool that caused the situation to further complicated for the people of Pakistan. That tool was religion which can be used easily by state actors to enhance their influence on the society members and shape their opinions while providing legality to the enactment of their policies. This is because, the citizens of a state are divided among various lines but are together too through some common identities which is why a human, who cannot live in isolation, tends to look for people of the same identity or ideology as his. This identity, many people tend to discover in is religion which for them stands as the symbol of unity and basis of a common ground.

Soon upon taking the position, Zia-ul-Haq started the process of building an emotional appeal for public support. It was seen in his first televised speech as the head of state where he says: “Pakistan was created in the name of Islam...can survive only if the state sticks to Islam...that is why I will bring the society and state back to the Islamic mould.”

To further give legitimacy to his rule, he said it many times that: “Previous rulers did whatever they wanted in the name of Islam” which upon comprehension is a prerequisite to optimizing the public’s opinion as previous all rulers were bad which is why martial law will serve as an aid to change Pakistan for the better.

Similarly, when celebrating the anniversary of the Prophet (PBUH) in 1982, Zia, in his speech emphasized the need to direct Pakistani life in accordance with the teachings of the Quran and Sunnah. Soon after this, Zia started the process of using Islam as a pretext to introduce laws and policies that changed the narratives about Islamic norms among the masses for years to come.

He called for a renewal of the requirements of Jihad and instructed his government’s members to initiate the process of formation of the Nizam-i-Mustapha. Additionally, the establishment of Hudood ordinances, building Zakat committees, and enhancing state-sponsored Zakat programs as well as the enactment of Islamic laws in the legal system helped shape the narrative of Zia as “Ashiq-e-Rasool (PBUH)” which later on helped in building support for much of his policies.

⁸ Shahid Javed Burki and Craig Baxter, *Pakistan under the Military: Eleven Years of Zia ul-Haq*, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991), 212.

Thus, the general description of Zia's regime during the 1980s was that it aimed to end un-Islamic practices and bring the society back to the score of following Islam on which it was formed.

In terms of the use of textual tools, we saw the use of policies as a means of backing extremism, they provided a sense of legality to the extremists, to move towards using any brutal means in order to replicate the following of their religious norms which according to them were Islamic.

Firstly, in the religious context, one of the major actions of Zia-ul-Haq was the amendment of the Pakistan Penal Code and Criminal Procedure Code to outlaw blasphemy. In the First Amendment of 1980; passing derogatory remarks against Islamic personages was made punishable by imprisonment which later on changed to becoming a cognizable offense. As there was a lack of certainty and explanation on what blasphemy is and specifically what actions would be taken against them thus this gave leverage to the general people who started using these laws as a tool against those with whom they had personal grudges. It also became the most sensitized tool that was later shaped into a person charged by the public itself to face mob violence. The introduction of imprisonment, fine, and death penalty for a case that is still not revised or explained still helps many people to use it as a backing for killing even Muslims themselves. Correspondingly, the power politics, Zia started to legitimize and support his own leadership under religion and aided others in using his policies for their own personal gains under the same religion.

The Centre for Research and Security Studies provides the following data on accused and killed people from different sects or religions based on blasphemy from 1947 till 2021. The results depict how the introduction of anti-blasphemy laws punishable by imprisonment, fine, and death are being used against sects of Islam themselves.

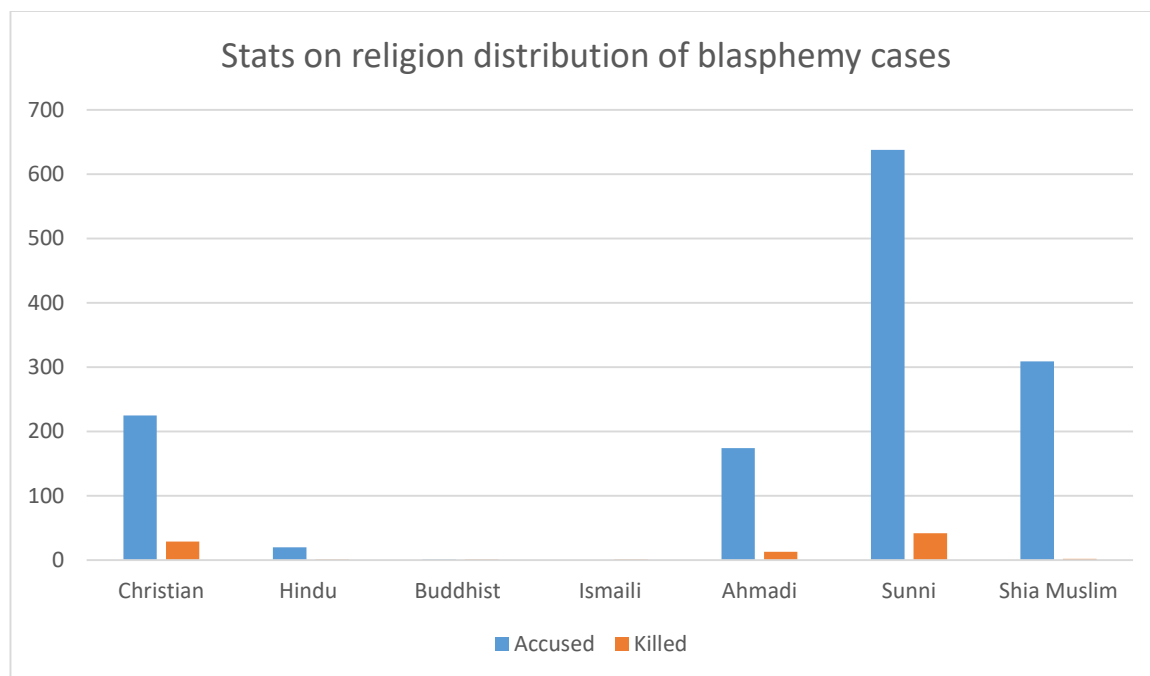


Figure 1: Statistics of Blasphemy Cases in Pakistan from 1947 to 2021
 Retrieved from: <https://crss.pk/blasphemy-cases-in-pakistan-1947-2021/>

In educational context, Zia-ul-Haq started the establishment and expansion of Madrasahs under the banner of providing Islamic education to the younger generation. The government set up a National Committee of Deeni Madaris under which many Deobandi and Barelvi school of thought prevailed. Accordingly, the number of Madrasahs during Zia’s regime grew from 893 to 2801. Due to large influx of students in Madrasahs, attention over other subject areas decreased. These Madrasahs developed many scholars who were ignorant of their role and helped in enhancing the sectarian divide in the society.

Additionally, Madrassahs also helped in forming Jihadist organizations and later on got involved in the recruitment of extremists for terrorism. On the narrative level, madrasahs like Jamia Naeemia Lahore established during 1980s have been involved in strengthening the Sunni Barelvi movement and by giving fatwas like no establishment of non-Muslim worship places in an Islamic state that strengthens the extremist divide based on religion.

In the context of the social domain, Zia’s policies brought injustice to women. His policies under Chaddar and Chaar Devari proved to be of a great obstacle for women working in different fields. With its help, the Qanon-e-Shahdat later known as the Evidence act made the testimony

of women to be considered half compared to a man as one, this was applied on non-Muslims too. Similarly, the number of rape witnesses required for legal actions against the offender was risen to 4 witnesses. The irony in this was that while religious offenses were made cognizable and strictly punishable even without a witness, social offenses were ignored even when prominent.

Under Zia's policies, Muslim identity was reorganized, and a new norm started of exclusion⁹ and differentiating from others. It gave rise to not only Muslim vs non-Muslim extremism but also for sectarian divide. The Shia community felt largely suppressed under Zia's regime and highlighted their opinion of Sunnis being aided by the government which is giving them Zakat funds for their own working while it is neglecting other groups within Pakistan. The growth of hatred between these two major sects of Islam started which saw sectarian conflicts¹⁰ at large scale by the end of Zia's regime.

Through speeches and fatwas, Zia used many religious scholars and members of religio-political parties to build a political discourse for the legitimization of his own regime. This discourse later proved to be the main tool used by extremists. It shaped radical narratives of society members and caused them to use brutal means for the inculcation of their own religious beliefs.

One of the religious tools used by Zia was Jihad that helped in gaining not only funds but also international legitimization for his regime. As during the 1980, the ongoing international conflict of Soviet invasion in Afghanistan was going on, it had a significant impact on the neighbouring Pakistan whose leadership helped form a Jihadist narrative to recruit people who could play a role in fighting the war against Soviets. The aim behind this was to receive international support and funding as Pakistan was getting involved in the Cold War and aiding the West in fighting against the communists.

Zia-ul-Haq in one of his speeches said "Afghanis are fighting a war for us because if they get defeated then the next number would be of Pakistan and it is our duty to at least pray for them to win this battle." Zia on numerous times referred to the people fight in against Soviets as "freedom fighter". He helped build the narrative that Pakistan and Afghanistan are one and their "fight is our fight".

⁹ Sidra Karamat, Muhammad Muzaffar, and Ali Shan Shah, "The politics of religious extremism in Pakistan: An analysis," *Review of Economics and Development Studies* 5, no. 2 (2019): 315-322, doi:.26710/reads.v5i2.604

¹⁰ Moonis Ahmar, "Sectarian conflicts in Pakistan," *Pakistan Vision* 9, no. 1 (2007): 1-19.

This narrative not only caused many people to join as fighters against the Soviets but provided them the framework that this is Jihad which is necessary, and it will help them get a ticket to heaven. This ideology was replicated according to the Saudi leadership of that time who declared that any Muslim going to Afghanistan and fighting against Soviets is doing Jihad and called it necessary for Muslims all over the world. Zia's era which was already seeing the shape tilt towards Sunni sect further legitimized this ideology and started recruiting and training people for the Afghanistan jihad.

Another ideology, Zia implemented on the people of Pakistan was the policy of exclusion. He very bluntly separated Ahmadi group, calling themselves as Muslims, from the circle of Islam. Zia-ul-Haq, as a sequel of Constitutional Amendment of 1974, released Ordinance XX in which he prohibited the Ahmadi group from practicing or following Islam. He referred to it as the anti-Ahmadi law which will help clean the Muslim society from those who call themselves Muslims but are actually not. Not only did it help criminalize being a Ahmadi, it also caused various people to turn Ahmadis in for punishment. In the following years, more than 3000 cases were registered under this regulation. In one of his speech, Zia called Ahmadi group as a "fitna" for society which needs to be eliminated. This not only divided the different sects to divide upon their perspective about the law but also boasted the Ahmadi group to use harsh means against other sects.

In addition to this, under his league of spreading Islam, Zia-ul-Haq boasted the use of strict punishments against those who commit crimes. However, neither the crimes nor the punishment was set. This aided many to use brutal tactics as a result of their crime and afflict emotional and physical abuse upon them. In his interview¹¹ with Vanya Kewley, Zia publicizes that punishments such as flogging or stoning someone to death are needed in the society. When asked about these things being a human right violation, Zia says that "it is a way of life and is absolutely right because if today we want to reform the society, then strict punishments are needed". This further legitimized the use of these punishments not only by the citizens of Pakistan but also by the government itself. The general public took this idea as the legitimization to use brutal measures

¹¹ Vanya Kewley, "Pakistan | Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq interview," filmed August 12, 1979 in Pakistan, ThamesTV, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xpc9y9DS0Ys>.

against their enemies, especially against other religious sects under the pretext of committing any crime. This helped mob violence to especially rise under religious extremism¹² in Pakistan.

Socio-political effect in the larger context:

The socio-political effect¹³ of the ideologies and narratives built by the leadership and the religio-political parties of the time period of the 1980s played a significant role in moving society toward religious extremism.

Events like mob violence, flogging and stoning of people, and sectarian conflicts grew in large numbers immediately after the 1980s¹⁴. Zia's regime himself used this method by changing the state into a totalitarian state. He banned all political activities and even started public flogging especially of journalists. Religious extremists drew from these activities and enhanced the use of blasphemy laws and the introduction of brutal punishments for their interests. They started instigating people on blasphemous laws and mobilized them into afflicting stoning a person to death of a person who according to them disrespected Islam.

The chain has since then continued with the latest case of Mushtaq Ahmed who was mentally unstable yet still stoned by the religious mob of 300 people in 2022. Cases of using blasphemy laws for personal interests also started in the same breath, in 1996, a bricklayer, Ayub Masih was jailed under blasphemy charges by neighbour Muhammad Akram who later on not only shot Masih within the Court jurisdiction but also aided in attacking him within jail. In 2002, the court proved that Akram only did all this for personal benefits like getting his plot. The following chart depicts blasphemy with the use of brutal punishments by religious extremists from 1980s till 2021.

¹² Suroosh Irfani, "Pakistan's Sectarian Violence: Between the 'Arabist Shift' and Indo-Persian Culture," *Religious Radicalism and Security in South Asia* 147170 (2004).

¹³ Muhammad Arshid, Muhammad Ejaz, and Waleed Ahmed, "Social implications of the Islamisation of General Zia-ul-Haq for Pakistan," *Journal of Humanities, Social and Management Sciences* 4, no. 1 (2023): 78-76.

¹⁴ "Special Report: Darkness Descends 1977-1988." *Dawn*, October 17, 2017.

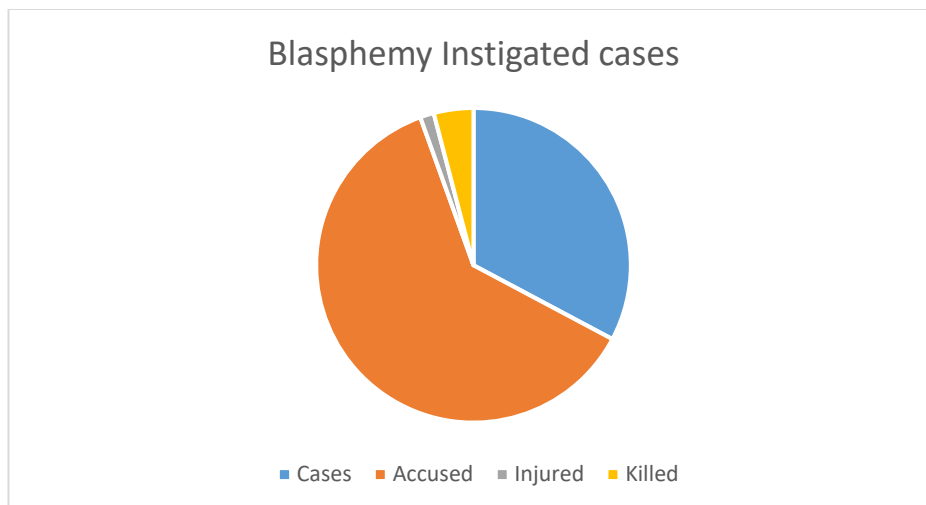


Figure 2 Statistics of Blasphemy Cases in Pakistan from 1947 to 2021

Retrieved from: <https://crss.pk/blasphemy-cases-in-pakistan-1947-2021/>

The sectarian divide¹⁵ started from the political discourse of the leadership of Zia-ul-Haq started in the form of protests and ended up into large sectarian conflicts which took the lives of many and injured many. In 1980, large protests were observed by Shia sect against the leadership’s implementation of Zakat and Ushr under the Sunni law. It gave birth to TNFJ (Movement for enforcement of the Jafaria [Shia] Law) in Pakistan’s politics under which Shia militants and Ulema started spreading an aggressive posture against other sects and regime. Later on, Sipah-i-Muhammed Pakistan (SMP) was founded on the same motive. As a response, Anjuman-i-Sipah Sahaba Pakistan (ASSP), or Association of the Soldiers of the Prophet’s Companions of Pakistan was established in 1985 that radicalized the Sunni community of Pakistan against other sects specially Shia. From 1980s, they got involved in various terrorist activities and murder of thousands of Shi’ites.

Another tragedy that emerged from the Islamization and martial regime of 1980s was the Jihad trend. This not only bought funding for Pakistan, but many groups also emerged with the aim of recruiting people to be sent to Afghanistan for Soviet war. Lashkar-e-Jhangvi and Harkat-

¹⁵ “A New Era of Sectarian Violence in Pakistan,” *Crisis Group*, September 5, 2022, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/327/asia/south-asia/pakistan/new-era-sectarian-violence-pakistan>.

ul-Jihad al-Islami (HuJI)¹⁶ are two such Deobandi groups who led delegations for to help in Afghanistan Jihad. These groups later on formed cooperation with terrorist organizations like Al-Qaeda and since then have been involved in recruiting extremists on the name of Jihad and using them for terrorism activities around the globe. They have also been involved in helping other extremist groups like Lashkar-e-Taiba. The terrorist activities done by these groups has caused great spread of extremism and spreading fear in the public. In 2006, HuJI, in a case of suicide bombing, attacked the US Consulate in Karachi killing the U.S. diplomat himself along with 3 others and injuring 48 people.

The Jihad culture of 1980s also brought a wave of Afghan refugees who spread around different areas of Pakistan. It fueled extremism within Pakistan. Illegal use of arms and drugs, the Kalashnikov culture, fight for opportunities, lack of resources caused the general public to turn against the Afghanis. Moreover, these refugees recruited by various groups from foreign nations funded the speed of terrorism in Pakistan. This was quite evident after 9/11 when Pakistan had to fight against the evil that took the lives of thousands of Pakistanis.

Countering Religious Extremism:

A country like Pakistan which was made on the name of religion has long faced extremism which is now embedded in the roots of its society. In a society where use of religion for power and oppression has been taken up by all individuals in in power, ending these radical ideologies is a task no government wants to uptake.

While physically, extremists and terrorists have been fought against however no regime has done any work regarding challenging the extremist ideologies and narratives in the minds and hearts of the audience. In a religiously separated and politically polarized state like Pakistan it is necessary that a long-term strategy is planned out to counter extremism. A complete analysis of the steps to be taken and its effects on the public needs to be measured as well as the possible response it can trigger from the other side.

¹⁶ Mapping Militant Organizations, "Harkat-ul-Jihadi al-Islami," *Stanford University*, July, 2019, <https://cisac.fsi.stanford.edu/mappingmilitants/profiles/harkat-ul-jihadi-al-islami>.

Education centers like madrasahs need to be specifically monitored as they serve as the first step in the making of an extremist, terrorist organizations not only use madrasahs for the spread of their ideologies but also to recruit them for terrorist activities.

Social media, a great tool used for radicalization should be monitored and it should also be used to spread the discourse for countering extremism among the masses. This is because young generation is particularly involved in social media and absorb whatever is displayed on their screens in minds, a such a time if they come to realize the importance of countering extremism and the small steps they can take against it, masses will see their thoughts changing and it will play a role in embarking on the long strategy of countering extremism from its roots.

Countering starts from community level thus there is a great need of mobilizing the masses in order for them to work together against further spread of extremism.

Conclusion:

The 1980s in the history of Pakistan played an important role in building the extremist and radical narrative among the masses. In the wake of fighting against the Soviets for Afghanistan Jihad, the regime funded the establishment of extremist groups who later on played a significant role in the spread of terrorism. Upon using the critical discourse analysis, the researcher has come to the conclusion that Islamization played and still plays an important role in the spread of political discourse for religious extremism. This is because it was not the spread of Islamic teachings and the setup of an Islamic society but the use of religion for legitimization of one's own power and strengthening the power they had.