

The Islamisation of Pakistan and Its Impact on Indo- Pak Relations

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Abstract

August 14, 1947, saw the birth of a new country - Pakistan. This country, contemplated as a separate home for Indian Muslims, could be viewed as: a geographic manifestation of the politics of Muslims as a minority group in the pluralistic Indian society; an expression of a community with a firm belief in a separate social order with its own political power base; and a sovereign state embodying the legacy of Islamic culture, which had developed in India for about eight hundred years¹.

The roots of radicalism and violence in Pakistan against minorities date back to March 1949 when constitution was being drafted. At the behest of the religious establishment, an Objectives Resolution was attached to the new constitution as a Preamble, it stated that the "*sovereignty over the entire universe belongs to God Almighty alone (not the people) and the authority which He has delegated to the state of Pakistan through its people for being exercised within the limits prescribed by Him, and tasks the state with the role of enabling Muslims to order their lives in both the individual and collective spheres in accordance with the teachings of Islam*"²." Thus Islam was accepted way back, as the core social and political institution in Pakistan.

KEYWORDS: Dinya, Harkat-ul-Mujahideen, Islamisation, Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Jawat-ud-Dawa, Lashkar-e-Taiba, Shariah

Introduction

Pakistan was not originally conceived as an Islamic State, and yet according to a 2009 report by the British Council, *more than seventy-five percent of Pakistanis consider themselves to be Muslims first and Pakistani nationals second*³. Moreover, a May 2011 survey by the Gilani Research Foundation, a Pakistan-based polling organisation, showed that *sixty-seven percent of Pakistanis favoured state-led Islamisation of their country*⁴. The narrative on which the identity of the country and politics are based has been constructed and crafted in such a way that even secular Muslims have contributed to both to the rise and spread of Islamisation in Pakistan⁵.

Pakistan Leadership: From Birth to 2014

Within a decade of the creation of Pakistan, Field Marshal Ayub Khan, later President, undertook Pakistan's first reforms by embracing private-sector industrialization and free-market principles, making the country one of Asia's fastest-growing economies. However, Ayub's standing began to slide post-presidential elections in 1965, amid allegations of widespread vote rigging. Moreover, it would be recalled that Pakistan had been forced to enter into a peace agreement with India to end the 1965 war, which many Pakistanis considered an embarrassing compromise. The war also resulted in increased opposition from East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) where the Awami League headed by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman sought more autonomy

for the province. Rising prices added fuel to fire resulting in nation-wide demonstrations. These agitations increased dramatically across the country from 1967 onwards. During the course of 1968, the political pressure exerted by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto through street agitations greatly weakened President Ayub Khan. Finally, seeing the writing on the wall, President Ayub wrote to General Yahya Khan (COAS) on 24 March 1969, inviting him to deal with the situation, as it was "the beyond the capacity of (civil) government to deal with the... Complex situation⁶." Though aware of the explosive situation, Yahya Khan too could not control the growing chaos⁷, with the situation going from bad to worse in East Pakistan. By 28 July 1969, President Yahya set a framework for elections that were to be held in December 1970. The general election's results truly reflected the political polarization of the country and set the stage for the revolt by East Pakistan which resulted in the creation of Bangladesh in 1971⁸.

The second attempt to transform Pakistan was just a transient phase. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto tried to gain control over the military and sought to diversify Pakistan's foreign and security policy. He aimed at nuclear weaponisation (Islamic Bomb) and introduction of a new economic order based on a combination of both Islam and socialism. But he faltered, perhaps even more dramatically than the other two. He was displaced by General Zia-ul-Haq. With American connivance, Zia indulged in yet another round of transformation, famously pursuing Islamisation and nuclear weaponisation⁹, bolstered by active support from China and Saudi Arabia. He notably damaged several of Pakistan's most important civilian institutions like the courts, the civil service and the universities.

After the death of Zia, Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif alternated in office during a decade of imperfect democracy, trying to re-create Jinnah's moderate vision of Pakistan. Benazir and Nawaz were unable to govern without interference from the intelligence and the military services, which had become powerful stake-holders in domestic politics during Zia's regime. Neither Benazir nor Sharif clamped down on the growing Islamist movements. Meanwhile, the Army, which believed that it was the caretaker of Pakistan's soul, must be continued to enjoy a free hand.

After a politically and militarily catastrophic operation in the Kargil region of Kashmir, General Pervez Musharraf seized power in a bloodless coup on October 12, 1999. He was firm on setting Pakistan on the right course under the Army's tutelage and launched yet another (the fourth round of) reform of the Pakistani state and nation.

Musharraf began to lose his grip on power because of his seeming support for an unpopular war in Afghanistan and his strategic miscalculation of Pakistani public opinion, which led him to believe that a protest by the judges and lawyers would dissipate. He, like his military predecessors had to turn to civilian politicians for moral authority after about three years of rule. Asif Ali Zardari, Benazir Bhutto's widower, was elected president on September 6, 2008, with the support of the PPP and in coalition with other secular parties, until it collapsed in January 2011. This paved the way for a civilian government under Nawaz Sharif to return to power¹⁰.

In this unseemly alternation between weak civilian governments and biased authoritarian military rule lies a catalyst for Pakistan's slow but steady drift towards Islamisation.

The Islamisation of Pakistan

Tracing the roots of Islamisation

The roots of “Islamisation” of society stretch back to the 1950s. Islamisation as an official socio-political ideology was first introduced in public life in shape of the symbols of the State. Quranic verses emblazoned on state buildings and constitutional debates about Islamic law started to emerge sometime after 1950. In 1951, Liaqat Ali Khan, aligned Pakistan’s foreign policy to the US for the whole Cold War era, who looked to Islam as a bulwark against Communism.

In 1953, AbulA'laMaududi¹¹ dedicated to converting the state of Pakistan into a Wahhabi Caliphate, instigated the country's first sectarian riots. They were led by the Jamaat-i-Islami, a back-to-the-roots party that Maududi had founded in 1943. To the credit of the then Pakistani government, they recognised that religious extremism ran counter to the liberal-democratic ideals of the country's founders. Hoping that firm action would deny the Jamaatis a platform for their agitation, the government tasked an Inquiry Commission to answer the question of just who is entitled to be called a Muslim and who is not. The Commission, comprising two of the country's most eminent jurists, summoned the leading mullahs of every known Islamic sect and school of thought and asked each to define a Muslim according to his sect's version of Islam. They came up with definitions that cancelled out each other. The jurists concluded that none of Pakistan's 70 million Muslims divided by sect would, in the eyes of one or the other mullah, qualify as Muslim. Later it became politically expedient to release Maududi, who went on to lead or instigate many more riots. With limitless funds from Saudi Arabia (and the United States), he won adherents among the bureaucracy and the merchant class. He recruited selectively among young Muslims, whom he trained and used to persecute opponents of his extremist ideology.

In 1956, Pakistan was officially renamed as the “Islamic Republic of Pakistan”. Even so, the Islamic State versus Moderate Muslim Republic discourse hung quietly in the background throughout the 1960s. During that period, the leadership of the Muslim League was bent towards the creation of a liberal modern society that embraced Islam’s universal principles. But, Islamic parties such as the Jamaat - e- Islami (JI), and the now defunct Nizam-e-Islam party, argued for a state where *Shariah* would rule.

Things started to change after the 1971 debacle, when the force of Islam was for the first time used by the Pakistan Army to patronise combative Islamist youth groups namely Al-Badar and Al-Shams, mainly consisting of young JI activists, the Islami Jamiat Taleba (IJT)¹². These groups assisted the West Pakistan Army in attacking Bengali nationalists. This was the first collaboration between the Islamists and the Army.

The burning debate that erupted after the East Pakistan catastrophe squarely revolved around the question what would keep that which remained of Pakistan together? ZA Bhutto suggested populist democracy and socialism driven by Islam. His offer was a modern version of Islam that he paraded as the new model for the struggling, post-'71 Muslim nation. The second ideological response to the question came from the Islamists (JI, JUP, JUI, etc.). They insisted that only “Shariah” would keep Pakistan together.

Then in 1973, when the second major Ahmadiya riots began, the Islamists tasted first major victory in the Country as the Bhutto regime agreed to declare the Ahmadiya community non-Muslims. Their second victory arrived in 1976-77 when Pakistan National Alliance was formed with the help of industrialists, bankers, bazaar merchants, and small-town entrepreneurs and they successfully agitated against Bhutto's "un-Islamic regime". The Jamaat remained impotent and irrelevant until rescued from oblivion by Pakistan's third military dictator, Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq, a closet Jamaati. The whole of Jamaat-i-Islami's well-oiled, well-financed machinery was deployed into helping the United States effort to destroy Soviet power through the Afghan war. Billions of dollars in American military equipment and aid were diverted into their coffers and a dedicated government department, the directorate for Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), deployed in their service at home and abroad.

Islamisation under General Zia-ul-Haq

In 1977, General Zia ul-Haq overthrew the democratic government of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and overturned almost all the state machinery into instruments of hyper-Islamisation. In General Zia's view, "*the ideology of Pakistan is Islam and only Islam. There should be no misunderstanding on this score. We should in all sincerity accept Islam as Pakistan's basic ideology ... otherwise ... this country (will) be exposed to secular ideologies.*"¹³ His policy of creating cultural bulwarks through Islamisation resulted in the radicalization of the national curricula. Therefore, in the national educational policy promulgated in 1979 by the Zia regime, the subject of "Dinya'at" (or the knowledge about religions) was replaced with "Islamia'at" (or the study of Islam only). This change had enormous consequences. In the multicultural, multi-religious society like Pakistan, the minorities were suddenly pushed out of the national curriculum and thus "Pakistaniat" began to be replaced with a fanatical concept of Islam. Zia adopted the JI's agenda: prohibitions on betting, drinking and dancing, and encouraging the usage of public flogging. Schools, offices and factories were required to offer praying space; textbooks were revised; mosques and madrassas multiplied.

The worst aspect in this context was the demagogic reengineering of the country's education curriculum. Religion as an instrument of homogenisation and control took centre-stage in educational policies.

This gradual Islamisation succeeded in creating an aura of religiosity in everyday life. But there was seemingly no improvement in morality, equality and justice. The government's edicts split society between a public life of Islamic pieties and a private life characterised by personal gain. This dichotomy is Zia's legacy. Since 1971, the State, military and the politico-religious parties have insisted on enforcing a singular ideological mind-set – "Islamic State", which created various ethnic and sectarian fissures.

The government of Zia-ul-Haq took a number of steps to eradicate non-Islamic practices from the country. He introduced various ordinances like *Zakat, Islamic Haddood, Ushr and Penal Code* in the Country. On June 20, 1980 the *Zakat and Ushr Ordinance* was promulgated to Islamize the economic system. A Shariah Council consisting of ulema was established to look into the constitutional and legal matters of the State in order to bring them in line with Islamic thought.

In the armed forces, the status of the religious teachers was raised to that of a Commissioned Officer, with a view to attract highly qualified individuals from the universities and religious institution to serve on such assignments. As the government grew further in its Islamic leanings, the numbers of mosques were increased¹⁴. Ordinance for the sanctity of Ramazan was introduced to pay reverence to the holy month of Ramazan¹⁵. A program to ensure the regularity of prayers called the Nizam-i-Salaat was launched by General Zia himself. Zia's Government introduced the *Haddood Ordinance* under which the punishments ordained by the Holy Quran or Sunnah on the use of liquor, theft, adultery and *qazf* (false accusation of *zina* (extramarital sex)), a culprit could be sentenced to lashing, life imprisonment and in some cases, death by stoning¹⁶. The Islamic laws of Zia also incorporated laws for women. Thus, for the first time, a woman could be flogged for adultery. Another law, The Law of Evidence, under the Shariah laws proposed that the testimony of a woman was not equal to that of a man. The status of women was thus arbitrarily cut in half by Zia. However, the lack of consensus among the religious authorities over the law combined with countrywide protests forced Zia to hold back on imposing the Shariah law on the Country. General Zia-ul-Haq wanted to make Pakistan the citadel of Islam so that it could play an honourable and prominent role for the Islamic world.

In 1979, after the USSR invaded Afghanistan, Pakistan started fighting a long proxy war, fuelled by the American dollars and arms. At that time, American think-tanks and many NGOs were actively shaping Pakistan's national policies because they needed a whole generation of jihadists. They served the American global agenda well but began to play havoc with Pakistan's social order after the end of jihad in Afghanistan. Sectarian killings became rampant; the returning jihadists from Afghanistan waged jihad against 'lesser' Muslims and non-Muslims alike.

The Significance of 1979

No single year has been more significant for the Islamic world than 1979. Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Iran were epicentres as well as tributaries, and confluences of that year.

The Iranian Revolution, which immediately changed the strategic landscape, marked the beginning of the year. In April 1979, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, was executed by Zia ul-Haq in Pakistan. This was followed by 11-year Army rule that, set in motion the process of the Islamisation of the Country. With the coming together of two of the three 'A's of Pakistan - Allah and Army - a religiously denominated national security doctrine that turned Pakistan's regional policy into a jihad, manifested itself.

In November 1979, the holy sites in Mecca were occupied by an anti-monarchy group. False rumours that American forces had entered these sites led to the burning of the US Embassy in Islamabad and the start of a wave of anti-Americanism in Pakistan that already had been incited by a variety of other reasons. Slowly but gradually, Pakistan set foot on a national vision that made it vulnerable to political Islam.

The year's most consequential event occurred in December, when Soviet forces invaded Afghanistan. The US-led jihad against the Soviets in Afghanistan, assisted by Zia ul-Haq, set the foundation of an extremist religious infrastructure that not only served US strategic interests but also helped other Islamic countries and propelled the Saudi-Iranian rivalry. New meaning to the concepts of war, conflict, and jihad were

given by Zia. Jihad became an offensive war. Thus Pakistani-style jihadist Islam was born during Zia's time, spawning a whole generation of militants.

Why the Islamisation of Pakistan was Perhaps Inevitable

The evolution of Islamic politics and an Islamic national identity within the country has been consistently encouraged and enforced by state policy. One of the important challenges facing the Country's founders was that each one of Pakistan's principal ethnic groups overlapped and extended into neighbouring countries. Without a common national identity, there was little reason why the Country should prefer to be Pakistani and why the country as a whole should cohere¹⁷.

The solution offered was to emphasize the shared Islamic religion of all of Pakistan's peoples over other attributes of national distinctiveness. This desire to create "one nation, one language, one religion" (a common slogan in Pakistani political life) has manifested itself in an effort to suppress local, ethno-linguistic identities by the state and a related effort to replace these identities with a national identity rooted in Islam. Further, Pakistan had inherited a shared common history and deep cultural linkages with India. The new country thus had little history of its own to appeal.

It must also be noted that the partition of the British Raj into India and Pakistan in 1947, separated the new Pakistani state from the heart of the historical Muslim empire in South Asia (undivided India), which later became part of predominantly Hindu India. Pakistan had little within its new territory to connect its people to the rich cultural heritage of South Asian Islamic traditions. The fact that more than 33% of South Asia's Muslims remained in India after partition meant that Pakistan from the beginning was hard put to justify itself as the homeland for South Asia's Muslims. Pakistani efforts to construct an Islamic nationalist identity were complicated further in 1971, when an additional one-third of South Asia's Muslims sought autonomy from Pakistan and created the separate country of Bangladesh.

The makers of Pakistani nationalist identity decided to craft a new historical narrative which supported Pakistan's modern ambitions and identity thereby justifying Pakistan's. Constructing a new national ideology thus involved fabricating an entirely new historical narrative. The official history of Pakistan reinforces the popular belief that the Country wasn't created in 1947, but rather twelve centuries earlier when Islam was first introduced to India as a result of the annexation of Sindh in 712 AD by the Arab-Muslim Umayyad Empire. The shared history of the peoples of South Asia has been rewritten in Pakistan's school curricula to stress the fundamental difference and divergence between Hindus and Muslims. The thirteen centuries since the conquest of Sindh are described in Pakistani school textbooks as the struggle of Muslims to maintain their distinctiveness, and the creation of an independent Pakistan is seen as the culmination of that struggle.

This ideology-based narrative has been championed both by secular as well as religious elements in Pakistan and the "Pakistan Studies" curriculum that is based on this narrative is taught in secular schools as well as religious establishments¹⁸.

Despite the history of Pakistan, each one of the country's constitution and even the legal framework orders adopted under military rule - has consistently reaffirmed the Islamic identity of the state and asserted that no law in the country should contravene any of the tenets of Islam. The harshest policies of Islamisation took place under

General Zia, who oversaw a broad-based effort to reorder Pakistani society according to a new Islamic vision.

During General Zia's rule, it became the norm to treat a religious degree from a madrassa as an equivalent of the professional and academic degrees awarded by modern universities and colleges. This indoctrination led this traditionally secular and liberal group of professionals to become ever more supportive of Islamist principles shaping government policy.

The Pakistani military and its culture were also fundamentally transformed by General Zia's Islamisation policies. Pakistani military was to serve as the "guardian" of both the "ideological as well as geographical frontiers" of the country¹⁹. The military thus became an increasingly religious and ideologically-driven organization. For example, in August 2009, on the eve of Pakistan's 62nd Independence Anniversary, the then Chief of Army Staff General Ashfaq Pervez Kayani stated that "*Islam is the soul and spirit of Pakistan. It is our strength and we will always be an Islamic republic.*"²⁰ In February 2010, General Kayani stated that his views are "India-centric"²¹ reflecting the common view within the Pakistan army that India is the primary national security threat²². This perception has clearly been reinforced by Pakistan's Islam-based ideology.

Another crucial factor which merits consideration is the growing "Talibanisation" of Pakistan which played and continues to play a role in influencing the initiative towards Islamisation²³. The proliferation of madrassas in the country resulted in expanding the fundamentalist constituency. While this segment of the population has over the years proved ineffective as a vehicle to mobilise ballot power, it possesses "street" power against political regimes. However, HK Dua opines that Sharif's Islamisation could be attributed to the "*fear that Islamic militancy will undermine his power base*"²⁴. "Almost every leader, political or military, understands this reality and tends to keep this fundamentalist constituency on the right side, if only to avoid any trouble for himself.

The other problem which has plagued Pakistan is sectarian violence which drastically increased, especially in the Sindh province. Sharif opined that, the imposition of Islamic rule would help to serve as a bulwark against this sectarian violence tearing apart the social fabric of the country. The Prime Minister reportedly said that he "*can no longer sit idle following rampant incidents of terrorism, lawlessness, injustice, corruption and land mismanagement*" and declared that the time has come to take action²⁵.

In this political backdrop, in 1998 the US missile strikes on Afghanistan took place and helped to aggravate the political situation which pushed Pakistan further towards Islamisation. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif first denied any prior knowledge of the US military action and thereafter altered his version after the Chief of Army Staff publicly stated that he had personally informed the PM of the development. Soon after, the Director General of the Intelligence Bureau and the Chief Secretary of NWFP were sacked for their public statements that the missiles had landed on Pakistani soil²⁶. The fallout of the entire episode was a government tottering on the verge of collapse. Moreover, in the same time-frame, the MQM proclaimed its intentions to break with the PML (N) led coalition. Thus probably political expediency took precedence, and PM Nawaz Sharif, announced his plans for

Islamisation (religious rule) on August 28, 1998, without however, spelling out his rationale or intentions for doing so.

For Pakistan, in the post-Chagai (nuclear tests) period (1998), plagued with an economic crisis, the Islamic card came in handy to strengthen its religious linkages with the oil-rich West Asian states. It was felt that this initiative would provide Pakistan the appropriate credentials to approach these countries for financial support to help overcome its economic setback accelerated by the US sanctions following nuclear tests.

Fall outs of Islamisation of Pakistan:

The impact of the government's use of Islamist groups to suppress non-Islamic identities is clearly visible in Pakistan today. In 1947, non-Muslim minorities including Ahmadiyas, Hindus, Christians, Sikhs, and Parsees accounted for 25% of Pakistan's entire population; this number had shrunk to five percent of the country's population by 2010. Hindus and Christians together comprise around four percent of the Pakistani population. While the Hindu's are discriminated on religious grounds, the conflicted relations between India and Pakistan have also caused them to be treated as 'fifth columnists' and potential enemies of the state. The Christian minority was traditionally tolerated in Pakistan, being followers of the "book" (Bible) just as Muslims adhered to the Quran. However, attacks on Christians have escalated over the last few decades²⁷.

Meanwhile, in the foreign policy arena, Islamist groups and their militant off-shoots have helped the Pakistani state fight asymmetrical covert wars with both of Pakistan's immediate neighbours, India and Afghanistan. A majority of the Islamist militant groups operating in India's Kashmir Valley have ties with Pakistani Islamist groups, and Pakistan's military-intelligence establishment views these groups as proxies to help suppress a greater adversarial neighbour. As a leading Pakistani scholar, Khaled Ahmed states, "*Intolerance is embedded in the evolution of the Islamic state and that is the foundation of Pakistani intolerance*"²⁸. Opposing "Hindu India" has become a defining feature of the Pakistani Islamic nationalist narrative. Without an identity that is firmly anti-Indian, Pakistan's leaders fear their country will be reabsorbed within a greater Indian identity - with potentially irreversible political and strategic consequences. As Khaled Ahmed observed in 2008, "*It appears natural to people that to be 'Pakistani' you have to be anti-Hindu*".

Ideology and Politics:

With fanatics occupying the public sphere, secular or non-religious parties have more or less been edged out in Pakistan. The entire character of a nation now appears distorted. The spirit of tolerance has all but disappeared. Politicians, who might remotely have threatened the Army's grip over the national polity, have been pushed aside or obliged to make unnatural alliances with the mullahs simply to survive in the public consciousness.

While Muslims wage war on each other for alleged "deviations" from the "true path", non-Muslims are inevitably targeted for one reason or the other divesting them of what little they possess in terms of livelihood, human rights and property.

According to Pakistan's Human Rights Commission, *violence continues to escalate in every sphere*. The Commission cites reports from all four Pakistani provinces and federally-administered tribal areas of deaths in "fake encounters" (set-ups by the police), daylight robberies, disappearances and police refusing to register complaints. In Sindh, feudal lords, with the help of armed thugs, have established fiefdoms within which the law does not prevail.

With the official justice system close to breakdown, make shift systems are appearing in remote areas. Impromptu tribal jirgas (councils) increasingly determine the fate of offenders. Women are the most vulnerable. The Rights Commission also pours scorn on government claims of economic growth. Thirty-five percent of the working population lives below the poverty line. There are no guarantees of access to work. The quality of education and the increased hold of Taliban make learning less and less meaningful. Lack of job opportunities is made worse by the practice of appointing serving or retired military men to posts previously held by civilians. The military's hold over private business has also tightened. The government is most of the time either a party to the iniquitous state of affairs or a helpless spectator.

Like Pakistan's foreign policy, the national curricula, introduced mainly by the Zia regime and perpetuated by the successive regimes thereafter, follows certain cardinal principles, which are as follows:-

- (a) That India is a perennial threat to Pakistan's existence.
- (b) That Islam is the only cementing force that can keep Pakistanis united since their cultural differentiation is too obvious and therefore unpalatable for the ruling elite.
- (c) That the military is the second holy power (after Islam) that binds Pakistan together and a guarantor of its existence.
- (d) That Pakistan belongs to the Ummah, especially the Middle East, and not to the South Asian cultural history marked by diversity and plurality.

The religious establishment was deliberately strengthened by successive governments for political expediencies. Consequently, since the Russian occupation of Afghanistan, thousands of madrassa students (or Taliban) were employed to fight in the Afghan wars. The disgruntled and disillusioned jihadists, returning from Afghanistan turned against what they perceived as the enemies of Islam in Pakistan. It explains the large scale sectarian killings that continue even today in almost all parts of Pakistan.

As early as 1956 Hans Morgenthau presciently noted, "*Pakistan is not a nation and hardly a state. It has no justification in history, ethnic origin, language, civilization, or the consciousness of those who make up its population. Thus it is hard to see how anything but a miracle, or else a revival of religious fanaticism, will assure Pakistan's future*"²⁹."

Pakistan's early generation wanted to build their nation on the basis of Islamic ideology and this soon became the defining force of Pakistani politics, which was accepted by both secular and Islamist parts of Pakistani society. As a Pakistani scholar, Waheed-uz-Zaman³⁰, noted in 1973: "*the wish to see the kingdom of God established in a Muslim territory ...was the moving idea behind the demand for*

Pakistan, the corner-stone of the movement, the ideology of the people, and the raison d'être of the new nation-state.... If we let go the ideology of Islam, we cannot hold together as a nation by any other means.... If the Arabs, the Turks, the Iranians, God forbid, give up Islam, the Arabs yet remain Arabs, the Turks remain Turks, the Iranians remain Iranians, but what do we remain if we give up Islam?"

Implications on Indo-Pak Relations - An Analysis

Today, orthodox versions of Islam are resurging in Pakistan. This is due to the State's excessive usage and failed ideologisation of Islam to gain political legitimacy and raise electioneering safeguards. During Bhutto's era an editorial '*For God Sake Leave Islam Alone*' reflects this misuse of religion. The State even coupled economic emancipation with fundamentalist ideologies. Every leader justified the government's action under Islam and simultaneously ensured his/her own survival by making public referrals to Islam. The State exploited the people in the name of Islam and some of the educated people always felt uncomfortable with it³¹. Gen Musharraf who came to power in 1999 after a bloodless coup, was apparently not an Islamist. His support for the US probably sent out a clear message that he would rather make himself secure and powerful through the Whitehouse than a Friday sermon in a local mosque. His involvement in the war against terror and Waziristan operation to crackdown Al-Qaeda militant and dislodge their operatives earned him two failed assassination attempts.

Islam has been misused as a tool for exploitation of masses and maintenance of power structures leading to gross human rights violation, especially those of women, minorities and children in the country. The State both passively and actively sanctioned this behaviour. Sometimes it allowed mobs on the street, in the name of religion. Whilst at other times, it skilfully politicised the legislature and law, for example, 'Objective-Resolution' and '*Haddood Ordinance*', existing even after sixteen years of Zia's death, proving the validity of modernist perspective of 'State' being the 'ultimate authority' to determine 'sanctioned behaviour'. Unfortunately, the Muslim Pakistanis are still to discover the unfathomable levels of insight and vision that Islam may hold for them to serve their own nation and the global community with justice, fair-play and impartiality. Pakistan has been eaten hollow by corrosive obscurantism unleashed by the Jamaat and its sympathisers. It has weakened a carefully brought up, barely credible, Pakistani nationalism and breathed fresh life into separatist movements.

Today, driven by hate, the storm troopers of competing sects identified by Taliban-type turbans of various colours swarm all over the big cities of Pakistan and mill around street-corners, haranguing passers-by, subjecting them to aggressive proselytizing. Ubiquitous armed police, on mosque-protection duties, watch warily from tops of minarets converted into watch towers. Mosques, proliferating more than ever, resemble ancient fortresses with battlements to ward off attack. Some minarets contain gun emplacements. Though the mosques remain largely empty – even the most dedicated salaheen (righteous) are daunted by bombs – the loudspeakers blare out not just azans (calls to prayer), but the entire prayer ritual at top volume.

The Impact of Pakistan's islamisation on India

In the ultimate analysis, the impact of Islamisation on Indo-Pakistan relations is the core issue. The theocratic rule transforms Islamabad's foreign policy towards New

Delhi. Today, we see a reverse trend with the movement in Pakistan and, to a certain extent, in Bangladesh impinging on India. The radicalization phenomenon, be it in Pakistan, Bangladesh and to a limited extent even in the Maldives, had state support. In Pakistan, it has had a lasting effect because this phenomenon got linked with the state's foreign policy. The danger to India is not from mainstream Islamic Radicalism, as it would find no space in a country with so many diverse cultures, and such a huge population. Nevertheless, the State needs to be wary of the danger from one extreme fringe group reacting to the activities of another fringe group³².

The implications of Islamisation of Pakistan can be divided into short and long-term implications. A short term perspective is that if Islam is followed, the State cannot be a democracy in the accepted sense of the term. To that extent, it would really not be feasible for a classical Islamic state to have cordial ties with non-Muslim neighbours. In the context of India-Pakistan, militant Islamic groups are continuously being sponsored by Islamabad on the ideological grounds of jihad to destabilize and subsequently liberate the Indian state of Jammu & Kashmir. A major player in the proxy war is the fundamentalist party the Lashkar-e-Taiba which "openly" supported Sharif's Islamisation Bill³³ (Oct. 1998). The boost, therefore, that this fundamentalist party gets if Islamisation continues to be imposed in Pakistan would in turn reflect in heightening the level of proxy war against India. It was during Zia's period that Islamisation had peaked and given rise to militant fundamentalism directed against India. This shows a linkage between Islamic fundamentalism and promotion of proxy war against India. Therefore, Pakistan's increasing levels of Islamisation would only reflect in heightening its degree of hostility towards India.

The long-term threat of Islamisation is a macro-level problem with far more wide ranging implications for Indian security arising from the possibility of the breaking up of Pakistan. Today Pakistan has around 80 Islamic sects and Zia only helped to sow the seeds of sectarian violence in the country. The resurgence of political Islam will only serve to further reinforce the process already set in motion. Earlier, similar demands for provincial autonomy during the late 1960s resulted in the secession of East Pakistan, leading to the creation of Bangladesh. Similarly in the long-term, a breakdown in the economic, political, and social spheres could result in the disintegration of Pakistan. And this would prove to be the ultimate nightmare for Indian security planners who will be faced with problems ranging from trans-border smuggling of drugs, narcotics, light weapons and ingress of homeless persons which are among other economic and social problems resulting from the breakdown of a state³⁴.

Osama Bin Laden looked at global jihad with the US as the centre of his attention. Some others, like Professor Hafiz Saeed of the LeT, state that their first target should be India because the Quran says that their holy war should start with those infidels who live nearby. Maulana Masood Azhar, the freed leader of Harkat-ul-Mujahideen (HuM) and subsequently the leader of JeM, was equally specific about his priorities, when he said: *'I need mujahedeen who can fight for the liberation of Kashmir. So marry for jihad, give birth for jihad, and earn money for jihad, till the cruelty of America and India ends'*³⁵.

As Selig Harrison a known authority on the South Asian region, very rightly observed in his article in the Boston Globe, (June 17, 2009) *"The danger of an Islamist takeover of Pakistan is real. But it does not come from the Taliban guerrillas now*

battling the Pakistan Army in the Swat borderlands. It comes from a proliferating network of heavily armed Islamist militias in the Punjab heartland and major cities directed by Lashkar-e-Taiba, a close ally of Al Qaeda, which staged the terrorist attack last November in Mumbai, India.”

Harrison goes on to say *“Under a new name, Jawad-ud-Dawa, Lashkar-e-Taiba have continued to operate its militias, its FM radio station, and hundreds of seminaries where jihadis are trained, in addition to its legitimate charities and educational institutions. When the UN designated Jawad-ud-Dawa as a terrorist group, the Pakistan government issued another ban and Jawad-ud-Dawa changed its name to the Falah-e-Insaniat Foundation. The “foundation” now has 2,000 members doing relief work in war-torn Swat with the approval of the government of Pak, reports that it is using its humanitarian cover to recruit new members as it did after the 2002 Kashmir earthquake. Lashkar-e-Taiba is on the Sunni side of the Sunni-Shia doctrinal divide in Islam and has its deepest roots in a 20,000-square-mile swath of Southern Punjab between Jhang and Bahawalpur, where it champions the cause of landless Sunni peasants indentured to big Shia landowners.”*

Punjab is crucial to Pakistan as it has the largest concentration of jihadi organisations, the largest concentration of the country’s armed forces, and all the country’s nuclear assets are in Punjab. For India this is of greater importance than any other factor³⁶.

Speaking about Pakistan, Selig Harrison says *“Sunni extremist groups have been active in the Punjab since the creation of Pakistan and became the nucleus of Lashkar-e-Taiba when the ISI, with US funding, built up a jihadi movement to fight against Soviet forces in Afghanistan. Lashkar-e-Taiba and key allies such as Lashkar-e-Jhangvi still get ISI support and have close ties with other intelligence agencies, but how much and how close remain uncertain.”*

Bruce Riedel’s says *“The growing strength of the Taliban in Pakistan has raised the serious possibility of a jihadist takeover of that country. Even with the Army’s reluctant efforts in areas like the Swat Valley and sporadic popular revulsion with Taliban violence, at heart the country is unstable. A jihadist victory is neither imminent nor inevitable but it is now a real possibility in the foreseeable future.”* He ends his essay about what might happen, appropriately titled “Armageddon in Islamabad” with these words *“Pakistan is a complex and combustible society undergoing a severe crisis. America helped create that crisis over a long period of time. If we don’t help Pakistan now, we may have to deal with a jihadist Pakistan later.”*³⁷

The crucial point to note is that, unless some serious effort is made at the domestic level, the State of Pakistan continues to face prospects of instability in the long term. A stable and democratic Pakistan is usually considered to be in everyone’s interest including India. But then the big question is whether Pakistan can succeed in holding itself together against various fissiparous tendencies that afflict it today³⁸?

In the coming years, India-Pakistan engagement will become even more complicated as Pakistan becomes more unstable and radicalisation of the Pakistani society gathers pace. In the short to medium term – 5 to 10 years – the Pakistan army is likely to remain embroiled in counter-insurgency. This might change the character of the Pakistan armed forces which in turn will have major impact on Indo-Pak relations. It

is still too early to say whether the Pakistan army, generally regarded as a professional army, will itself get radicalised³⁹.

India's Options:

India's policy towards Pakistan will be shaped by the emerging reality based on the above trends. In such a scenario, the anti-India mind-set of Pakistan's military and the ruling elite is not likely to change and may in fact worsen. In such a scenario what should be India's policy options?

- (a) India's policies will need to be based on hard reality and not on wishful thinking. India should closely monitor the developments within Pakistan particularly in the context of provincial and sectarian fault-lines which may deepen in the coming years. India should be sensitive to developments in Sindh and Punjab, the two provinces which share borders with India. India should be prepared to engage and deal with all sections of Pakistani society which may be amenable towards better relations with India.
- (b) India need not be apologetic about its policies towards Pakistan. It should make clear that it has genuine security concerns in Pakistan and that it would deal with them appropriately.
- (c) The challenge from Pakistan should not make India think only in terms of military responses. A nuanced approach to Pakistan will be required while dealing with challenges like 26/11. Diplomacy should be the first line of defence for India. An increase in bilateral trade could help the Pakistani economy enormously and also create constituencies on both sides with stakes in peace and stability.
- (d) It is important that India should deal with the separatists in Kashmir by itself rather than through Pakistan. Links between the two parts of Kashmir should be encouraged.
- (e) A two-front situation is developing for the Pakistani army which is not as yet geared to simultaneously fight India as well the Taliban. However, India remains the common enemy of both the Taliban and the Pakistan army. India should not follow any policy which would bring them together against India.

To sum up, Indian policy towards Pakistan must be geared to the new unfolding situation in Pakistan. India's growing economic profile and its rising international recognition give it a chance to deal with the Pakistan problem in a much better way than was the case before. The challenge before India will be how to protect itself from the consequences of a blow-back from an unstable Pakistan and also to evolve a sophisticated approach combining hard and soft options in dealing with it⁴⁰.

Conclusion:

Islamisation can broadly be identified as a holistic process of religious socialization in accordance with Islamic norms, precepts, value postulates and rituals. It underlines a process of religious orientation, indoctrination and enforcement of Islamic beliefs, traditions and thought processes. Due to the pervasive nature of Islam, Islamisation as a process assumes wider scope and perspective encompassing the philosophical,

socio-economic and political strands of an individual follower of Islam or a Muslim community.

To be religious is one thing, and to use it to run a state is quite another. Instead of binding the nation together, Pakistan's grounding in Islamic ideology has actually operated to divide the Pakistani nation, pitting Muslim against non-Muslim, and Muslim against Muslim. If Pakistan is to survive, it will have to do away with its reliance on Islamic ideology and find a new basis for the state and nation.

This would, however, require the national narrative, including school curricula, to be dramatically rewritten so that it has more in common with facts and reality. This outcome will inevitably prove difficult to achieve, especially since so many of the country's civilian and military leaders have over the years embraced the Islamist narrative of Pakistan's origins and purpose.

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