CONCLUSION

FUNDAMENTAL SIM IN
PAKISTAN AND BANGLADESH
A COMPARISION
In the post-cold-war epoch one of the most significant phenomena, which have come to the fore, is Islamic fundamentalism. There are several forms of fundamentalism linked to movements of revivalism of various religions, yet internationally Islamic fundamentalism is more pronounced and widespread. Islamic fundamentalism does not address religious beliefs, but rather a socio-political worldview, that is a broad concern about the nature of state, society and global politics. These concerns are, however, articulated in religious symbols. Broadly defined as a religio-political movement, Islamic fundamentalism is more than simply a rejection of modernity or a revolt against the West; it seeks to establish an alternative global order. For, the fundamentalists believe that departure from and non-abidance with Islam since the onset of the nation-state system has led to steady regression and decline of Muslim peoples.

Fundamentalists, according to Bassam Tibi, are modernists, not traditionalists, because they evaluate tradition in the light of modernity, and selectively retrieve salient elements of both so as to put forward a concept of alternative political order, whether domestic or global.¹ Fundamentalists thus advocate adherence to the original beliefs of the religion in their literal interpretations as fundamental and basic principles, transcending all social, economic, political and cultural transformations which span a period of 14 centuries. Their call for “the return to Islam” has for over three decades incited political involvement and direct action across the Muslim world to bring about the re-Islamisation of the society and the establishment of an Islamic order in accordance with the fundamentalist doctrinal vision of the world, popularly known as Nizam al-Islami.

Religious fundamentalism is nothing new as it has been in existence since the birth of religion itself. Although Islamic fundamentalism is not a new phenomenon, in recent times it has attained a vicious and virulent character with its “absolutist universalism” posing the greatest threat to civilizational accommodation.² Other scholars like Oliver Roy are, however, of the view that the contemporary fundamentalist movements in the Muslim world, which can be said to date from the early 1970s

² Ibid., p.42.
“embody the failure of Islamism.”3 The term “Islamism” refers to a wide variety of political activity - non-violent and violent, progressive as well as reactionary - undertaken in the name of Islam.4 In other words, Islamists are those Muslims who draw upon the belief, symbols, and language of Islam to inspire, shape, and animate political activity. This also includes the moderate, tolerant, peaceful Islamists who seek to apply their religious values to domestic political problems and foreign policy.5 While the extremists or militant Islamists, for instance, seek to impose change from above through holy wars, many others pursue a bottom-up approach what Gilles Kepel calls “Islamisation from below.”6

Under military and political pressures, Islamic extremism – particularly the jihadi form - may peter out, but Islamism or Islamic fundamentalism as a movement will not easily succumb to external blows, thanks to the impressive social infrastructure it has. In the past three decades, Islamist groups have built up a large, organised social base through independent networks of charitable societies, consumer cooperatives, educational institutions, social welfare and medical services. Drawing on the charismatic leadership and its extensive networks of social activity, Islamism “provides political responses to societal challenges by imagining a future, the foundations for which rest on re-appropriated, reinvented concepts borrowed from the Islamic tradition.”7 On the one hand, the Islamists have provided significant support through their establishment of a

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5 It may be noted that both the moderate and extremist fundamentalists share common goal of constructing totalitarian theocratic state. See Fawaz A. Gerges, America and Political Islam: Clash of Cultures or Clash of Interests? (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 16.


network of social services, which the state either refuses or cannot afford to provide. On the other hand, the conservative-oriented social message of political Islam and its focus on traditional values in a rapidly changing world has been an important factor in providing comfort and, hence, increasing the legitimacy of the Islamists in the eyes of the masses. As John Esposito summarises, "Many swept along in a sea of alienation and marginalisation found an anchor in religion. Islam offered a sense of identity, fraternity, and cultural values that offset the psychological dislocation and cultural threat of their new environment."^8

If Islamism has become the primary vehicle and vocabulary of most political discourse in much of the Muslim world, it is less because of its conspiracy narratives or pursuit of establishing the Nizam al-Islami (Islamic order) modeled on the Medinian Caliphate than the failure of other protest ideologies, namely nationalism and socialism in achieving their anti-imperialist, nationalist egalitarian goals.9 Indeed, Islamist discourse is so pervasive today that even secular nationalists do not hesitate to invoke such Islamic themes as jihad and iman (belief) in an effort to re-capture the lost ground. Paradoxically, nationalism that began as a sort of de-islamised religion is now reappearing as an Islamised nationalism or simply Islamism.10 This is precisely why Mark Juergensmeyer has described the trend as “religious nationalism” confronting the secular state in the post-Cold War global order.11

In examining the causation of the phenomenon, Bernard Lewis contends that something has gone seriously wrong with Islam, which accounts for the decline of a civilization that was once materially successful and communally tolerant. What has gone wrong with Islam, according to Lewis, is its unwillingness to come to terms with the long-term dangers of fusing religion and politics. In brief, it is argued that the deep roots

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9 Aswini K. Mohapatra, "Arab and Turkish Responses to Globalisation", *India Quarterly* (New Delhi), Vol. LXIII, No. 3 (July-September 2007), p. 41.


of the fundamentalist movement lay in Islamic history and thought guarantee its potency and staying power. As discussed earlier (Introduction Chapter), such cultural reductionist explanations have been contested by the contextualists on the grounds that religions require interpretation to give it meaning in specific context. In other words, it is the context and to an extent the interest of particular groups (the Islamists and nationalists, for instance) who interpret the religion or local culture that determines its character and function, not the other way round. In this sense, the phenomenon of Islamic fundamentalism cannot be understood properly without reference to the structural conditions, notably the historical process of state formation, authoritarian nature of the regime and its failure to deliver goods, the dependency-structured economy, and the western cultural hegemony through the imposition of neo-liberal globalisation (the context).

To sum up, Islamic fundamentalism is the product of the interplay between the structural (social, political and economic) conditions on the hand and the politicised version of the Islamic history on the other. Culturally, for instance, the process of globalisation carries implicit homogenisation tendencies and messages, which in combination with the “borderlessness” of the phenomenon evokes a “cultural pluralist response.” Although the scenario of a single ‘MacDonaldised’ world cultures an exaggeration, the spread of Western values, beliefs and tastes on a global scale has instigated a defensive counter-movement seeking to shield society from its negative effects. Nowhere has this phenomenon been more pronounced than in the Muslim world where rejection of the globalising tendencies in its purest form is associated with

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and expressed by the resurgence of religious politics in various extremist configurations. Bernard Lewis argues that Islam’s inability to adapt to the modern age has left Muslim societies ill-prepared and ill-equipped to meet the challenges of globalisation on their own. They suffer from a profound inferiority complex, a sense of being behind, which makes them all the more vulnerable.

Thus, from the cultural-essentialist perspective, the counter-movement in the Muslim societies as manifested in the recent upsurge of jihadi terrorism is not simply a defensive societal reaction; it is reflective of their inability to adjust to a globalised society, where the destinies of cultures and peoples inexorably intertwine. In other words, Islam is regarded as a religion that is hardly compatible with a pluralistic vision of society. According to a critic, “Many Muslims have little knowledge of, or respect, for religions other than their own and easily respond to a growing sense of alienation spawned by modernisation or globalisation by reducing Islam to a militant political ideology.” The contextualists, on the contrary, assert that the Islamist counter movement is not the product of the cultural intransigence or the deep-rooted inferiority complex of the Muslims, but the failure of the regimes, secular or Islamic, in coping with the wilting forces of globalisation, which a critic has termed it as “new US-based form of imperial globality.” It is an economic-military-ideological order that subordinates regions, peoples, and economies world-wide. The underside of imperial globality is “global coloniality,” that is “the heightened marginalisation and suppression of the knowledge and culture of subaltern groups.”

Proud of their cultural traditions, some of these groups find it difficult to reconcile themselves with their status on the margins of the world system they did not create and cannot control. Overwhelmed by feelings of political impotence in a world where force

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18 Lewis, What Went Wrong?, n. 12, pp. 32-36.
and potential for force dominate the agenda, they turn to religion, which gives them expressive instrument such as suicide bombings.\textsuperscript{22} The expressive violence (ritualistic, symbolic and communicative) of the 9/11 World Trade Centre terrorist attack, for instance, had meaning both for the victims (anxiety and humiliation) as well as for the perpetrators (status, prestige and reputation in the Muslim world).\textsuperscript{23} Thus, Benjamin Barber posits jihad, the Islamic concept of holy war, as one part of a mutually constituted dialectic between particularism and globalisation. Jihad, Barber graphically depicts, “in its essential form is a kind of animal fear propelled by anxiety in the face of uncertainty and relieved by self-sacrificing zealotry- an escape out of history.”\textsuperscript{24} What, however, motivates a faithful to carry out jihad is not only the alienation and hopelessness, but his belief in the superiority of the “Self” (Islam) and demise of the “Other”(West).\textsuperscript{25}

Paradoxically, the contemporary Islamist movement is not merely a reaction to globalisation; it is facilitated by it. For the technological advances of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century provide a formidable array of tools for mobilisation, easing communication via new media that defy traditional censorship.\textsuperscript{26} The Islamists have effectively utilised these tools to promote their brand of Islam rooted in the revolutionary rhetoric of radical Muslim thinkers and activists including Maulana Abul Ala Maududi of Pakistan. Islamists have also benefited from the improvements in communications technology and transportation in creating a strong sense of unity and uniformity across the Muslim world based on the Arabised/Wahhabised form of Islam. Prior to these changes, “the norms of what ‘Islamic’ was in a society and what was not were decided on a local, regional, or national level. Each country had the opportunity to find its own interpretation of the Islamic message.”\textsuperscript{27}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{24} Barber, Jihad vs. McWorld, n. 16, p. 81.
\item \textsuperscript{26} Dale F. Eickelman and John W. Anderson (eds.), New Media in the Muslim World: The Emerging Public Sphere (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003), pp. xi –xiii.
\item \textsuperscript{27} Frank Griffel, “Globalisation and the Middle East: Part Two”, YaleGlobal, 21 January 2003 at http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/display.article?id=744
\end{itemize}
In sum, the most important effect of globalisation is the spread of the jihadi culture in which the doctrinal vision of the radical Islamists and the Wahhabi legacy of religious zeal have played a decisive role.\(^\text{28}\)

In an era when the "isms" of communism and socialism, even nationalism, have lost their luster, it is quite understandable that many people return to their religious roots for meaning and for values. Islam appeals because it is an alternative to the secular nation-state, to a Western, non-indigenous, non-Islamic form of social organisation and political process, said R. Scott Appleby, professor of history at the University of Notre Dame and co-editor of *The Fundamentalism Project*, a massive five-volume study of global fundamentalism. Likewise, Emmanuel Sivan has argued, "Islamism is basically an indigenous response to prevalent socioeconomic and political problems."\(^\text{29}\) Gilles Kepel concurs with Sivan and others regarding the state of contemporary Muslim society, especially in terms of an ever-increasing sense of powerlessness.

The emphasis for Kepel, however, is more strongly placed on the individual's "loss of reference points" and "loss of identity" in a rapidly changing world as being the primary factor in the increased support for the Islamists.\(^\text{30}\) Saleem Qureshi also examines this question of powerlessness when he writes, "The uprooted are often those psychologically least able to cope with the unknown and the strange, and the dislocation often results in alienation and loss of identity."\(^\text{31}\) Islamist organisations are thus viewed as modern social movements whose success is rooted in their appropriation of religious symbols, discourse, and language to express socio-economic grievances, utilising them as instruments to mobilise the population towards a concrete goal.\(^\text{32}\) While the Islamists may


\(^{32}\) For an analysis of linking of Islamic activism with social movement theory, see Quintan Wiktorowicz, (ed.), *Islamic Activism: A Social Movement Theory Approach* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2004)
espouse and articulate their message within a religious or moral framework, their support is predicated upon the particular socio-economic context of that society. The individuals who support these groups do so not necessarily for religious reasons, but because they desire a radical restructuring of the current order, a change they believe can only be provided by contemporary Islamist movements. For many Muslims, Islamic revival simply means becoming a more religiously observant Muslim. For others, being an observant Muslim is not simply more attention to prayer or fasting; it’s also about creating a more just, moral, Islam-based society. Consequently, Islamism either takes the form of a violent protest movement similar to Mexico’s Zapatista rebellion in the 1990s or an anti-state ideology, challenging the legitimacy and coherence of the states.  

A Comparison: Similarities and Dissimilarities

As a closer examination of the phenomenon in Pakistan and Bangladesh in the preceding chapters shows, Islamic fundamentalism is not monolithic, but presents different faces in different countries according to the differing conditions in those countries. It therefore requires a multi-causal explanation. We must deal with fundamentalist Islam in a variety of contexts: how it impacts on issues of importance to the international community, the regional security and stability, and domestic politics and society, such as encouraging open market or political pluralism or respect for human rights. In the following discussion an attempt is made to draw the similarities and dissimilarities between the two case studies in terms of their origins, growth and impact at the global, regional and domestic levels. In the first two sections, the focus of the discussion is on the causation (factors) and context (historical and social conditions), and how they together account for the variation, if any, in the support base and nature of the fundamentalist movements in the two countries located in the same geographic area. Since the factors contributing to the growth of Islamic fundamentalism are common to

33 The Zapatista campaign in the Chiapas Highlands was led by the impoverished Maya Indians against the Mexican state. Comparing the Zapatista with Egypt’s militant Islamic movement, Gama’a al-Islamiyya, Dan Tschirgi has labeled these movements *Marginalised Violent Internal Conflicts*. Dan Tschirgi, “Marginalised Violent Internal Conflict in the Age of Globalisation: Egypt and Mexico”, *Arab Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 21, No. 3 (Summer 1999), pp. 13-34. For a critique, see Asef Bayat, “Islamism and Social Movement Theory”, *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 26, No. 6 (2005), pp. 891-908.
both the cases, it is relatively easy to identify them and assess their saliency in sustaining the movements despite pressures from the within the country and without.

The main reason for the resurgence of Islamic fundamentalism is the enormous ideological vacuum created by the collapse of communism and the associated movements’ world wide. According to Khalid Duran, the so-called “green peril” is not an invention of the leaders of xenophobic parties in Europe and America. Islamic fundamentalism, he adds, “is, in certain ways, a successor to Soviet communism.”\(^{34}\) In a society where the state has failed to provide health care, education and jobs, Islamic fundamentalism has used these deprivations to build up its own forces.\(^{35}\) In Pakistan the military dictator, General Zia-ul-Haq instigated this process in order to quell the mass movement and left wing currents in society. In 1971, there were 900 madrassas in Pakistan. By the end of Zia’s rule there were 8,000 registered and 25,000 non-registered madrassas. The Taliban (religious students) emerged from some of these madrassas in Pakistan, run by a Islamic Deobandi sect under the auspices of its political outfit, the JUI (Jamiat Ulma-e-Islam).\(^{36}\)

Equally significant was the oil boom of the 1970s, provided the conservative Gulf monarchies the ground for constructing a new ideology to counteract the intrusive Pan-Arabism. Labeled as “petro-islam”, it derives from the premise that “it is not merely an accident that oil is concentrated on the thinly populated Arabian countries rather than in the densely populated Nile Valley or Fertile Crescent, and that this apparent irony of fate is indeed a grace and a blessing from God that should be solemnly acknowledged and lived up to.”\(^{37}\) On the regional level, an important ideological function of petro-Islam was

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to promote Muslim universalism, a safer doctrine than the geographically more limited but politically more troublesome idea of Pan-Arabism.\textsuperscript{38} Being a supra-national identity it poses no threat to reason of state; it aims at promoting Islamic fraternity rather than the unification of sovereign political entities. It was in pursuit of this ideal that the leading Gulf States used their oil-led wealth to support movements wedded to promotion of Islamic culture or to those confronting anti-Islamic regimes. A substantial portion of their bilateral and multilateral aid was directed towards the non-Arab states with large Muslim population through internal charity organisations, notably the \textit{Rabita-e-Alam-e-Islami}, \textit{Al-Haramain} and International Islamic Relief Organisation (IIRO), and trans-national bodies like the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC).\textsuperscript{39}

However, what has guaranteed potency to the fundamentalist Islam is its potential use either as a regime-challenging instrument or as regime-legitimising ideology in the authoritarian states. Externally, religious fundamentalism derives legitimacy either through alliance with global great powers in their zero-sum game to contain each other, or functioning as regional proxies in the inter-state conflicts.\textsuperscript{40} Pakistan’s Army of Islam comprising a host of Islamist terrorist outfits such as the \textit{Harkatul Mujahideen} (HuM), \textit{Lashkar-e-Tayyaba} (LeT), and \textit{Jaish – e-Mohammad} (JeM) employed against India to settle old scores appropriately fits into the second category.\textsuperscript{41} These states rely on such fanatic elements not because they are committed to a particular brand of Islamic idealism, but to carry out a low-intensity war that has sufficient debilitating potential to the targeted state.


\textsuperscript{41} B. Raman, “Pakistan’s Inter-Services Intelligence(ISI)”, \textit{South Asia Analysis Group}, Paper No. 287, 1 August 2001 at http://www.saag.org/paper3/paper287.html
Islam as Source of Legitimacy

Islam in Pakistan and Bangladesh has not only served the instrumental function as the purveyor of legitimacy, but also represents the constitutive element of state identity. In Pakistan, for example, religious right has been willful accomplice of the state in reinforcing an instrumentalist use of Islam. It has in varying degrees complimented the military both in its quest of legitimacy and its efforts at marginalising the mainstream parties politically. While the military sees itself as the guardian of the state power and has established the mandate to intervene should the civilian authority fail to deliver, it relies on the Islamic-centric pillars of state ideology to retain its political primacy. Likewise, the religious groups have been the self-proclaimed guardians of the Pakistani state, defending the founding ideology of the state against perceived or real attacks on Islam and at the same time championing the vanguard role that Pakistan plays as a leader of the ummah (global Muslim community). Furthermore, the image of military as the protector of “Islamic Pakistan” against a “Hindu India” has turned the Ulema a natural ally. No wonder, various segments of clergy have been co-opted by the military, which in any case requires their services to legitimise its engagement in politics and counter the potential civilian opposition.

The military-mullah alliance expanded and gained strength during the eleven years of military rule of General Zia-ul-Haq (1977-88). Zia had in fact joined hands with the religious parties prior to overthrowing an elected government. Their protest movement created the conditions for his coup d'état. Predictably, the religious conservatives like the Deobandi ulema and the Jamaat-i-Islami not only guided Zia's brand of Islamisation, but also became the military’s partners in the Afghan war. It was during the Afghan jihad that a definitive mullah-military alliance developed into its present manifestation. Despite the restoration of democracy, the political process in post-Zia period remained hostage to the "unholy alliance", which undermined the credibility


of civilian political actors so much so that General Musharraf carried out the bloodless coup in November 1999 without a whimper of protest. The chief architect of the Kargil misadventure, Musharraf continued to utilise the services of the Islamist forces for the consolidation of his hold on power, and more importantly, his policy of persecution and harassment of his secular political adversaries facilitated the steady growth of the Islamist parties.

The six-party religious-political alliance called the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA) in fact owed its victory in the October 2002 elections in North West Frontier province and Balochistan to state patronage, particularly the blessings of the military-led establishment.

Unlike Pakistan, Bangladesh has experienced no such alliance even though there are instances of convergence of interests between the military and clergy. What would arguably account for the absence of this feature in Bangladesh is Islam not being the *raison d'etre* of the state. All the same, Islam has assumed preeminence in the Bangladeshi polity since the introduction of a new national ideology following the assassination of Sheikh Mujib and the overthrow of his government by a military coup in August 1975. Not long after his ascendancy as the new ruler in November 1975, General Ziaur Rahman brought about a major shift in state ideology by replacing the secular “Bengali nationalism” with “Bangladeshi nationalism.” Outwardly though inclusive, the new Bangladeshi nationalism essentially highlights the Muslim roots of the country, differentiating its Muslim majority Bengalis from their Hindu counterparts in West Bengal in India. This in a sense “reinstated the ‘Two Nation’ thesis that the formation of Bangladesh had seemingly overturned. Hindu Bengal was once more recognised as Indian and alien.”

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Based on the new state ideology, Ziaur Rahman created the Bangladesh National Party (BNP) to compete for power with the Awami League – the party closely identified with the regime he had overthrown. To counteract the political influence of the Awami League, not only did the Zia regime consciously flirt with Islamic-oriented groups and social movements, but also amended the constitution in 1977 by replacing “socialism” and “secularism” with “social justice” and “the absolute faith in God Almighty”, which transformed Bangladesh into a quasi-Islamic state.49 Internally, this transformation enabled President Zia to legitimise his rule while providing the ideological platform to justify his opposition to the Awami League. Externally, the state-led Islamisation brought the oil-rich Arab Gulf states, particularly Saudi Arabia closer to Bangladesh, whereas the US preferred the pro-Western Islamists to the pro-Soviet socialists in Dhaka.50 The Islamisation process started by Zia in some respects grew even stronger under the General Ershad (1982-1990). Together with his Islamic gestures to legitimise his rule, namely the 1988 proclamation of Islam as the state religion, declaration of Friday as the weekly holiday, proclamation of, introduction of religious teaching in military, promotion of madrassah education and construction of mosques, Ershad’s overplay of “India card” over the Farakka barrage issue and attempts at politically re-instating the pro-Pakistani and anti-Liberation elements like Golam Azam and S. A. Rahman helped create a popular support base for the Islamists.51 As Tazeen Murshid has pointed out, “Religion and politics do not necessarily come together only when political institutions are weak, but also when dominant authoritarian regimes feel threatened.”52


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The ensuing competition among the two mainstream political parties - the Awami League and the BNP - to publicly display their loyalty to Islam by taking recourse to various pseudo-religious rituals “demonstrated the importance of the Islamisation of politics spearheaded by the Jama’at, and equally pursued by the successive military regimes of Zia and Ershad.” As a result, the Islamist groups on the political margin began to exercise disproportionate influence by taking advantage of the polarised nature of the Bangladeshi polity. Emboldened by the victory of the Afghan mujahideen against the Soviet army and the subsequent Taliban rule there, the radical factions within the Islamist movement forged close ties with the Pakistan-backed pan-Islamic jihadis and the al-Qaeda network of bin-Laden. Apart from the nexus built over the years between the Bangladeshi Islamic militant groups like the Harkatul Jihad al-Islami, the ISI of Pakistan and the International Islamic Brigade, a steady increase in the share of votes for the Jamaat-I Islami since the 1991 parliamentary elections and the ongoing conflict between the pro-NOO civil society and anti-NGO Islamists are a definite pointer towards an impending ascendancy of Islamic extremism in Bangladesh.

External Factors

The rise of the Islamist forces as prominent legitimate political actors in Bangladesh is less due to the impact of changes in global political structure or extraneous organisation and ideology than “the specific dynamics of domestic politics that allowed the pre-eminence of Islamic forces in the polity, and their successes in the electoral process.” In contrast, the external factors, namely the Islamic revolution in Iran and the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, played a major role in facilitating Pakistan’s Islamisation process under Zia ul Haq. Following the onset of the second Cold War, Washington’s pursuit of so-called policy of containment turned Pakistan as its frontline state that would serve as an effective bulwark against both the spread of Soviet influence

in South West Asia as well as the threat of the Iranian type clerical revolution. In return for wider legitimacy along with economic and military assistance, General Zia accepted this role and opened up Pakistani territory for training camps for the Jihadis. Thus, started as “a joint venture” between the US, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, which in the next decade and half turned a local conflict into the pan-Islamic jihad to fight the Soviet Union.\footnote{Oliver Roy, \textit{The Failure of Political Islam} (London: I.B. Tauris Publishers, 1994), p. 109}

While Washington wished to demonstrate that the war in Afghanistan involved the entire Muslim world against the Soviet occupation, Saudi Arabia sought to take advantage of the “frontier of anarchy” to distract the domestic political opposition, and Pakistan aimed at levering itself into a dominant position in the Islamic world and securing the so called “strategic depth” against India.\footnote{Robert Kaplan, \textit{The Ends of the Earth: A Journey to the Frontiers of Anarchy} (New York: Vintage Books, 1997).} In West Asia, the Brethren and the Saudi-based World Muslim League organised “Islamic” humanitarian aid for the Afghan resistance, and established an “Islamic legion” made up of Arab volunteers who would be received by the Pakistani intelligence service, the ISI and \textit{Jamaat-i-Islami} in Peshawar before sending them to join the \textit{mujahidin} groups.\footnote{On the link between the West Asian Islamic militants and Pakistan, see Samina Ahmed, “The (Un) holy Nexus?”, \textit{Newsline} (Karachi), Vol. 10, no. 3 (September 1998), pp. 31-34. Also see, Ahmed Rashid, \textit{Taliban: Islam, Oil and the New Great Game in Central Asia} (New York: I. B. Tauris, 2000), pp. 128-139.} Members of this popularly known “Islamic International Brigade” were recruited from a variety of Arab countries—notably Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Syria, Jordan, Palestine and Iraq, and even Iran as well. Although it is difficult to have a precise figure for the number of \textit{mujahideen} since the entire operation was clandestine, there were around 15,000 Arabs between 1986 and 1989. Until 1984 there were hardly 200 Arabs in the area, but in 1986 onwards there was a huge influx of Arab fighters, as Pakistani embassy in Riyadh started delivering up to 200 visas a day to the young recruits.\footnote{Mark Huband, \textit{Warriors of the Prophet: The Struggle for Islam} (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1998), pp. 2-3.} Among those thousands of Arab recruits were Sheikh Abdullah Azzam, a Jordanian Palestinian who headed the Muslim Brethren bureau in Peshawar, the Iraqi-born Ramzi Ahmed Yousef who was involved in the 1993 World Trade Centre bombing, the Algerian
Tayib al-Afghani and Kamar Eddin Kharban leaders of the FIS, Yamen Ramzi, leader of the Army of Prophet Mohammad in Jordan, Egyptian Islamic Jihad’s leaders, Ayman al-Zawahiri and Muhammas Atef, the two sons of the blind Egyptian prayer leader Sheikh Omar Abdul Rahman and topping them all is the Saudi multi-millionaire construction tycoon, Osama bin Laden.60

Even after the withdrawal of the Soviet forces in 1989, Arabs continued to drift to Afghanistan for military training and introduction to a new ideology based on a deadly mixture of Salafism and puritanical Deobandism. A branch of Sunni Hanafi Islam, Deobandis arose in India during the last quarter of the 19th century as a reform movement with twin objectives of training religious scholars to safeguard the traditional Islamic values and to resist the colonial state ruled by non-Muslims. What was, however, taught to the Afghan refugees in hundreds of madrassas set up along Pakistan’s Pushtun belt in the wake of the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan was an extreme form of Deobandism, which was much closer to the Wahhabi creed than the reformist agenda of the original Deoband seminary.61 In fact, the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Centre in New York marked the beginning of a new phase of Islamist terrorism as it moved from internal arena of Muslim states to a global context under the banner of a pan-Islamic jihadi movement.62 The new generation of jihad volunteers known as the Arab Afghans became a major security issue in the countries of their origin as many of them formed clandestine guerrilla cells modeled on Afghan lines in the Arab countries, while others had their bases inside Afghanistan to conduct campaign elsewhere.63

60 The sheikh was the chief theological guide of the Egypt-based Islamic Gama’a who established a small mosque in New Jersey from where he began to assemble the Islamic activists from several West Asian countries. For details, see Mark Juergensmeyer, Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), pp. 66-68.


Role of the State

As explained above, the gradual transformation of Pakistan from an Islamic to Jihadi state is the result of the state appropriation of Islam in political discourse initiated by General Zia-ul-Haq since his seizure of power in July 1977. General Zia’s search for legitimacy caused him to employ Islam as a source of national identity, cultural integration and public morality to a degree which exceeded the previous regimes. It is, however, argued by some scholars that Zia used Islam not simply for the purpose of regime-legitimacy but to neutralise the rising tide of Islamist activism in the form of the Order of the Prophet (Nizam-i-Mustafa) movement of the late 1970s by co-opting sections of Islamist opposition and isolating others and at the same time bolstering state power and capacity. “Islamisation from above”, according to S. V. R. Nasr, “allowed the state to reap the fruits of the Islamist propaganda and win the competition with the Islamist challenge from below to control the normative order, and thus construct a viable state ideology that provides for uniformity across society as well as a greater compliance with the will of the state.”

At any rate, Pakistan under Zia was not only authoritarian in political structure; it also aspired to be an ideological state. Predictably, Zia’s Islamisation programme covered all areas and institutions including the army and judiciary. The army’s role was no longer confined to merely defending Pakistan’s territorial borders; it became the defender of the country’s “ideological frontiers”. In selection boards for officer candidates, for instance, religious knowledge became a determinant for selection and promotion in the place of secular educational background. Besides, the ruling generals openly declared themselves to be conservative Islamic in their orientations and even tried to outdo each other in an attempt to be seen at congregational prayers. The judiciary was another institution severely affected by Zia’s policies such as increasing the representation of the orthodox

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elements in the reconstituted Council of Islamic Ideology (CII), setting up of the Shariat Bench in the provincial High court, which were later replaced by a Federal Shariat Court with the appointment of Ulema as judges empowered to examine laws for their repugnancy to Islam, the creation of local Qazi courts and the last but not the least, the 1981 Provisional Constitutional Order that required all judges to take a new oath of allegiance.

In the Islamisation campaign, Zia set for himself the goal of introducing concrete steps designed to transform the socio-cultural, economic and political principles. In a press conference in 1983, he said,

My only ambition in life is to complete the process of Islamisation so that there will be no turning back - - - the Islamisation process, its aims and objectives are straight on the path of righteousness. And that is what I call Islamisation.67

Accordingly, Zia’s Islamisation measures in the social and economic spheres included the abolition of riba (interest), introduction of Zakat (Islamic charity) tax and ushr (tax on agricultural produce) and government encouragement to mosque-run schools. In an attempt to implement Islamic laws, Zia extended the scope of Bhutto’s Islamic regulations: the banning of alcohol and gambling, the closure of offices for the Friday congregational prayer, introduction of Islamic punishments like flogging for certain offenses, enforcement of the Hudood ordinance and the Blasphemy law targeting the women and minority respectively. In addition, under the pressures from the Ulema he issued an ordinance, which made it a criminal offense for the Ahmadis to pose as Muslims.

In an overarching quest for Islamic transformation of society, General Zia-ul-Haq used education as an instrument to “prepare a new generation wedded to the ideology of Pakistan and Islam.”68 As elaborated in Chapter II, restructuring of the country’s education system included the creation of an Islamic university in Islamabad, compulsory


teaching of Islamiyat (Islamic Studies) for all Muslims, introduction of nazara Qur'an (reading of Qur'an) as a matriculation requirement and the enforcement of religious knowledge as a criterion for the selection of teachers at all levels. In addition, a thorough revision of textbooks and course curricula was undertaken in order to “guide students towards the ultimate goal of Pakistan - the creation of a completely Islamised State.”69 Likewise, through state patronage of religious seminaries, Zia used them as an outlet for conveying state ideology to the masses.70

The task of rewriting history books started in earnest in 1981, when Zia's regime made the teaching of Pakistan studies mandatory to all degree students, including those at engineering and medical colleges. Central theme of the revised history was the “ideology of Pakistan”, which was though defined variously had its origins in the Manifesto of the Jamaat-i-Islami formulated in 1951 and re-approved by its Majlis-i-Shoora in December 1969.71 Naturally, the revised history of Pakistan turned out to be nothing but the wholesome dissemination through educational institutions of Jamaat-i-Islami concept of Islamic state, its aversion to pre-Islamic history of the region, portrayal of Hindus as enemies of Islam, glorification of violence under hallowed cover of Jihad.72 Constructing such historical narratives, the Zia regime not merely enforced political legitimacy and control, but also endowed the state with a hegemonic ideology and that is, the movement for Pakistan as the movement for an Islamic state.73

Zia's espousal of the orthodox version of Islam and his pursuit of an ideological state left behind an atmosphere of bigotry, fanaticism and distorted values conducive to an upsurge of Islamist extremism. For the primacy of orthodox Islam in Pakistan was not effectively challenged despite the return to democracy after General Zia's death in

71 Hoodbhoy and Nayyar, “Rewriting the History”, n. 66, p. 66.
August 1988. Islam remained the primary idiom of political discourse and a vehicle for mass mobilisation by both the government and the opposition. Whether it was the imposition of Zakat on the Shia Muslims, or the status of the minority, or persecution of the Ahmadis, the core issue was to what extent it conformed to the tenets of Islam, not its legality or desirability. This precisely explains why the subsequent civilian governments either failed to prevent what a well-known Pakistani historian calls "murder of history" or willingly perpetuated it. 74

Equally significant was the transformation of Pakistani army from a secular and professional organisation to one which included elements that strongly subscribed to beliefs and policies of General Zia. Thus, if the democratisation progress was retarded in the succeeding years, one of the leading factors was the de facto alliance between the Islamist factions and the military. It played a catalytic role in both the dismissal of Benazir Bhutto’s government in August 1990 as well as in the formation of the Islamic Democratic Alliance (IJI) comprising the two factions of the Pakistan Muslim League and the right-wing religious parties.

Consequently, the democratically-elected governments were reluctant to undo the Islamisation process partly due to their fear of incurring the wrath of the Islamist groups who could mobilise masses in the name of protecting Islam and partly, the uncertainty surrounding their survival in a political system dominated by the military and President whose power had been enhanced by Zia’s Eighth amendment to the 1973 constitution in 1985. In her earlier speeches Bhutto had stated that genuine economic and political rights, not bogus Islamic prescriptions designed to “fool the poor and the downtrodden”, were what Pakistan needed. 75 In the face of stiff religious opposition throughout her first, brief 20-month tenure as Prime Minister (November 1988-August 1990), she was unable to introduce a single piece of legislation. Rather than repeal the repressive Hudood ordinance or the blasphemy law as promised by her Pakistan’s Peoples Party (PPP) during the elections, Bhutto spared no efforts to appease the Islamists (covering her hair, for instance). It was in fact during her second term in office (October 1993-November

74 K. K. Aziz, Murder of History in Pakistan (Lahore: Vanguard Books, 1993

1996) that the leader of PPP's political ally, the right-wing Jamiat-i-Ulema-i-Islam-F (JUI-F), Maulana Fazl ur-Rahman played a crucial role in opening up communication channels between the Pakistan government and the Taliban leadership.76

A political outfit of the Pakistani Deobandis, the JUI funded by Saudi Wahhabis had set up hundreds of madrassas (Islamic schools) along Pakistan’s Pushtun belt between the NWFP and Baluchistan during the war in Afghanistan, offering Afghan refugees and young Pakistanis free education, shelter and military training. A predominantly Pushtun group, Taliban emerged in 1994 as a messianic movement made up of a generation of Young Afghans raised in the strictest fundamentalism of the Deobandi madrassas.77 Actively backed by Pakistani army and the Inter-Service Intelligence Agency (ISI), a band of Taliban conquered Kandahar in late 1994 and set up the so-called emirate there. The Talibanisation process also contributed to the growing political marginalisation of Pashtun nationalist forces. Given their checkered history and traditional support base, they are potentially an effective and viable political force to challenge the religious extremists in the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) and the adjacent Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). Pakistan's secular and Pashtun nationalist Awami National Party (ANP) was routed in national and provincial elections in 2002 largely because anti-Musharraf and anti-American sentiments were at their peak leading to support for the religious alliance Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA).78

While the Benazir government by facilitating the JUI the access to the corridors of power indirectly conferred legitimacy on the Taliban’s purist ideology and its model of Islamist revolution, her successor, Nawaz Sharif tried, albeit unsuccessfully, to enforce rule by Islamic laws in Pakistan by introducing the 15th Amendment to the constitution in August 1998. Faced with the prospects of its rejection in the Senate after having got it passed in the lower house, Nawaz sought the mullahs’ support to pressurise the Senate for the passage of the bill. Clearly, these instances illustrate not just the disproportionate


political weight that the Islamic groups enjoyed during the 1990s, also the extent to which the state-sponsored Islamic orthodoxy initiated by General Zia had reduced the space available to liberal Muslims in Pakistani society.\textsuperscript{79}

Similar to Pakistani experience, an Islam-oriented state ideology introduced in Bangladesh by General Ziaur Rahman set off a process that conduced to the re-emergence of religious themes and idioms in political discourse. In addition, Zia’s brand of nationalism in which Islam was accorded primacy over ethnic/linguistic identity encouraged the previously disbanded religio-political forces to occupy a definite space in the Bangladeshi polity.\textsuperscript{80} Although the hardcore Islamists failed to take power, their influence on national politics and society at large continued to grow even after the end of 15 years of military rule. Nowhere was it more glaring than in the profoundly secular Awami League, whose ideological position as regards Islam changed dramatically. Apart from making pilgrimage to Mecca, the party supremo, Sheikh Hasina tried to convey the message through usage of Islamic jargons, slogans and symbols that the party valued Islam as an integral part of Bangladeshi national culture. So did its rival, the BNP, which sought support of the Islamic parties, notably \textit{Jama’at-i-Islami} to counter the challenge posed by the secular nationalist forces represented by the Awami League.\textsuperscript{81}

As in Pakistan, so too in Bangladesh, wooing the religious right as political ally came at a price of promising to advance the cause of Islamisation. Unlike Pakistan, the progress of Islamisation does not seem to have purged Bangladesh of its secular intuitions and syncretic traditions. Reflective of this is the growing popularity of Awami League, which, notwithstanding its public display of pro-Islamic gestures, remains officially committed to secularism and ethno-linguistic nationalism. Whereas the BNP believes in, not necessarily practices, Islamic values, the Awami League considers the relationship between man and God private.\textsuperscript{82} Even though Islam has been declared as the

\textsuperscript{79} Yasmeen, “Pakistan”, n. 64, p. 82.
\textsuperscript{80} Ali Riaz, “God Willing”, n. 55, p. 112.
state religion, the Constitution “provides for the right to profess, practice, or propagate - subject to law, public order, and morality - the religion of one’s choice. It also states that every religious community or denomination has the right to establish, maintain, and manage its religious institutions.” Likewise, Shari’a law has not been implemented formally, nor is it imposed on non-Muslims.

It may be thus argued that the rise and growth of Islamic fundamentalism in Bangladesh has more to do with the failure of post-independence leadership to deliver (i.e. Mujib’s iron-fisted governance, dilution of democracy and lack of international support) than the failure of secularist experiment per se. Extraneous factors including the inflow of petro-dollars, the Super-power rivalry during the Cold War, linkages to the Arab Gulf states and the developments in Afghanistan have only supplemented the process of Islamisation in Bangladesh. After all it is country of “over-developed society” (in terms of level of political consciousness due to mass mobilisation during the liberation movement) with an “under-developed state” (in terms of institution-building), which accounts for the poor governance, gross mismanagement and a polarised polity. Together they have created space for the fundamentalist Islam to grow steadily at the cost of the country’s secular tradition and syncretic culture. In contrast, Pakistan, as Hamza Alavi has described it is an “over-developed state” (in terms of strong military-bureaucratic control) with an “under-developed society”, the reasons for which lay in the process of state formation.

State Formation Process and Islamisation

As noted, the role of Islam varies depending on the nature of the society; structure of the polity and more importantly, their diverse experience in the historical process of state formation. While Pakistan was created on the basis of religion, Bangladesh emerged as a sovereign, independent entity in defiance of a national identity defined by Islam. Way-back in 1956, Hasan Suhrawardy, Pakistan’s only Bengali Prime Minister, for

example, declared the two-nation theory invalid, and the notion of an Islamic bond uniting the regions of Pakistan as utterly "fatuous." \(^{86}\) What make Bangladesh distinct from the former are its local syncretistic cultural practices, as reflected in Bengali folk cult, literature, music and festivals. In fact, Bangladeshi nationalism that emerged in the course of the liberation struggle led by Sheikh Mujib's Awami League was primarily rooted on the unique combination of land and language. Bangladeshi nationalism was originally the product of the cultural differentiation from West Pakistan and the latter's imposition of "Urdu or Islamisation of the Bengali language."\(^{87}\) Soon after its independence in 1971, Bangladesh adopted this East Bengalis nationalism together with socialism, democracy and secularism as state ideology, relegating Islam to private sphere.

Thus, Islamisation in Bangladesh is not an inescapable product of history; nor is it simply a reaction to the failed secularist experimentation during the early days of independence, which, according to a critic, "did not reflect Bangladesh's social spirit and history."\(^{88}\) Refuting the proponents of identity crisis theory, Ali Riaz has attributed the rise of Islam as a political ideology in Bangladesh to the "crisis of hegemony of the ruling bloc and politics of expediency by the secularist parties."\(^{89}\) Together they created an environment conducive to the rise of religious rhetoric in political discourse and subsequently allowed the Islamist parties to become a significant force in the Bangladesh polity.

As compared to Bangladesh, the phenomenon of Islamic fundamentalism has attained a virulent character in Pakistan partly because of its geographic proximity to the Muslim world and its enhanced strategic saliency in the wake of the Soviet invasion of bordering Afghanistan. More importantly, the ambiguity surrounding the role of Islam in the affairs of the state left the field open for the adventurist rulers to resort to its absolutist

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\(^{89}\) Riaz, "God Willing", n. 55, p. 302.
interpretations either to legitimise their misconduct or to cover up their failings. The state-sponsored Islamisation process in Pakistan is in a way organically linked to this basic problem pertaining to the state ideology and its identity. This has its roots in the conflict between the liberal and orthodox Islamic views that reside in the independence struggle for Pakistan. For the former, "the ideology of Pakistan was not Islam, but rather the belief that Muslims and Hindus were intrinsically too different in culture and beliefs to allow the former to thrive as a minority within a state dominated by the latter." It was Muslim nationalism, which became the vehicle for the achievement of Pakistan. The term ‘Muslim nationalism’ as applied to the Pakistan movement "is to be seen mainly in juxtaposition to the Hindu (and the Congress) demand for a united India rather in relation, or as an extension of the Muslim Middle East." No wonder, the Lahore Resolution of 1940, which became the basis for the partition was viewed by the British and the Indian National Congress almost up to the eve of independence as a bargaining counter by the Muslim League. Describing the ‘Two -Nation Theory’ of the Muslim League as a ruse to force concessions from the Congress, Ayesha Jalal, for instance, argues that the idea of separate Pakistan was a ploy to "avoid the logic of arithmetic."

Although religion was the key to this founding theory and the leaders of the Muslim League had used Islam to mobilise support among the Muslims for carving out a separate state for them from British India, the state was not based on an ideal of religious zealotry. The founding father of the new state, Mohammad Ali Jinnah did not in fact envision a theocratic Islamic state; he instead presented a vision of a state for Muslims which would be liberal and moderate enough to accommodate cultural and religious differences. However, his contradictory statements, which emphasised democracy and secularism at one time and the role of Islam at another contributed to the future confusion of as regards the ideological basis of the Pakistani state. Confounding the confusion

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further was the assertions by the religious groups and leading Islamic scholars like Maulana Mawdudi of Jamaat-I Islami and Maulana Shabir Ahmed Othmani of Jamiat Ulama-i Islam that Pakistan was created as an Islamic state and not merely a state for Muslims. The Pakistani state, having been created in the name of Islam, asked Mawdudi, had an obligation to define what it meant to be Muslim.\footnote{For Maulana Mawdudi's views on the ideological basis of Pakistan, see Sayyed Vali Reza Nasr, Mawdudi and the Making of Islamic Revivalism (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 49-68.}

Reflective of the struggle between liberal and orthodox Islam, the first Constitution of 1956 declared Pakistan an Islamic Republic, asserting an Islamic basis for the state but not allowing Qu’ran and Sunna as the sole source of guidance and law for the state. The 1962 constitution under General Ayub Khan even initially dropped the word “Islamic” to the Republic of Pakistan, and Islam was not declared the official religion of the state, as in the previous constitution. Under pressures from the orthodox sections, the Ayub’s regime subsequently inserted the dropped word ‘Islamic’ to the ‘Republic of Pakistan’, and declared that all existing laws of the country would be brought in conformity with Holy Quran and Sunnah.\footnote{G. W. Choudhury, Constitutional Development in Pakistan, Revised Edition (London: Longman, 1969), p. 184.}

The ideological conflict intensified following the traumatic experience of the Indo-Pakistan war of 1971, which resulted in the secession of East Pakistan as Bangladesh. While Ayub Khan’s modernist orientation had already led to a major confrontation with the orthodox Ulema over proposed family law reforms, the 1971 debacle refocused popular attention on the issue of Pakistan’s identity and its raison d’etre. The questions raised were as follows: “What are the links that bind the people of Pakistan? What is the soul and personality of Pakistan?\footnote{William L. Richter, “The Political Dynamics of Islamic Resurgence in Pakistan”, Asian Survey, Vo. 19, No. 6 (June 1979), p. 549.} What is our national identity and our peculiar oneness which makes us a nation apart from other nations?” Islamic parties attributed the dismemberment of the country to its deviation from the true path of Islam and called for the reaffirmation of Pakistan’s Islamic roots.\footnote{Lawrence Ziring, “Introduction;„ in L. Ziring et al, Pakistan: The Long View (Durham: Duke University Press, 1977), pp. 6-7.} It was in the backdrop of powerful Islamic current that Pakistan’s first democratically elected Prime Minister
Zulifiqar Ali Bhutto (1971-1977) resorted to Islamic symbolism in domestic and foreign policy despite his secular convictions in order to gain popularity and undercut his political opponents. He, for instance, gave the 1973 Constitution, which was a far more Islamic in letter and spirit than the previous two constitutions. For the first time, it declared Islam as the official religion of the state and sovereignty belonged to Allah (Article 227). Under pressures of the religious lobby, his government declared the Ahmedi sect to be a non-Muslim minority, established a Ministry of Religious Affairs for the first time in Pakistan's history, promoted Arabic instructions in schools, made Friday the weekly holiday instead of Sunday and banned liquor and gambling for Muslims.98

Using the politics of Islam, Bhutto successfully re-oriented Pakistan's foreign policy by supporting Arabs wholeheartedly during the 1973 October Arab-Israel war, hosting the second Islamic Summit Conference in Lahore, facilitating Pakistan's export of manpower to and inflow of remittances and aid from oil-rich Arab states.99 Topping them all, he mobilised funds from Muslim countries for Pakistan's nuclear energy programme under the rubric of 'Islamic bomb'.100 All the same, Bhutto's Islamisation pursuit did not endear him to various segments of Pakistan's powerful clergy. Even though he increasingly relied on Islam to legitimise his populist experiment based on the ideology of what he called 'Islamic socialism', he failed to resolve the basic issues pertaining to the relationship of religion to the institutions of the state. Consequently, the established religious groups of Pakistan, namely the Jamat-i-Islami and Jamiat-I Ulama-i Islam became highly vocal criticising his authoritarian style of governance and campaigning for the establishment of Nizami-e-Mustafa (a system of government based on the traditions of the Prophet Muhammad) in the country. They spearheaded the 1977 protests against the alleged ballot-rigging under the banner of the Pakistan National Alliance (PNA), which gave General Zia ul-Haq the pretext to overthrow the elected

99 M. G. Weinbaum and Gautam Sen, “Pakistn Enters the Middle East”, Orbis, Vol. 22, No. 3 (Fall 19768), pp. 584-600.
100 For details, see Steve Weissman and Herbert Krosney, The Islamic Bomb (New York: Times Book, 1981),
government of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in a bloodless July 1977 coup. Predictably, Pakistan’s oldest and most organised fundamentalist organization, the Jamat-i-Islami became Zia’s surrogate political party internally and the closet ally in the US-sponsored jihad in Afghanistan. So central was the importance of the Jama’at to the Zia’s military regime that Butto during his trial in the court once said, “I chose a Chief of Staff from the Jama’at – i-Isalmi and the result is before all of us.”

The process was paralleled by a perceptible shift in the societal attitudes towards Islam partly because of the loss of East Pakistan and in greater part, popular disillusionment with Ayub Khan’s capitalist model of development and Butto’s brand of socialism. In addition, other factors that contributed in varying degrees towards the aforesaid shift include Pakistan’s close proximity to the Muslim countries, which began with its hosting of the Islamic Summit in 1974; rise of a new middle class as a result of the developmental polices of the earlier decades; expansion of urban proportion of population, which more then doubled from 1950 to 1970; massive flows of workers including Pakistan’s best and brightest to the Gulf countries following the oil boom undermining the country’s labour movement. All this provided the fertile ground for the orthodox Ulema to bring Islam to the centre-stage of the country’s politics, setting the stage for the initiation of Islamisation as a state ideology under the military rule of Zia ul-Haq to strengthen the unity of the nation. In a speech, Ziaul Haq justified the state policy of Islamization by stating:

The basis of Pakistan was Islam. The basis of Pakistan was that the Muslims of the subcontinent are a separate culture. It was on the two-nation theory that this part was carved out of the subcontinent as Pakistan. And in the last thirty years in general - - -

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there has been a complete erosion of the moral values of this society - - - These are the Islamic values and we are trying to bring these values back.\textsuperscript{105}

In short, Islamisation under Zia was the culmination of the gradual turn of the Pakistanis state towards Islam since the early 1970s. As noted, the gradual turn to Islam began at a time of profound crisis of identity due to the failure of the Western educated elite-led project of Pakistani nation-building. The failure is partly attributed to the ambiguity surrounding the notion of common Muslim identity, which created ideological polarisation undermining its integrative potential. Second, Pakistani nationalism, unlike its Bangladesh counterpart, did not emerge from below as a popular mass movement for a separate state. It was instead the product of a movement led by “a coalition of individuals, factions and segmented political interests belonging mostly to the landlord stratum.”\textsuperscript{106} Conceived and campaigned by a small number of Western-educated and secular elites from the central provinces of India, Pakistani nationalism failed to strike roots and help build an overarching national identity amidst various ethnic, sectarian, linguistic and regional diversities. This explains why the state elites of post-independence Pakistan increasingly relied on Islam as an integrative determinant of the national identity, which resulted in what Nasr calls, “a veritable cultural transformation” of Pakistan.\textsuperscript{107}

In contrast, the beginning years of independent Bangladesh were marked by secular nationalism, the eclipse of which is attributed to the erosion of the credibility of the \textit{Mujibism} (the four core state principles of nationalism, democracy, socialism and secularism) amidst hyperinflation, endemic corruption and non-availability of essentials. The failure of the welfare state naturally prompted Mujib’s dictator-successors to resort to Islamic gestures to counteract the political influence of the secular-nationalists represented by the Aawmi League and to rally support among the Muslim peasants. Historically, the Muslim peasants of this predominantly agrarian country have been mobilised for various Islamic movements since the early 19th century mainly by the


\textsuperscript{107} Nasr, \textit{Islamic Leviathan}, n. 65, p. 17.
Wahhabi and Faraizi leaders against the local exploiting class of Hindu Zaminadar-bhadralok-mahajan triumvirate.  

In short, the “Hindu phobia” of Bengali Muslims, a legacy since the British colonial days, transforming into “Indophobia” during the Pakistani period remains embedded in the psyche of the average Bengali Muslims. Arguably, the two factors - Indophobia and the peasants’ Islam - have played crucial role in facilitating the Islamisation process in Bangladesh from below. No less important is the activities of the Tabligh Jamaat, a grassroots-based puritan movement that had originated in northern India in the late 1920s to preserve and spread an Islamic identity unadulterated by the majority Hindu customs and practices. Although Tabligh Jama’at has no overt political agenda and focuses primarily on observant practices of Islam, it has indirectly contributed to the growth of Islamic fundamentalism in Bangladesh through its activities such as the spread of a culture identified with the Islam of Prophet’s period and organising largest gathering of Muslims in Tungi every year.

Capping them all is the spread of Wahhabi school of thought through thousands of Islamic seminaries (madrasas), which together with the culture of fatwas and the delivery of Islamic justice by the rural ulema through traditional local institutions like salish (village arbitration) have underpinned the fundamentalist challenge in Bangladesh. Deprived of their power and status because of the extensive socio-economic programs of NGOs, particularly those related to rural development, micro-credit and small business, have allied themselves with the Islamists to prevent the NGO


activities.\textsuperscript{112} This explains why there was an upsurge in the issuance of \textit{fatwas} in the early 1990s by rural clerics against NGO activists, social reformers, and feminists.\textsuperscript{113} At the same time, there is an exponential growth of madrassas in Bangladesh, which according to some estimates, have gone up to nearly 64,000 and most of them are beyond any form of government control or supervision. It is estimated that there are as many as 10,000 Qami or \textit{Deobandi madrasas} imparting Islamic education to 100,000 students.\textsuperscript{114} Independently-run and supported by religious endowments and private donations, some of these \textit{madrasas} have been providing their students guerrilla training to realise their dream of establishing an Islamic state in Bangladesh.\textsuperscript{115}

**Goal, Structure and Support Base of Fundamentalists**

As evident from the two case studies, Islamic fundamentalism is a multifarious movement with diverse manifestations, components, and contextual historical and societal conditions. Even the programmes, strategies and tactics of Islamist groups vary among and within countries, as do their sometimes contending ideologies.\textsuperscript{116} Regardless of particularistic properties, Islamist groups in both the countries have identical goals and unity of purpose though they differ on strategies and methods for the same potential supporters. They share certain common approaches to the realisation of their ultimate goal of Islamisation of society by the seizure of state power. Despite their cultural-linguistic differences, Islamists in Pakistan and Bangladesh have identity of views on issues ranging from the application of Sharia, adultery, status of women and the treatment of religious minorities to projection of India’s enemy image. As befits a political ideology, their doctrines are framed in simplistic terms. In an interview with


\textsuperscript{114} \textit{The Daily Prothom Alo} (Dacca), April 03, 2006

\textsuperscript{115} \textit{The Daily Star}, February 26, 2005

National Public Radio, Vincent Cornell termed this approach as “radical superficiality.”\(^\text{117}\)

In terms of \textit{organisational structure}, the fundamentalist groups in the two countries have rigid hierarchy based on their committed cadre of workers. Compared to the secular, mainstream parties, they appear more professional and disciplined with an organised network. One of the oldest and most influential contemporary Islamic fundamentalist movements in South Asia, the \textit{Jama'at-e-Islami} is not simply a political party but an organisation with an exclusive membership and strong organisational structure from the local to national level with elections as an essential component. Since its formation in 1941 by the prominent radical Islamic thinker Maulana Sayyid Abu’l Maududi, the Jama’at has operated as revivalist party based on the Leninist party model. The head of the organisation is called the \textit{amir}, who is elected by the direct vote of full-fledged members. The \textit{amir} is advised by the central \textit{Majlis-i-Shura}, a committee elected by members every three years.\(^\text{118}\) It membership is predicated on a prohibitive membership criteria because lives of members need to reflect the party’s view of an Islamic way of life. With such restricted membership, the Ja’amat “has been operating as a vanguard force in a political context that is favourable to mass politics.”\(^\text{119}\) It is, however, more than a political party; it represents an ideological movement in the sub-continent striving for Islamisation of the society from above.

Established as a Chapter in 1979, the \textit{Jama'at-I Islami} in Bangladesh follows the same organisational and membership structure. Prior to independence, the Jama’at found limited support in Bangladesh. Since its \textit{amir} Ghulam Azam was opposed to division of Pakistan on the ground that it would contradict the principle of oneness of a religious community. The Jama’at entered the political arena in 1979 following the ideological shift from ethno-cultural-based nationalism to religious nationalism under President Ziaur


Rahman. Similar to the Bangladeshi Jama'at, the mother organisation of the extremist Harkat-ul Jihad al-Islami Bangladesh (HUJI-B) is located in Pakistan.\textsuperscript{120} As discussed earlier, the Pakistan-based Jama'atul Ansar (Group of the Helpers) renamed itself as the Harkatul Jihad al-Islam (The Movement for the Islamic Jihad) or HUJI in 1988. with the support of Pakistan’s Inter-Services Intelligence Agency (ISI). It was the first Pakistani-based Jihadi outfit, which is a member of bin-Laden’s International Islamic Front (IIF).

In the 1990s, it expanded its operations beyond Afghanistan, especially in support of the struggle of Muslims in non-Muslim countries. Founded by Shafiqur Rahman, an Afghan war veteran in 1992, the HUJI-B was, like its Pakistani counterpart, originally made up of the militants who had participated in the anti-Soviet war in Afghanistan to struggle for a Shari'a-based Islamic regime in Bangladesh. The HUJI headquarters at Ukhiya (Bangladesh) is home to Taliban and al-Qaeda veterans.\textsuperscript{121} According to some analysts, the HUJI-B has both military (jihad) and non-military wings. While members of the military or jihad wings are responsible for providing training as well as carrying out terrorist activities, the latter is responsible for motivating people to create a support base through publication and other means.\textsuperscript{122} Another militant fundamentalist outfit Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) active in Bangladesh since the late 1990s is also modeled after the Pakistan-based Kashmiri militant organisation Laskar-e-Taiba (LeT).\textsuperscript{123} Unlike the LeT which is dedicated to the liberation of Kashmir, the long-term goal of the JMB is to capture state power in Bangladesh by replacing the existing system with the laws of Almighty.\textsuperscript{124}


\textsuperscript{121} See Hiranmay Karleka, Bangladesh the Neat Afghanistan (New Delhi: Sage Publication, 2005), pp-163-171

\textsuperscript{122} The Daily Star, October 18, 2005

\textsuperscript{123} The Prothom Alo (Dhaka), March 24, 2005

\textsuperscript{124} The leaflets found at the bombing sites in August 2005 reveal the agenda and goals of the JMB. See The Daily Star (Dhaka), August 18, 2005. On the LeT’s views on Kashmir, see Hassan Abbas, Pakistan’s Drift into Extremism: Allah, the Army, and America’s War on Terror (Armonk, New York: M. E. Sharpe, 2005), p. 214.
Although LeT has attracted Wahabi Muslims from foreign countries, its cadres are generally drawn from Lahore, Gujranwala, Mulatan and parts of Central Punjab where Ahle Hadiths have considerable influence. The village Gondalwala otherwise known as the village of Martyrs (Pind Shaheedan) in Punjab has contributed one member from each family to fight and die for the cause for Kashmir.\(^\text{125}\) What makes them so combative and well motivated is the nature of training in the indoctrination cum training camps all over Pakistan. To be a Jihadi for Allah’s cause, for instance, it is mandatory to keep a beard and wear loose baggy trousers above the ankle and not indulged in pleasure like watching television and listening to music.\(^\text{126}\) Unlike the LeT, which has vowed in one of its party documents “to reestablish Muslim rule in India”,\(^\text{127}\) Jaish-e-Mohommad (JeM) formed in 2000 by the Harkat ul Mujaheddin (HuM) is involved in terrorist activities inside Pakistan and Afghanistan even though it professes an active interest on Kashmir. Save some minor variation in their areas of operation, all these extremist Islamist factions have similar motivations and goals, and source of recruitment. The only difference is in patronage: while HuM and HUJI are strongly linked to Taliban, the LeT has close association with the Wahabi groups in Saudi Arabia.\(^\text{128}\) They are bound by Islamic solidarity and are drawn from the pool of unemployed youths from Punjab and North Western Frontier Province.

Second, the fundamentalists have combined organisational skills with dedication to community service, often ensuring that the beneficiaries are encouraged to support them politically. The Jamaat-i-Islami in Bangladesh has, for instance, launched trust-run private schools, hospitals, publishing firms, socio-cultural organisations and numerous other non-profit welfare societies. A recent report of the Brussels-based International Crisis Group (ICG) reveals that “almost all of Bangladesh’s districts are now home to Islamic micro-credit schemes; where others, such as Grameen Bank or BRAC, have to charge interest rates of over 15 per cent to make the projects work, the interest free

\(^\text{125}\) Hussain, *Frontline Pakistan*, n. 45, pp- 56-57


\(^\text{127}\) Hussain, *Frontline Pakistan*, n. 45, pp. 56-57

\(^\text{128}\) Ibid., p. 52.
Islamic models run at a loss, which has to be covered by their organizers.\textsuperscript{129} Likewise in Pakistan, the extensive involvement of the \textit{Jamaat ud-Da’awa} in the rescue efforts and distribution of relief to the victims of the October 2005 earthquake in the Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK) illustrates the well-organised, grassroots networks of the Islamist groups active in the country.\textsuperscript{130}

Third, fundamentalists of the two countries have used a variety of methods to establish their credibility among local communities and to reach out to a larger audience with their vision of Islamic social order. Apart from publishing instructional texts, biographies, and translations of classical Islamic texts, the \textit{Jamaat-e-Islami} has also utilized the technology of globalisation to facilitate its mission. It has, for instance, maintained an informative website, which addresses to Muslims by stating, "As a Muslim, you must work for establishing Islamic social order in your country. You must join an organisation to complete this gigantic task." \textsuperscript{131} In the recent years, Jama’at in Bangladesh has sponsored the publication of romance novels, which, according to an analyst, form part of the Jama’at’s efforts to insert Islam into the Bengali cultural realm.\textsuperscript{132} The Islamist authors also try to "socialise, politicise, and culturalise the religious imagination" by employing Islamic themes, historical events and Muslims’ struggles such as Palestine-Israeli conflict so as to "glorify particular conceptions of Jihad, martyrdom and Islamic life in the framework of genres that formerly constituted the domain of secular writers."\textsuperscript{133} In this regard, Jamaat-e-Islami in Pakistan has been fairly successful in Islaimising secular discourse, thanks to the assignment given by the Zia regime to carry out changes in school curriculum conforming to its agenda in the wake of the Afghan war.\textsuperscript{134}

\textsuperscript{129} \textit{International Crisis Group (ICG)}, Report # 121, October 23, 2006, p. 12.


\textsuperscript{131} See http://www.jamaat-e-islami.org/about/anintroduction.html

\textsuperscript{132} For a critique of Islamist novels, see Mainmuna Huq, "From Piety to Romance: Islam-Oriented Texts in Bangladesh" in Dale E. Eickelman and Jon W. Anderson (eds.), \textit{New Media in the Muslim World} (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), pp.129-157.

\textsuperscript{133} Uddin, \textit{Constructing Bangladesh}, n. 82, p. 168.

particularly its student wing, Islami Chhhatra Shibir (ICS) has resorted to intimidation and terror tactics in pursuit of its political agenda. Most of the top leaders of the militant Islamic group, JMB, which had established an armed wing called Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh (the Awakened Muslim Masses of Bangladesh or JMJB), headed by Siddiquul Islam alias Bangla Bhai were former members of either the Jamaat-e-Islami or its student wing.135

Fourth, mosques and madrassas (seminaries) act as effective medium in facilitating the Islamists' accessibility to the faithful, disseminating their ideas, raising funds and above all, training and recruiting potential Jihadi foot-soldiers. As discussed in the preceding chapters, the state-led Islamisation programme since the mid-1970s has resulted in an exponential growth of mosques and madrassas in both the countries. In Pakistan, number of officially registered madrassas grew from 900 in 1971 to 8000 in 1988, thanks to Zia’s policy of generously funding and support. The number further rose to 9, 500 by the mid-2000 with over 40, 000 unregistered madrassas, essentially beyond reach and control of the state.136 As many as 1 million students study in Pakistani madrassas compared with primary school of 1.9 million. An overwhelming majority of these madrassas, according to Husain Haqqani, follow the strictest tradition, teaching “a rejection of modernity while emphasising conformity and medieval mind-set.” 137 Some such famous Pakistani Deobandi madrassas as the Darul Uloom Haqqania located on the main Islamabad-Peshawar highway and Jamiat-ul Uloom-il Islamiyya in New Town area of Karachi were, in fact, the major training grounds for the Taliban leadership.138 Many of the madrassas set up along Pakistan’s Pushtun belt and run by the Pakistani Deobandi party, Jamiat-ul-Ulema-e-Islam (JUI) and its splinter groups not only trained a new generation of Afghans for a Taliban model of revolution, but also served as the supply line for a pan-Islamic jihadi movement.139

137 Husain Haqqani, “Islam’s Medieval Outposts”, Foreign Policy, November-December 2002, pp 63.- 64.
138 Thomas L. Friedman, “Pakistan’s Children are Schooled to Hate America”, International Herald Tribune, November 14, 2001
139 Jessica Stern, “Pakistan’s Jihad Culture”, Foreign Affairs, Vol.79, no. 6 (November/December 200).
In Bangladesh, likewise, some 1,500 madrasas registered with the government in 1970 rose to 9,000 by 2005 with thousands more which were neither registered nor had their curriculum regulated. According to the *Bangladesh Economic Review*, from 2001 to 2005, the number of madrasas increased by 22.22 per cent in comparison to 9.74 per cent growth in general educational institutions, whereas number of students in general educational institutions rose by 8.64 per cent, and in madrasas 10.12 per cent. There are about 15,000 Qawmi madrasas under the Bangladesh Qawmi Madrasa Education Board, which are totally out of government control and have their own curriculum. Supported by religious endowment and private donations, Qawmi Madrasas impart Islamic education to 100,000 students. Besides, several madrasas in Chittagong and in the Cox’s Bazaar districts of southeastern part of Bangladesh established by the militant Islamist groups like HUJB were reportedly used as bases for terrorist training.

Fundamentalist organisations active in both Pakistan and Bangladesh have thrived and even flourished due to the financial support from Islamic charitable bodies based in Arab Gulf states. Prominent among them are the Jeddah-based *International Islamic Relief Organization*, the Kuwait-based *Revival of Islamic Heritage Society*, and Saudi-based NGO, *Hayatul Ighatha* and *Muslim World League (Rabita al-Alam al-Islami)* and *al-Haramayne Foundation (AHF)*. The inflow of funds from these organisations has helped the Bangladeshi Islamists establish an impressive social infrastructure, mainly madrasas and mosques. The smart new mosques that have mushroomed in villages across the country are popularly known as “Kuwait mosques”; most have madrasas attached, and many are home to other networks providing a thin cover for political organisations. The Saudi-based al-Haramayne Foundation (AHF) reportedly spent approximately $40 million for the construction of 80 madrasas and 4 orphanages in Bangladesh between 1992 and 2004. Some of these madrasas and orphanages were used for providing training.

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144 “Bangladesh Today”, p. 20.
to JMB militants in the manufacture and use of bombs. The Bangladeshi English daily also reported that militants received funds for construction of madrasas from the UAE-based welfare organizations al-Fuzaira and Khairul Ansar al-Khairia, the Kuwait-based Doulatul Kuwait, and the Bahrain-based Doulatul Bahrain.\footnote{The Daily Star, August 22, 2005.} In fact, the newly-built Qwami madrasas, also known as the Wahhabi madrasas run by the financial support of the Gulf-based religious foundations are believed to be the breeding ground of Islamist terrorism in Bangladesh today.\footnote{The Daily Star, February 26, 2005}

The International Crisis Group (ICG) July 2002 Report revealed that Pakistani madrassas and religious centers had received more than $1.5 billion every year through charitable donations. The amount was almost equal to the government’s annual direct income from tax revenue.\footnote{"Pakistan, Madrasas, Extremism and the Military", ICG Report, July 2002.} Most of the madrasas currently rely on private charity and funding from Arab countries and Muslims living in Britain and other European countries. According to the ICG report, diversion of funds for educational and humanitarian projects to the radical Islamist groups is a normal practice, and the Kashmiri diaspora in Britain contribute more than $5 million each year to such terrorist outfits as the LeT and JeM.\footnote{Ibid.} To sum up, in explaining the phenomenon of Islamic fundamentalism in Pakistan and Bangladesh, the significance of the rigid organizational structure of the Islasmit groups, their disciplined cadres with extensive social network, variety of methods they adopt to draw popular support, mosques and madrasas they use to disseminate their ideas and train potential holy warriors and above all, the external funding they receive to sustain their movements cannot be underplayed or ignored altogether.

It is true that fundamentalist organisations have traditionally carried little electoral punch. For example, the percentage of popular vote of the Bangladeshi Jama’at has remained below 10 percent in successive elections.\footnote{Philipson, “Corrupted Democracy”, n. 64.} Likewise, Islamic parties in Pakistan have secured 5 to 8 percent of vote with the notable exception of 1988 when...
they reached 12 percent. Although the performance of the MMA, an alliance of religious parties in the 2002 elections appeared impressive winning over 11 percent of vote, the overall Islamist vote remains limited to slightly more than one-tenth of the electorate despite heavy manipulation by the state in its favour. All the same, “no government can safely” ignore the Islamist forces given their “street power” to foment such civil and sectarian violence. More importantly, religious parties in both the countries have served in varying degrees the instrumental function for legitimation as well as consolidation of military regime by counteracting the influence of mainstream political parties. This is what precisely explains why the Musharraf government retreated from its commitment to delete lessons of jihad from the school textbooks in the face of the Islamist resistance.

Moreover, the military-mullah alliance that evolved from the mutually-beneficial interests accounted for the President Musharraf’s selective approach to the extremist organisations since his volte-face on Pakistan’s Taliban policy. While some violent sectarian and pro-al-Qaeda outfits were banned in 2002, others, considered to be useful in Afghanistan and Kashmir were kept in watch list. The illustrative example of this is the LeT, which despite being banned in January 2002 as part of Musharraf’s purported dismantling the Jihadi infrastructure has continued to operate as the Jamaat-ud-Dawah in full view of the state’s security apparatus. Similarly, madrasas in the western Balochistan province run by the leaders of the ruling MMA alliance continued to provide recruits for a new generation of Islamic warriors. In fact, the provincial capital, Quetta has become a stronghold of radical Islamic groups with a large concentration of erstwhile Taliban activists.

In Bangladesh too if the Islamic militants despite being small minority became more vocal and daring since the late 1990s, it is because the two leading political parties continued the policy of the military regimes in courting Islamists for winning elections and forming government. The inclusion of the Jama‘at-i-Islami in the BNP-led coalition


151 B. Stern, Democracy and Dictatorship in South Asia: Dominant Classes and Political Outcomes in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh (Westport: Praeger, 2001), p. 138.
government in 2001 not only emboldened the Islamic extremists to operate freely, but also limited the ability of the government to act decisively.\(^{152}\) Despite wide-spared media reports on the unprecedented rise in incidence of terrorist violence, particularly in the second half of 2005, the government continued to deny the existence of such extremist outfits as the HUJI-B and JMB.\(^{153}\) It was the sustained international pressures that forced Dhaka to ban the JMB in 2005, and its leaders were finally executed in March 2007. Thus, the Islamic fundamentalist organisations in Bangladesh and Pakistan appear to be similar in more than one way and even have close association and shared goal. A major point of difference, however, is that the political culture that supports the ideology of jihad in Pakistan "is rooted in both material culture and religion, although religion reduced to a series of formulaic, rituals and customs based on a superficial understanding of Islamic ethics."\(^{154}\) In contrast, Islamist extremism in Bangladesh has much to do with the competing vision of a community: Bengali ethno-linguistic nationalism and religious nationalism. The Islamists, a vocal minority, in pursuit of state power exploits the ongoing struggle between the desires to be Bengali and to be true Muslims.\(^{155}\)

**Impact of Islamic Fundamentalism**

The impact of Islamic fundamentalism has to be gauged at least three identifiable levels: domestic, global and regional environment. Within the modern Islamic world, much of the ongoing debate between fundamentalist Muslims and secular Muslims has focused on the status of women, marriage, and family law. Fundamentalists believe that Islamic faith itself is the key to Muslim social order as the term Islam literally means "obedience." A just and holy society can be achieved only when Muslims live in obedience to God’s divine revelation mandating human relationships to God and to one another. Thus, in seeking to enforce the sovereignty of God upon the entire universe, Islamic Fundamentalists begin with the individual and the family in obedience to God. "Only when families in a community are living according to Islamic law can the


\(^{153}\) For the statement of amir of the Jama’at saying that Bangla Bhai was the media creation, see *The Daily Star*, July 23, 2004.


\(^{155}\) Uddin, *Constructing Bangladesh*, n. 82, pp. 183-184.
community be in harmony with God; only when all communities in a nation are living according to Islamic law can the nation be in harmony with God; and only when all nations are living according to Islamic law can the universe be in harmony with God.\textsuperscript{156}

In the context of attempts to interject strict Sharia law upon Muslim society and government, women have been, and remain, the primary focus of attention. Islamic fundamentalists view the strict suppression of women’s “rights” as vital to the revitalisation and purification of Islamic society. No wonder, the process of Islamisation in Pakistan has resulted in institutionalising gender discrimination and made women vulnerable to patriarchal control though the retrogressive \textit{Hudood Ordinance}\textsuperscript{157} So is the case with Bangladesh where the focus of a virulent fundamentalist drive in the 1990s was Taslima Nasreen for her provocative criticism of \textit{pirs} and mullahs “lustful men” in her controversial book \textit{Lajja} (shame).\textsuperscript{158}

Most Islamists and radical activists still look to the so-called golden age of the four caliphs for inspiration and for guidance on the implementation of an ‘authentic’ and uniquely Islamic form of popular government. The reference to the golden age of Islam also conveniently helps to dilute the consequences of modernisation in Muslim societies and to reduce barriers which have emerged in modern Muslim states between religion and government. While the radical Islamists’ insistence on a return to the golden age is a reflection of the desire to emulate the pure practices of that era, it is also as much the outcome of a strategy which intends to place political power in the hands of the religious community. Thus, the \textit{ulema} under such circumstances come to represent a new political class, which, by virtue of being deeply tied to the traditions of Islam, enjoy legitimacy for their authority to interpret Islam.\textsuperscript{159} Second, the growth of Islamist forces constitutes a potent challenge to the pluralism. Many Islamists view pluralisation as a “ploy to weaken Islam, and even those Islamist groups who have been able to take advantage of pluralistic


\textsuperscript{159} Anoushiravan Ehteshami, “Islam, Muslim Politics and Democracy”, \textit{Democratization}, Vol.11, No.4, August 2004, pp.90–110.
structures in various Muslim countries to gain access to levers of power have not always agreed that they should respect diversity of political opinion, or accept its circulation through democratic means once they take power."¹⁶⁰ This arguably explains why the fundamentalists in both the cases have not been able to translate the popular passion stirred by the notion of Nizam-i-Mustafa into electoral gains. On the contrary, Islamisation is seen as promoting a very specific Sunni school of thought,¹⁶¹ which has not only triggered off sectarian division, but sharpened differences between the Deobandi and Barelvis.¹⁶²

The process of transformation of Pakistan from relatively moderate Muslim state in the late 1970s into hub of Islamic terrorism twenty years later had a devastating impact on the country's social landscape. An estimated 30,000 young Pakistanis lost lives in Afghanistan and Kashmir, and 2000 more were killed in sectarian clashes inside the country.¹⁶³ Moreover, Pakistan in the past years has experienced over 50 acts of suicide terrorism.¹⁶⁴ The state of affairs in contemporary Pakistan shows that the army having created an Islamic Frankenstein could no longer control it. In fact, Pakistani promotion of the ideology of jihad and logistical support to the march of Taliban in Afghanistan fractured the social mosaic by setting off the cycle of sectarian violence, which, together with proliferation of small arms and intervention of external powers turned Pakistan a "failed state" in popular perceptions. Nuclear-armed Pakistan has been ranked among the top ten failed states in the world, ahead of Afghanistan, and other crisis-ridden African countries in a survey published by the Foreign Policy magazine.¹⁶⁵ Yet another

¹⁶⁴ Isaac Kfir, "The Paradox that is Pakistan: Both Ally and Enemy of Terrorism", The Middle East Review of International Affairs, Vol. 10, No. 1 (March-2008).
¹⁶⁵ See "The Failed States Index", Foreign Policy (May/June 2006), pp. 50-58
investigative report published in Newsweek in October 2007 says, "Pakistan is the most dangerous country in the world, and a safe haven for terrorists."\(^{166}\)

**Education System**

The result of the state-led Islamisation programme in Pakistan today is a brand of education that fosters intolerance, bigotry and violence. As recent study of Pakistani curriculum and textbooks titled *The Subtle Subversion* carried out by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) reveals, children have been "educated into ways of thinking that makes them susceptible to a violent and exclusionary worldview open" to the "sectarianism and religious intolerance."\(^{167}\) The findings of the study suggest that it is not only the madrassas which are indoctrinating children in the politics of hate and bigotry, but the country's public schools are equally responsible for the rise of militancy and regressive thought. According to the SDPI report, curriculum and textbooks are the "distortion of facts and omissions that serve to substantially alter the nature and significance of actual events in our history; insensitivity to the existing religious diversity of the nation; incitement to militancy and violence, including encouragement of jihad and shahadat, perspectives that encourage prejudice, bigotry and discrimination towards fellow citizens, especially women and religious minorities, and other nations, a glorification of war and the use of force."\(^{168}\)

For example, the 9th standard students of Pakistan Studies are being taught that "one of the reasons of the downfall of the Muslims in the sub-continent was the lack of the spirit of jihad. In Islam Jihad is very important - -- The person who offers his life never dies. --- All the prayers nurture one's passion of Jihad."\(^{169}\) According to an article published in *Newsline* magazine, the school going children in Pakistan are growing up learning that the Urdu equivalent of the letter A stands for *Allah*, B for *bandook* (gun).

\(^{166}\) Quoted in *Indian Express*, (Mumbai), October 23, 2007.


\(^{168}\) Ibid., p. V. The 140-page SDPI Report contains a detailed analysis of currently used textbooks (Urdu, English, Social Studies and Civics) and general curriculum in government school in Pakistan.

\(^{169}\) Class 9-10; *Pakistan Studies*, p. 7 & 10 quoted in Farrukh Saleem, "Curriculum of Hate", *The News*, June 08, 2008.
The three examples of Allah, bandook and jihad are not the only ones which sound like a "blueprint for a religious fascist state". The Urdu letter for the T sound stands for takrao (collide), K for khunjar (dagger), H for hijab (veil) and Z for zunoob (sins) - which includes watching television, playing musical instruments and flying kites.\(^{170}\)

Besides, the textbooks also incite permanent enmity with and hatred towards India by depicting Hindus as enemies.\(^{171}\) In the Urdu textbook prescribed for the second grade (for seven-year-olds), for instance, "Mujahideen are glorified as the alpha male on a mission from God. They are the superheroes that kill Hindus."\(^{172}\) Likewise, Kashmir is presented as Pakistani territory forcibly snatched by Hindus and Pakistan as a country created only for Muslims. Children are instructed to "mercilessly beat up" non-Muslims. "Every student should become a holy warrior," the second grade textbook states, "We should all be willing to lay down our lives for the great nuclear power that is Pakistan."\(^{173}\) Describing the language used in textbooks in reference to Hindus as "provocative", an eminent Pakistani historian, Mubarak Ali has called for a thorough review of the "fictitious" history being taught in Pakistani schools.\(^{174}\)

The extent of influence the textbooks of Pakistani government schools wield on students' impressionable minds is indicated by a survey of schoolchildren, published in 2002. Almost half of those surveyed do not support equal rights for minorities, a third of them support jihadi groups, two-thirds of them want the Shariah to be implemented in letter and spirit and a nearly a third prefer the liberation of by force.\(^{175}\) Under pressures from the West, when President Pervez Musharaff initiated reforms in the education system, he faced stiff resistance from the fundamentalist organisations and powerful

\(^{170}\) "For Pak Kids, J is for Jihad", \textit{Times of India}, January 14, 2009.


\(^{172}\) See Mohammad Shehzad, "School Books that Teach Children to Hate", \textit{Friday Times}, February 14-20, 2003.

\(^{173}\) Ibid.


clerics who demanded the status quo to be maintained. The latter, for instance, launched a virulent campaign through venomous propaganda against the Presidential Ordinance of November 8, 2002 inducting the Aga Khan University Examination Board (AKUEB) into the national education system. The AKUEB was assigned the task of upgrading and modernising the declining standards of education and of holding examinations for the country’s private educational institutions.  

Similarly, the Punjab chapter of the Tanzeem-e-Usatiza, the teacher’s wing of the Jamaat-e-Islami, incensed by changes in the curriculum for classes one to ten brought out a toxic 11-page booklet accusing the federal government of pandering to the American, Israeli and Indian interests. Worse still, faced with protests by the Islami Jamiat-e-Tulaba (IJT), the youth wing of the Jamaat Islami and members of the six-party alliance, the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA), the Musharaff government chose to retreat from its earlier commitment to carry out changes in academic curricula as recommended by the SDPI Report 2003. The rightwing groups were up in arms at the government’s decision to delete references to Jihad from Pakistani textbooks. Interestingly enough, Federal Education Minister Zubeida Jalal responding to these charges clarified that the particular verse referring to jihad had been 'shifted' from the biology textbook for intermediate students (Classes XI and XII) to the matriculation level courses (Class X), not omitted. The minister added by stating that the government had rejected the SDPI report because the committee she had set up to look into the report had found it representing an "extremist" view. Disappointed with the government’s response, A.H. Nayyar, one of the authors of the SDPI Report said, "The full impact of what happened under General Zia is now being felt in rising religious militancy, sectarianism and violence in our society and our politics, and another generation of young Pakistanis is now going through the same education."

177 “Theocracy, Bureaucracy and Hypocrisy”, Daily Times, September 27, 2004
179 Quoted in Ansari “Lessons in Intolerance”, n. 134.
As in Pakistan, Bangladesh too has experienced a brand of intolerant Islamic fundamentalism notwithstanding a history of religious tolerance. As the Jamaat-e-Islami began to grow rapidly in rural areas with the deepest poverty and the incidence of Islamist terror rose to unprecedented level, it was the minority Hindus who constitute about 10 per cent of the population suffered the whiplash. Already the Hindu population had dropped from 18 per cent of the country’s total in 1951 to 11.5 percent in 1961 to 10.5 percent in 1991 since the onset of the state-led Islamisation in the 1970s. The Vested Property Act, for instance, stripped the Hindu community of the freedom to make a choice to deal with one’s own life, property, ownerships and assets.

Conclusion

A comparative study of Islamic fundamentalism in Pakistan and Bangladesh has brought to the fore the significance of the regional/global developments and external linkages that have played a greater role in the growth of Islamic fundamentalism in these countries (hypothesis 1). What has, however, guaranteed the movement’s potency and staying power in both the cases is its deep roots in Islamic history and thought. The fundamentalists may not have registered considerable success in electoral terms, but they continue to dominate political discourse because their message is capable of attracting a broad spectrum of society. “The perception of Islam as a comprehensive code for all aspects of life, and its intimate connection with both personal and national identity, grant Islamic solution an authenticity no other ideology could have.” Given the anxiety evoked by the problems of modern urban society, as long as Muslim fundamentalists are not allowed to test their solutions by actual application, it is unlikely these movements will die out. State suppression alone cannot contain the spread of such movements partly because of its ideological legitimacy and partly, religious gatherings or for that matter the mosque prayers cannot be outlawed. Participation in political process can do more to tame the Islamist threat than the state repression. Exclusion and crackdown on Islamists

180 See www.bbsgov.org/ana_vol1/religiou.htm
as the similar experience of Egypt and Algeria has shown, may radicalise them with a widespread sympathy among those who would not otherwise be drawn to fundamentalism.

Osama bin-Laden may not be the new Islamic Caliph, but his brand of "holy terror" is very much a part of the resurgent Islam sweeping across the Muslim world with burgeoning militant movements in the past three decades or so. No matter whether the U.S.-led war on terror would eventually succeed in its mission to dismantle the al-Qaeda terrorist infrastructure or not, the jihadists would continue to haunt us in the days ahead unless the religious moderates from within the Muslim world challenge consistently and bluntly the fundamentalist theoretical constructs.\textsuperscript{183} Jihad, after all, is a mindset developed over the years, which no amount of force can change overnight.

The study has also proved the hypothesis 2 that Islamist groups in Pakistan and Bangladesh share common organisational features, but the circumstances (the context) that give rise to them and motivate their actions vary widely. Whereas the relatively strong social base of the Bangladeshi Islamists increases the possibility of rise in Islamic extremism, as some observers have recently cautioned the "impending threat of Talibanisation of the polity", the phenomenon in Pakistan looks relatively different.\textsuperscript{184} Even though the extreme sects of Islam have grown in the past three decades, their political weight and support base could be contained because of the sectarian divisions within Pakistani Islam and the regional and linguistic diversities. More importantly, Pakistan's Islamist groups are not of the same breed, and most of them have been created and sustained by the state, which may enable the authorities to curb their activities either by force or by pitting one against another. While Islamic fundamentalism in Pakistan is containable, accomplishing it would depend on a variety of factors, ranging from democratisation of the polity and strengthening of civil society to the stabilisation of post-Taliban Afghanistan and settlement of the dispute over Kashmir. Internally, however, fundamentalists in Bangladesh encounter political and ideological challenge


from the secular nationalists, whereas in Pakistan the conflict is centred on which variety of Islam - liberal/reformist or orthodox - should constitute the ideological basis of the Republic (hypothesis 3). This is reflective of the ambiguity surrounding the role of Islam in the affairs of the state partly because of the religious basis of state formation and partly, its strategic saliency as “frontline state” in the U. S.-led war on terrorism.