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TERRORISM AND RELIGIOUS VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN PAKISTAN

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Abstract

Pakistan has been subjected to a number of terrorist-related violent threats and incidents since September 11, 2001. People's social, economic, and psychological well-being has been jeopardized by a never-ending and intermittent wave of terrorist attacks. Terrorism entails the intentional infliction of violence or force on a specific population in order to instill fear in order

to achieve desired religious, psychological, or political objectives. As a result, terrorism causes harm to people's physical, economic, psychological, and emotional well-being. In fact, the fear of terrorism has decreased to a large extent as a result of counter-terrorism measures implemented around the world, especially in Pakistan, which ranks fifth in the terrorism index in 2018. Human behavior and responses to terrorism, as well as perceptions of fear and the risks of terrorism and abuse, can be shaped by the media. It is attributed to a variety of perceptions of exposure to violence as a result of violent attacks that may or may not be specifically linked to acts of terrorism. The levels of fear crime and terrorism in Pakistan are determined by all of these various forms of crimes, social circumstances, and personal experiences.

Introduction:

Terrorism has posed a significant threat to the social and psychological well-being of Pakistanis. Terrorist attacks have caused a great deal of suffering among people (Yaseen & Naveed, 2018). Terrorism and extremism are major problems in Pakistan (Hasan, 2005). According to the Pakistan Institute of Peace Studies (PIPS) study on national security in Pakistan, there were 1442 terrorist attacks in 2007, including 60 suicide bombing cases, resulting in death and injury, as well as traumatic effects on the population (Zakaria, Jun, & Ahmed, 2019). In addition, 3448 people were killed or injured in 2005 and 2006, leaving them homeless, destitute, and emotionally disturbed (Khalid, 2014). Pakistan has been subjected to a number of terrorist-related violent threats and incidents since September 11, 2001 (Yousaf, 2019). People's social, economic, and psychological well-being has been jeopardized by a never-ending and intermittent wave of terrorist attacks (Z. U. A. Malik, Zhilong, & Fatima, 2020). Terrorism entails the intentional infliction of violence or force on a specific population in order to instill fear in order to achieve desired religious, psychological, or political objectives (Borum, 2004). As a result, terrorism causes harm to people's physical, economic, psychological, and emotional well-being (Ahmad, Bakht, & Hassan, 2016). Terrorism is a strategy used by a variety of ideologies to achieve a variety of goals, including social, political, and religious ones (Khushi, 2018). Terrorism is a calculated or implemented approach to achieve future results for the intended ends, not an ideology, social, political, or religious preference (Z. U. A. Malik, Zhilong, & Rafay, 2019). While the Pakistani government has paid close attention to internal security and border tensions, it has ignored the social and psychological needs of its people in order to build support for counter-terrorism and violent extremism (Hoffman, 2002). This ruthless attitude has created a climate of mistrust among the general public, animosity between religious groups, and fear of terrorism across Pakistan (Khalid & Roy, 2016). According to Jean-Francois Mayer, using religion to justify violence is a hazardous act; violent acts trigger the natural catastrophe, which brings an endless series of violence that is impossible to stop. (Mayer, 2001, p. 369) Religious terrorists consider violence a sacred act or divine duty demanded by religion or a religious leader as proof to check his truth (Hashmi, Hashmi, Khan, & Malik, 2021). They use sacred texts and historical examples to argue their claims. (Hoffman, *Holy Terror: The Implications of Terrorism Motivated by a Religious Imperative*, 1995, p. 272). Apart from religious goals, religious groups using terrorism also have social and political objectives. (Sedgwick, 2004).

Bruce Hoffman explains four types of terrorism:

1. Use of violence or threat of violence
2. Targeting citizens, individual or public property
3. Generating panic
4. Violent activities of a non-state militant group

(Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, 1998, p. 43). Bruce Hoffman argues that religion justifies religious violence, which shows that religious ideology resembles Marxist and fascist ideologies in influencing violent acts. (Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, 1998, p. 88). According to Walter Laqueur, religious terrorism is new terrorism of being himself on the right and others on the wrong, which seems more nationalist than a religious idea. (Laqueur, 2000, pp. 127, 148) Religious terrorism seems similar to traditional terrorism because both use religious scriptures and symbols and focus on religious motives. The use of religious scripture and symbols does not mean that religious and traditional terrorism are two sides of the same coin (Z. U. A. Malik, Uzzaman, et al., 2021). Certain non-religious factors may also cause groups to use terrorism for religious motives. Some militant groups also use terrorism to overthrow governments for further establishment of religious government, which shows that although the cause of terrorism (i.e. the overthrow of the government) seems non-religious, its motive is purely religious, which is the establishment of the caliphate to practice Shari'a law. (Gregg, 2014, pp. 38-39)

Terrorism and Extremism in Pakistani Society: A Horrible Incident

People who live in countries or locations where terrorism and violent extremism occur develop fears of being killed, wounded, or victimized as a result of direct or indirect acts of terrorism and abuse (Feyyaz, 2013). In Pakistan, religious and educational institutions were thought to be peaceful and safe from such criminal attacks, but a terrorist attack on Army Public School (APS) in Peshawar claimed the lives of 150 students (Qureshi, Gulraiz, & Shahzad, 2016). In fact, the fear of terrorism has decreased to a large extent as a result of counter-terrorism measures implemented around the world, especially in Pakistan (Z. U. A. Malik et al., 2021), which ranks fifth in the terrorism index in 2018 (M. S. Malik & Khan, 2018). Religions have also been seen as a source of distrust by many countries and individuals around the world (Johnston, McDonnell, Burbridge, & Patton, 2016). Despite the fact that many empirical research studies find no connection between Islam and terrorism, since the terrorist attacks on the Twin Towers in Oklahoma City on September 11, Europeans have increasingly and seriously looked down on Muslims and Islam as terrorists who are disrupting the world's socio-political climate (Rajan, 2015).

Terrorism and Extremism: The Role of Social and Electronic Media:

In recent years, social media has become a dominant medium and prominent indicator of people's evolving emotional, behavioral, and thought patterns. In the one hand, social media outlets such as newspapers, television, Facebook, WhatsApp, and YouTube have raised public consciousness about social issues; on the other hand, they have intensified public fear and paranoia about crime and terrorism (Maurice, 2013). Some researchers suggest that media coverage and reporting distorts the picture of elderly people living in rural areas (Ayres & Maglaras, 2016). Human behavior and responses to terrorism, as well as perceptions of fear and the risks of terrorism and abuse, can be shaped by the media (Nadeem & Khan, 2017). The role of electronic television channels in instilling or dispelling fear of terrorism and terrorist attacks is critical (Rabbi, 2012). Because of the extraordinary emergencies triggered by terror attacks, the media actually reframed news mechanisms significantly (Bakrania, 2017). The media has had a significant influence on how people view terrorists, react to threats, and cope with the fear and trauma of potential attacks (Borum, 2004). Terror fear, which is heightened or promoted by the media, is viewed differently by various social classes in society (Riffat, 2015). Young people who use social media, for example, become neutralized and oblivious to the contents on the platform over time, and therefore have no fear of being victimized. Rather, they are criminally motivated

in Pakistan(Z. U. A. Malik, Akhter, et al., 2021) for possessing criminal behavior and intending to hurt others(Hasan, 2005).

Terrorism attacks that are specifically or indirectly linked to violent attacks:

If terrorist-victimization and perceived fear of terrorist attacks are to be assessed, demographics, gender, and social status are some of the most important variables to consider. Different areas, including urban and rural, have different views of terrorism and violent extremism, so the levels and perceptions of fear and anxiety about terrorism and violent extremism differ(Celso, 2018).It is attributed to a variety of perceptions of exposure to violence as a result of violent attacks that may or may not be specifically linked to acts of terrorism(Allbritton, 2010).Levels of anxiety and perceptions, on the other hand, illustrate the fear of unsafe criminal conditions in the world in which people live(Demir & Varlık, 2015).The risk interpretation method, for example, explains that levels of fear can be generated by a variety of variables, including individuals' background experiences and the existence of social environments, which can ensure the possibility of victimization and the loss of loved ones(Ayres & Maglaras, 2016).This fear, as seen through this lens, shows how various forms of victimization can be linked, such as material, job-related, loss of self and family members, and disorderly community conditions(Lin, Kwee, & Tan, 2011).

In today's world, there are a number of undesirable and risky conditions:

The unwanted and harmful conditions prevalent in society form and affect the thought habits of people who are vulnerable to outer-world phenomena, but there is no consistency about what actual variables can be considered dominant for altering their discerning outlines(Rasmussen, 2002).Many who believe terrorists are religiously selfish, disordered, and flawed people have higher levels of fear of terrorists and terrorism(Shah, 2014).

Terrorism affects the following social classes disproportionately:

Fear of crime and terrorism has been linked to socio-demographic perceptions and circumstances, but there is no agreements on the characteristics of social groups are more vulnerable to terrorism feelings(Syed & Javed, 2017).However, it is common knowledge that people develop varying degrees of vulnerability to fear, danger, and perceptions of crime and victimization as a result of their past experiences, living experiences, and exposure to violence(Iannaccone & Berman, 2006).Many studies have been conducted, and it has been discovered, for example, that those subjected to incidents of terrorism and abuse in urban areas have a higher fear of being assaulted, and that women who have not yet been victims of violence have higher levels of fear of victimization(Hanif, Ali, Shaheen, & Hanif, 2019).Terrorist events in the United States changed people's perspectives(Javaid & Mushtaq, 2014). For example, it has been determined that Americans continue to believe that another 9/11-style attack could occur at any moment, despite the fact that this is untrue(Borum, 2004).

Threatening news on social media has the following consequences:

People's emotional reactions and thought habits are influenced by the overabundance of such threatening news on social media, which can lead to the creation of anxiety, self-isolation, and psychological abnormalities(Kaiter, 2016).The spread of news and knowledge, it is claimed, increases the risk of becoming a victim of any of these criminal acts(Forest, 2012).Some researchers conclude that people who are economically frustrated and belong to the elderly age group have a greater fear of being victims of local crimes and terrorist acts(Qureshi et al., 2016).

Conclusion:

People in rural and urban areas have different fears; for example, rural residents may fear being robbed of their valuables, while urban residents who face ethnic and religious abuse may fear being physically attacked and killed in an unexpected act of terrorism. Moreover, urban residents may perceive that criminal and terrorist activities in their communities have a negative impact on their income and financial situation. Apart from violent crimes committed within their neighborhoods, urban residents are often afraid of violent encounters with their ethnic counterparts; the intensity of criminal and violent circumstances will increase the risk of criminal victimization and death. Women are more afraid than men, while those who live in unsafe environments are more afraid, and those who are exposed to a physically violent world are more afraid of losing their physical well-being, economic status, and loved ones. The levels of fear crime and terrorism in Pakistan are determined by all of these various forms of crimes, social circumstances, and personal experiences.

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