

Understanding the Causes of Terrorism in Pakistan

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Abstract

The wave of terrorism surfaced in Pakistan after 2001, largely due to Pakistan's involvement in the 'War on Terror.' The most intense wave of terrorism faced by Pakistan was from 2008 onward and was mostly in response to how state authorities failed in handling Lal Masjid Operation. Since then, terrorism has become a formidable challenge to the socio-economic and political landscape of Pakistan. This paper aims to find out the causes of terrorism, its fallout for Pakistan and way forward. Based on secondary review of academic sources, this article identifies some gaps in the governance and the society of Pakistan causing violence and terrorism. The living conditions of the people and hindrances in the development of Pakistan have pushed some groups to become radical. Given the fact that the country is a soft target of terrorist activities, an inquest of the internal problems linked to terrorism is mandatory. Hence, qualitative analysis has been used to discover the real causes of terrorism. A good number of articles, monographs, newspapers, books and websites have been analysed to extract actual causes of terrorism. The central conclusion is that with some ideological factors of terrorism, poverty, unequal distribution of resources, poor understanding and lack of knowledge prompt minds to go for justice in violent manners. Therefore, some consolidated actions are required to fight against terrorism, instead of blaming single factor.

Keywords: Terrorism, Pakistan, Society, Violence, Security, Education.

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Introduction

Terrorism is not restricted to one area of the world. The terrorist attacks in the last few years in Sri Lanka, New Zealand, Belgium, Germany, Bangladesh, France, Saudi Arabia, the United States of America (USA), Afghanistan, Turkey, Pakistan and incidents of Orlando, Brussel, Nice and Istanbul have reinforced the idea that terrorism somehow demystified, that it is disturbing peaceful areas of the world. The issue of terrorism has increased the number of deaths, for instance from 2006 to 2016, number of deaths have increased almost 67 per cent.¹ Hence, the international community is looking at the issue of terrorism in a global context and trying to identify the pushing factors behind making of a pitiless psyche. In this backdrop, this study probes into the factors leading to terrorism in Pakistan and the motives of terrorists behind the choices of targets. This formidable threat has erupted at once, after 2001, due to the US led global War on Terrorism (WoT) and became intense after 2008.

Indubitably, terrorism has become an international issue, but Pakistan faced acute affliction of it. In the past two decades, terrorists have indiscriminately targeted crowded areas of Pakistan including religious places, markets, hotels, parks, schools and other public places.² Pakistan (for almost two decades) has been bearing savagery due to several reasons. However, Pakistan's involvement in the War against terrorism was the main factor driving intense defiance in the country. Following American-led invasion of Afghanistan, the US took bases in the surroundings of Afghanistan. Pakistan also became a non-NATO ally of the US just like other neighbouring states of Afghanistan for the sake of peace. Soon, all the facilitators of the US in WoT started to face consequences and so did Pakistan. Pakistan was in a war-like situation and where terrorism was the gravest issue of the governance and a nightmare for the public.

¹ Murray Acman, "What does terrorism tell us about peace?", (November 20, 2017), *International Alert*, <https://www.international-alert.org/blogs/what-does-terrorism-tell-us-about-peace>.

² Zahid Shahab Ahmed, Farooq Yousaf and Khan Zeb, "Socio-economic and Political Determinants of Terrorism in Pakistan: University Students' Perceptions", *International Studies*, Vol. 55: 2 (2018), 131.

This study revolves around the question that how the internal vulnerabilities have facilitated terrorists to operate from Pakistan and use its outskirts for their purposes? A review of the existing literature indicates that there may be countless factors triggering terrorism in a country. However, every factor has its own interpretation depending on the situation.

In order to investigate the causes of terrorism in Pakistan, a qualitative analysis has been made. The purpose was to develop an understanding of how internal problems in Pakistan was causing terrorism. The primary objective of this paper is to explore the domestic vulnerabilities leading to terrorism in Pakistan and suitable remedies of it. The available secondary data has indicated that the important causes of terrorism include poverty, bad governance, Pakistan's decision to be a part of the US in the GWOT, misperceptions and lack of the enforcement of the law. This study shows up that single factor should not be taken as germinating terrorism and for effective policy measures an inclusive strategy is required. The last part of the paper emphasises the need to transform societies through education, media and introducing new laws. Indicative policy measures may help to bring down the terrorist activities. Since terrorism is a polygonal problem, therefore, it requires a multi-pronged solution. Hence, it is suggested that a multifaceted and focused problem-solving strategy is direly needed to end the complex causes of terrorism in Pakistan.

Internal Vulnerabilities

The word 'terrorism' resonates different meanings. However, terrorism generally can be defined as the use of violence against civilians in order to achieve ideological or political goals by creating fear. Definitions of terrorism may be different, but its connotation is always derogatory. Christopher C Harmon delineated terrorism as a political issue. He maintained: "Terrorism is the deliberate and systemic murder, maiming and menacing of the innocent to inspire fear for political ends."³ The US Department of

³ Christopher C Harmon, *Terrorism Today* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 1.

Defence defines terrorism as: “the unlawful use of violence or threat of violence often motivated by religious political or other ideological beliefs to instil fear and coerce governments or societies in pursuit of goals that are usually political.”⁴

It is hard to identify a single root cause of terrorism, even a common set of causes are debatable. Nevertheless, different preconditions are causing the emergence of various forms of terrorism. Economic disparity, injustice, corruption and political discrimination are known factors facilitating terrorism.⁵ As a matter of fact, “terrorism entails the active participation of small group of individuals who may or may not represent collective interests.”⁶ In the transitioning international security landscape, there are rising external pressures on Pakistan to rationalise its expenditures on war against terrorism. Internally, myriad of problems are curbing Pakistan’s efforts to root out terrorism such as ethnic divisions, brainwashing of innocent people, political divisions, weak anti-terrorism laws, poverty, dissatisfied people and hatred against government.

Sectarian Division and Ethnic Fault Lines

Sectarian division and history are essential elements in comprehending the roots of terrorism in Pakistan. Just like other parts of the Muslim world, Pakistan is also having a major sectarian division i.e. Shia and Sunni and further division is between Barelvi and Deobandi. Adding fuel to fire, ethnic and cultural differences also create fragmentation in the society.

Some pre-Islamic traditions are intermixed with religious rituals due to the settlements of other religious groups in the sub-continent. The long history of sectarian violence is smashing the peace process in Pakistan.

⁴“Joint Publication 3-26, Counterterrorism”, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (October 24, 2014). vii available at https://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/Doctrine/pubs/jp3_26.pdf.

⁵ Eric Rosand, “In strategies to counter violent extremism, politics often trump evidence” (May 6, 2019), available at <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2019/05/06/in-strategies-to-counter-violent-extremism-politics-often-trumps-evidence>

⁶ Martha Crenshaw, “Political Explanations”, *Addressing the Causes of Terrorism: The Club de Madrid Series on Democracy and Terrorism*, (Madrid: Club De Madrid, 2005), 13.

However, sectarian rift was not a major issue in the early years of Pakistan.

“The 1st incident in was anti-Ahmadiya riots in 1953 at Lahore. Because of this incident the first martial law was imposed After this incident, sectarian clashes were there but the conflict was on minor scale. During Ayub khan’s reign many sectarian incidents occurred, but the most violent incident was the attack on Muharram procession in a town near Khairpur Sindh. At the end of the 1970s a number of events led to enhance the sectarian differences that ultimately led to establish the culture of violence in the Pakistani society. Among these events the impact of Iranian revolution and the empowerment of Shia community by the Iranian proxy tactics, the inundation of Afghan refugees to Pakistan, as a result of soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the role played by Pakistan

in Soviet Afghan war and introduction of Islamisation policies by Zia-ul-Haq are the most prominent factors. These factors increased sectarian violence in Pakistan and the internal security situation worsened.”⁷

Thereby, sectarian violence was high during the 1990’s in Pakistan, but the political leadership could not muster the courage to thwart the mounting power of Jihadists and the scale of religious extremism reached its climax.⁸ The Shia sect, which comprise about 15 per cent to 20 per cent of the total population was subjected to terrorist attacks.⁹ Similarly, the Shia Hazara community is not safe in Quetta.¹⁰ The Hazara community (Hazarganji area in Quetta) has been facing devastating suicide attacks

⁷ Asma Khan Mahsood, History of Sectarianism in Pakistan: Implications for Lasting Peace. *Journal of Political Science and Public Affairs*, 5: 291. (2017), 1. doi:10.4172/2332-0761.1000291

⁸ Hassan Abbas, *Pakistan’s Drift into Extremism: Allah, the Army, and America’s War on Terror* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 12.

⁹ Eamon Murphy, *The Making of Terrorism in Pakistan: Historical and Social Roots of Extremism* (London: Routledge, 2013), 2.

¹⁰ Edward Mickolus, *Terrorism, 2013-2015: A Worldwide Chronology* (Jefferson NC: McFarland and Company, 2016), 73.

since long.¹¹ Hence, societal fragmentation is a major contributing factor in terrorism.

In addition, some wicked people have presented a distorted image of Islam to justify their use of violence. They are getting full advantage of the innocence of people and instilling their ideology, engraving more ethnic divisions. Although Eric Rosand has proven in his research that the non-religious and non-ideological grievances are facilitating factors of terrorism. His study proves that there is little empirical evidence that religion (or ideology) is a main motivator for violent extremism.¹² Yet few other sources prove religion as a supporting factor of terrorism with reference to the Global Terrorism Index (GTI) 2014, “religious extremism has become the main driver of terrorism.”¹³

Terrorists did not leave any place, markets, mosques, offices, educational institutes and hotels, to target. Government attempts to create national cohesion and hold the country together against the pull of ethnic division. Civil-military leadership took an inclusive step to curb the menace of terrorism. In this regard, National Action Plan (NAP) along with military operations namely operation Zarb-e-Azb and Radd-ul-Fasaad were successfully launched against militant groups. However, progress is still awaited on many targets of the NAP.

Indoctrination

Brainwashing of young people is a major tactic of terrorists. Several suicide bombers, caught alive, revealed about the existence of Pakistani Taliban schools, established to brainwash youth. They kidnapped teenagers from schools, streets or parks and teach them that God has chosen them for

¹¹ Syed Ali Shah, “20 killed, 48 injured in attack targeting Hazara community in Quetta” *Dawn*, April 12, 2019.

¹² Eric Rosand, “In strategies to counter violent extremism, politics often trump evidence” (May 6, 2019), available at <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2019/05/06/in-strategies-to-counter-violent-extremism-politics-often-trumps-evidence/>

¹³ George Arnett, “Religious extremism main cause of terrorism” *The Guardian*, (November 18, 2014), <https://www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/2014/nov/18/religious-extremism-main-cause-of-terrorism-according-to-report>

suicide attacks and they cannot refuse to carry out suicide attacks.¹⁴

The general view of terrorism is that young minds are indoctrinated in a particular environment and in the name of religion, hate is imparted by masterminds.¹⁵ This practice was started in 1979 when Pakistan, as an ally of the US and frontline state against the Soviets, gave its land to the US and other allies to promote *Jihadi* culture. It is apt to say that many people were brainwashed during the Soviet Union's intervention in Afghanistan and after the end of the war, they continued their activities for the cause of Islam.¹⁶ The religious schools (commonly referred to as *madaris*) were built to train fighters. They were instilled with a religious zeal to throw out non-believers from Afghanistan and also brought together the language of *jihad* in Pakistan.¹⁷ With the end of the Cold War, the US started to change its tone toward Pakistan. Since then, the US officials have been accusing Pakistan of playing a double game. However, Pakistan's efforts to cope up with the evil of terrorism are remarkable as it has adopted new encounters and coordinated mechanisms. The connection between remote radicalisation has also been found, therefore, it was becoming harder to detect real culprits. The new coordinated mechanisms to counter terrorism between bordering states have been introduced such as Quadrilateral Cooperation and Coordination Mechanism (QCCM). Political and military cooperation between states has proven successful. Since the use of technology is becoming prevalent in society and has made evil use of technology easier as the most fanatical religious extremists use the internet.¹⁸ The Internet is an effective tool for terrorists, they use online chat rooms to share information, spread propaganda, coordinate attacks, raise

¹⁴ Musa Khan Jalalzai, *Whose Army? Afghanistan's Future and the Blueprint for Civil War* (New York: Algora Publishing, 2014), 89-93.

¹⁵ Jessica Trisko Darden, "Tackling Terrorists' Exploitation of Youth" American Enterprise Institute. (May 2019), 1. <https://www.un.org/sexualviolenceinconflict/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/report/tackling-terrorists-exploitation-of-youth/Tackling-Terrorists-Exploitation-of-Youth.pdf>

¹⁶ Hassan Abbas, *Pakistan's Drift into Extremism*....12.

¹⁷ Samina Yasmin, *Jihad and Dawah: Evolving Narratives of Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jamat Ud Dawah* (London: Hurst & Company, 2017), 21.

¹⁸ Jame A. Lewis, "The Internet and Terrorism" *Proceedings of the Annual Meeting (American Society of International Law, Cambridge University Press)* Vol. 99 (March 30-April 2, 2005), 112.

funds, and to recruit more people.¹⁹ Terrorist propaganda on the internet along with radicalisation is playing the potent role in changing young minds as they are being used remotely. Moreover, this contributes to fast-growing religious intolerance causing fearful environment and fulfilling terrorists' objectives. Hence, the main cause behind the hampering of Pakistan's ability to stop rebels is the indoctrination of its own fighting forces within its own borders.²⁰

The terror itself has brought psychological problems ranging from individuals to society.²¹ Growing terror in the hearts of the people is causing depression, distress and confusion. Most people have acquired the sense of insecurity and they feel unsafe in performing normal activities because they watch or hear news about growing terrorism in different cities. Particularly people who have lost their family members or friends in these terrorist activities are suffering more and many who have closely witnessed the suicide bombings are in severe disturbance. Our youngsters' minds need fresh thoughts and modern education to shun plagued idea of becoming violent.

Political Aspect

In case of Pakistan, political leaders usually identify the problem, but they have remained weak in creative thinking. A path of military rule employed by President Ayub Khan (1958-1969), President Zia-ul-Haq (1977-1988) and President Pervez Musharraf (1999-2008), caused resentment in many fundamentalist groups. Historically speaking, the evolving political instability, formation of splintered jihadist groups and socio-economic downfall played the vital role. The fragile situation was conducive for outsiders to use the land of Pakistan and this prepared breeding grounds for terrorists. During the time of President Zia-ul-Haq, the *Jihadists* were

¹⁹ Eben Kaplan, "Terrorists and the Internet", *Council on Foreign Relations* (January 8, 2009), <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/terrorists-and-internet>

²⁰ Shuja Nawaz, "The Pakistan Army and its Role in FATA", *Combating Terrorism Center*, Vol.2, Issue 1 (January 2009), <https://ctc.usma.edu/the-pakistan-army-and-its-role-in-fata/>

²¹ "Effects of terrorism: A Trauma and Victimological Perspective" United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes UNDOC (July 2018), <https://www.unodc.org/e4j/en/terrorism/module-14/key-issues/effects-of-terrorism.html>

nurtured to fight with Soviets in Afghanistan, but the ideological and religious orientation became so strong in Pakistan. A special report of Dawn in 2017 mentioned; “His tenure saw the state-sponsored export of Islamic jihad to several parts of the world”.²²

Nearly a decade later, another military rule started, General Pervez Musharraf took control as the chief executive. Pakistan became an ally of the US in the WoT and President Musharraf took bold steps by banning insurgent outfits, arresting leaders of insurgent organizations, cut off their funds and expunged radical elements. Certainly, at that time the military leadership showed its commitment to root out terrorism from Pakistan.

The tragic incident of December 16, 2014, in which ostensibly the *Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan* (TTP) attacked Army Public School (APS) in Peshawar, pushed the government to take some serious actions. Thus, the twenty-point National Action Plan (NAP), as a new counter-terrorism strategy, was adopted by the civilian government. The Prime Minister and the Army Chief of Pakistan vowed to adopt an iron fist policy against all terror groups. However, after six months, NAP appeared as a hastily-conceived wish-list formulated during a crisis time, it was not a coherent strategy.²³

Weak Law and Enforcement

Weak states have weak law enforcement systems, which spurs violent behaviours in society. In this way, hostile forces can easily apply subversive techniques to achieve their objectives. Weak governments have had a poor record in combating terrorism because of dishonest rulers.²⁴ The political and economic systems are soft targets to implode society and breach

²² S. Akbar Zaidi, “Despotic Islamization” Special Report: Darkness Descends 1977-1988, Dawn, November 01, 2017.

²³ “Revisiting Counter-terrorism Strategies in Pakistan: Opportunities and Pitfalls, Crisis Group”, *Report NO 271/ Asia*, (July 22, 2015). <https://www.crisisgroup.org/asia/south-asia/pakistan/revisiting-counter-terrorism-strategies-pakistan-opportunities-and-pitfalls>

²⁴ Douglas Johnston, Andrew McDonnell, Henry Burbridge, James Patton, Countering Violent Religious Extremism In Pakistan Strategies For Engaging Conservative Muslims”, International Center for Religion and Diplomacy, DC, (March 2016), 15.

national cohesion. After the 9/11 incident with the rising terrorist attacks, Pakistan was so weak in providing security to public and law enforcement agencies (LEAs), it

remained unable to provide protection to the elites of the country. Due to weak laws, individuals involved in terrorism activities were set free by courts on the basis of lack of evidence.

Public places such as schools, markets, hospitals and worship places had remained their favourite marks. The terrorist attacks on Army Public School in 2014 with 145 killings,²⁵ veered the Government of Pakistan to introduce new strict laws to beat up terrorism such as National Internal Security Policy (NISP)-enforcement of this policy was assigned to NACTA.²⁶ It was realised that the best defence of a country would be achieved by improving the legitimacy of the state through the practice of rule of law at the national level. Rule of law should be the building of strong judicial institutions and cultures, a fair and effective criminal justice system, expanding human rights education and fighting corruption.²⁷

Media as a Factor

Media has become an indispensable tool of official *communiqué* and an instrument of conveying public voices to authorities. Indeed, media can bring both positive and negative effects. Its positive use can transmit ethics and moral values. Communication revolution has created a host of virtual communities.²⁸ However, the continuous advancement of media has given birth to insecurity and social vulnerabilities because of the spread of counterfeit news. Several stories of media are admired because both users and handlers are young people and stories displaying youths are

²⁵ Sophia Saifi and Greg Botelho, "In Pakistan school attack, Taliban terrorists kill 145, mostly children", *CNN*, (December 17, 2014), <https://edition.cnn.com/2014/12/16/world/asia/pakistan-peshawar-school-attack/index.html>

²⁶ Douglas Johnston, Andrew McDonnell, Henry Burbridge, James Patton, Countering Violent Religious Extremism In Pakistan Strategies For Engaging Conservative Muslims", International Center for Religion and Diplomacy, DC, (March 2016), 9.

²⁷ Ted Piccone, "Democracy and Terrorism" Brookings; *Policy Brief*, (September 2017), https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/fp_20170905_democracy_terrorism.pdf

²⁸ Jonathan R. White, *Terrorism and Homeland Security* (Boston: Cengage Learning, 2017), 80.

popular too. New communication channels are prevalent in the society and contributing to forming different mind-sets.

Mostly young people are the users of social media. Their average ages are 18 to 35 years, however, adults' number is increasing too.²⁹ Generally, youth is the most vulnerable target of media programming as electronic media imprints lasting effects on young minds. Glorification of violence and the stories of conflict in TV talk shows project an emotional public sphere.³⁰

Keeping in view the popularity of media in public, terror mongers have also started to use it. Terrorists are primarily interested in the number of viewers. The response of the viewers is the key for them and victims are insignificant. To get the attention of the public through media is their main goal and the selection of the area and media coverage of terrorist incidents is advantageous for them as it gives more ratings to TV channels. Terrorists want to make their actions legitimate and media inattentively gives sometimes their anticipated station. Given this factor, terrorists conduct attacks shrewdly with full cognizance of the impact of media reporting. The media coverage of Lal Masjid during operation in July 2007, terrorist attacks on the memorial of Shahbaz Qalandar in early 2017 and Army Public school in December 2014 are a few examples to refer to.

Poverty, Unemployment and Dissatisfaction

The relationship between terrorism and unemployment is complex. It comes under the broader theme of globalisation, as the enlarged income gap between the rich and the poor is too much because of globalisation. Nevertheless, material deprivation and socioeconomic struggle are the

²⁹ "Social Media Fact Sheet", *Pew Research Center: Internet and Technology* (January 12, 2017). Retrieved September 13, 2017, www.pewinternet.org/fact-sheet/social-media/.

³⁰ N. Lorenzo-Dus, *Television Discourse: Analyzing Language in the Media* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 5.

sources of social tensions and resentment among the less privileged.³¹ The unemployed poor people who cannot afford food and hardly fulfil the basic needs of life usually become violent and forget respect, tolerance and other moral values of life. Although poverty is not directly the cause of terrorism,³² but it generates hate, which has consequences. Former president of the US George W. Bush is relevant in this regard, as he once said, “we fight against poverty because hope is an answer to terror.”³³

Poverty breeds social upheaval, creates illegal immigrants influx, and connects with violence, which may lead to terrorism. Therefore, reasons for mobilisation of terrorists can be economic.³⁴ The extremist forces are opportunists and exploit the emotional state of food insecure people. During 2004-16 Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) had the lowest percentage of food security. Study showed food insecurity rate is generally high in all provinces, but specifically high in Balochistan and Sindh.³⁵ Hence, the people of these areas are easy prey for the real culprits as they are exciting the unwaged youth to commit atrocious offences such as suicide attacks against the harmless public.

An emerging class in Pakistan is of diaspora and some educated young people who are dissatisfied with the extant political, social, and economic system of Pakistan, thinking that their rights are being violated. Some are rightful in getting the position in offices, but they are deprived because of the confiscation of certain posts by influential groups, this deprivation triggers youth to join fanatic parties.

³¹ Chris E. Stout ed., *The Psychology of Terrorism: Theoretical Understandings and Perspective* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 2002), 69.

³² A Kruger & J. Maleckova, “Education, Poverty and Terrorism: Is there a Causal Connection? *Journal of Economic Perspective* 17, No.4, (2003), 119-144

³³ *George W. Bush’s Speech in Monterrey, Mexico*, (March 22, 2002).

³⁴ Andrej Zwitter, *Human Security, Law and the Prevention of Terrorism*, (Taylor & Francis, 2015), 97.

³⁵ Adeeba Ishaq, Mahmood Khalid and Eatnaz Ahmad, “Food Insecurity in Pakistan: A Region-Wise Analysis of Trends” *Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) Working Papers* 157, Islamabad (September 2018), 22.

Educational System and Monopoly of Elites

The extreme poverty and poor educational system is stuck with the old structure. Many parents are bound to send their children to *madrassahs* (a school which teaches Islamic curriculum with no teachings of science and technology). Poor educational systems contribute to the growing number of *Jihadists*.³⁶ Old-fashioned *madrassahs* are not harmonised with modern trends. Therefore, their graduates cannot compete at the global level. A survey conducted in Pakistan has indicated that a minority of the religious schools have promoted extremist view of Islam.³⁷ *Madaris* constitute almost 10.8 per cent of all educational institutions in Pakistan.³⁸ Government has taken several steps to reform *madrassahs* in Pakistan, but the efforts remained insufficient and futile. "In the early 2000s, President Musharraf passed several reform initiatives; including the Voluntary Registration and Regulation Ordinance of 2002 and a five-year \$113 million

plan to introduce secular subjects into the *madrassah* curriculum. These efforts gained little traction and received insufficient funding and support".³⁹ In order to bring harmonised religious education with mainstream education system, the Government of Pakistan has announced recently that all the registered *madrassahs* would be placed under the education ministry.⁴⁰ However, not all the *madaris* are registered and many of them are being tagged in far-flung districts of Sindh and KP by NACTA.⁴¹ These efforts are intended to teach respect toward other religions and sects.

³⁶ Peter A. Olsson MD, *the Making of a Homegrown Terrorist: Brainwashing Rebels in Search of a Cause* (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2014), 82.

³⁷ Bano, M. "Beyond politics: the reality of a deobandi madrasa in Pakistan". *Journal of Islamic studies*, Vol 18, Issue 1, (2007) 43–68.

³⁸ Mohin Bashir and Shoaib Ul Haq, "Why madrassah education reforms don't work in Pakistan" *Third World Quarterly*, Volume 40, Issue 3, Taylor and Francis Online, (March 21, 2019), <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/01436597.2019.1570820>

³⁹ Douglas Johnston, Andrew MCDonnell, Henry Burbridge, James Patton, *Countering Violent Religious Extremism In Pakistan Strategies For Engaging Conservative Muslims*, International Center for Religion and Diplomacy, DC, (March 2016), 8.

⁴⁰ Adil Tanoli, "Registered madrassahs to be placed under education ministry: NACTA", (April 30, 2019)

⁴¹ Ibid.

The traditional elites have monopolised power in Pakistan for almost 70 years and the rest of the population suffered discrimination, whereas, landlords used poor population as second-fiddle. The frustration is erupting and turning into extremism as local elites have hampered the path of advancement. The absence of opportunity caused by the stranglehold of the elites in all provinces of Pakistan gave birth to frustration.

It has been observed that due to the monopoly of the political elites over certain decisions of development and social justice, they were deemed responsible for the violation of human rights. From 2006 to 2009, several targeted attacks were carried out against the political elites, for instance, in December 2007, the former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto was targeted, in September 2008, the then Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gilani was attacked⁴² and several other incidents took place. The end of dissatisfaction is possible through equitable distribution of resources. It is considered that liberal democracy promotes the system of rule of law, which serves as an effective conflict resolution mechanism and experiences fewer activities of terrorism.⁴³ Hence, the fusion of religion, modern teaching, and international languages are required to handle a greater variety of occupations.

Anti-American Sentiments

The wave of hatred was visible against the US due to its discriminate behaviour.⁴⁴ It is generally perceived in Pakistan that the US wants to divide the Islamic world and to impose American culture on Muslim societies,⁴⁵ which is sowing the seed of hatred in general public. Another important factor of anti-American sentiment is the US-India nexus, the growing Indo-US relations are furthering the exasperation.

⁴² Muhammad Feyyaz, "Conceptualising Terrorism Trend Patterns in Pakistan: an Empirical Perspective", *Respective on Terrorism; Terrorism Research Institute* (February 2013), 82.

⁴³ Seung Whan Choi, "Fighting Terrorism through the Rule of Law?" *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol.54, No.6 (December 2010), 944.

⁴⁴ James Kitfield, "Despite The Millions America Spent Trying To Win Them Over, Most Pakistanis Still Hate The US", *The Atlantic*, (June 30, 2012), <https://www.businessinsider.com/despite-spending-millions-to-win-the-over-most-pakistanis-still-hate-america-2012-6>

⁴⁵ Madiha Afzal, *Pakistan under Siege: Extremism, Society, and the State* (Washington D.C: The Brookings Institution, 2018), 8.

Drone attacks caused civilian casualties more than what has been televised and even most of them (victims) were not the actual culprits.⁴⁶ The continuity of such attacks on our land set off fear in public and to some extent distancing common people from the government. The changed attitude of the US toward Pakistan is a contributing factor of the general public hatred toward the US. The Salala incident in 2011, had added fuel to the fire. Apt to say that the West and Pakistan have always been different in identifying the agents of terrorism.⁴⁷ Ever since Pakistan is supporting the US-led WoT and sacrificed a lot, the US has always wanted Pakistan to do more. President Trump is ignoring Pakistan's efforts toward regional peace and siding with India. Moreover, one of the significant American vindictive actions against Pakistan since 2001 is the decision of Trump administration to suspend military aid to Pakistan⁴⁸ which has aggravated the situation.

The series of suicide bombings has killed a large number of innocent civilians and hindered the pace of economic growth which was already slow. The below-given chart shows an increasing number of casualties from 2001 to 2015 and 2016 to 2018.

⁴⁶ Marina Fang, "Nearly 90 Percent of People Killed in Recent Drone Strikes Were Not the Target", *Huffpost*, (October 15, 2015). www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/civilian-deaths-drone-strikes_us_561fafa2e4b028dd7ea6c4ff

⁴⁷ Marvin G. Weinbaum, "Militancy and Extremism in Pakistan: A US Perspective" in Moeed Yusuf ed., *Pakistan's Counterterrorism Challenge* (George Town University Press, 2014).

⁴⁸ Vanda Felbab-Brown, "Order From Chaos", *Brookings*, (January 5, 2018), <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2018/01/05/why-pakistan-supports-terrorist-groups-and-why-the-us-finds-it-so-hard-to-induce-change/>

	Civilians	Security Force Personnel	Terrorists/ Insurgents	Total
2000	45	0	0	45
2001	29	9	0	38
2002	88	7	44	139
2003	140	24	25	189
2004	435	184	244	863
2005	430	81	137	648
2006	608	325	538	1471
2007	1522	597	1479	3598
2008	2155	654	3906	6715
2009	2324	991	8389	11704
2010	1796	469	5170	7435
2011	2738	765	2800	6303
2012	3007	732	2472	6211
2013	3001	676	1702	5379
2014	1781	533	3182	5496
2015	940	339	2403	3682
2016	612	293	898	1803
2017	540	208	512	1260
2018	369	165	157	691
2019	97	75	56	228
Total*	22657	7127	34114	63898

Table 1 Fatalities in Terrorist Violence in Pakistan 2000-2019 (Data till June 23, 2019)⁴⁹

Afghanistan Border and Tribal Areas of Pakistan

The unmanaged porous border between Pakistan and Afghanistan has been the main cause of tension and invited foreign powers in the region. This porous border poses serious threats to Pakistan's internal stability as Islamist terror outfits nailed their foothold in the tribal areas of Pakistan, which gradually became the source of perennial worry for

⁴⁹ "South Asia Terrorism Portal (SATP)", *Institute for Conflict Management (ICM)*, www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/pakistan/database/casualties.htm

Pakistan. The continuous stay of the US forces in the region together with poor governance, steered militancy across much of the region and had produced fertile grounds for the protracted instability including terrorist attacks in Pakistan.

A great number of people have become homeless due to drone attacks and some have lost their assets. People seeking shelter in the settled areas of Pakistan, remained dissatisfied due to poor coordination of the government.⁵⁰ Eventually, this encouraged people to join anti-state actors as resentment. Apt to say that domestically, Pakistan is facing an undesirable situation largely due to the negligence of the government. This has also alienated people and made them deprived.

Several ethno-nationalist militant groups are operating from across Pak-Afghan border and Pak-Iran border. Due to porous nature of border between Pakistan and Afghanistan, other problems such as human trafficking, cross-border terrorism and drug trafficking have made the situation worse. In past, uncontrolled movement of people due to porous border has made authorities helpless. The tribal areas of Pakistan were considered the safe haven for terrorists. It was a recruiting and training ground for the Afghan Taliban.⁵¹

Neither Pakistan nor Afghanistan would be capable of eliminating hideouts of terrorists without cooperation of each other.⁵² In an effort to ease tensions and improve security, Pakistan struggles to manage the issue internally and externally. Externally, Pakistan is constructing the fence along its porous 1,500-mile border with Afghanistan.⁵³ Pakistan is using a proper mechanism to manage border over which Afghanistan is showing its unhappiness. Internally, with several new laws, the merger of Federally

⁵⁰ Uzair M. Younus, "Pakistan's IDP Problem", *Foreign Policy*, (January 16, 2015), <https://foreignpolicy.com/2015/01/16/pakistans-idp-problem/>

⁵¹ Daniel Seth Markey, *Securing Pakistan's Tribal Belt* (Council on Foreign Relations, 2008), 3.

⁵² Franz J. Marty, "Afghan-Pakistani Cross-Border Terrorism Cuts Both Ways", *The Diplomat*, (April 09, 2018), <https://thediplomat.com/2018/04/afghan-pakistani-cross-border-terrorism-cuts-both-ways/>

⁵³ Mushtaq Yusufzai, Francis Whittaker, Wajahat S. Khan and Ahmed Mengli, "Pakistan is building a fence along border with Afghanistan", *NBC News*, (May 17, 2018), <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/pakistan-building-fence-along-border-afghanistan-n873291>

Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) into KP is another explicit instance to bring peace to the region. However, Pakistani efforts are being seen with suspicion by sub-nationalist groups within Pakistan and also disparaged by Afghanistan.

Nevertheless, if Pakistan and Afghanistan do not settle their issues bilaterally, the results would be detrimental at local and regional levels. Mutual trust and cooperation in the management of their border would mitigate tension. Moreover, legitimate travel and commerce can contribute to harbouring regional peace.

The Way Forward

In view of the internal vulnerabilities, some initiatives are required along with the on-going efforts to curb terrorism. Possible remedies could include:

- Modern, technical, empirical and research oriented knowledge must be introduced in the universities and all educational institutions. Textbooks must be rewritten, harmonising international standards and Islam. For this, the assistance of intellectuals, technical and skilled people are required.
- Institutional decay must be stopped, and a transparent system should be introduced to mitigate corruption. In order to bring transparency, accountability and separation of powers without prejudices are the antidotes.
- Although, the formation of new institutions and laws to cope up with the challenges and military operations to root out terrorism are commendable. Yet, efforts should be made to eliminate poverty and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) must be taken as an economic opening as it would steer a lot of employment opportunities.
- An institution is required to identify the loopholes in the on-going

efforts of curbing terrorism and proposals of remedies. In this regard, international trends and developments must be taken into consideration.

- Better line of communication with Afghanistan must remain intact; it would eventually lead to the end of the menace of terrorism.
- Citizens of Pakistan should be persuaded to propagate a pluralist culture of Pakistan to promote the good image of the country. Only educated people will be helpful in shunning the misconstrued beliefs.
- The on-going reforms for *madrassahs* must be continued until the harmonisation with the modern education system. The major religious groups should be called together to settle down their issues and they all should talk about problem-solving methods.
- To set an example for extremists, doors for reconciliation must remain open. They must be offered an option of apology first and alternate iron fist policy must be followed
- Role of media is very important to shun terrorist activities in Pakistan. Media should display responsible behaviour while broadcasting news stories about terrorist activities and killing of the innocent people because this can serve the terrorist cause. The message of tolerance, respect and morality must be the language of electronic and print media.
- Promotion of entertainment programs, celebrations of festivals, recreational activities must be increased to end suffocation in the society.
- While making policies to counter terrorism, merely current arrangements are not enough. To meet the present and forthcoming requirements of the security forces, a perpetual line with long-term planning will return required results. It is essential to respect human rights and freedom while certifying the internal

security.

- Youth programmes and counselling centres must be established at the national level. Moreover, equal opportunities for youngsters will be helpful in mitigating violent elements in the society.
- Role of political parties is very important to curb terrorism in Pakistan. They all must converge their interests on this issue. While setting aside their differences they must work together for national cohesion.
- There is a need to link the economy with science and by this means security preparedness would be more effective. Advanced technology can help investigators in identifying criminals. Technology helps in maintaining huge records and insertion of the right kind of information and it is of a greater assistance to maintain law and order.

Conclusion

Terrorism is a form of irregular warfare and it has become a parasite for Pakistan's social fabric. During the last 72 years of Pakistan's existence, the internal security environment shows that it is lacking in national cohesion and it appears that there are several reasons for societal fragmentation. Several concepts have been muddled up and transmitted into society and as a result, society is confronting an existential threat spanning from ethnicity, intolerance, snobbery and militancy.

Nevertheless, Pakistan has adopted many effective actions to combat terrorism. The deepening commitment of Pakistan can be seen in the new military offensive against terrorist hideouts and revamping of laws. Despite all human and economic losses, the country is labelled by the US as dishonest or unwilling in fighting terrorism and Pakistan is told several times to "do more." The failure of the US-led forces, after staying long in Afghanistan, the entire blame is on Pakistan for not taking action

against terrorists. This has worn the trust between the US and Pakistan's governments and triggered an international image problem for the country. Criticizing Pakistan's endeavours in fighting against terrorism is damaging to the country. We have sacrificed a lot in the on-going war on terror. Hence, national consensus and confidence in governmental efforts are the prerequisite of the accomplishment of the objectives. Although to control terrorism and other hitches related to it, efforts are going on, yet to root out terrorism without an inclusive and dynamic strategy. All national strategies to counter terrorism are different in terms of local expectations. The Government of Pakistan has therefore adopted one approach and issued the National Internal Security Policy. The term "security" has also been changed and has become so intricate. The long-term planning entails special attention to research and development and greater emphasis on integrated efforts.