



OVERVIEW OF POLITICAL-RELIGIOUS VIOLENCE IN PRE AND POST- INDEPENDENCE PERIOD OF PAKISTAN: MANIFESTATIONS OF DIVERGENT CONFLICTS

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Abstract

As a historical backdrop for this study, this article provides an outline of political-religious violence in pre- and post-independence Pakistan. In attempt to contextualize the extraordinary violence in Pakistani society, it studies data from primary sources. A non-violence policy and its guiding principles are necessary for any community to achieve peace, harmony, and tolerance; otherwise, disorder and discord would rule. Both tranquil communities and peaceful minds are products of peace. In multi-religious communities, such as pre-partitioned India and the newly formed Pakistan, it is crucial to uphold the idea that mosques and other places of worship are just as significant to Muslims as they are to adherents of other faiths. Furthermore, there will be suffering and horrors if people's rights are not respected. After then, there will be oppression due to the lack of security and effective administration, both of which are crucial for people's daily life. Multicultural, racial, and religious civilizations all value the celebration of many cultural festivals. An outline of the pattern of violence before and after Pakistan's independence will be provided in this article. Hindu-Muslim issues from before independence as well as post-independence Qadiani and Sunni-Shia sectarian disputes will be explored.

Keywords: Political cum Religious, Violence, Communal, Qadiani, Sunni-Shia

1. INTRODUCTION

Prior to Pakistan's movement for independence from British colonial rule, Muslims in the Indian Subcontinent believed they were constantly the victims of injustice. Since they had ruled the subcontinent for almost a millennium, they perceived themselves as victims of injustice, making their struggle against the British justifiable. Muslims opposed the British occupants because they had seized their territory and installed their own political order. The British rulers treated them poorly as a result of this hostility. Truthfully, however, 'Treason doth never prosper; what's reason? For if it prospers, none dare call it treason'¹. One thing that has to be said is that, 'it goes without saying, then, that the bulk of victims of violence are Muslims, 11 September notwithstanding'².

¹ Ghosh. S. K. (1992). *Politics of violence*. Calcutta: Law Research Institute. P. 1.

² Edwards, B. M. (2006). *Islam and violence in the modern era*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. P: 105.



There was the belief that because Hindus and Muslims in the Sub-Continent share a culture and traditions, they were able to coexist peacefully for a very long time. However, most historians believe that the justice of Muslim rulers was the primary factor in their ability to coexist peacefully for such a long time. However, during British administration, things altered. Community tensions between Hindus and Muslims grew to greater extent. The formation of the Congress Party in 1885 was the first notable political example of these distinctions. Even though it started out as a non-communal party, the Congress eventually became a Hindu-dominated organisation that exclusively cared about the interests of Hindus, with little regard for other groups and minorities, especially Muslims. The Deccan Times newspaper stated under the heading ‘Congress and the Hindu-Muslim problem’ (Congress and Hindu-Muslim, 1939) that ‘it is a fact that the Congress did not desire a solution to the Hindu-Muslim problem’. As a result, in 1906, Muslims in the Sub-Continent made the decision to create the All India Muslim League, a new political party.

2. RELIGIOUS SYMBOLISM AND THE HEIGHTENING OF COMMUNAL TENSIONS

Mosques Desecration

In a land with many religions and faith traditions such as the Indian sub-continent, the prevalence of diverse religious symbolisms is only to be expected. It is beyond question that the majority community of Indian Hindus was maltreating Muslims. The desecration of Muslim religious symbols such as mosques at the hands of Hindu groups happened with greater frequency. The New Times Newspaper (Punjabi, 1938) carried a feature article, which spoke of an increasing trend in which, “they (Hindus) would enter into the Mosques, worship idols there and chant hymns to the accompaniment of musical instruments”. The Indian Statutory Commission reported on an over excited and frenzied multitude of Hindus that demolished the grand Masjid of Aurangzaib Alamgier and the demolition of fifty other mosques in the city. A large number of Muslims were killed³ when these Hindus went on a rampage in the city pillaging and slaughtering their victims. There was another case, which was revised in Ayodha in the decade of 1990s, when historical Babri Masjid was desecrated. Mr. Fisher writes in these words on the desecration of the Masjid: “In December 1992, militant Hindus set off renewed communal violence by destroying a mosque in Ayodhya, India”⁴. Al-Biruni made the observation that Hindus and Muslims were different in all respects and traditions as early as the first decade of the 11th century. He clarified his point by noting that Muslims were viewed by Hindus as ‘Maleche’, or dirty. Additionally, they prohibited any association with them, including marrying and other forms of close relationships. They even avoided having meals and drinks with them out of concern that they would get ‘polluted’ by doing so. Therefore, when the Pakistan independence movement started, differences between the Hindus and the Muslims erupted all at once. Urdu-Hindi controversy, vidya mandir scheme, cow slaughtering, Bandemahtaram, hymns of the vidas, Pan Hindustan, Hindu religious slogans and symbols, the Hindu revivalism, Hindustan for the Hindus; these were the basic ingredients of conflicts and differences which emerged and masqueraded in the form of violence throughout the whole of India.

Language Issues and their Religious Significances

The Hindustan Times well captured the language issue of pre-partitioned India when it used the title ‘Hindi or Urdu, language problem upsets legislators’, to gain the public attention of its coverage of the fourth session of the Bombay Legislative Assembly commenced in 19 August 1938 in the council hall with Mr. G. V Mavlankar in the chair. A keen debate ensued over the following clause in the report: ‘Recognized language means any one of the following languages, namely Gujrati, Marhathi, Kanarese, Urdu or Hindi Hindustani’ but the issue was not settled until at the end of the Assembly.⁵ Mr. Mardy Jones (who was the government servant in British India) made known his views on India’s “Lingua Franca” when he said that Hindustani was best suited as the

³ Brass, P. R. (2003). *The production of Hindu-Muslim violence in contemporary India*. Report of the Indian Statutory Commission, 1930, Vol. I, Pt. I (London: HMSO, 1930), Memorandum on “Communal Disorder”.

⁴ Fisher, M. P. (1997). *Living religions: An encyclopedia of the world's faiths*. London: I. B. Tauris and Co Ltd. p. 365.

⁵ Bombay Assembly. (1938). *The Hindustan Times*, Banaras, August 17, 1938.



future mother tongue of India, for it was the most widely spoken in the bazaars of all India outside South India. It has a potentiality to become a literary language in the hand of scholarly enthusiasts who would help guide the growth of its literature. In his views it was the clearly the duty of the first congress government in the Madras presidency to pioneer the compulsory study of Hindi and he congratulated them on the decision they had taken in the matter already. It was high time, said Mr. Jones, that the congress high command also woke up to the need to enforce compulsory study of Hindustani in the middle school stages in all other congress provinces.⁶ Actually, a “Hindi Day” was observed. A meeting was held in Arya Samaj hall, Gurukul section, on Monday under the joint auspices of the various Hindu, Jain and Sikh organizations of Simla, to observe Hindi day. There was a large representative gathering, the hall was fully packed, and the resolutions were unanimously passed.

‘It was resolved that the Hindus of the Punjab view it as a matter of great regret that no arrangements existed for the compulsory teaching of Hindi to the Hindu students in government and municipal schools of the province. This lack of proper arrangements is proving detrimental to Hindu interests in as much as all religious books of Hindus are in Hindi and in devnagri script and consequently the ignorance of Hindi among Hindus is suicidal to Hindu Derhamm (religion) and Indian culture. This meeting, therefore, urge upon the Punjab government to provide proper facilities for the teaching of Hindi from the very first standard (primary classes) and to make it a compulsory subject for Hindu students.’⁷

As things later developed, the position of Urdu came under threat. For instance, Urdu suffered a serious loss in Bihar when Bihari took the place of Urdu in the legal system. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan was worried about the future of Urdu in India and wrote these words:

‘I have learnt another news which has caused me so much grief and anxiety. At Babu Shev Parasad’s instigation, Hindus have generally resolved to do away with the Urdu language and Persian script, which is a monument of the Muslim rule in this country. I have heard that they have moved the Hindu members of the scientific society to see that Hindi should replace Urdu in the newspapers as well as books published by the society. This is a proposal which makes the Hindu-Muslim unity impossible. Muslim will never agree to Hindi, and if Hindus, following the new move, insist on Hindi, they also will not agree to Urdu. Consequently, the Hindus and the Muslims will be completely separated’⁸. According to my own approach, script problem was to be dealt with. If the script problem was solved then there was no more language issue, which was to be solved. Even many Hindus like Pandit Shambo Nath who was the Secretary of Literary Society, were in the favor of Persian script⁹.

Hinduism and Islam, in the eyes of Indian Muslims, were not only two religions but also two social systems that had produced two completely different cultures. A thorough examination of this country’s history demonstrates that the conflicts between Hindus and Muslims were not limited to contests over governmental dominance but also took the form of conflicts between the two social systems. Despite spending more than a thousand years together, they continued to cultivate various cultures and traditions. Their musical taste, architectural style, and writing style were all completely different. They spoke a completely different language and dressed very differently. Furthermore, as M. A Khan said, that they proclaimed Hinduism as a nationality as well¹⁰.

⁶ Jones, M. (1938, August 18). Hindi as India’s ‘Lingua Franca’. *The Hindustan Times*, Banaras.

⁷ The Hindustan Times, Banaras, August 17, 1938.

⁸ Muhammad, M. (Trans). (2002). *Maktubāt- e Shyakh Ahmed Sirhindi* (Arabic). Istanbul: Dārush Shafaqah.

⁹ Muhammad, S. (1980). *The Indians Muslims: A documentary records*. Meerut: Meenakshi Prakashan. p. IX.

¹⁰ Khan, M. (1985). India inviting Muslims back to Hinduism. In K. Siddiqui (Ed.). *Issues in the Islamic Movements*. London: The Open Press Limited. p. 33.



Eid-ul-Adha Celebration and Hindu-Muslim Conflict

As mentioned earlier, there were many differences between the Hindus and the Muslims; the latter were even being harassed on Eid-ul-Adha celebrations, when they performed the religious obligation of cow slaughtering. Under a 1938 civil and military gazette orders had been issued commanding the Muslims to abstain from slaughtering cows on Eid-ul-Adha celebration. The order, which was reported in the *Hindustan Times* under the heading “Muslims’ right of cow slaughter,” was issued under section 144, Cr. P.C, by the district magistrate.¹¹ Riots had occurred arising from Muslims’ cow slaughtering during the Eid-ul-Adha celebration. According to the report of D.V. Jahamankar, almost seventy-five persons were killed and almost three hundred were seriously injured in communal clashes in Bombay and Poona, solely over the issue of cow slaughtering¹².

Religious Conversion: Shuddhi Movement

Many organizations in India have the ideology of Hindu nationalism like the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP); Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP); Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram (VKA); Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). The Shuddhi movement was started in 1923 by Swami Shraddhanand to convert Muslims to Hindu Derham (religion). Shuddhi means to purify, because orthodox Hindus think that all non-Hindus are profane and they should be purified. The purpose of this movement was to bring the Indian Muslims back to Hinduism¹³. As reported in the *Daily Pratap*, a Delhi newspaper, ‘The question of Shuddhi is the matter of life and death for the Hindus. Muslims have grown from zero to seventy million and Christians are four million. It is difficult for 220 million of Hindus to live in the face of seventy million Muslims.... A religion should be propagated for the sake of religion but Hindus are forced to adopt this procedure on account of several other reasons’¹⁴.

He writes further,

‘The Shuddhi movement of shardahanad sawami has come in for a great deal of criticism both from the nationalists and the Muslims. Whatever one may have to say about the opportunities of that particular movement, it is difficult to understand how Christians and Muslims can object to it on merits. They are constantly engaged in their proselytizing missions and converting Hindus to their own faith. If the Hindus on their side also start converting non-Hindus to their faith, it is no business of non-Hindus’¹⁵. Before Shuddhi movement, Arya Samaj was established in 1875, which resisted idolatry and launched the idea of Hindu revivalism by setting up the Shuddhi¹⁶.

3. PATTERN OF VIOLENCE AFTER INDEPENDENCE

As it has been mentioned above, violence does not emerge all of a sudden in society without some historical background. When Pakistan emerged on the world map, there was continuity of violence that started from the very first day of the movement for its independence. If there is violence in any place, its effects are expected to spread to the whole region. This was the case with Kashmiri people in Jammu and Kashmir. Mr. Muhammad Ali Jinnah expressed that apprehension before the

¹¹ Civil Gazette, (1938, August 29). *The Hindustan Times*. Patna, India.

¹² Mirza, S. H. (1997). *Hindu-Muslim conflict in South Asia: A case study of the genesis of Pakistan*. University of the Punjab.

¹³ Thursby, G. R. (1975). *Hindu-Muslim relations in British India: A study of controversy, conflict, and communal movements in northern India 1923-1928*. Netherlands: Brill Academic Publishers.

¹⁴ Dar, B. A. (1978). *Why Pakistan*. Lahore. Islamic Book Service.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ragi, S. K. (2010). Nationalism and the market economy-challenges to Hindu nationalism in India. In A. Guelke (Ed.), *The Challenges of Ethno-Nationalism*. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan. p. 97.



emergence of the sovereign nation of Pakistan¹⁷ and he warned Lord Wavell (1883-1950)¹⁸ on the consequences of the violence in Kashmir and the injustice against the Kashmiri people¹⁹. Although he assured Muhammad Ali Jinnah that action would be taken to solve the problem, which the Kashmiri people were facing, in practice, no solution was in sight. Kashmiris have had the same problems and violence from the very first day of their movement that Pakistan had²⁰.

The terrible, pervasive, and deadly violence that preceded the partition was accompanied by completely different attire. Yasmin discusses this fact in this way. 'After 15 August 1947, it took on a new ferocity, intensity and callousness. Now militias trawled the countryside for poorly protected villages to raid and raze to the ground. Gangs deliberately derailed the trains, massacring their passengers one by one or setting carriages ablaze with petrol. Women and children were carried away like looted chattels'²¹.

The whole of British-India was enveloped in a surge of violence but the Punjab was perhaps the worst; nothing and nobody was safe. Yasmin quoted the book of Penderel Moon (1962) *Divide and Quit* as follows: 'grisly scenes of violence in Punjab have been better described in fiction, poetry and film. Children watched as their parents were dismembered or burned alive, women were brutally raped and had their breasts and genitals mutilated, and the entire populations of villages were summarily executed'²²

4. CONSTITUTIONAL PROCESS AND WAVE OF VIOLENCE

Quaid-e Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan, gave his presidential address to the Constituent Assembly on August 11, 1947. 'The Constituent Assembly had two main functions to perform. The first was the very onerous and responsible task of framing the future constitution of Pakistan and the second of functioning as a full and complete sovereign body with the title of the Federal Legislature of Pakistan'²³. Further, Jinnah stressed in his speech that the first duty of a government is to maintain law and order, so that the life, property and religious beliefs of its subjects could be fully protected by the State.

Jinnah believed these key points in his speech were issues that were important to the future stability and wellbeing of Pakistan. In his view, delays in the delivery of the national constitution and deprivation of the fundamental rights of the people by their government would bring political unrest to the new Pakistan society. However, subsequent developments in the country showed that these two basic principles were often violated or not honored by its military and political leaders. In consequence, widespread dissatisfaction resulted among the people leading eventually to separatist and violent tendencies in the country. The violent dismemberment of Pakistan that resulted in the independence of Bangladesh in 1971 and the plague of violence in the shrunken country since then were not unconnected to the earlier separatist and violent tendencies. Historians and political leaders have argued that violence takes place when the political parties fail

¹⁷ Quaid-i-Azam Papers (QAP), Islamabad Quaid-e-Azam Papers cell, Ministry of Education, Islamabad, File No.505, [National Archives of Pakistan]. p: 9.

¹⁸ Lord Wavell was Governor General of British India from 1943 to 1947.

¹⁹ Bazaz, P. (1954). *The history of struggle for Freedom in Kashmir*. Islamabad: Ministry of Education.

²⁰ Garewal, Sher Muhammad, Jinnah-Wavell correspondence (1943-47). Research Society of Pakistan, University of the Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan. QAP, File No. 505, p.3; The Transfer of Power (T/P) Vol. 4, (This letter is dated September 6, 1943). pp: 210-211

²¹ Khan, Y. (2007). *The great partition: The making of India and Pakistan*. Yale University Press.

²² Khan, Y. (2007). *The great partition: The making of India and Pakistan*. Yale University Press.

²³ *The Dawn*, August 14, 1999, Independence Day of Pakistan.



to deliver the rights of the masses and they lose their legitimacy; furthermore, they then revert to a legitimate claim to have a monopoly of force²⁴.

The violence that started during the movement for Pakistan's independence was different from the post-independence one. There were four military dictators in the history of Pakistan, Field Marshal Ayub Khan, Yahya Khan, Zia-ul-Haq and Pervaiz Musharaf. They reined in power over the country for the major period of the history of Pakistan, e.g. 1958 to 1969, 1969 to 1972, 1977 to 1988 and 1999 to 2008. For thirty-four years out of the sixty years of Pakistan as a nation, there were military dictatorships, and in the rest of the period, there was an electoral authoritarianism. Some politicians had direct or indirect relations with the army generals and they were taking their turns in power one by one. The Pakistani masses have never really tasted democracy; neither had they taken part in the process of democracy. Political parties only know how to blame the military dictators for usurping the country's helm and sovereignty. Nevertheless, the reality is that the twenty aristocratic political families had dominated the country and those political leaders came into power in the disguise of autocrats. Pakistan's condition was so bad that it was in political shambles. This is possibly the main reason why the state failed to eliminate violence; from the very first day of the independence of Pakistan to this day, Pakistan could not, did not and has not got rid of violence. A 'Safety Ordinance' was implemented to meet the challenges but that ordinance merely crushed basic human rights²⁵. Concocted reports were prepared against political workers and peasants' organizations and a huge scuffle took place under this Safety Ordinance. The Pakistani nation for a long time has experienced military dictatorship as its form of government. In this regard, a constitutional work process could not be properly managed, due to its delay resulting from the army capturing the reins of government many times. It is a fair comment to say that the constitutions of 1956 and 1962 were made for their own interest to prolong the dictatorships. All the powers were assembled in the hand of the president. As far as the Pakistani masses were concerned, they were being maltreated ruthlessly. Due to a local strike in Lyallpur, six workers were killed and some were hovering between life and death; great use of lathi (baton) charges and tear gas was common²⁶.

No doubt, people like democracy but democracy cannot become fruitful for the masses without development in every sector of societal life. For example, if there is moral corruption then it is impossible to have progress in other fields, because morality is related to every field of life; in education, politics, and economics or in social progress. One thing, which is important to describe here is that America wants to support the growth of democracy in Pakistan and America is a strong supporter of Pakistan's security²⁷. This is, at the very least, open to doubt, because if America and the United Nations are sincere in wanting to establish a system of democracy, why has that democratic aspiration not happened? It goes without saying that industrialised nations keep emerging nations underdeveloped and underdevelopment frequently leads to a persistent condition of violence. Adopting a gradualist approach to social change may be quite complex and involve violent revolutions that spark other acts of violence. Extremely high birth and mortality rates, abject poverty, ignorance, and a lack of participation in important decisions that have a big impact on the lives of countless men are all elements of the first form of violence. Then, support is provided to a more overt and militant type of violence, frequently involving revolutionary activities, which also results in a steadily rising death toll.

²⁴ Weber, M. (1947). *The Theory of social and economic organizations*. New York: The Free Press.

²⁵ This act had been issued in 24 March 1955.

²⁶ Pakistan Times, Friday, 20 June 1958.

²⁷ Obama, B. (2009). *On 'the way forward in Afghanistan and Pakistan'*, speech delivered on 1 December 2009, US Military Academy, West point. http://www.msnbc.com/id/34231058/ns/politics-white_house.



5. BASIC DEMOCRACY AND HIDDEN VIOLENCE

The most important thing about basic democracy is the freedom to choose and influence people. In the practice of democracy, there should be free and fair elections. However, poll rigging has been common in Pakistan. Governments issue millions of dollars in the name of development for launching election campaigns. This is to reinforce the interests of politicians in the ruling parties and to make sure that they keep on staying in power, rather than for anything related to public interest. People who are responsible for supervising the electoral process are often found to be corrupt. This is done to ensure that the government, which is in power, wins the election and continues to rule the country regardless of the people's real wishes. This is a serious issue in the country. However, this is not to deny that there have been efforts at finding means and ways of restoring democracy and conducting peaceful free and fair elections²⁸. One should note that if basic democracy does not exist in society then in all likelihood violence would erupt. The motives underlying political-religious violence are either to maintain or change the legal or political order of an existing system in undemocratic and illegal ways. Political-religious violence takes place when a participatory democratic system of government does not exist; that is why the masses cannot enjoy living peacefully and cannot participate in a real democratic political system. Somehow, the following pro-active measures can be adopted to eradicate political and social evils:

Firstly, worthwhile intra-religious and political dialogue; secondly, veneration of the nation's constitution and laws and impartial courts; thirdly, teaching tolerance and lifting the literacy rate and finally, reconciling the differences of people in different walks of life.

In Pakistan, the most important way to address these problems is through political and religious dialogue to provide a common platform for solving frictions between the different political and religious parties. Furthermore, in order to achieve harmonious situations, people should be educated to develop and maintain tolerance and respect for human rights and dignity. To break the spiral of violence and crime in the society in general, there needs to be deliberate measures to end the cycle of poverty, among other things, by providing vocational education and life business skills to the youth and poor people. By doing so, the country can achieve its educational philosophy that emphasizes the inner and personal nature of faith. Therefore, in this way the necessity for respecting the sanctity of the self and maintaining fundamental principles of human rights can be accessed easily²⁹. Poverty and intolerance act as intervening variables, which may indirectly lead to violence. It is estimated that about 1.5 billion Muslims living in different countries are poor and underdeveloped. According to the United Nations definition of poverty, Pakistan's economy is not performing very well; therefore, poverty reduction and economic growth should be given the first priority in all national plans.

Political tensions that are currently brewing are closely related to territorial disputes, competition for economic resources, and demands for self-determination-based sovereignty. Political entities forged on their abrasive bargaining tables inherit structural weakness, volatility, and potential war. Anger and fury grow when these claims are denied or recognised slowly. But no amount of annoyance or humiliation can excuse completely aggressive behaviour. Violence is a manifestation of our educational and social systems' failure to instill the right values of respect for life and the sanctity of everyone's human rights, regardless of colour, religion, or political philosophy. The failure of our current system is evident in all brutal and severe actions, whether carried out by violent people or their victims. Politicians risk causing instability and revolutions in Pakistan if they permit anyone to employ excessive force or uncontrolled counterforce.

²⁸ Honderich, T. (1976). *Three Essays on Political Violence*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell. p: 92.

²⁹ Bsteh, A. (Ed). (2004). *Intolerance and violence, manifestations and reasons*. 2nd Vienna international Christian-Islamic Round Table, Vienna, February 21 to 24, 2002. Verlag St. Gabriel.



6. BHUTTO AND ZIA ERA AND VIOLENCE

Bhutto and Zia had historically established politico-religious and civil-military authoritarian ideologies. Bhutto's ideology was widely perceived as oriented towards communism and Zia's ideology towards sectarianism with a religious fervor. In fact, these were two opposite ideologies, which have existed right up to the present political situation. The Bhutto's pro-communist ideology produced the slogan: roti (bread), kapra (clothes) and makaan (house) (the necessities of life), and Zia's religious ideology flourished under the slogan of enforcement of the Shari'ah as interpreted by his circle of religious scholars. These two ideologies, which contradicted each other, became a major cause of political-religious violence in Pakistan. Some political scientists and historians claimed that the first ideology wanted a Shi'a domination while the second wanted a pro-Wahabi domination in the country. Many people question their sincerity with the majority of Pakistan's people. For the sake of their ideologies, both used the public purse irresponsibly to the extent that even the Zakat fund was used for their political and sectarian purposes. In this case, the distribution of the massive Zakat fund for the construction of Madāris was not effectively used. Moreover, people were encouraged to simply open seminaries so that they could receive at least fifty thousand rupees from the Zakat fund³⁰.

7. Sunni-Shi'a's Relation and Schism

Sunni-Shi'a issues were not that sharp and prominent in the course of Pakistan's independence Movement³¹. It was in the post-independence era that Sunni-shi'a violence erupted more frequently due largely, interestingly enough, to the Ahmadi controversy (this issue will be discussed later). Moreover, Bhutto's authoritarian policies and Zia's Islamisation provoked sectarian religious violence in Pakistan³² (Weiss, 1987). Before the partition of India, Sunni-Shi'a conflict was never serious; only random and sporadic violent incidents took place. However, after the partition, especially in 1963 about one hundred Sunni-Shi'a clashes were reported to have taken place in different parts of the country. In 1985 unprecedented violence took place, when many people were killed in a procession staged by the local leadership of a Shiite organization, the Tehrik-i- Nifaz-i- Fiqah-i- Jafaria (TNFJ)³³. However, the Prime Minister Muhammad Khan Junejo denied that there was any political hand behind the riots³⁴.

Bhutto was widely perceived as being soft towards the Shi'a and Zia towards deoband and Ahl-e Hadīth. When President Zia declared that Islamic laws, including Zakāt and Ushr, would be promulgated in Pakistan TNFJ launched demonstrations against his Zakāt laws, which they saw as an imposition of Sunni-Hanafi jurisprudence, the country's dominant legal school of thought on the minority Shi'a-Ja'afari community. There are significant differences between the two schools of jurisprudence on the issue of zakat. According to the Ja'fari School of law, Zakāt can be collected on only nine items, namely silver and gold if these two things are in the form of coins, cows,

³⁰ Ahmad, N. (1972). *Jaiza-e Madaris Arabiyya-e maghribi Pakistan*. Lahore: Muslim.

Academy. Islamabad: Ministry of Religious Affairs, Government of Pakistan, Report 1979.

³¹ W.C. Smith's justification on the shi 'a in his study of modern trends in Indian Islam is worth quoting here: 'we have not given the Shia group separate treatment in our study of the changes wrought in Islam by modern social processes, because there is nothing in the differences between sunni and shia fundamentally relevant to those processes. The two groups diverge over what answers are to be given to questions which to-day do not arise.' 'Modern Islam in India' (Lahore, Minerva, 1947, 399).

³² Weiss, A. (Ed.). (1987). *Islamic reassertion in Pakistan: The application of Islamic laws in a modern state*. Lahore: Vanguard.

³³ 6 July 1985, Daily Dawn, Karachi, Pakistan.

³⁴ 16, 18 April, 6 July, 1 October, 1985, Daily Dawn, The News International, Karachi.



camels, goats, and sheep; and dates, raisins, wheat and barley³⁵. On these nine things, Zakat is wājib (obligatory). On the other hand, in Sunni jurisprudence Zakāt is obligatory on both currency and gold and silver. Gold is taxable if weighing more than 4.8 grams and silver if more than 52 grams. In Ja'fari jurisprudence, Zakāt is not obligatory on currency. However, the Iranian revolution in 1979 inspired the Shi'a community everywhere to reassert themselves politically and religiously. In trying to get advantage from the political system of Pakistan,³⁶ they mobilized themselves against Sunni Zakāt system³⁷. As a result, Sunni- Shi'a differences became sharpened.

Quite clearly, intra-Islamic sectarian conflicts in Pakistan have reached new dangerous levels. When the researcher was collecting data, he witnessed a big bomb blast that took place at Hazara Town in Quetta, where at least 67 Hazara Shiites were killed and at least 180 people were seriously wounded. Lashker-e-Jhangvi (a banned organization) took responsibility and its spokesperson Abu Baker Siddique told reporters by phone 'our suicide bomber carried out the blast and the Shi'a community in Hazara Town was the target'³⁸. On 10 January 2013, 81 Hazara tribe members were killed and 121 wounded in Quetta. The same Lashker-e-jhangvi claimed responsibility for the suicide attack³⁹. The Sunni-Shi'a conflict has become more complex and more dangerous because foreigners and vested interest groups have been dragged into it. One columnist wrote in the Daily Jang newspaper⁴⁰ that former ISI operative Khalid Khwaja claimed that Osama Bin Laden had paid money to former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to get rid of Bhutto's pro-Shi'a government in 1989, and that he himself had carried the money to Sharif. Khalid Khwaja also claimed that Nawaz Sharif met Osama Bin Laden more than three times. According to that columnist, Osama bin Ladin's main motif in doing this was to protect his group in Peshawar. If what was claimed by Khalid Khwaja was indeed true then this was a clear indication of the internationalization of the political-religious sectarian conflicts in Pakistan.

The Sunni 'ulama' fatawa on the Shi'a as 'apostates' or Shi'a apostasy only worsened Sunni-Shi'a relations in the country. When the fatwa was issued in 1986⁴¹, its main references were the Fatawa-e-Alamgiria and Taqi-ud- deen ibn Taymiyya's books. The consequences of the fatawa were bloody. Militant Sunni and Shi'a groups were killing each other's leaders⁴² with time bombs and target killings. By the mid-1990s suicide bombing has begun to be used as a means of eliminating religious or political opponents.

The fatawa exhorted Sunni extremists to enforce the law themselves. The attack on Parachinar, a predominantly Shiite region in northern Pakistan, may serve as an illustration of this. However, migration of Afghans and a thriving drug and gun trade, Parachinar had no history of organised violence. Because the Zia regime did not want any Shia pockets on the route used to transport

³⁵ Zakat. Retrieved from <http://www.islamic-laws.com/zakat.htm>. Assessed on 10 June 2015.

³⁶ Tikekar, M. (2004). *An Indian's across the Wagah*. New Delhi: Promilla & Co., Publishers. P. 221.

³⁷ Nasr, S. V.R. (2002). *Islam, the State and the rise of sectarian militancy in Pakistan*. In C. Jaffrelot (Ed.), *Pakistan: Nationalism without a nation*. p. 88.

³⁸ Saleem, S. (2013, February 11). Hazara killing in Quetta. *Dawn*.

³⁹ Saleem S. (2013, January 17). Hazara killing in Quetta. *Dawn*.

⁴⁰ Daily Jang, 27 March, 2006.

⁴¹ Khomeini aur Isna Asharya Kay baray main Ulama e kiraam ka Mutafiqa faysala, (1991), (*'Ulama's unanimous decision about Khomeini and isna Asharya*). Karachi: Bayenaat Publishers. p. 185.

⁴² Shi'a militant groups assassinated Maulana Haq Nawaz Jhangvi in retaliation on 23 February 1990.

Moreover, Mehr Ali terrorist blew up Maulan Zia-ur-Rehman. Maulana Azam Tariq had also been killed on the outskirts of Rawalpindi.

weapons from Pakistan to Afghanistan, Afghan fighters were dispatched to this region to combat the Turi Shi'a. Since then, violent sectarian religious conflict has become widespread.⁴³

8. QADIANI ISSUE AND VIOLENCE

The Qadiani issue is another recurring source of sectarian religious violence in Pakistan. This section discusses how the Qadiani religious issue has become politicized, its impact on Pakistani society, and the role played by different governments in dealing with this divisive issue. The gulf of differences among politicians, *'ulama* and different relevant groups will be analyzed. The ordinance and constitutional amendments, which were promulgated to address the challenge, will also be discussed.

9. THE QADIANI MOVEMENT: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The Qadiani movement began at the end of the nineteenth century in the Punjab Province. When this movement was spreading in the Indian communities, British domination had spread from east to west. Its founder was Mirza Gulam Ahmed Qadiani. There is much uncertainty about his date of birth as well as about his ancestry.⁴⁴ During his education period, he served for four years in the office of Deputy Commissioner from 1864 to 1868 in the Sialkot district of Punjab province⁴⁵. In his early life, he believed in Prophet Muhammad (ṢAAS) as the final Prophet of Allah and that no one can abrogate, or renounce the Qurān after its completion⁴⁶. Furthermore, he says that:

'I am not a claimant to prophethood nor to miracles, and neither am I a denier of Angels and belief in good and bad fate, I believe in the finality of Muhammad Mustafa (ṢAAS), and I believe such person as an infidel and liar who claims prophethood after Rasool Allah (ṢAAS)'⁴⁷. According to historical sources, he did not claim prophethood until 1897. In fact, he would deprecate any person who dared to claim prophethood.

However, his followers were divided into two main factions. One called the Qadiani and the other the Lahori. The first faction believes in the prophethood of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad and if anyone does not believe in him as a prophet, he will be considered as an infidel. The second faction (Lahori) considers him as a Zill-e-Nabi (shadow of Prophet or apostolic prophet). After partition, the first mass killing in Pakistan arising from the Ahmadi issue occurred on 4th and 5th March 1953 when twelve people were killed and nearly sixty-nine people seriously injured in Lahore. This violent incident took place in the wake of the failure of the government to meet three main demands of the majority community. These demands were: 1) Ahmadi Qadiani should be declared a non-Muslim; 2) Zafer Ullah Khan who was then the Foreign Minister of Pakistan should be removed because of having Qadiani ideology, and 3) other Qadianis who have key posts should be removed from their offices. The failure of the authorities to resolve the issue led to protests and arrests that were to turn into violence⁴⁸. On 12 July 1952, The Muslim League passed the resolution moved by

⁴³ International crises group (ICG), working paper, Asia Report No. 125, working paper, 11 Dec 2006. P. 1-38.

⁴⁴ Sometime, he says that he belongs to Mughal descendant (Qadiani, G. A. (1900). *Arbaeen*, Article: 23. Qadayyan: Rīaz Publishers, India) and sometime he says that he belongs to Persian family and a Chinese family (Qadiani, G. A. (1902). *Tuhfa-e-Golaria*. p. 41. Qadayyan: Rīaz Publishers, India). Furthermore, he claims as a Sikh and a Hindu (Qadiani, G. A. (1950). *Haqiqat ul Wahī*. Rabwah, Matboah (printed), India). p. 85.

⁴⁵ Mirza, B. (1939). *Sirrat ul mahdi*, vol 1, 2. Riwa'et No: 49. Lahore: Ahmadiya Anjuman Isha'at-e-Islam. p. 35.

⁴⁶ Qadiani, G. A. (1311.H). *Hamāmat ul Bushrā*. Lahore: Ahmadiya Anjuman Isha'at-e-Islam. p. 32.

⁴⁷ Mir, Q. A. (n.d). *Tabligh-e-risalat*, vol: 2. Lahore: Ahmadiya Anjuman Isha'at-e-Islam. p. 22

⁴⁸ Protesters' demands could not be met in time and the government started to arrest the leaders like Maulan Abual Hasanat Muhammad Ahmad, 'Allama 'Ala-al Din Siddique and Maulan Muhammad Bakhsh Muslim etc.



Maulan Sayyad Ahmad Saeed Kazmi and seconded by Khajaw Abdul Hakim Siddiqi, that Qadiani be declared a non-Muslim minority and Zafer Ullah Khan, who was a Qadiani be removed from office and that he could not be a representative of the Muslims.

Underground and open anti and pro-Qadiani activities continued until the separation of East Pakistan, when the Pakistan People Party (PPP) came into power. After 77 years of emotional and violent history of the Qadiani issue, Mulana Shah Ahmad Noorani presented the following resolution in the National Assembly of Pakistan on 30 June 1974.

‘Whereas it is an accepted fact that Mirza Ghulam Ahmad proclaimed to be a prophet after the Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) and whereas his false proclamation of being a Prophet and his attempt to falsify many of the verses of the Holy Qurān and to end the conception of Jihad was a treachery against the fundamental values of Islam. In addition, whereas the followers of his religion may have any name given to them, intermix with the Muslims, pretending to be a sect of Islam. In addition, whereas the Muslim World Organizations in its meeting held between on 6 and 10 April in Makkah, in which 140 Muslim Organizations took part, united in deciding that the Qadiani, which calls itself a sect of Islam, is a subversive movement against Islam and the Islamic World. Now, therefore, this assembly should declare that the followers of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Qadiani, may they be given any name, are non-Muslim and that a government bill may be introduced to make necessary amendments in the constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, so that this declaration of this non-Muslim minority may be safeguarded’⁴⁹.

One thing that was observed, if dissemination of abusive literature, whether it was pro-Qadiani or anti-Qadiani could be banned and different Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) were also banned, then those kinds of controversies would not intrude into society.

Following this resolution both government and opposition resolutions were presented with both the House and Select Committees pursuing the matter. Mirza Nasir Ahmad Qadiani, who became the head of the Qadiani group and the third successor of Mirza Ghulam Ahmed Qadiani in 1965, and Sadrudeen, Amir of Lahori Group, requested the Committee to hear them in their defense. Their request was accepted and Mirza Nasir presented a written explanation of 200 pages. Finally, the Special Committee and Sub-Committee, having considered the resolutions along with the examination of witnesses, including heads of Anjuman Ahmadiya Rabwah and Ahmadiya Anjuman Ishaat-e-Islam, Lahore, unanimously made the recommendation to the National Assembly. The bill was unanimously passed by the Upper House and Lower House and an amendment made to article 106 (3) and article 260 clause 2 of the Constitution of Pakistan, whereby, whereby the Qadianis and the Lahoris were declared a minority along with other minorities⁵⁰. This constitutional amendment was the second in the history of Pakistan and the first ever pertaining to the Qadiani issue.

Zafer Ullah Khan strongly condemned this decision of Pakistan Parliament but then law minister Abdul Hafeez Peerzada rejected his condemnation and said that the Parliament was a supreme body; no one could challenge its decision⁵¹. The constitutional declaration of the both (i.e. Qadiani and Lahori also collectively referred to in Pakistan as the Ahmadies, as a non-Muslim minority created a big opportunity for Pakistan and gave it a momentum to secure a decisive solution to this sectarian problem. However, Pakistan’s leaders, especially the religious, failed to seize the opportunity. The constitutional definition of the role of non-Muslim in the government was excluded. People were saying that now the Qadiani controversy had been dealt with but with the passage of time, others Qadiani’ related differences and issues flourished. This matter was not so complicated but it had to be made so, that is why, political-religious violence was going to diverge into a non-violent society. Political forces under the umbrella of religious enmity were creating political agitation to get political benefits.

⁴⁹ The Message (1984, June-July) *International*, Karachi.

⁵⁰ National Assembly Secretariat Notification (1974, September 7), Islamabad.

⁵¹ Dawn, Karachi, 10 October 1974.



The governments within the framework of democracy and interfaith dialogue as follow-ups could have taken various kinds of measures to the constitutional amendment. However, unfortunately, Governments in Pakistan did not open the intra and inter faith dialogues among different sects to create harmony. Several of the nation's regimes rigidly rejected dialogues, which could have discouraged violence in future, out of prejudices and sectarian political and religious interests. In an open, Islamic and democratic country, there would be a place and role for intellectuals and other civil society groups to help prevent violence in society. When checks, balances and accountability disappear from society, then institutional political-religiously based violence and non-institutional violence will play the same role in fostering uprising, lawlessness, carnage and target killing.

The constitutional amendment to the religious status of the Ahmadis did not make the religious climate in Pakistan any better. In fact, it got worse. Religious sectarian warfare became more common and intense. According to Muhammad Qasim Zaman, after the Qadiani apostasy, Pakistan reached a slippery slope, when its first religious organization and jihadi political party (Sipah-e-Sahaba) devoted itself to the cause of declaring Shi'a as non-Muslim⁵². The Qadiani issue itself was to grow into a bigger problem. Religious blasphemy was countered with another blasphemy, leading to new legislations on inter-religious relations that were to further divide society. The Qadiani issue also became internationalized as it was brought up at several international forums, including in Israel, which is known to have a Qadiani presence.

Mr. Bhutto's constitutional amendment proved to be inadequate in addressing the Qadiani issue. When Zia came into power, he passed new ordinances aimed at curbing religious hate and blasphemy, especially against the Prophet (SAAS). Ordinance 44 passed in 1980 was added to section 298-A that dealt with derogatory remarks directed at revered religious figures. This addition pertains to the Prophet's family and companions. It reads:

'Whoever, by words spoken or written or by visible representation or by any imputation innuendo or insinuation directly or indirectly defiles the sacred names of any wife (*Umm al-muminin*) of the Holy Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) or members of the family (Ahl al-bayt) of the Holy Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) or any of the righteous Caliphs or companions (Sahaba) of the Holy Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend for three years or with fine or both'⁵³.

The above section was promulgated with the addition of sections 298-B and 298-C to the Pakistan Penal Code, where the Qadiani and the Lahori were explicitly mentioned. The promulgation of this ordinance added a new dimension to the politicization and internationalization of the Qadiani issue. The Ahmadis fought back on all fronts. Mirza Tahir (grandson of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad) sought asylum in London, where he restarted his campaign to publicize persecution of the Ahmadis. The Middle East Times quoted him as saying that he believed that rather than leading to an Islamic state, a persecution campaign against the Ahmadis might lead to a divided Pakistan⁵⁴. Although, no one was prosecuted by any civil court; Mirza Tahir claimed that three million Ahmadis had faced a wave of religious persecution⁵⁵. Mirza Tahir's loyalty to Pakistan came into question, when he sent a special delegation to Israel headed by Shaikh Sharif Ahmad Amini the outgoing leader of the Ahmadiya movement in Israel. According to The Jerusalem Post, 'The new leader of the sect, which

⁵² Zaman, M. (1998). Sectarianism in Pakistan: The radicalization of Shi'i and Sunni identities. *Modern Asian Studies*, 32 (3), 689.

⁵³ Khan, M. A. (2002). *The Pakistan penal code 1860*. Lahore: Ilmi Kitab Khana.

⁵⁴ Middle East Times, 17-24 November 1984.

⁵⁵ Newsweek, 16 July 1984.



has 1200 followers in Israel, brought numerous documents as evidence that the sect is persecuted in Pakistan'⁵⁶.

On the legal front The Ahmudia Movement appealed to the High Court of Lahore that the ordinance abrogated their basic human rights to practice and propagate their religion when Pakistan itself was a signatory to the Charter of Human Rights to which it was therefore bound to abide. Furthermore, they argued that it was against the principle expressed in the speech delivered by Mr. Jinnah in the constituent assembly on 11 August 1947. The High Court of Lahore dismissed the petition. Mujeeb-ur-Rehman, who was the president of the Ahmudia Movement of Rawalpindi, filed the petition in the Federal Sharia Court (FSC) against the ordinance on 15 July 1984. The court, in the presence of jurist consultants like Dr. Mahmoud Ahmad Ghazi and Dr. Muhammad Tahir-ul Qadri, heard the issue for twenty-one days and then dismissed the petition on August 12, 1984⁵⁷. The Court declared Mirza Ghulam Ahamd Qadiani as an infidel who sought through lies and clever design in his writings and speeches to establish himself as the Mahdi and Masīh. All his predictions and prophecies were found false but in order to avoid the ridicule of his opponents, on many occasions he tried to maintain his innocence by saying that he never claimed prophethood or apostleship. The Court also declared that there had never been any promise by the Quaid-e Azam to treat the Ahmadias as a Muslims or let them preach their faith in the name of Islam⁵⁸.

Failing in their legal initiatives Mirza Tahir opted to challenge the Pakistan leadership for *Mubahila*⁵⁹. In one Friday sermon he said, "For the last several years, the opponents of Ahmadia in Pakistan have gone beyond all limits in defiling the person of the Promised *Masīh* and committing atrocities against the Jam'āt. Continued efforts have been made by us in all possible ways to make the nation understand. However, our advice has fallen on deaf ears. We are compelled, therefore, to give the false accusers and their leaders a challenge of Mubahila to make a distinction between right and wrong. The challenge for Mubahila is given to the Pakistan leadership at all levels, in the Government, in the Judiciary, in the politicians, in the 'Ulama. The challenge is on the behalf of the entire world-wide Ahmadia community"⁶⁰. Dr. Muhammad Tahir-ul- Qadri accepted the Mubahila (imprecation and invoke the curse of Allah on the liar) challenges. The place of Mubahila was fixed at Minar-e Pakistan, Lahore. However, Mirza Tahir did not appear at the scene⁶¹. Ahmadi controversy was not only in Pakistan but also in other part of the Muslim world like Indonesia. Ulama Council in Indonesia, which is called Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI), issued fatwa against Ahmadia in 2005. It stated that, "Ahmadiyya is outside of Islam, misguided and misleading"⁶².

⁵⁶ The Jerusalem Post, 21 November 1985.

⁵⁷ The Muslim, August 13, 1984.

⁵⁸ Dawn, Karachi, October 29, 1984.

⁵⁹ *Mubahila* is an Arabic word, which means invoke the punishment from Allah on the liar or invoke the curse of Allah upon each other. It has been described in the Holy Qurān in these words: "So, if someone contends with you about 'Isa (A.S) after knowledge has come to you, say: 'Come, let us (jointly) call our sons and your sons, our women and your women, and ourselves and yourselves (at the same place). Then let us supplicate fervently (i.e., most submissively) and invoke the curse of Allah upon the liars (3:61)"

⁶⁰ Tahir, M. (1988). *Mubahila ka khula khula challenge* (open challenge for imprecation). Rabwah: Zia-ul-Islam press.

⁶¹ Mubahila. (1988, October 24). Mubahila ka challenge aur rad-e Qadiani at, (Open challenge for imprecation and the rejection of Qadiani). khatm-e nabuwat conference. [VCD No: 770]. Lahore: Minar-e Pakistan.

⁶² Katjasungkana, N & Wieringa, S. (2012). *The future of Asian feminisms: Confronting fundamentalisms, conflicts and neo-liberalism*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing. p. 328.



10. CONCLUSION

The entire scope of the article demonstrates how political and religious sectarian violence has increased in Pakistan since the country's independence. Observers and opponents of Pakistan's political scene note that the nation has seen extended stretches of political misrule, conflict between the military and civilian leadership, a lack of participatory democracy, inter-ethnic conflict, and separatist wars. Conflicts within Islam have persisted for a long time on the religious front. The Sunni-Shia rivalry and controversy are the two most prominent sectarian religious disputes. Prior to the 1990s, both problems grew worse as a result of both internal and external influences. On both sides of the Sunni-Shia split, extremism was evident. The internationalisation of the Qadiani controversy and the constitutional amendment affecting Ahmadis' religious status have had a significant impact on the nation's religious milieu, which resulted in sectarian violence.