



## RELIGIOUS FUNDAMENTALISM IN SOUTH ASIA: TREND ANALYSIS

*Dr. Muhammad Umer Hayat*  
Associate Professor  
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences  
Bahria University, Islamabad Campus,  
Islamabad – Pakistan  
[muhmalik@gmail.com](mailto:muhmalik@gmail.com)

*Alina Zaid*  
VFM, Bahria University, Islamabad Campus,  
Islamabad – Pakistan

### Abstract

*This article aims at analyzing the phenomenon of religious fundamentalism along with its causing implications as an important part of political spectrum. By using the name of politics, it has been playing an utmost important role in post-colonial states particularly that includes the South Asian countries. The term not only confined in Pakistan but its existence also includes the rest of Muslim world. Some historical factors have strong connection in playing of fundamentalism at present as it's linking roots with backwardness, societal deprivation too, least level of awareness & consciousness as well as the poverty. Additional, presenting this literature so to add more generally, in scholarly and policy interests networks between two prominent variables i.e. religion and politics. More over examines about the contrast of religious pluralism and of religious nationalism due to such elements making this region hostile thus study establishes to bring focus and uniformity on prevailing issues by cultivating cross purposes in seeking stability and security for regional states.*

**Keywords:** *Religious Fundamentalism, Religion & Politics, South Asian States*

### Introduction

Currently, South Asian states consisting of most hostile societies and each state has been facing in one or another-way same kind high or extreme high hostilities all across the

---



region causing the serious threats. Religious diversity associates with moral relativism which enhances fears amongst people and the competition for converts to keep them away from the right *faith*. Leaders' roles that are the important in this regard, their supports often seem in favor of majority religions for them which considers it as necessary to foster same identity and for protective purpose of nation security from the threats of outsiders. Political elite's direct approaches with religious communities for the reason to use them for own advantages and hopes about to squelch dissidents for the threats that may be challenge for them. None less than to say more acts of extremism hailing from the religious sects preferred by the state.(Saiya, 2019)

When one makes discussions on religious fundamentalism, literature usually relates with two factors the threat of modernization and correlated secularization. As a result of it claims about consequences of secularization processes *rage* of religiousness. For few scholars' phenomenon to which they investigate that religion generates fundamentalism and the reason for it is inherent, asserts that it carries the absolute reality. But at the end the analysis of studies justifies it as simply a way of thinking and acting which may thrives or sometimes develops in secular or on the religious soil.(Haynes, 2020) One of the most noteworthy phenomenon rose after the cold war which has arisen to forefront is the issues of Islamic fundamentalism though it includes various forms when it comes to the term of fundamentalism, but till now the widespread issue is of Islamic fundamentalism worldwide. Islamic fundamentalists thus reject the concepts of modernity and thus holds their own believes and calls for to, return to Islam or the *Nizam-e-Islami* means the Islamic Order. A complex multi-dimensional phenomenon, arguably product of few factors in which endogenous and exogenous are in particular, the former terms usually consists of the symptoms of society in crisis while the other includes outside development in which the globalization and deep engagement of western politico-cultural penetration.

Due to geo-graphic proximity, the occurrence of problem has attained virulent character. Orthodox *Ulemas* brought the center stage to Islam in state politics as the initiation of Islamization the ideology came under Zia regime to strengthen and unite Muslims, that culmination since initial 1970's period was slow but sure turning point in Pakistan history towards the Islam.(Mishra, 2012)

Bangladesh when got separated from Pakistan kept on resisting full-scale Islamisation, even after that both state major parties succumbed to religion in the field of politics. Worse and radical Islamism took hold in the country, that idea got popularity in the politics with the time when rich and the difference between poor got widened. Hate for Muslims was more in Myanmar politics, prominent nationalist organization *Mabatha* narrowly focused



on anti-muslim and political goals that dedicated its efforts for Buddhism protection at time of uncertainty and unparalleled changings between state and society.

In contrast to Hinduism, that also outlined religion (Indian Nationalism) as major factor in their constitution that got prominence back to 1980s by supra-political party Hindu nationalist organization with specific agenda of Hindu nation. RSS through Ram temple campaign and with political progeny BJP by political mobilization started using the identity of religious touch. Fascism was thus prominent in such communal and fundamentalist organizations as well as evident in them. Thus, the goals of such fundamentals only focus on political gains to establish hegemony in dominant sections. Such impressions thus shows similarities in different political movements across spectrums only intensity matters from state to state.(2018 - *Mainstream*)

### **Religious Extremism in Pakistan**

From the time when Pakistan got independence from British rule in 1947, the state divided into a condition that includes sectarian, ethnic and religious lines in order to foster extremism-terrorism in which many outsiders except internals organizations played their roles in it. Though Pakistan efforts in countering terrorism in past years were insufficient against the groups those who posed direct threat for state security, *Sipah e Sahaba*, *Sipah e Muhammadi*, *Islami Tehreek*, *Mullah Nazir Group*, *Harakat-ul-Mujahideen*, *Jaish-e-Muhammad*, *Afghan Taliban* and its affiliated Haqqani networks. Although roots cause in the failure of countering extremism consists of various factors such as the weak governance, economic obstacles and civil-military internal clashes plus the state reluctance to target them that serves their own strategic benefits. Violence related to terrorism in previous year of 2016 declined to a great extent about 600 as compared to that of in 2012 in which it marked 6000. But for some scholars still claim intolerance and extremism are on upswing in state. In regards to extremism the public opinion is different in Pakistan, in sum mixed.(*Pakistan: Extremism and Terrorism | Counter Extremism Project*, 2021)

Radicalization into extremist groups and recruitment in it, stems in various multitude factors. Such extremists' groups in Pakistan rely on numerous methods in order to spread their influence not only just confined to few but beyond it too. Amongst all some of them tactics they uses consists of; intimidation of silence ideologies by opposing political parties, by espousing extremist ideologies like *takfirisim* and by means of religious intolerance, by means of providing economic assistance and financial funding like Hezbollah and Lashkar-e-Tayyaba did. (Mirahmadi et al., 2016). Situation of the state after independence passed through many phases, during Ayub khan period and at that juncture Z.A Bhutto availed the opportunity who made them stronger and by conceding demands of



religious extremists the Shariah Law (Islamic system) introduction by Islamist forces during Zia regime, orthodoxy further then made inroads. More into it, the Russian invasion era also heralded the win-win era for religious extremists in Pakistan back to the period of 1979. The more lasting damage came into state in the form of forceful extremism entry in the political life of Pakistan, thus can be say like that the vision of Jinnah was afterwards hijacked by such elements of religious extremism who availed the opportunities to put the state on conservative lines in terms of religious means.

Religious and military elite ties that started in late 1950's reached the zenith during Zia government when such militants became a fundamental part in state politics thus destabilized governments in 1990's along with the support of some invisible hands. Apart from all roles, Madrassas also served socially important purposes even in Pakistan they seen as a catalyst in the promotion of such extremist views, that is why their affiliations in different domains are of serious concern. Short and long term strategies needed as sometimes such radicalization's often leads terrorism. Two main factors that led to this such state of affairs includes that terrorist outfits are no kore just limited to Al-Qaeda but now spreading in various local Pak-Talban and other religious groups, secondly, they mostly based on Tribal belts (FATA region). Thus serious re-orientations in a detailed perspective's requires to curb the violence.(Javaid, 2011)

Democratic ideal Pakistan plunged in between of religious intolerance and extremism which marks undoubtedly potential consequences from futuristic point of view. Assassinations of two leading personalities Salman Taseer and Shahbaz Bhatti had highlighted lingering question mark on state future. Thus it marks more grave consequences for global states if the state could be gone in to radicalized hands specifically in terms when one talks about nuclear armed states. Additional, extremism seems to be embedded in Pakistan's political culture as the other factors are shrinking by all means, act of Sunni extremists showed in Asia Bibi case of blasphemy and Taseer's case which was international condemnation subject matter. Last but not least, global terror watch dog, FATF (Financial Action Task Force) concluded on the point that Pakistan failed to address deficiencies that are still lagging behind and retained Pakistan on its grey list.(*Violent Extremism, Religious Intolerance in Pakistan Poses Devastating Consequences for Its Future*, 2021)

## **General Trends in South Asia**

### **Religious Fundamentalism: an overview of regional states**



Religion Islam had arrived in sub-continent three centuries before the rule of Mughal, Sufi missionaries brought with them religion in India in 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries. On the other hand, Hindu society were structured on low caste lines along with historical complexities to which they aware themselves better. In contrast to Hindu's temples, the centers of Muslim life' were the Sufis shrines called them as Khanqahs in which they found social organizations. They had profound impact in 14<sup>th</sup> century which influenced Hindu reformist movements particularly the Bhakti Movement. Ideological impact of Islamic ideals also had deep impact over all in terms of their practices.

Ideals of modernity got more elements of modernity centuries later which the Islam encapsulated in it but by originating new term as secular pluralism and that have had vital influence on Hindu fundamentalist movements i.e., Arya Samaj and RSS. Undoubtedly both these movements also had strong influence on governmental policies. Now the current government philosophy of integral humanism also committed to ideology of Hindutva favoring state cultural Hindu nationalism, of which *Ghar Wapsi* movement is an example for purification of state.

Islamic fundamentalism and its genesis in this region also had its links that shared with the rise of Hindu fundamentalism some of them includes those contributing features like confronted challenges to Muslims in South Asia like loss of political power and of colonialism along with the modernity. On the other hand, it also had other local and combination of Islamic traditions. All such circumstances also gave rise to two most important broad responses which had powerful influence on shaping of such religious fundamentalism includes namely Apologetics and Salafism. To tackle the main concern that orthodox Muslims had about aggressive western ideas and their institutions, ulema's played their role by setting up network Deoband were the vital part of that.

Additionally, *Maulana Adul Ala Maududi* was the main representative of revivalism and Islamic fundamentalism, who was the founder of Jamaat-i-Islami in 1941. Although it has had great impact on Pakistan not only here but now has in India and in Bangladesh as well. Late in 1977, Zia's regime embarked on program of Islamisation as for his own inclination towards religious background that suited to him. Though the claims and realities were different from manifesting universal Islamic vision to Islamic theological the narrow interpretation propounded by Sunni orthodox Deobandi and Hanafi School but consequently opposed by Shia community. Tablighi Jamaat was one of the missionary movement in subcontinent most successful grassroots that had on that time, which was the response to Hindu's Shuddi and Sanghatan.(Hassan, 2016)



Back to the year 2014, fresh controversy aroused by Hindu outfits which they planned to convert Islam and Christianity and to *finish them by 2021* by all means. Thus mentioned about the reconversion (*Ghar Wapsi*) and statement of that much head described about it to convert about approximately 3 lac Muslim's and Christians back to the religion from which they themselves belongs (Hinduism).('Hindu Outfit Plans to "Finish" Islam, Christianity by 2021', 2014) That vision of *Hindu Rashtra* shows continuity, in few years shows strict regulations of conversion and amendments in existing laws passed in some places , from 2017-2021. Homecoming ceremonies are primarily the strongest tool used by VHP and by militant in order to chastise other religions so that to convert them in Hindu nation by claiming that as to turn people in original faith. However, influencing factors seems complex by using such propaganda to undermine the fundamental rights and freedom of people choices, in sum one can say it as death of Indian secularism.(Cswpress, 2021)

The threats to regional security emerge from a combination of local, regional and global level factors which also have their subsets. Present wave of religious violence is increasing day by day, whether it is India, Pakistan, Bangladesh or any other regional country. This trend is better reflected in jihadism in Pakistan, Hindutva ideology of RSS (*Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh*) and Sangh Parivar in India, Maoist Insurgency in Nepal and dyeing insurgency of Sri Lankan Tamil Tigers. The alarming rise of these activities is hardly found to be combated. Poor economic growth in South Asia too plays its role in these issues. The madrassahs, ashrams and *Yatim khanas* are principal actors in providing basic recruitment to these groups. The Communist Party of Nepal – Maoists adheres to Mao's ideal and with the objective to establish constitutional monarchy working on 'people's government' through a 'people's war' once having political face under the leadership of Baburam Bhattarai. Maoists also believed to work through the People's Liberation Army and were involved in attacking government and military establishments.(Ashraf, 2002)

Persistent link between religion and politics is visible in many terms here. In direct economic terms religion does not pose threat to the society but due to changing nature of diplomatic relations a cause and effect relationship makes it necessary to review it. So, we see a greater hue of religion and nationalism. There is leading debate in South Asia on role of people in economy, politics and culture; which also exhibits the fundamentalist ideals. There have been efforts to evolve paradigm of dispute settlement in South Asia, yet persistent issues of Kashmir and cross-border terrorism create hindrance in the way to cooperate. There is dire need to take practical steps(*South Asian Free Media Association (SAFMA)*, 2005). Differences of Christian, Islamic, Buddhists, Hindu, and other minority religions have been motivating factor in relation to regional politics.



India itself has been facing challenges of Hindu extremism and fundamentalism. The situation denotes that different fundamentalist groups feel challenged by other religions as well as secular ideals. Best quoted example is of Shiv Sina formerly headed by BAL Thackeray. Shiv Sina believes in absolute *Indianization* of people with religious hegemony of Hinduism. Bal Thackeray and his followers are of the view that Indians have become prisoners in their own land, power has been accumulated in few hands, and Muslims claim for right of self-determination in *Ram Janam Bhumi*. Such parties constructed basis for Hindu fundamentalism in India (Bal Thackeray: *Latest News, Videos and Bal Thackeray Photos* / *Times of India*, 2020) Same were the ideal which motivated Hindus of Gujarat to burn many of the Muslims alive without discrimination of sex, age and other characteristics. (Jaffrelot, 2015)

Ayesha Jalal states that in contradictory to its arch rival, India has not undergone through ignominy of fully dismemberment. But changing natures of center and entire zone have had a crucial relevance on its democratic federalism. In the early periods of liberation the centralized structure of India partly tempered Indian National Congress, managed to counter centrifugal pulls of a predominantly linguistic regionalism. (Ayesha Jalal, 2017)

Former East Pakistan had religious tie with Pakistan but on due to historical exploitation and rise of nationalism and ethnic rights, it was separated. Still, it is fighting against extremism and ethnic challenges. Bengali population is traditionally religious, Jamaat e Islami once banned to work in Bangladesh is working there, but continuously facing expressions of anger from Hasina Wajid government. In Bangladesh there is diversity in religious authority, one looks the Deobandi Ulema and their Ijtema which is near to Second after Hajj; other looks Bihari's as a threat whereas Rohingya Muslims the minority in Burma are also considered extremists. Hussain is of the view that Bihari's also Rohingyas have been embracing Islamic fundamentalism or extremism extensively as weapons in contradiction of nation and state. (Hussain, 2007)

Religious fundamentalism in Bangladesh reached its roots in Bengali societies and hinted more about growing conservatism, presented through xenophobic concepts that circulates in India-Bangladesh games, (cricket matches) and by using force on women to wear Hijab's along by murdering the atheist bloggers as did with Ananya Azad by Bangladeshi youth. Radical Islamic clerics done different jobs by washing brains of youth and by sharing close links of Al-Qaeda ISIS/ISIL not only had this but other global terrorist organizations operated and still in Bangladesh through banned like JMB and Ansarullah Bangla Team (ABT). But all such was properly cashed, reactionary politics of Hindu nationalists like Hindu Samhati took advantage of it by portraying it as inflated image of Islamic radicalism in Bengal state and that Hindu communities of being victimized.

---



Concluded, by targeting the west Bengal and sense of fear for Hindu by growing *Islamization*. Thus Hindu-nationalists' agenda of hate mongering politics got successful, by creating the problematic scenario for Bengalis where they do stand and in spite of same linguistic community, they are dividing into two forms of religious identity politics. Additional all it creates amalgamation of much confusing factors like politico-cultural crisis threat for regional peace in which de-secularization of people as well as growth of xenophobic ideas in politics also by more fuel additional from neo-right wing side ideas.(Mriganka, 2017)

Muslims of Burma often called Rohingya are subject to violence, rape, murder, lynching of houses and expulsion to India for years. Due to availability of lesser content and ban on media, lesser content comes under discussion. (CNN, 2017) Post 9/11 environment also changed the discourse of Nepalese political elite. ('DECEMBER 5 2001', 2017) Nepal once facing the Maoist insurgents went through critical change and then went to political solutions.(*The Kathmandu Post Archive*, 2021) In the case of Nepal, one main point of Mark Juergen Meyer comes for better understanding and i.e. not being colonized in the past with secular missions. Not really seems any external political exertion visible in secularizing Nepal but it had decided its own trajectory apart from this other missionary influence at societal level. Revolution to which Hindu termed as Maoists as antagonists which could better be considered as the prime dawn for long journey to secularism in this state.

Plausible logic usually Hindu gives as they gave identity to Nepalese by giving religion to which at present Indian Prime Minister showed his will to support in spreading Hinduism all over the Nepal state. Additional conspiracy strategies adopted utilized by west for some of their own purposes by applying on Nepal to make it secular. Thus it all sums up on one argument the Hindu Monopoly, which had contributed a lot in raising grievances from various groups of minority that boosted dissatisfaction but it all marked outside intentions in the conversion of Nepalese.(Dahal, 2016)

Yet it was the year 2009 when the movement was crushed by armed operation. The transition from post-cold war era the present time perhaps not panned out as Samuel P. Huntington hypothesized in his work "clash of civilizations" the work in which he claimed on few on utmost thing that how the fault lines between civilizations will be the battle lines for future. Not only this but the conflict when arise in current 21<sup>st</sup> century would for sure be a result of divergent ideologies that stemmed in them.

His observation might come true regarding the matter, it has been riddled the friction that resounds in the intersected mesh of government relations. Socio-economic interests of

---





south Asian states also impact political life of each state when actions taken. Although all of them strung into historic parallels accept the fact for having other various disparate identities. History holds many seeds of secrets that they still found in prevailing circumstances when it comes to its affiliations and root causes. Same like, Mughals and colonial powers when came to this continent they had their own minds by religious means that lead to opportune environs seeds of religious fundamentalism to be fixed.

Confusion and modernity of thoughts in secular standpoint also creates troubles in contemporary era, as it also receives opposing attitudes in response to advance changings of beliefs but on the other hand also it gets supports to some extent from global community and other influential states also do their respective roles in it. Amongst all the magnitude of insecurity gives the impression in India, Pakistan and in Afghanistan notably, now the results of recent researches show new involvements by using digital platforms in order to disperse their effective agendas and motives of Us vs Them throughout the global states but this region is the key battle space for enforcing all such kind of activities especially. Ongoing transformations, growing radicalizations, social media roles, and interconnected network of groups as one cannot run it alone to spur the faith on same basis also demands outside supports in process of recruitment and united bond. It raises serious concerns when the ideologies spread and creates in bolstering of risky situations as religious heterogeneity is one similar major trait of collective South Asian people as compared to great regional powers the other states like Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka and Maldives lack such relative capabilities in terms of to tackle such religious fundamentalism that has spillover effects. (Longtail-e-media, 2019)

## **SOUTH ASIAN POLITICAL SCENARIO**

Radicalism does hurt society. To appraisal of collateral compensations by devout extremism is imperative for various reasons. To begin with and preeminent is undoubtedly to have logical along with correct data in for the purpose of exact estimate, designs and influences or to find causes of the exceptionally wonder in a specified place and at stated point of time. Supplemental causes ranges in variations of shades beginning from plans for transformation and restoration to utilize the data for open mindfulness and nation-state information. ('Kazi Anwarul Masud', 2009) However it is lasting inquire about issue in field of social sciences to get quality information and data on matters of touchy nature. States incline towards to control info on things like devout savagery also racial clashes. In this way, it isn't few and far between to have exceptionally diverse figures of passing toll for same occasion of viciousness from diverse sources or verily from similar source with time distinction.



No state favors to spill out required figures whereas on war against any anti-state components inside state, but once such problems come to be portion of the past, and postures not any risk for those who are in control, more often than not additional quality and valid data comes into view. There's inconsistency on amount of valuable souls sent back to paradise by non-secular fundamentalist. Global report on September 11 attacks troubles in the aid of using by United States authorities is unsuccessful in this framework as it's anxious only with specific occasion and pile up on info archived by press, however actual information in the root given by the supervisions to them (mass media).(*The 9/11 Commission Report*, 2002, p. 11)

Impression of fear based oppression is certainly terror. Devout radicalism creates the experience of helpless and constrain masses to acknowledge the alternatives that aren't in their choice. Undoubtedly, that is non-law based and non-human. To begin with and pre-eminent, effect at the society being terrorized is visible on its exchange. Traders make investments in their cash and assets in wish of benefits. Society being uncertain, each character attempts to lessen its expanses and spare its assets to fulfil any crisis he or she additionally may confront. In this way the offerings and items each both confront a low call for with inside the marketplace(*Impact of Terror Attack in Mumbai - Magazines*, 2008). In Pakistan the ups and downs of inventory or stock advertise in marketplace with each psychological militant assault is an illustration of effect of radical acts on trade and commerce. This monetary situation simply effects is task reductions for all intents and purposes comes about in work decreases and authorities incapability's to address financial issues without getting sufficient assess and in case of third world countries, without the adequate overseas or remote aid.(*Walter Enders, Todd Sandler - The Political Economy of Terrorism* (2005) | *Suicide Attack / Violence*, 2006)

It isn't always simplest the financial strain that damages the fitness and wholesome sound states of mind of individuals in a society of dread. Terror motivates strains and this bring about in low inspiration, low efficiency and inevitably people having no believe on the capacity of state to ensure. There are variety of news from Iraq and Pakistan display the most exceedingly worst circumstances of folks that stay with inside in the society of terror. Wellbeing, schooling and studying liabilities, economic system and tremendous dispositions towards existence is first to impact via way of means of consistent terror with inside the society(*The Impact of Terrorism on Foreign Direct Investment | Expert Commentary | IRMI.Com*, 2006) Legislative issues in terms of strength area is possibly simplest branch only department that takes fear based oppression and radicalism greater as possibility than challenge. Radical acts give openings of notoriety, non-public gains, setting up for assisting party plans and giving all time accessible pardon for any disappointment. On different hand, it is miles the general control of society, the politics

---



which could coordinate and feature ability to combat and deter the risk of terrorism(*Suicide Bomber Sows Terror in Bhakkar, Attacks MNA*, 2008).

But this indeed not ended violence but stopped it for the while. As causes of religious extremism are numerous and deep, the violence and extremist trends are well alive in Indian society up to this day. Multiplicity of religions in India in itself is a challenge for democratic practice of governance. All India Congress almost monopolized the politics for 26 years after independence. Having the so many problems to deal with not only kept busy the Congress but also provided good excuse for bad governance. Having the legacy of right to center politics, Congress tried its best to prove its secular and impartial stance. But it is also fact that all religious minorities starting from the biggest in number the Muslims to the tiny minorities of Buddhist and Christians failed to receive the favors of governing class. This neglect pushed the members of society belonging to religious minorities, far behind in national competition for success and progress. Studies suggest that the early neglect by congress is the main cause of present sorrow economic and educational backwardness of Muslims and Sikhs.

Congress came to power with a very popular support being the pioneer party and enjoyed the power for more than any other party. Unfortunately, this monopoly created rent for corruption, misuse of power, and bad governance. This result in very negative and miserable conditions for the majority of the Indians and it was believed by many that the secularist and all-inclusive approach is responsible for all this non-deliverance. After Congress secular stance, the BJP came to power on popular and pronounced politics based on Hinduism. To them there in India was no place for non-Hindus and that is up to this day is a common slogan in political rallies of BJP. This indeed was result of bad governance and power monopoly of the Congress that give rise to BJP, and they made the common man believe that all social justice could be achieved if once India became all Hindu state. (Worden, Hietzmen, 1995)

The loot, burnt, killing and all type of moral crimes plagued the streets of India. All appeals from all politicians and those in power, along with all efforts failed to combat the violence. And all this ended with the heroic action of Mohan Das Gandhi who refused to eat until violence ends. Violence ended indeed, on the heroic death of Gandhi for this humanistic cause. (Merton, 2007) If extremist have their strong supporters in parliament, it also gives very hard time to government to act timely and manage effectively. Religious extremism is especially the type that has more silent supporters that cause analysis error in research and strategy.



To sum up the harm due to the radicals in legislative issues isn't because of their disruption in ordinary control of affairs. Or maybe it reasons debilitating the conviction of masses in vote based system as fair framework and uncovers all shortcoming of the state level as well as territorial and global politics. Internet harm is weak spot of democracy and the most noticeable awful important thing is no one appears to care. From known history of subcontinent India, that is almost 3000 BC, the trend is a minority came from outside and conquer the land. Then the powerful culture of India, conquer the conqueror and gradually the difference between rulers and ruled-ones diffuses. They agree to live together with certain rules and newly formed added or extended culture. And consequently, again some foreign power conquers the land and story goes on in circle.

This cyclical movement was mainly due to the rich resources and good geographic conditions promised a habitable atmosphere. And that is also responsible for the birth of Hinduism. As religion Hinduism is very much different than any other religion of the world. There is no single set of creed or beliefs. At times one can find total opposite set of creeds from monotheism to polytheism. As Jawahar Lal Nehru rightly mentioned in his book that no one can define Hinduism. It is at same time culture, religion and everything one consider of it. To be Hindu there is only requirement of the person concerned to think of himself or herself as Hindu.

No external binding requirement could be settled what so ever. The problem gets even complex when the Hinduism is what a Hindu do. Therefore, Hinduism has the capability to adjust with ever-changing society. It may be surprise for many Western scholars that even the atheist Hindu is something very common in present day India. (*Hinduism*, 2011) Having such open perspective and non-insistent on any single point one may hope that in such tolerant religion/culture there must not be a chance for religious extremism. But contrary to that in India the religious violence is one of main expressions of human insult. To understand phenomenon, we need a historic perspective of Hinduism and its political violent expression.

To trace the recent events of religious extremism, we find that India at independence had to face with so many social and governance problems. And first and foremost was indeed to combat widespread religious violence among Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs. Violence was something beyond the control of state apparatus and was somewhat sudden expression of centuries of hate. This violence took at least six million lives at both sides of borders. In newly created Pakistan there were very few minority members from Punjab and Sarhad who choose to migrate and became the victim of this blind and indiscriminate violence. While on the other hand in India live for centuries hundred thousands of Muslims and most



of the urban Muslims tried to migrate. (*Thematic Chronology of Mass Violence in Pakistan, 1947-2007* / *Sciences Po Mass Violence and Resistance - Research Network*, 2019)

In this sense we can say that BJP is roughly something acceptance of Two Nations Theory promoted by All India Muslim League in pre independence era with the only difference of change of means. Muslim League achieved political ends through peaceful and democratic means. Having world attention by demolishing Babri Mosque as the place to build Ram Mandir the BJP was condemned within and outside India. Intellectuals and politicians alike termed it “Shame for the Nation”. But this show of power sent a new message to the masses, living in misery and below the poverty line. That still there are some powerful people who not like Congress do promise something and achieve it.

This act, though condemned by Human Rights activist, indeed give promotional edge to BJP. Later the Gujarat Carnage under Narendra Modi was an example of planned valance by the government over religious minority. (Robinson, 2005) The human right organizations compiled reports of thousands of pages. The civil servants reported that the planned nature of this inhuman act is evident. But again, this carnage gives a winning victory to BJP. And now the burning the Churches in India with the same message that if you wish to live in India be Hindu is clear. All this violence as noted in early paragraphs of this section has one set pattern. (Kiernan, 2007)

All across the South Asian region rise of religious movements fueling macho form nationalism along by creating dangerous fault lines all over amongst communities. In Bangladesh the rise of Hefazat-e-Islam the rise of Islamic fundamentalist movements on the other hand Sri Lanka had his own *Bodu Bala Sena* the radical violent Sinhalese Buddhist group. Now all that belongs to different communities adding more fuel to ethnic conflicts, and more often they got supports from poor supporters and their donations thus become a source of hardline supporters. Ethno-religious chauvinism represents biggest threat to economic growth of region that states enjoyed in recent years. Not all but some hardline groups connect themselves with religious constructive and community building activities as in Myanmar’s Buddhist movement which consists of mixtures that operates in opaque environment to blur the religious and political motivations, *Ma Ba Tha* as its example the Buddhist association for protection of peace and religion.

Embracing their ideology that Buddhism is under pressure from both internal and external forces. At the same time the plight of Rohingya galvanized the Muslims crisis, Al-Qaida and other Jihadist groups also directly called for retaliatory response for attacks on Myanmar as they were not prepared to deal with issue that might can lead to fresh waves of communal violence. Overcrowded camps in Cox's Bazar of Bangladesh thus requires



immediate concern over the matter as for the reason of indicating Rohingya radicalization camps that marks big security concern for region. Real danger lies in hard-liner approaches of neo-nationalist's agendas that are taking hold amongst some main stream religious groups. So the time to stop the dangerous vibes and waves before it infect the swathes of state society at broader level, as analysts hinted for coming years about the situation which may be got worse in Myanmar furthermore seems likely problem in Indonesia.(Robinson, Roughneen, 2017)

The growing leverage of religious fundamentalism in Bangladesh thus poses a biggest challenging threat that found its expressions from hard-line extremist Islamist group hence called as ABT (Ansarullah Bangla Team). In contrast to HUJI-B and JMB this group holds of different goals to achieve by radicalizing youth along by promoting Jihadist ideology and by targeting those who else gives own views ad poses threat to their fundamentalist ideas are potential targets of this group. Such secular minds indeed got inspiration from Zia's Islamisation the Pakistani peer today which is no more a silent process but also reached it center of politics all where in Dhaka and hence functioning as effective transmitter. Government of Dhaka need to learn from Pakistan the mistake they did (ban on JJ), better understanding is the need of time that ignoring of jihadism is not enough the costs of it are much higher than narrow political ends. Negotiations, finding of compromises, to weaken the efficiency of ABT ideology all gives nothing as for them it is as the matter of their survival to fight democracy by hook or by crook.(O.Wolf, 2016)

All across the region where indulging in this curse, Sri Lanka also faced the same threat of religious fundamentalism as well as ethnic issues as well. The virulent strain of Buddhism in Sri Lanka and also by including Thailand and Myanmar posed a great emerging danger amongst such states of South Asia undoubtedly Buddhist majority also faced the similar experiences in this regard, the embodiment of two main factors mainly the tolerance and pacifism. A mixture of Buddhist ethnic Sinhala, ethnic Tamil minorities and of Muslim's, in short, the nation facing the issues by focusing on such differences. Sri Lankan Monks own thinking as the best guardian of Theravada Buddhism tradition. But many differences contributed and still in growing complexities between Muslim's and Buddhist's even though such long-term economic issues also exacerbating in spreading of the problems. Full scale violence that Myanmar had faced such experience also one can relate it with one of the reasons of Muslim-Sinhala tensions that might be deteriorating such circumstances. Thus the ethno-nationalism marks a big question mark and insists for better understanding that can prevent such brutal clashes on certain points.(Abeynayake, 2017)

Sri Lanka's multi ethnic-religious, and lingual society direct linkages with the legacies left behind by its geographic proximity to busy maritime routes frequented by traders and

---



travelers and also a former colony of three European nations. Such violence's of low intensity and riots stands in stark contrast with centuries old tradition of co-existence among various communities of Sri Lanka. Prominent role by political leaders who are spreading false information's by manipulating wounds of people in order to achieve their own personal and political gains. As they provide supports for extremists to instigate attacks against the religious minorities, thus in the promotion of all these religious leaders and media as well matters a lot in dissemination of information and protecting of all religions. In troubling circumstances, it highlights quite problematic for District inter-religious committee to intervene, along with-it religious leader's dichotomy role as agents of bringing peace or conflict, avoiding of interfering in times crises and denying in facing of challenges all additions in prevailing of issues. Growing discourse over the peace journalism over the past decades as it tend to sensationalize their news and contents for reporting.(Peiris, 2019)

Case of commingling both variables the politics and religion are hardly novel, particularly in India's context. India's leadership commitment to secularism thus in many senses have frequently violated many blurry lines as reality reflects intentions towards political interests and gains. Post-colonial leadership that embarked on nation-building vision rather than prioritizing one religion over others as it might can upend state nascent social impact. Today's two nationalism of India stems from various notion, the territorial, cultural and third theme stresses on religion. However, state own constitution allows about outside interference in religious matters, political manifestation of Hindutva in order to revive era of greatest culture.

The crucible of Hindu nationalism started long before 1920's by RSS to achieve core interest of Hindu nation, further moved the BJS mission that the precursor BJP got from them. Now to help gauge regarding the start up this propaganda it is important to examine that wielded into power by unexpected ways and in unpredictably. Construction of Ram Temple by Modi 2.0, abrogation of article 370, banning cow slaughtering strictly adding in books and close links with the vision of home backing (Ghar Wapisi). Undoubtedly Modi led government has led all this into fierce contest by raising some serious questions that connects with foreign policy decision making processes and his ideological beliefs.(Vaishnav & Vaishnav, 2019)

Moreover, the implications of such rising fundamentalism and extremist ideologies in this region mainly in two prominent states i.e., India and Pakistan are dividing communities, growing violence as well as marginalizing members from religious sects. Experts' views on India hence more added that two types of violence converging at present, the one based upon caste and the other upon community religion and the root cause of all this is due to

---



hyper nationalism increasing in India. Same in the case of Pakistan perspective which presents something different that present day Pakistan independence that idea of separate homeland and caste systems that comes from the establishing the country defined that whether Pakistan is separate piece of land for Muslims, as sectarianism and casteism are also prevalent in state. For the sake of power dynamics exploited thus religion Islam, as caste systems are structured around religion which marginalizing minorities. On the same point panelists of experts agreed that growing discrimination and marginalizing of minorities as the biggest problem that need to be ponder through laws and accountability. (*Webinar Discusses Implications of Religious Fundamentalism in South Asia, 2020*)

### **Conclusion**

There is dire need of sober thinking in order to control the worsening situation before it get more. Global Islamist fundamentalism, regional or national religious nationalism are all of same type and of two sides of same coin. Using religion for political opportunism can only bring negativity, conception of hatred feelings and violence as it is pretty much difficult to disaggregate few terms from each other in which religion and politics are prominent. All such demand to get out from this illusion by understanding it as dangerous of world peace as to discover the antidote for mass hysteria and such illusions is quite complicated task to fulfil. It is imperative for all Muslims to led down the violence and discourage the concept of militancy as there is no link with Islam, by presenting these things as Islamic image and true Islam are opposite to such elements. For smaller states of South Asian region, has less relative capabilities in order to tackle with overabundant effects of religious fundamentalism when it comes to comparison with great powers of region. Not only one state effort can curb the menace but the united efforts are required for the purpose to bring collective peace for the region because the agenda of such fundamentalists not only harms one specific mass but also encircles those masses that are not a part of it. For resolution as SAARC is the only organization that makes connectivity of each state with other in this region which lays largely dormant needs to wake up for the sake to promote peace as the states are now engaging with multi grand organizations of South Asia like BRI, SHANGHAI CO-OPERATION & Indo-Pacific but still the rising tensions are on its peak reaching the climax without easing the tensions such organizations are working.

In order to bring improvement thus the role of state leaders and opinion makers are of utmost importance by avoiding the elements of hatred feelings and by preaching the sense of tolerance amongst people. Furthermore, need to curb the challenging phenomenon that are giving boost to religious fundamentalism mainly includes the poverty and disillusion, which encourages such issues, also essential to bring measures about the protection of minorities rights, laws and provision to ensure that independent enquiries about the critical

---





cases of religious groups, independent commission are also necessary in this regard to eliminate discriminatory moves and bring equality to racial, religious wise and of gender as well. Various areas are need to be explored at regional level, moreover nuanced approach is the requirement of time so that deal with such asymmetric complexities of this region, obliterate at the moment is needless to say but as a solution mitigation of states present need.



## References

- 2018—*Mainstream*. (n.d.). Retrieved 31 May 2021, from [http://www.mainstreamweekly.net/rubrique113.html?debut\\_articles=10#pagination\\_articles](http://www.mainstreamweekly.net/rubrique113.html?debut_articles=10#pagination_articles)
- Abeynayake, R. (n.d.). *Sri Lanka sees emerging tensions between Buddhists and Muslims*. Nikkei Asia. Retrieved 14 June 2021, from <https://asia.nikkei.com/Opinion/Sri-Lanka-sees-emerging-tensions-between-Buddhists-and-Muslims2>
- Ashraf, F. (2002). MAOIST UPRISING IN NEPAL. *Strategic Studies*, 22(2), 62–80.
- Ayesha Jalal. (n.d.). Retrieved 22 April 2021, from <https://ajalal01.pages.tufts.edu/Articles.html>
- bal thackeray: Latest News, Videos and bal thackeray Photos | Times of India*. (n.d.). Retrieved 22 April 2021, from <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/topic/bal-thackeray>
- CNN, K. H. and R. W. (n.d.). *Rohingya crisis unleashes fears among Myanmar's other Muslims*. CNN. Retrieved 23 April 2021, from <https://www.cnn.com/2017/11/28/asia/myanmar-yangon-muslim-community-rohingya/index.html>
- cswpress. (2021, April 26). The death of secularism in India: 'Homecoming' in the name of the Hindu rashtra. *FoRB in Full*. <https://forbinfull.org/2021/04/26/the-death-of-secularism-in-india-homecoming-in-the-name-of-the-hindu-rashtra/>
- Dahal, K. (n.d.). *Secular Nepal: Understanding the Dynamics of Religious Nationalism and Secularism*. 67.
- DECEMBER 5 2001. (2001, December 5). *Courier-Post*, 17.
- Hassan, R. (2016, September 21). 238: *Religious Fundamentalism in South Asia: Some Preliminary Considerations – NUS Institute of South Asian Studies (ISAS)*. <https://www.isas.nus.edu.sg/papers/238-religious-fundamentalism-in-south-asia-some-preliminary-considerations/>
- Haynes, J. (n.d.). *Peace, Politics, and Religion*. Retrieved 15 June 2021, from <https://www.mdpi.com/books/pdfview/book/2597>
-



Hindu outfit plans to 'finish' Islam, Christianity by 2021. (2014, December 19). *The Indian Express*. <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-others/hindu-outfit-plans-to-finish-islam-christianity-by-2021/>

*HINDUISM: The world's third largest religion*. (n.d.). Retrieved 23 April 2021, from <https://www.religioustolerance.org/hinduism.htm>

Hussain, I. (2007). Fundamentalism and Bangladesh: No Error, No Terror. *South Asian Survey*, 14(2), 207–229. <https://doi.org/10.1177/097152310701400203>

*Impact of terror attack in Mumbai—Magazines*. (n.d.). The Economic Times. Retrieved 1 June 2021, from <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/features/etfeatures/1466318837.cms>

Jaffrelot, C. (2015). Gujarat 2002: What Justice for the Victims? *Economic and Political Weekly*, 7–8.

Javaid, D. U. (n.d.). *Genesis and Effects of Religious Extremism in Pakistan*. 7.

Kazi Anwarul Masud. (n.d.). *Indian Defence Review*. Retrieved 14 June 2021, from <http://www.indiandefencereview.com/author/kazianwarulmasud/>

Kiernan, B. (2007). *Blood and soil: A world history of genocide and extermination from Sparta to Darfur* (pp. x, 724). Yale University Press.

Longtail-e-media. (n.d.). *Religious Fundamentalism in South Asia: The Concerns for Security in the Region*. Retrieved 4 May 2021, from <https://www.aidiaasia.org:443/research-article/religious-fundamentalism-in-south-asia-the-concerns-for-security-in-the-region>

Merton, T. (2007, November 1). *Gandhi on Non-Violence*. <https://www.ndbooks.com/book/gandhi-on-non-violence/>

Mirahmadi, H., Ziad, W., Farooq, M., & Lamb, R. D. (n.d.). *Empowering Pakistan's Civil Society to Counter Global Violent Extremism*. 35.

Mishra, A. (2012). Islamic Fundamentalism in South Asia: A Comparative Study of Pakistan and Bangladesh. *India Quarterly*, 68(3), 283–296. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0974928412454606>

---



Mriganka, M. (2017, December 19). Religious Fundamentalism: A Problem for India and Bangladesh in 2018. *Asia Dialogue*.  
<https://theasiadialogue.com/2017/12/19/religious-fundamentalism-a-problem-for-india-and-bangladesh-in-2018/>

O.Wolf, Dr. S. (2016, January 30). Ansarullah Bangla Team: A Major Threat for Bangladesh's Democracy. *E-International Relations*. <https://www.e-ir.info/2016/01/30/ansarullah-bangla-team-a-major-threat-for-bangladeshs-democracy/>

*Pakistan: Extremism and Terrorism | Counter Extremism Project*. (n.d.). Retrieved 2 May 2021, from <https://www.counterextremism.com/countries/pakistan>

Peiris, S. (n.d.). *AN INTRODUCTION TO IN SRI LANKA*. 46.

Robinson, R. (2005). *Tremors of Violence: Muslim Survivors of Ethnic Strife in Western India*. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9788132103615>

Robinson, Roughneen, G. and S. (n.d.). *Religious extremism poses threat to ASEAN's growth*. Nikkei Asia. Retrieved 31 May 2021, from <https://asia.nikkei.com/Spotlight/The-Big-Story/Religious-extremism-poses-threat-to-ASEAN-s-growth2>

Saiya, N. (2019). Pluralism and Peace in South Asia. *The Review of Faith & International Affairs*, 17(4), 12–22. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15570274.2019.1681779>

*South Asian Free Media Association (SAFMA)*. (n.d.). Peace Insight. Retrieved 1 June 2021, from <https://www.peaceinsight.org/en/organisations/safma/>

*Suicide bomber sows terror in Bhakkar, attacks MNA: At least 22 killed, 62 injured*. (2008, October 7). DAWN.COM. <http://beta.dawn.com/news/324260/suicide-bomber-sows-terror-in-bhakkar-attacks-mna-at-least-22-killed-62-injured>  
*The 9/11 Commission Report*. (n.d.). 585.

*The Impact of Terrorism on Foreign Direct Investment | Expert Commentary | IRMI.com*. (n.d.). Retrieved 23 April 2021, from <https://www.irmi.com/articles/expert-commentary/the-impact-of-terrorism-on-foreign-direct-investment>



*The Kathmandu Post Archive.* (n.d.). Retrieved 23 April 2021, from <https://kathmandupost.com/archive>

*Thematic Chronology of Mass Violence in Pakistan, 1947-2007 | Sciences Po Mass Violence and Resistance—Research Network.* (2019, April 26). [thematic-chronology-mass-violence-pakistan-1947-2007.html](https://www.sciencespo.fr/mass-violence-pakistan-1947-2007.html)

Vaishnav, M., & Vaishnav, M. (n.d.). *Religious Nationalism and India's Future - The BJP in Power: Indian Democracy and Religious Nationalism.* Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Retrieved 2 June 2021, from <https://carnegieendowment.org/2019/04/04/religious-nationalism-and-india-s-future-pub-78703>

*Violent extremism, religious intolerance in Pakistan poses devastating consequences for its future.* (n.d.). ANI News. Retrieved 4 May 2021, from <https://www.aninews.in/news/world/asia/violent-extremism-religious-intolerance-in-pakistan-poses-devastating-consequences-for-its-future20210317045302/>

*Walter Enders, Todd Sandler—The Political Economy of Terrorism (2005) | Suicide Attack / Violence.* (n.d.). Scribd. Retrieved 23 April 2021, from <https://www.scribd.com/document/422833070/Walter-Enders-Todd-Sandler-The-Political-Economy-of-Terrorism-2005-pdf>

*Webinar discusses implications of religious fundamentalism in South Asia.* (n.d.). Retrieved 31 May 2021, from <https://www.qatar.northwestern.edu/news/articles/2020/11-sasa-webinar>

Worden, Hietzmen, J., RobertL. (n.d.). *India.* Retrieved 23 April 2021, from <http://countrystudies.us/india/>