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## THE YOUTH RADICALIZATION IN PAKISTANI SOCIETY: PERCEPTION OF STUDENTS OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTES

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### **Muzamil Rahim**

Officer - Restoring family links,  
Pakistan Red Crescent,  
Sindh, Pakistan  
Email: [muzamilrahim92@gmail.com](mailto:muzamilrahim92@gmail.com)

### **Sumera Ishrat**

Assistant Professor,  
Department of Social Work, University of Karachi,  
Sindh, Pakistan  
Email: [sumeraishrat@uok.edu.pk](mailto:sumeraishrat@uok.edu.pk)

### **Samina Rauf**

Assistant Professor,  
Department of Social Work, University of Karachi,  
Sindh, Pakistan  
Email: [samrauf@uok.edu.pk](mailto:samrauf@uok.edu.pk)

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Although Pakistan was founded with a progressive and enlightened vision, the country's diversity has been decimated by extremism and violence. In Pakistan, youth radicalization is very common. This was due to factors such as a poor education system, socioeconomic determinants, and unequal economic opportunities across the society. The radical groups are targeting youth to carry out their agendas. The 9/11 attacks in the U.S. created the framework for radicalism among Pakistan's youth. Radicalism can be seen in many forms, including violent extremism and ethnic violence in Pakistan. However, there were immediate concerns about Pakistan's human development experience as a result of the emergence of jihadist violence in Pakistan. This research was done to identify risk factors for youth that lead them towards radicalization. It also looked at the sources and awareness of youth who are inclined towards radicalization. The research was qualitative in nature and exploratory in type. The researcher used Stratified sampling, which is a method of collecting data using a scheduled questionnaire. The Researcher used Simple random Sampling for both the distribution of Universities and the allocation of respondents.*

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**KEYWORDS**

*Youth, Radicalization, Society, Violence, Extremism*

**INTRODUCTION**

Today's prevailing national security and international security dynamics have made it necessary for almost all societies to fight new challenges, their identity, beliefs, and ideologies. Globalization, technological advancement, and growing economies have all contributed to an increase in quality of life. They also increased the impact of the domestic situation on the international system. Cyber threat, climate change, and population outbursts are just a few of the many other factors that threaten stability and security around the world.

Insurgency or terrorism was previously fought within the State's territorial borders. These conflicts are now taking center stage on the international stage. These are the fundamental strands of society. However, if one doesn't respect other ideals or asserts oneself violently or radically on others, it can lead to chaos and unrest. Mahmood (2016)The rise of violent extremism has claimed many lives in recent years. The number of terrorist and violent extremist deaths has increased ninefold since the dawn of the 21st Century, from rising 3,328 in 2001, to 32684 by 2014. (GCY, 2015). Although 2015 showed a decrease, it still had the second-most deaths in recorded history with 29 376 deaths. However, terrorist-related deaths in OECD countries increased from 77 in 2014 up to 577 by 2015. Global Terrorism Index (2016) also shows 2015 as the most deadly year for the Taliban in Afghanistan. Terrorist deaths were up, but so were battlefield deaths. 72% of all deaths in 2015 occurred in five countries: Afghanistan, Pakistan, Nigeria, Afghanistan, and Syria. However, violent extremism is growing: The number of countries with more than 500 deaths increased from 5 to 11, an increase of 120 percent from 2013. Somalia, Ukraine, and Yemen are the six countries that have seen more than 500 deaths. The number of violent extremist attacks is growing globally. While many events have been covered by international media, the majority of victims of violent extremism in countries of the Arab States, Africa, and Central Europe are not being noticed.

These ideologies ranged from religious fundamentalism to separatism xenophobia and radical nationalism. Fundamentally, extremist ideologies promote the supremacy of a group based upon their religion, citizenship, or conviction. They oppose the idea of a more open society (GTI, 2015).

**Radicalization:**

Globally, it is also increasing. This is a precursor to violent extremism. Radicalization can affect multiple age groups (youth are more highly engaged than others), many beliefs, and employed & unemployed as well. It also impacts men and women equally

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**Radicalization:**

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The educated youth is a crucial part of any study on radicalization in any society. This group is more important in Pakistan, where it is projected 103million public 63% are younger than 25 and have limited admission to education and job chances. In 2007–2008 the Economic Survey of Pakistan found that there were 113 universities in Pakistan and 1371-degree colleges in Pakistan in 2007. In 2007, 424,271 students and 324,988 were enrolled in these institutions, respectively. Unregistered universities or degree colleges existed, but they were very few. Pakistan's youth population is an important demographic segment. Youth disillusionment has been caused by rising violence and militancy in Pakistan, as well as deteriorating socioeconomic conditions and decreased employment opportunities. Youth in war-affected zones are the most affected by the closure of educational organizations & the discontinuation of education due to militancy and security forces' operations. Students from Pakistan have also been affected by political violence on university campuses, especially in Karachi. Students from conflict zones who study in Islamabad show signs of serious psychological problems.

Additionally, the incidents of violence and harassment at the country's top universities are alarming signs that there may be radical tendencies among Pakistan's educated youth. Despite these serious implications, no study has been done to date that focuses on radicalization among Pakistan's educated youth. This study aims to evaluate the views of Pakistan's educated youth on social, religious, and political turmoil to determine factors that encourage radical feelings (PIPS, 2010).

We assess that Pakistan's current greatest threat lies in its failing education policy. It

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might be pertinent to mention that Pakistan has had no education policy since the 1980s and that its young generation is still unable to make decisions. The regime created Madaris, which are neither schools nor mosques to meet its obligations to provide affordable primary education for the poor. Their students don't know in what social slot they are being educated. As such, the estimated 1.5 million to 2.5 million madras students are not aware of which slot of society they were educated in. However, it is impossible to guarantee that the majority of them will not become extremists as their unskilled education makes it unlikely that they will find employment.

We currently have three different education systems: English medium, Urdu medium, and madrassa culture. Pakistan's education system has split Pakistani society into three distinct groups, which is both alarming and harmful to its national security interests. Although the democratic process has been re-established, it is not clear how the government will integrate the society into the wider political, social, and cultural realms. The inflation and price rise have made it impossible to see any improvement in the quality of the social life of the common people. Therefore, the writers see a serious problem in the coming days and months where common people may also be driven to extremism/radicalism. An aggrieved party may then seek other ways to get revenge. For example, it might join a radical/extremist group. A person who is a member of such a group forfeits the possibility of leaving it.

While looking at the problem of youth radicalization in Pakistani society, the researcher conducted the research. This has caused tensions and strains in Pakistani society, whether they are economic, social, cultural, environmental, or security. It has eroded the country's tolerance of religion and culture. This research will focus on the Karachi youths who are studying at different universities, both public and private. This research examines how actions can contribute to or characterize youth radicalization.

#### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

S. Sogar (2015) examined the alarming rise in extremist activities that surprised the whole globe, mainly as it crossed countrywide boundaries. The director of the Norwegian Global Network for Rights and Development revealed shocking facts about the danger terrorism poses to the world during the inauguration. He stated that terrorist victims were once limited to just eight countries in the past five years. Today, they are spread across 151 countries. There are 1,812 declared terrorist organizations, which employ more than 13,000,000 people and whose ideologies are believed to have influenced around 80 million people. He said that the terrorist and terrorist groups' control of the territory was not greater than 30,000 km. However, it is now more than 12,000,000 km. He stated that terrorist attacks have caused economic losses of more than five trillion dollars.

The majority of radicals are between 18-35 years old if you look at the phenomenon of radicalism, especially religious radicalism. This raises the question of what sociological factors drive youths to join extremist groups, at both the micro and macro levels. Many youths who join radical groups face many social and economic problems. These include a lack of justice in income distribution and rising unemployment rates. This is especially true in countries with long-standing political tensions or countries with democratic elections. Nigeria, Iraq, and Afghanistan are just a few examples of countries that have held elections. However, they all suffer serious economic problems due to the disparity in incomes and resources between different classes. In many cases, unfair wealth distribution can be tied to ethnic or sectarian divisions that make certain groups more privileged than others. However, this does not mean that youths who have not been marginalized or suffered from poverty will not join radical groups. Many of the members of these groups are educated and come from well-to-do families. These cases are still rare and can be attributed both to guilt over the suffering of others or to a sense that one has a moral obligation to make a difference (Samir 2015).

Yusuf M. (2014) researched that there were serious concerns about the rise of radicalism in Pakistan among its youth in the wake of the attacks on the U.S. The debated connection between youth bulges, radicalization, and radicalization raised immediate concerns about Pakistan's future human development. Khan, A.U. (2015) showed that stakeholders and civil society are concerned about the rising radicalization and related acts of terror in Pakistan. Only 93 percent of Pakistanis believed that radicalism is a problem in Pakistan. There are many forms of radicalism in Pakistan. These include terrorism, violent extremism, and ethnic and sectarian violence. Recognize that while a security-oriented approach to neutralizing militancy might be effective, it may not address the root causes. If this happens, radicalization could recur in new ways.

Radical mindset is responsible for the series of events in Pakistan. In October 2004, an IED killed 40 Sunnis in Multan. Terrorists attacked a Shia mosque in Lahore on October 10. According to a BBC news report, approximately 4,000 people have been killed in Pakistan's 25-year history of sectarian violence. According to Pakistan's National Security Policy 2014-2018, "Pakistan faces genuine, non-customary threats of rough radicalism and sectarianism. Terrorism and militancy are real dangers." According to the South Asia Terrorism Portal (information as of 27 September), not less than 20697 citizens died in terrorist attacks between 2003 and 2015. Tehreek-i Taliban - Pakistani Taliban and its fragment groups continued to take responsibility for various attacks in Pakistan in 2015. Peshawar and Quetta were the sites of some of the worst attacks on religious and sectarian minorities in 2013. These included the Peshawar terror attack that killed approximately a hundred Shias in Quetta on 10 January; the Quetta attack that killed 80 Shias in Balochistan's Hazara; and the 22<sup>nd</sup>

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Sept bombardment (Country Information and Guidance, 2015).

In the 1980s and 1990s, Pakistan was a battlefield for proxy Saudi-a-Arabia/Iran wars. After 1994, the Taliban's rise in Afghanistan delivered safe harbor for anti-Shia fighters. The Capital of Pakistan Islamabad was left watching as the state became inflamed by extremism (Abbas, 2010). Karachi is the most striking example, having suffered 2,700 setbacks in 2013, mainly in target killings. 45 Ismailis were attacked and killed while on a Karachi transport. Various groups including Jundullah, TTP, and Islamic State (IS) took responsibility (Amnesty International Report 2015-16). An elderly Sunni cleric Mufti Nizamuddin Shozai was killed in Karachi on May 30, 2004. In October 2004, 30 people were killed in an attack on a Shia mosque. The report of the Nine Eleven commission (2004) confirms that many Pakistani Madrasas have been linked to terrorism and radicalism. The State of Radicalization in Pakistan (2005) reveals that Madrasas were used to promote terrorism and radicalism in the 1980s under the Zia administration. Worldwide Crisis Group (2002, in one of their reports on Madrasas) states that Pakistani religious institutes promote extremism and terrorism. 363 religious institutions are located at Ahmadpur in the province of Punjab, and most of them promote biased violence. A comprehensive list of Pakistani Madrasas associated with jihadi groups is available. Karachi was an al-Qaeda safe zone since September 11, 2001. It also hosted the accomplices of that organization, such as Jaish-e-Muhammad's partisan gathering (Afzal & Anayat, 2012). Poverty, joblessness, and a lack of wellbeing-concerned office bearers, as well as illiteracy and equity, are some of the major reasons for militancy in Pakistan. This group of jobless young people in Pakistan has found a profession; philosophy and another family are aggressor organizations. "The chiefs and leaders of such militants try to keep the unaware characters which believe their particular religion is right & all other beliefs and classes are false (Irshad, 2011). Madrasas are a major source of religious association initiatives. They include individuals who began their careers as petition pioneers or ministers in their local mosques. The same mosques behind a petition pioneer, who may also be one of its pioneers. They share the financial burdens necessary for the maintenance and development of madrasas as well as supporting groups of individuals who have been victims of sectarian violence. (Zaman, 1998). Another important aspect of partisan-sparked brutality that has not been as well considered is the authoritative side. This refers to how nearby organizations handle issues such as disagreements over mosques, Eid Milad-un-Nabi & Ashura rallies, strategies for religious drives, and the designation with awqaf properties. The syllabus of these foundations and their courses are beyond the state's instructional structure with many underlining small conversions that show self-confidence and flexibility for differences (PIPS, 2013).

Herald, a monthly publication by Dawn group, Karachi, surveyed to get the opinion of young Pakistanis on a variety of issues including politics, war, economy, and suicide

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bombings. Some of the answers to this survey confirmed existing wisdom about multi-dimensional problems facing Pakistan today. Herald's survey report describes many factors that contribute to radical tendencies in Pakistani youth. However, it fails to analyze the findings within a particular theoretical framework. Although the survey attempts to show that extremist tendencies are increasing among Pakistani youth, it fails to explain why certain individuals are more inclined to these ideas.

Saba Noor's case study, "Radicalization Among Educated Pakistani Youth", is an empirical portrayal of trends in radicalization among educated Pakistani teenagers. This study, which includes both male and female Quaid-e-Azam University students in Islamabad shows that Pakistan's educated youth are generally supportive of equal rights and are not radical (Noor 2009). The issue of youth radicalization has been the subject of a lot of research internationally. Pakistan does not have the empirical research to examine patterns of radicalization in different youth groups scientifically.

#### **RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

1. To analyze youth level of awareness towards radicalization.
2. To explore the attitude of youth towards radicalization.
3. To seek the sources that drive youth towards radicalization.
4. To find out risk factors that lead youth to radicalization.

#### **RESEARCH HYPOTHESES**

1. There will be a significant relationship between educational institutions and radicalization among youth.
2. There will be a significant relationship between media exposure and radicalization among youth.
3. There will be a significant relationship between political preaching and radicalization among youth.

#### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The current research under the title of "An Increasing Trend of Youth Radicalization in Pakistani Society" was studied through a quantitative research method which included personal interviews based on the questionnaire for data collection. Data was collected using both Primary and Secondary methods. Primary information assortment included a questionnaire containing both open-ended and close ended questions to gather information from the target population and secondary information for the study was centered on books, research articles, government reports, papers, and the web. The research type was Descriptive to understand the subject matter in-depth. The Stratified sampling used i.e. probability sampling method for the distribution of the Universities and the allocation of respondents, Simple random sampling technique was adopted. The universe of this study comprised of the students/youth that is enrolled in different

Public and Private Universities in Karachi.

## FINDINGS

**Table No. 01: Radicalization through the System**

Options	<i>f</i>	%	Cumulative Percent
Yes	202	62.3	62.3
No	122	37.7	100
Total	324	100	

The table displays the opinion of respondents about the system's promotion of radicalization. The majority of the respondents i.e., 62.3% believed that the system promotes radicalization and 37.7% thought that the system doesn't.

**Table No. 02: Promotion of radicalization by Political parties**

Options	<i>f</i>	%	Cumulative Percent
Yes	266	82.2	82.2
No	58	17.8	100
Total	324	100	

The table shows the opinions of the respondents regarding the preferment for radicalization through political organizations. A high percentage i.e 82.2% of respondents believed radicalization was promoted by Political parties than 17.8%.

**Table No. 03: Major Actors of Radicalization**

Options	<i>f</i>	%	Cumulative Percent
Overseas powers	52	16	16
Political Organizations	122	37.7	53.6
Religious gatherings	86	26.6	80.1
Educational Organizations	42	13	93.3
Other	22	6.7	100
Total	324	100	

The table shows the opinions of respondents regarding Pakistan's major terrorist actor. The majority of respondents believed that the major factor in radicalization in Pakistan was political parties, with 37.7% believing this. 26.5% thought that religious gatherings, 16% foreign powers, and 13% education Organizations were key factors. The remaining 6.8% believed that other factors played a major role in the radicalization of Pakistani citizens.

**Table No. 04: Youth Experiences towards Radicalization**



Options	<i>f</i>	%	Cumulative Percent
Yes	150	46.3	46.3
No	174	53.7	100
Total	324	100	

The table shows 53.7% of participants mentioned they hadn't experienced radicalization and 46.3% stated that they experienced it in their lives.

**Table No. 05: *The aspects of society that add fuel to Radicalization***

Options	<i>f</i>	%	Cumulative Percent
Family & Friends	108	33.33	33.33
Educational Organizations	48	14.8	48.1
Religious Organizations	44	13.5	61.6
Political Organizations	124	38.4	100
Total	324	100	

The above table indicates that the majority of participants 38.4% said that political parties fuelled the radicalization of society. 33.33% of respondents said that friends and family fuel radicalization. 14.8% stated that educational institutions fuel radicalization. 13.5% claimed that religious institutions fuel radicalization.

**Table No. 06: *Measuring radical approach***

Options	<i>F</i>	%	Cumulative Percent
Education	71	21.91	21.91
Job Opportunities	33	10.18	32.09
Skill Training	28	8.64	40.73
Law and Order	63	19.44	60.17
Equality	59	18.21	78.38
Decreasing Nepotism	41	12.66	91.04
No Corruption	29	8.96	100
Total	324	100	

This table indicates that the majority of participants 21.91% believed education could eradicate radical thinking. 19.44% of respondents said that the preservation of law and order can eliminate radical mindset, while 18.21% stated that equality can eradicate radical mindset, while 12.66% believed that the system can eradicate radical mindset by reducing nepotism. 10.18% of participants said that the radical approach could be eliminated by providing job opportunities for young ones. 8.96% of participants stated that the radical approach could be removed by eradicating corruption & giving skill training facilities for youth.

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**Results of Hypotheses**

**Hypothesis 1:** According to statistical analysis, the calculated value of the chi-square was 13.311. This was higher than the table value which is 3.841 with d.f. 1, and a level of significance of 0.05. H was rejected and H was accepted. This shows that there is a strong relationship between youth radicalization and education institutions.

**Hypothesis 2:** According to statistical analysis, the calculated value of the chi-square was 4.546. This is lower than that shown in the table, which is 7.815. 3. and a level of significance of 0.05. Therefore, the Null hypothesis was accepted and the Hypothesis was rejected. This indicates that there is no significant relationship between media exposures and radicalization among youth.

**Hypothesis 3:** According to statistical analysis, the calculated value of the chi-square 23.379, is higher than that shown in table 3.841, d.f. 1, and level significance 0.05. Therefore, the Null Hypothesis was rejected and the Hypothesis was accepted. This shows that youth radicalization and cultural background have a significant relationship.

**Hypothesis 4:** According to statistical analysis, the calculated value of the chi-square is 6.618. This is higher than the table value which is 3.841 with d.f. 1, and a level of significance of 0.05. Therefore, the Null Hypothesis was rejected and the Hypothesis was accepted. This shows that there is a significant relationship between youth radicalization and political preaching.

**DISCUSSION**

The research was conducted to identify the driving factors that promote youth to become radicalized. The researcher discovered that Pakistan is facing many unfamiliar and neighborhood problems, including religious extremism and terrorism as well as sectarianism. Going beyond these variables, the study also revealed that there is a constant dispute with India which has led to 3 major wars between both countries. The country's current security situation has presented new challenges to Pakistan since the 2001 US attack on Afghanistan. The research shows that youth radicalization is mainly due to factors such as education institutions, media exposures, and cultural background. To save the youth from intolerance, the government should reform all social institutions. Reforms are needed in the areas of family, education, religion, and economic institutions.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

The study resulted in separate recommendations to the government, parents, and media.

To save youth from intolerance, the government should reform all social institutions. Reforms are needed in the areas of family, education, religion, and economic institutions. The government should run youth programs across the country. Youth programs must be monitored and evaluated effectively. Parents must maintain a peaceful and fair environment in their families. It is not appropriate to discuss parental controversies with children before they are ready.

Teachers should be encouraged to have patience with their students by all educational institutions. Every period should contain 10 minutes to highlight the importance of patience against the background of religious and social aspects. All social components should work together to create a "Pehle Aap," which means "You First," to incite the entire society to show patience, especially the youth. The research-based teachings of religion should be interpreted by religious scholars. It is not appropriate for religious scholars to make hate speeches. Madrassas syllabus must be made uniformly under the control of the government. The media must stop spreading hatred and hate materials against diversity in society. Mass campaigns should be run by NGOs to raise awareness among the youth. Youth should be involved in NGOs' various community-level activities.

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