

## **Islam, Education and orthodoxical knowledge production in Pakistan**

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The education sector of Pakistan is largely shaped by the Islamic seminaries popularly called as madrasas, the extreme religious training along with Islamic texts are being formalized as elementary education. The Islamic training that is imparted in the madrasas do not only penetrate deep into the young Muslim minds but also such students enter into elite public universities and radicalize the campuses further which is meant to be for free thinking. It has skyrocketed post 'war on terror' and gained traction across the campuses of higher learning. So much so that Pakistan's higher education commission(HEC) had to come to an agreement with National Counter Terrorism Authority of Pakistan (NACTA) to implement a range of measures, including a university-level teaching course on prevention of violent extremism.<sup>1</sup> The most prominent divisive and right leaning student's organization of Pakistan is Islami Jamiat-e-Talaba (IJT) which was established in 1947, the same year of Pakistan's independence. The presence of such radical islamist student groups in the prominent campuses of higher learning has bearing in academic and administrative policies such as academic activities, admission policies, hostel related matters and fee structures. Islami Jamiat-e-Talaba (IJT) has immense influence in eminent universities like University of Punjab, Lahore, another renowned university, university of engineering and technology is centre for militant activities of Jamat-ud-Dawa(JUD), who's chief is anti india islamist fundamentalist and terror accused Hafiz Saeed.

Islami Jamiat-e-Talaba was founded by Syed Abul-Ala Maududi, an islamic preacher born in undivided india's deccan region who's main focus was to promote radical Islamic tenets in indian sub continent. He was the ideologue of Political Islam in South asia. So IJT has had grown to be most radical islamist students movement in pakistan's universities which regularly clashes with ethnic minority students forums like Pakhtoon Students Association. Curricular and pedagogical activities of the classrooms and outside have been religiously motivated. Quranic texts are heavily imposed on the syllabus that regularly inspires students towards violent ethnic religious separatism and Islamic militancy.

Pakistan has three kinds of educationa system : Madrassas, Public education institutions and Private educational institutions which implies that the state has no uniform universalized framework of education due to the heavy institutionalised role of Islam. Madrassas are supported and encouraged under the direct sponsorship of the state and the all powerful military establishments as the fountainhead of radical Islamic virtues which is tasked with creating a synchronization with the larger society and education. It is noteworthy to refer the case of funding of Rs 300 million by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government of Imran Khan's party to Darul Uloom Haqqania Madrassa in Nowshera district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa which is also known as the 'University of Jihad'. Darul Uloom Haqqania Madrassa trains muslim youths ideologically and militarily to fight against the west and india. It has trained the ideological head of Taliban, Samiul Haq and Taliban leader Sirajuddin Haqqani. Most of the Educational institutions in the state of KPK has mandatory courses on sharia law and therefore breeding grounds for the various offshoots of Afghan Taliban. The ethnic minority students face everyday attacks from islamist students groups.

<sup>1</sup>The attack on the Army Public School (APS) by the Pakistani Taliban on December 16, 2014, which resulted in the deaths of approximately 132 students, and Bacha Khan University attack of January 20, 2015, killing twenty-two people, shook the country. Following the APS attack, worldly educational institutions faced threats from the Taliban that resulted in their temporary closure. From this, we could infer that, on the one hand,

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<sup>1</sup> Ahmed, Zahid Shahab & Jafri, Qamar Abbas (2020). ) 'Drivers of violent extremism in higher education institutions of Pakistan'. *Dynamics of Asymmetric Conflict*, 13:3, P-231.

madrassas face no danger from the Pakistani Taliban because they only incorporate religious education, which is also one of the Taliban's major aims. As the intention of such education is to promote the application of sharia law, which according to Taliban interpretation is the only legitimate knowledge allowed, it could, therefore, be assumed that madrasa students might not oppose the Pakistani Taliban."<sup>2</sup>

### **Genesis of Islamic Education in Pakistan**

The emergence of Pakistan after the phases of crucial political bargaining with the colonialists by Muslim league leader Mohammed Ali Jinnah, witnessed most critical juncture to not only frame a constitution in accordance with the Islamic values but also give shape to an education system on the basis of Islamic texts and interpretations. It was aimed to in fact propagate the idea of muslim Pakistan through the Islamic education system from an early stage. The first education minister of Pakistan, Mr. Falur Rahman had officially outlined the vision of Pakistan's education in an educational conference organised by the government of Pakistan. His vision for future education system was clearly borrowed from the Islamic codes of knowledge. He said,

"Our educational policy should be according to modern requirements and also reflects those ideas which are the real base of the creation of Pakistan. We will have to change the Pakistan into that democratic state, which citizens have the physical, intellectual and moral qualities to lay a good life and for this purpose we will have to get benefits from Islamic values and civilization. Our educational system will have to get guideline from Islamic principles. It is only Islam in throughout school of thoughts which presents a complete code of human sympathy and unity."<sup>3</sup>

The education policy 2009 by the relatively ideologically liberal Government of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) had a whole chapter on Islamic education. It specified the vision for Islamic education in the National curriculum, 'Transformation of society on Islamic Values'. To transform the education sector of Pakistan, the policy suggested Islamiyat as compulsory core subject from childhood education extending up to graduation in universities. It clearly stated the objective of Pakistan's education policy,

"The objectives of teaching of Islamiyat shall be to ensure that all Muslim children are provided opportunities to learn and apply the fundamental principles of Islam in their lives with the purpose of reformation and development of society on the principles of the Qura'an and Sunnah."<sup>4</sup>

Though the idea of Islamiyat education was first incorporated much earlier during the martial law rule of General Ayub Khan in 1960s and later during the martial law rule regime of General Zia ul Haq in 1980s. Needless to say martial law regimes had massively pushed Islamic theological contents in the curriculum of education. In 1969 proposals for new education policy were sought from the experts as well as from common public. The proposals later shaped the idea of islamisation of state aided education, it was introduced through the proposals that islamic studies should be made compulsory till the university level. Subsequently, The education policy of 1972, had introduced radical measures to Islamize the education system. The 1972 policy recommended that the Islamic principles and beliefs should be made part of the whole curriculum instead of compulsorily teaching Islamic Studies as a separate discipline.

The most Significant and aggressive steps towards for Islamization of education in Pakistan was made through education policy 1979 during General Zia's regime. The 1979 policy stated that "it is the need of the day that we prepare clear Islamic aims of education and the method of their achievement should be done according to the theory of Pakistan"<sup>5</sup>. According to the National education policy main objectives of the education were: 1. "To create the sense among students that they are the members of Islamic world, side by side the members of Pakistani nation. 2. To construct and orientate the character of students according to Quraan and Hadith so that they would be sincere and faithful Muslims."<sup>6</sup> To attain these goals the policy framers went all out towards not only islamisation but also arabisation and shariaisation of country's education sector: "1. Islamiyat will be included in all levels of academic, technical and professional institutions as a compulsory subject. 2. In all schools and colleges the teaching of Arabic will be organized. 3. A complete faculty of shariah will be established in Quaid-eAzam University. 4. Changes will be brought up in the curriculum and text-books according to the principles and theory of Islam. 5. The important status will be given to mosques and five thousand mosque schools will be established for students in throughout country. 6. All Madrasahs, Maktabs and Darul-Ulooms will be given

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<sup>2</sup> Hanif, Saba, Hassan Ali, Majid & Shaheen Faiza (2019). *Religious Extremism, Religiosity and Sympathy toward the Taliban among Students across Madrassas and Worldly Education Schools in Pakistan . Terrorism and Political Violence* , P-2.

<sup>3</sup> *Government of Pakistan Education Report. (1947), P- 6-8.*

<sup>4</sup> *National Education Policy (2009), Ministry of Education, Government of Pakistan, P-24.*

<sup>5</sup> *Government of Pakistan. (1979). National education policy and implementation programme. Islamabad: Ministry of Education.*

<sup>6</sup> *ibid*

full importance and all the students of Madrasahs will be given the same facilities like other formal educational institutions.”<sup>7</sup>

Quite surprisingly the National education policies in 1992 and 1998 undertaken during the civilian rule of Nawaz Sharif had also gone ahead with islamisation agenda of the state education. The 1992 policy affirmed that true message of Islam can be conveyed to the students through the Islamic interpretations of science: “The actual results could not be achieved by only Islamizing the education. This policy suggests the program by which students could understand the real message of Islam and prepare them to adopt modern and scientific needs in perspective of Islam”<sup>8</sup>. Again, Under the same Pakistan Muslim League (N) government in 1998 led by Nawaz Sharif proposed Reforms of education in concurrence with Islam through the National education policy. The policy stated that : 1. There are some provisions of the policy regarding Islamic education 2. Teaching the Holy Quraan with translation shall be introduced from class VI and will be completed by class XII. 3. The basic teachings of the Holy Quraan shall be included in all the courses of studies. 4. Valuable and rare books on Islam shall be reprinted and distributed among Deeni Madaris for research and reference. 5. Curricula and text books of all the subjects shall be revised so as to exclude and expunge any material repugnant to Islamic teachings and values, and include sufficient material on Quraan and Islamic teachings, information, history, heroes, moral values etc, related to the subject and level of education concerned”<sup>9</sup>.

### **Islamisation of Pakistani Education Sector: Emergence of Radicalism**

The ideology of Political Islam evidently shaped the core of Pakistan’s Secondary , higher secondary, and university education system, it was only during the tenure of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto , right to education was included in the newly inherited constitution of 1973 but this did not last long as Islamist martial law administration took over the country with coup of General Zia ul Haq, that’s when there was a tectonic shift took place in the education policy making as for Zia, the primary emphasis in education sector was through the madrasah system. His government started tremendously funding Islamic education through the Madrassas . International crisis group in its 2004 report laid bare the adverse effects of islamisation of education sector and how it had aggravated gender disparities especially with sensitive Islamic contents that could create passions in the classrooms. ICG also proclaimed that Pakistan’s weak education system has the potentials to radicalize its youth , It said : “Pakistan’s deteriorating education system has radicalised many young people while failing to equip them with the skills necessary for a modern economy. The public, government-run schools, which educate the vast majority of children poorly rather than the madrasahs (religious seminaries) or the elite private schools are where significant reforms and an increase in resources are most needed to reverse the influence of jihadi groups, reduce risks of internal conflict and diminish the widening fissures in Pakistani society.”<sup>10</sup>

With inculcation of General Zia’s Islamisation, Arabisation and Shariaisation formula in public education, Sunni orthodoxical notions got infused into the curriculum and textbooks which started inspiring Jihadi terrorism and started nurturing xenophobia against ethnic minorities in the university campuses. Islamist parties like Jamaati-Islami (JI) and Islamist students movements like Islami Jamiat-e-Talaba (IJT) started directly influencing Educational administration and academic policies. Prominent academic Dr. Muhammad Safeer Awan of Islamabad’s National University of Modern Languages in an article stated that how hyper islamisation policies of General Zia Ul Haq pushed minorities towards indignity, he wrote: “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-Islamization. His policy of creating cultural bulwarks through Islamization had 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 “Pakistani-ness” began to be replaced with a fanatical concept of Islam.”<sup>11</sup> Astoundingly, the national curriculum and pedagogy that permeated with Islamic doctrines by Zia’s Islamist regime was maintained, even preserved and extended by the successive civilian regimes. Zia’s islamisation agenda were based on four broad contours , that 1. Islam is the guiding force of the state and everyday life 2. India is a permanent threat so is Hindu minorities , 3. The army is as sacred as Islamic texts and 4. Arab is the guardian of Ummah and Islamic internationalism is the ideology.

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<sup>7</sup> *ibid*

<sup>8</sup> *Government of Pakistan. (1992). National educational policy. Islamabad: Ministry of Education.*

<sup>9</sup> *Government of Pakistan. (1998). National education Policy 1998-2010. Islamabad: Ministry of Education.*

<sup>10</sup> *International Crisis Group (2004). Pakistan: Reforming the education sector. Asia Report N°84, Islamabad/Brussels*

<sup>11</sup> *Awan, Safeer Muhammad (2012). Impact of Radical Islamisation of Education on Pakistani Society’, Pakistaniaat: A Journal of Pakistan Studies, 4:2, P- 46.*

Essentially, the idea of multiculturalism and South Asian plural historicities have no place in the curricula as well as in ideological frameworks of the state of Pakistan. Important to note here that the post 9/11 war on terror created a havoc chaos in Pakistan when General Musharraf's martial law regime partnered with the United States, which also led to the reinforcement of militant Islamism in the wake of global outrage against jihadi terrorism and fundamentalist Islamic groups operating from the soil of Pakistan. General Musharraf tried to bring substantive changes in the education policies but ended up taking the same lines of Zia's regime. The syllabus of the schools, colleges and universities remained unchanged and instilled with Islamic codes and Quranic texts. Pakistani economist Dr. Ishrat Hussain in his study of the State of Social Sciences had pointed out the immediate and urgent need to deradicalise the curricula and the syllabus: "The constraints imposed on the universities and academia in general to subscribe or follow a particular school of thought about religious thinking, ideology of Pakistan, history of separatism from India etc. should be removed. Competing or alternative ways of thinking provoke debate, discussion, discourse and further inquiry that challenge conventional wisdom and generate new knowledge continuously. Hostility towards other viewpoints or defensiveness are not the right attributes for an academic community. These are the attributes of an intellectual graveyard. Some of the challenges facing Pakistan today would have been resolved if there was freedom to pursue independent thinking on some of these issues"<sup>12</sup>. In fact, Pakistani academic S. Akbar Zaidi in his investigative research on the condition of social science research in Pakistan has argued that how educational institutions have been subverted by the authoritarian state and how it gave rise to the sycophantic culture and the creative dissenting voices are being disliked by the state. Zaidi's research is deeply penetrating and revealing of the deep rot in the Pakistani education set up and in its conducting of research especially in social science disciplines. He pointed out: "As Islam and Islamic ideology became the hallmark of the Zia regime, we began to see deep structural influences of this ideology on different aspects of society. Research under the banner of Islam began to thrive and there were considerable attempts to recast Pakistan's identity. There was a conscious move on part of the military government of General Zia to dislodge Pakistan from its South Asian roots and to re-orient Pakistan into a Muslim, Middle and Central Asian nexus. A new sense of identity and identification was invented with Islam playing the pivotal, cementing, medium. Given the basic premise of the role of the state and its power and hegemony over patronage, as discussed above, aspirants to power and higher office in universities and in research institutions, began to toe the line and became part of the Islamic 'resurgence'. Economics became 'Islamic economics', anthropology, Islamic anthropology, research in history started focusing far more on the Islamic dimension, and the only sort of history which began to be promoted was that related to the Pakistan Movement and the Muslim Freedom struggle in United India. Also, with attempts to reinvent Pakistan's 'ideology' in Islamic terms, much of the research in political science and other social science disciplines could not have been influenced by these important macro trends. The establishment of the International Islamic University in Islamabad in 1980 is part of this trend."<sup>13</sup> Most of social scientists doing research in Pakistan too are using the lens of Islam to interpret nuances of socio-political discourses where secular multicultural lenses have no place. At times fanatical Islamic nationalism is used as a core principal to analyse the changing dynamics of the Pakistani state and society. Racial hatred, ethnic reductionism and the bogey of Islamophobia are used as sentiments in the curricula so that Islam remains the ideological foundation and the thinking of future generations would be shaped in accordance with Islamic supremacist teachings.

### **Role of Religious education: Rise of religious extremism in Pakistan**

The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), an independent and bipartisan commission of the United States government in its 2011 annual report has unveiled some bone-chilling references of how textbooks and curricula are infused with Islamic texts to foster anti-Hindu and anti-Christian prejudices and intolerance. USCIRF in its 2011 ground-based studies monitored the disturbing rise in violent Islamic extremism throughout Pakistan that does not only target non-Muslims but non-Sunni religious sects of Islam. Significantly, the report found out that such Islamist supremacist Wahabi religious trainings were mostly provided in the thousands of madrassas of Pakistan as well as in the public education institutions. Religiously inspired violence in Pakistan and abroad are mostly results of the ideological trainings of Sunni Islamists operated religious Islamic seminaries.

USCIRF funded a study by the International Center for Religion and Diplomacy (ICRD) to study Islamic studies, social studies, Urdu textbooks and pedagogical methods as well. ICRD, along with the Pakistani think tank Sustainable Development Policy Institute reviewed more than 100 textbooks and interviewed hundreds of students and teachers in madrassas and public education institutions, the findings are terrifying: "Public school textbooks used by all children often were found to have a strong Islamic orientation, while Pakistan's religious

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<sup>12</sup> Hussain, Ishrat. (2008) "Public Policy and Social Sciences." A paper presented at the Workshop on Social Sciences organized by Government College University Lahore on March 27.

<sup>13</sup> Zaidi, S. Akbar (2002), *Dismal State of Social Sciences in Pakistan*, Economic and Political Weekly, P- 4.

minorities were either referenced derogatorily or omitted all together. Hindus, one of Pakistan's religious minorities, were described in especially negative terms, and references to Christians were often inaccurate and offensive. Madrassa textbooks generally portrayed non-Muslims in one of three ways: (1) kafirs (infidels) or mushrakeen (pagans), (2) dhimmis (non-Muslims living under Islamic rule), or (3) murtids (apostates, i.e. people who have turned away from Islam). Non-Muslims were never described as citizens with the constitutionally protected rights which accompany citizenship.<sup>14</sup> General Zia ul haq in fact in 1970s stated in his one of foundational speech that, "The highest priority would be given to the revision of the curricula with a view to reorganizing the entire content around Islamic thought and giving education an ideological orientation so that Islamic ideology permeates the thinking of the younger generation and helps them with the necessary conviction and ability to refashion society according to Islamic tenets." This was not so new to witness in Pakistan though, during another martial law administrator General Ayub Khan, the textbooks were officially published by the government in accordance with Islamic codes. General Zia wanted to promote the narrative of puritanic muslim and good Pakistanis through the promotion of Jihadist Islam as the ideological foundation of Pakistan. USCIRF in its textbook analysis findings states: "Pakistan and Social Studies textbooks are rife with negative comments regarding India and Great Britain, but Hindus are often singled out for particular criticism in texts and in interview responses, together with Ahmadis, who consider themselves Muslims but are not considered so by the Pakistani constitution. Although an unbiased review of history would show that Hindus and Muslims enjoyed centuries of harmonious co-existence, Hindus are repeatedly described as extremists and eternal enemies of Islam. Hindu culture and society are portrayed as unjust and cruel, while Islam is portrayed as just and peaceful."<sup>15</sup> While Hindus were portrayed as backward and superstitious, textbooks across the provinces reminded that Pakistan's identity is nothing but 'Laa ilaha illallah Muhammadyur Rasulullah (there is no god but Allah, Muhammad is the messenger of Allah). Students and teachers in public as well as madrassa education system have deep rooted biases not only against non muslim minorities but also towards Hinduism and Christianity. Pakistan's eminent newspaper DAWN in a 2011 article reported 50 percent of its students can not read a sentence' and called the situation a dangerous trend towards education emergency that threatens tens of millions of children<sup>16</sup>. Poor quality education and infrastructure is aggravated by the very low spendings on the education sector because most of the budgetary allocations go for the military establishments known as the deep state of Pakistan. Military generals mostly appointed and promoted through the ranks from dominant sunni community had the major bearing on the country's policy making that is exclusive of minorities. In its 2002 report, Religious Minorities in Pakistan, the Minority Rights Group International based in London described the magnitudes of the religious minority community: "Some 10–13 million Pakistanis belong to minority communities, with Christians, Hindus and Sikhs among the most prominent. It should be remembered that this number does not include several Muslim denominations, which do not wish to be identified as minorities. These include Shias, among whom are Ismailis, and Zikris, Muslim communities that are deeply disturbed by Sunni demands that they be designated as minorities. Moreover, the Ahmadis officially declared a minority refuse to be categorized as non-Muslims."<sup>17</sup> Even Zulfikar Ali Bhutto who was hailed as socialist democratic leader, under his civilian regime Ahmadis were deprived of their muslim identity. Post amendment to the constitution which became effective from 1974 and robbed Ahmadis of its muslim identity, Shia muslims and Sufi barelvis started facing sunni islamist protests across the country for legally classifying them in non-muslim category. Shia and Sufi shrines were attacked as well.

Shockingly USCIRF funded study in its focused group discussions with students of Punjab, Sindh, KPK and Balochistan found deep animosities and hatred towards non muslims: "Some of the students stated that anything that is against Islam or attacks Muslims is the enemy of Islam. Paradoxically, while students reported that they are taught to respect non-Muslims, a majority of them simply identified non-Muslims/infidels as enemies of Islam. When specific, madrassa students indicated that Jews and Hindus and to some extent Christians are considered as the biggest enemies of Islam. Many students also mentioned specific nations such as America, Israel, and India as enemies of Islam. Several students also provided explanations for why they consider non Muslims to be enemies of Islam."<sup>18</sup>. There has also been enormous amounts of pressure on christian and hindu

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<sup>14</sup> Hussain, A., Salim, A., & Naveed, A. (2011). *Connecting the Dots: Education and religious discrimination in Pakistan: A study of public schools and madrasahs*. United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, Washington, DC.

<sup>15</sup> *ibid.*, 15.

<sup>16</sup> DAWN (2011), *Education Emergency Pakistan*.

<sup>17</sup> Malik, Iftikhar Haider. *Religious Minorities in Pakistan*. London: Minority Rights Group International, 2002

<sup>18</sup> Hussain, A., Salim, A., & Naveed, A. (2011). *Connecting the Dots: Education and religious discrimination in Pakistan: A study of public schools and madrasahs*. United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, Washington, DC.

students to get converted to Islam. The same study by USCIRF in an interview with a Christian student found out chilling narrations of pressure of Muslim students and teachers on him to read Kalima and become Muslim. A Christian student from Lahore revealed “ that he was treated harshly by the teacher at the government-run primary school he previously attended. His teacher used abusive language towards him, calling him “dirty” and “dirty Christian” (Choorhay Easi). He also used to beat him more than any other student in his class. In his current school, there are several students who ask Sabir to convert to Islam and say that if he becomes Muslim, they will provide him with money and care. He refused by saying that his elders take care of him already. Sabir said he wants to learn about Christianity, not Islam, in school. His teacher said everyone should study Islamic Studies, but he was given a choice between Arabic and Computer Science (he opted for the latter). In primary school, he did not want to study Arabic, but was forced to by his teacher. Sabir wishes to be treated as a human being equal to everyone else and not discriminated against for not being Muslim. He also wants teachers and students to stop hurting his feelings or trying to convert him to Islam.”<sup>19</sup> It is though untrue to say that Pakistan has been Islamised during General Zia’s ten years long rule but Pakistan from the very beginning was created on the deep agenda of making an Islamic homeland for Muslims of the Indian subcontinent. In this regard Pakistan’s first non-Muslim law and labour minister Mahapran Jogendra Nath Mandal’s scathing resignation letter on 9<sup>th</sup> October 1950 is absolutely gut-wrenching and revealing. Mahapran writes : “That the abduction and rape of Hindu girls have been reduced to a certain extent is due only to the fact that there is no Caste Hindu girl between the ages of 12 and 30 living in East Bengal at present. The few depressed class girls who live in rural areas with their parents are not even spared by Muslim goondas. I have received information about a number of incidents of rape of Scheduled Caste Girls by Muslims. Full payment is seldom made by Muslim buyers for the price of jute and other agricultural commodities sold by Hindus in market places. As a matter of fact, there is no operation of law, justice or fair-play in Pakistan, so far as Hindus are concerned. . Leaving aside the question of East Pakistan, let me now refer to West Pakistan, especially Sind. The West Punjab had after partition about a lakh of Scheduled Castes people. It may be noted that a large number of them were converted to Islam. Only 4 out of a dozen Scheduled Castes girls abducted by Muslims have yet been recovered in spite of repeated petitions to the Authority. Names of those girls with names of their abductors were supplied to the government. The last reply recently given by the Officer-in-Charge of recovery of abducted girls said that “his function was to recover Hindu girls and ‘Ahhuts’ (Scheduled Castes) were not Hindus”. The condition of the small number of Hindus that are still living in Sind and Karachi, the capital of Pakistan, is simply deplorable. I have got a list of 363 Hindu temples and gurdwaras of Karachi and Sind (which is by no means an exhaustive list) which are still in possession of Muslims. Some of the temples have been converted into cobbler’s shops, slaughter houses and hotels. None of the Hindus has got back.”<sup>20</sup> So, Islamisation program and Islamic education was not a recent phenomenon of Pakistan, it was started from 1950 itself and onwards. Whether its General Ayub Khan, General Yahya Khan, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, General Zia ul Haq, Nawaz Sharif, Benazir Bhutto, General Pervez Musharraf and Imran Khan, the national education policies had the stated objective to infuse Islamic ethos and codes of life in the curricula. None had ever radically battled for secular education like their foundational leader Mohammed Ali Jinnah. Pakistan’s last long serving Popular military backed Prime Minister Imran Khan had no less contribution in advancing the religious education. In 2021 his Party Pakistan Tehreek e Insaf led federal government unveiled Single National curriculum which was aimed at freeing Pakistani students from “ English Culture” because for Khan who was also an ardent supporter Islamist jihadist Tehreek e Taliban, adoption of English culture would ensure downfall of Pakistan who himself is western educated Oxford graduate. Khan’s Single National Curriculum made Islamiat as not only compulsory from Grade 1 but to be treated as separate subject too.”<sup>21</sup>

Pakistan’s noted educationist and scholar Rubina Saigol has in her various writings squarely said that Pakistan’s education system remains anti progressive, anti criticism and anti liberal thoughts and it is still chained by the ‘discredited two nation theory’<sup>22</sup>.

The universities of Pakistan are in a deplorable state not because of its elementary to secondary to higher secondary education is dictated by Islamic tenets and Islamiat but the process of recruitment in universities are at times deeply corrupt and mostly on the basis of dominant Sunni sects. There is no serious scientific research allowed as well in most of the federal as well as in provincial universities. Critical social science research, research on comparative religions are considered to be against the Islamic ethos of the Pakistani state. Most of the social

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<sup>19</sup> *ibid.*, 113

<sup>20</sup> Accessed from Resignation letter of Jogendra Nath Mandal to Pakistani Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan, 9<sup>th</sup> October 1950.

<sup>21</sup> *Single National curriculum(2021), Ministry of Federal Education, Government of Pakistan.*

<sup>22</sup> Saigol, Rubina (2005). ‘State of Educational Discourse in Pakistan’ in Inayatullah, Rubina Saigol and Pervez Tahir (eds), *Social Sciences in Pakistan: A Profile. Islamabad: COSS.*

science research revolves around uncritical Islamic issues through the lens of Islam which made Pakistani university and college campuses as breeding grounds for Islamist fundamentalist jihadi activities. Pakistan's paramilitary border guard force, Rangers are openly permitted to move in many a university campuses of Punjab and Sindh which is not only deeply disturbing but also a blow to the very idea of independence of the university campuses. Romantic affairs and cross gender relationships in the campuses are a rare sight in most of university campuses of Pakistan. International Islamic university of Islamabad, a stronghold of Islami Jamiat-e-Talaba (IJT) is also accused by Pakistan's former Interior minister Naseerullah Babar for nurturing terrorists after the news of world trade centre bombing accused ramji Yousuf's 'peaceful' stay in the university's hostel. Most of the university campuses and the students activism has no independent critical worldview but led by the Islamic worldviews and narratives thereby imposing the same through conservative Islamist students forces. In April 2017, a brutal murder was carried out on the Khyber Pakhtukhwa (KPK) provinces's Abdul Wali Khan University (AWKU) where Mashal Khan, 23, a student of Mass Communications at had been beaten and shot to death by premeditated Islamist mobs drawn from the students wings of Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek e Insaf and Awami National Party. Mashal was accused of so called blasphemy charges manufactured by the Islamist students of the wali khan university.

Islamist students forces especially Islami Jamiat-e-Talaba (IJT) are mostly the self proclaimed moral torchbearers of Islam in the university campuses that has had put a ban on inter-sex socialization, dress code for women students, organising cultural programmes and critical discussions on social issues. In her article 'Islam and higher education in Pakistan', Dr. Ayesha Razzaque of Michigan state university, also a Pakistani origin writes: 'IJT at various public university campuses has already enforced five prayer breaks at the hostel canteens, cafeterias and other shops at the hostels. This is in addition to the two-hour Friday prayer break which has been in place for a number of years. During the month of Ramadhan classes are shortened by 15-20 minutes on campuses where religious student parties are active. This fundamentalist approach of IJT and the imposition of their particular philosophy upon others is referred to as the 'Talibanization' of Pakistani campuses. The following incidents reflect the strong negative influence of this 'Talibanization' on the social and academic lives of Pakistani students. Women have been affected in particular. The IJT, on campuses it controls, has prescribed a dress code for women students, and are trying to implement the hijab as mandatory part of women's dress. According to Hoodbhoy almost half of all female students at public universities are clad in a burqa or hijab; a trend that was absent 20 years ago. Regrettably it is not just the students who are guilty of harassing women students, Islamist faculty also harass women students who do not cover their heads. These faculty members pressurize women students to cover their heads either directly by humiliating them or indirectly by influencing their grades. As a former student of a premier public sector engineering university the author herself had such experiences. In one instance the chairman of the department conveyed through a subordinate, his dismay over the fact that I did not cover my head. The degree to which his views were conservative can be judged from the fact that he chose to communicate this message through a subordinate because he avoided directly talking to women students enrolled in his department'.<sup>23</sup> It was also reported in 2007 extensively in Pakistani news dailies that how Islami Jamiat-e-Talaba (IJT) goons hauled up a female student in Punjab University for her 'immoral' unIslamic dress. This is no single aberration but its almost everyday moral policing that goes hand in hand with their supporters in conservative university administration and the fundamentalist teachers community on the campuses. In 2018, Jamiat-e-Talaba fundamentalist students thrashed a man brutally in the same campus for sitting with his wife in the campus which according to IJT goons was unIslamic.<sup>24</sup> Islamisation of the campuses, Islamisation and Shariahisation of courses and academic curriculums have collectively turned every universities into Islamic university which is deeply supported by the implicit and explicitly Islamic political parties and Islamic professors on the campus. In his book, 'Islam and science: Religious orthodoxy and the battle for rationality' Pakistan's eminent academic Pervez Hoodbhoy writes, 'Pakistani universities are intellectually sterile and there has never been a tradition of intellectual activity on campuses'.<sup>25</sup> Hardcore Islamist preachers from Tablighi Jamaat are regularly invited in the university campuses across the country, even so called liberal higher education university like Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS) invited highly sexist and Tablighi Jamaat's prominent

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<sup>23</sup> Razzaque, Ayesha (2009), "Islam and Higher Education in Pakistan", in Fatma Nevra Seggie and Reitumetse Obakeng Mabokela (eds.) *Islam and Higher Education in Transitional Societies*, Rotterdam/Taipei : Sense Publishers.

<sup>24</sup> Gabol, Imran. (2018, October 25). 'Islami Jamiat Taleba students' suspended by Punjab University for thrashing man on campus. DAWN.COM.

<sup>25</sup> Hoodbhoy, Pervez. (1991). *Islam and science: Religious orthodoxy and the battle for rationality*. New Jersey, NJ: Zed Books Ltd.

global Islamic preacher Tariq Jamil. Needless to say that Pakistan's university campuses are taken over by the islamist students groups and conservative teachers which regularly blocks any attempts to have progressive teaching and discussion in and outside the classrooms. It is almost impossible to de islamise the campuses in a country which is established and survives on the idea of political islam. Pakistan's socio cultural and political thinking and everyday life is directly drawn from the quranic texts and Muhammad's dictations in Hadith that unswervingly impacts pakistan's educational policies as well as university systems at large.

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