

INTERVENTION PAPER

# PREDICAMENT OF MINORITIES IN PAKISTAN

Jagdish N Singh



INDIA POLICY FOUNDATION



## Ethnic & Religious Minorities in Pakistan

**Ethnic Minorities** : Sindhis (14.1%), Pathans or Pakhtuns (15.42%, 2006 census of Afghan in Pakistan), Mohajirs (7.57%), Baluchis (3.57%).

**Religious Minorities** : Hindus (1.6%), Christians (1.59%), Ahmaddiyas (0.22%), Shi'as, Isma'isilis, Bohras and Paris.

Source : Minority Rights Group International (September 2010 )

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Jagdish N Singh  
*Senior Journalist & Researcher*



भारत नीति प्रतिष्ठान  
India Policy Foundation

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A grieving Hindu woman  
after the demolition of the 100 year  
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## Thoughts on Predicament of Minorities in Pakistan

“Our temples are being vandalized and women being raped. Atrocities against us are increasing day-by-day. We won’t get permanent jobs unless we convert to Islam. In Pakistan, we are subject to persecution and have to live our daily lives in fear.”<sup>1</sup>

Sroop Chand Malhi, Hindu resident of Umerkot, Sindh

“I just want my remaining children to grow up in peace, learn and live happily in Pakistan as Pakistanis.”<sup>2</sup>

Mukhtar Masih, Christian resident of Gojra, Punjab

“The Islamists want to radicalize Pakistani society and they cannot stand what they consider to be a “bad Muslim.” These Islamic fundamentalists don’t care if the Christians and other religious minorities are condemned ;...They are determined to make them embrace radical Islam.”<sup>3</sup>

Anne-Isabelle Tollet, Senior French Journalist and Author

“You can only know that non-Muslims also exist in Pakistan if you come into direct contact with one, not otherwise.”<sup>4</sup>

*The Express Tribune* of Pakistan.

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**Sources:** 1 & 2 from “A Question of Faith: A Report on the Status of Religious Minorities in Pakistan”, *A Jinnah Institute Research Report* (2011). ([http://www.humansecuritygateway.com/documents/JI\\_AQuestionofFaith.pdf](http://www.humansecuritygateway.com/documents/JI_AQuestionofFaith.pdf))

3 is from a story “Author shares a day in the life of imprisoned Pakistani mother” on Anne-Isabelle Tollet of Mar 14, 2012 appeared in catholicnewsagency.com (<http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/author-shares-a-day-in-the-life-of-imprisoned-pakistani-mother/>) accessed on January 25, 2013.

4. <http://blogs.tribune.com.pk/story/6982/pakistan-a-place-where-non-muslims-also-live/>

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## ABSTRACT

### Predicament of Minorities in Pakistan

One of the quintessential functions of a modern State is to foster the multi-faceted development of all its citizens. Ironically, however, very few States still care for it in the world today. Volumes have already been written about the dismal track record of the State of Pakistan in this regard. Ever since M A Jinnah converted this once-great land of ancient, composite culture into a separate Nation out of an undivided secular India, self-styled radical Islamists have been on the ascent in the Islamic State of Pakistan. Hell-bent on creating an order of feudalism and irrationality based on the fanatic *Wahhabi-Deobandi* version of Islam, these obscurantist reactionary forces have increasingly prevailed upon the State to resort to such policies as would make the lives of people of all other faiths and values miserable in the land. In the process, the plight of its citizens in general and minorities in particular has turned from bad to worse over each passing day. It is high time the enlightened contemporary international community in general and the governments in the leading democracies of the world , such as India (world's largest democracy) and the United States (world's oldest democracy) in particular, must intervene and take all appropriate measures to put an end to their current predicament. Lest, *insaniyat* (humanity) will never forgive us for our inhuman apathy & total inaction ; for posterity.

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Philosophers, political scientists, statesmen *et al* have defined the modern State as a positive entity fostering the multi-faceted development of all its citizens, rising above the artificial barriers of caste, creed, colour, religion, sex etc. However, objectively speaking, very few States are able to fulfill this ennobling mission in the world today.

In the Post-Second War landscape, most of the newly independent States (NIS) came to acquire the universal status of sovereign equality along with its associated privileges. But they have miserably failed to honour their obligations towards their own citizens, most notably towards the minorities.

Volumes have already been written about the dismal track record of the Islamic State of Pakistan in this regard. Ever since the founder of Pakistan, M A Jinnah succeeded in converting this once-great land of ancient, composite culture into a separate Nation out of an undivided secular India; the successive dispensations in Islamabad have resorted to implementing many sectarian vindictive policies detrimental to the interests of its own citizenry belonging to the minority Non-Sunni faiths, especially the most persecuted and impoverished members of the Hindu community. Due to total apathy by the State since its inception, the plight of the religious minorities in Pakistan has turned from bad to worse over each passing day. But the Indian 'secular media' and many Indian 'eminent' think-tanks (of both government and private), the most vocal champions of minorities' rights in India, have stoically maintained somewhat deafening silence over the current predicament of religious minorities in Islamic Pakistan, far from putting the Islamic State it in the dock. Over the years, many leading lights of Pakistan's liberal intelligentsia belonging to its fledgling and persecuted religious minority communities have already migrated (some seeking political asylums) to many of world's leading democracies viz the US, the UK, Canada and others.

Various progressive and non-partisan individuals and organizations in Pakistan and abroad have confirmed this bitter reality. They have also suggested measures to address the on-going minorities' rights violations in the country and actionable ways to end their predicament. But Islamabad has cared a fig. And so have the other Capitals of the world. Ironically, even the governments of liberal democracies, which are always forthcoming in preaching the gospels of human rights to the entire world;

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have glossed over their blatant violations in Pakistan and maintained what noted American scholar Selig S Harrison called ‘business as usual’ with the oppressors in Islamabad.

This humble endeavour aptly titled as ‘Intervention Paper’ is a serious attempt to intervene and inform the decision-makers, political executives, influential media houses, think-tanks *et al* of New Delhi so as to mobilize and exert massive international pressure on those in the saddle in Islamabad to stop the ongoing State-sponsored persecution of its minorities. This will go a long way in mitigating the plight of the religious minorities in Pakistan and end their current predicament at the earliest, for good.

I am immensely thankful to **Prof. Rakesh Sinha**, Honorary Director of the India Policy Foundation (IPF) for giving me an opportunity to undertake this noble humanistic mission of writing this Intervention Paper “Predicament of Minorities in Pakistan” and complete freedom regarding the way it should be written.

Let me take this opportunity to thank the entire research team of the IPF, particularly Deepak Syal, Sourabh Jyoti Sharma, Gayettri Dixit, Shiv Kumar and Sudhir Kumar Singh. But for their timely help at different stages of this project, it could not have seen the light of the day.

I would also like to thank and acknowledge the support of many of my learned friends in India and abroad, most specially my friend and senior journalist Anne-Isabelle Tollet from France who will be coming here for delivering the key-note address on this issue. Let me also acknowledge R. N. P. Singh, a New Delhi-based intelligence analyst for his thoughtful and perceptive comments which are of great help in undertaking this enterprise.

Finally, none but I alone can be held responsible for any inadvertent mistakes, literary or statistical etc. in this humble endeavour. I, hereby, welcome all constructive criticisms on this Intervention Paper and promised to give serious attention to it for its further improvement in the future.

With warm regards,

**Jagdish N Singh**

**January 26, 2013,  
New Delhi.**

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## Chapter -I

### Humanity Betrayed

History does not move forward automatically. Progressive forces have consistently worked hard for its positive evolution. In their long political journey beginning with the *Magna Carta* and travelling through the Renaissance and the Reformation in Europe, the War of Independence in America, the French Revolution and various freedom struggles in the Afro-Asian and the Latin American nations -- philosophers, political scientists and statesmen have come to define the modern State as the custodian and defender of the rights and liberties of all its inhabitants or citizens. The central idea behind the legendary *American President George Washington's* actions was to equip each and every citizen back with his inalienable natural rights and freedoms. His successor **President John Adams** once said, "*Our Constitution was made only for a moral (and religious) people.*" **American President Thomas Jefferson** wrote: "*God who gave us life gave us liberty at the same time.*"

Extending such sublime foundational principles, the United States has contributed enormously to the development of freedom and democracy the world over. In his historic **Fourteen-Point speech** at a joint session of the US Congress on January 8, 1918, **American President Woodrow Wilson** advocated his thesis of "*an unhampered and unembarrassed opportunity for the independent determination of political development and national policy.*" He talked about an association of nations affording mutual guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity to great and small states alike.

The central idea behind Wilson's concept of **right to self determination** was to defend and promote the "*enlightened interests of the populations concerned.*" It was to better the lot of the oppressed minorities across the world by letting them create their own Nation-States in which they have their political freedom or opportunities for holistic and multi-faceted development. His conception was of a 'World of Nation-States' committed to the pluralistic values and peaceful co-existence of multiple ethnicities, languages and religions. **American President F D Roosevelt** had the same conviction when he lent his support to the then freedom struggles in different nations, including India.

**One, however, finds that very few States still care for the welfare of all its inhabitants or citizens.** Germany's Hitler and Italy's Mussolini are long dead but not their methodologies and tools to oppress their populations, especially the minorities. Their fascist ideological descendants are still flourishing in different parts of the world. They have been inventing irrational populist ideologies and using them to capture or retain power. This has led to the worsening of the plight of the ethnic and religious minority communities across the world: **Shias and all Non-Wahhabi individuals and groups in Saudi Arabia; Shias and Kurds in Turkey and Iraq; Azeris, Kurds, Balouch, Ahwazi Arabs and Lurs and Non-Muslims such as the Jews, the Baha'is and Zoroastrians (Parsis) in Iran; Christians in Iraq, Indonesia, the Gaza Strip, Egypt, Sudan, Nigeria; Kurds in Syria; and the Berber/Amazigh peoples in Morocco and Algeria.**

## **Pakistan : A Repressive State**

Nearer home, Pakistan has been the worst oppressor of its religious minority communities. This, however, runs contrary to the original ideals of its **Founding Father M A Jinnah** had envisaged and envisioned for it. **In his famous address to the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan on August 11, 1947; Jinnah laid down the 'foundations of a modern, tolerant and progressive Pakistan where everyone would have equal rights regardless of religion, caste, creed and gender.'** But if we consider his speech, looking at the current state of affairs of an Islamic Pakistan, this looks more like some rehearsed rhetorical monologues of a satirical play. **For if Jinnah would have been alive today, as somebody says so rightly, he would have been flogged and lynched by the rowdy Islamic fundamentalists of the Islamic State of Pakistan for ghastly un-Islamic habits - smoking, eating porks etc. All these facts are well documented.** Nevertheless, let's just look at what Jinnah said about 65 years ago. He declared: *"...every one of you, no matter to what community he belongs, no matter what relations he had with you in the past, no matter what his colour, caste or creed, is first, second and last a citizen of this State with equal rights, privileges and obligations,....You are free, free to go to your temples; you are free to go to your mosques or to any other places of worship in this State of Pakistan. You may belong to any religion or caste or creed that has nothing to do with the business of the State. .... Now I think we should keep that in front of us as our ideal and you will find that in course of time Hindus will cease to be Hindus and Muslims would cease to be Muslims, not in a religious sense, but in the political sense as citizens of the State."* Further, he observed, *"We are starting with this fundamental principle that we are all citizens and equal citizens of one State."* Had these secular

and liberal democratic ideas been implemented in their true letter and spirit, we would not have seen the ongoing ruthless State-sponsored persecution of the religious minority communities there and would not have to raise the issue of the ‘predicament of minorities in Pakistan’, at the first place. Let’s accept the reality in today’s Islamic Pakistan that Non-Muslim or Non-Sunni religious minorities have no ‘right to a dignified living’. **Further, as we are going to discuss this threadbare; one can see that even that oft-repeated/quoted speech of Jinnah was mere a product of circumstantial compulsion to befool the world and surely never in tune with what he stood for till very recently – for an Islamic State of Pakistan as the homeland exclusively for the Muslims of the sub-continent of an undivided India.**

**Later, in tune with this speech, Jinnah’s successors incorporated Articles 20, 21, 22, 25, and 36 in the constitution of the State to protect the rights of the minorities and their freedom to practise and profess their religions. Article 20** of the constitution states, *“Every citizen shall have the right to profess, practise and propagate his religion; and every religious denomination and every sect thereof shall have the right to establish, maintain and manage its religious institutions.”* **Article 25** maintains, *“All citizens are equal before law and are entitled to equal protection of law...There shall be no discrimination on the basis of sex alone.”* **Article 36** states, *“The State shall safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of minorities, including their due representation in the Federal and Provincial services.”*

## **Exodus of Minorities**

**But the reality of Pakistan has been far different and shocking. Article 19 of its constitution accords primacy to Islam over all other religions in Pakistan.** It states, *“Every citizen shall have the right to freedom of speech and expression and there shall be freedom of the press, subject to any reasonable restrictions imposed by law in the interest of the glory of Islam or the integrity, security or defence of Pakistan.”* **The successive Governments in Pakistan have increasingly used this provision to sanction the political exclusion of its Non-Muslim minorities and legalize the disenfranchisement of some Muslim minorities, ‘whose status has been in question.’<sup>1</sup>** They have sidelined all the minorities in important matters related to the governance of the country. **Institutions like the National Minority Commission have been meaningless. Their sessions are seldom called.** Besides, the rulers in Islamabad have been mute spectators to or collaborators in various other forms of discrimination against the minorities.

**In the process, the minorities in Pakistan - Hindus, Sikhs, Christians, the Baha'is, Buddhists, Zoroastrians (Parsis), Ahmadis, Shias and Mohajirs - Non-Muslims and non-Sunni Muslims both - have suffered a lot. Most of them have either resorted to exodus or religious conversion to skip their ordeals. The entirely changed demography of Pakistan reveals this truth well.**

In the undivided British India Non-Muslims formed more than a quarter of Pakistan's population. On Partition, they came to account for about 14 percent of its population, albeit concentrated mainly in East Bengal.<sup>2</sup> Today in its population of 17, 56, 46,000 - Sunni Muslims constitute 77 percent and Shias 20 percent. Non-Muslims - Hindus, Christians and others - are 3 percent.<sup>3</sup>

*The shift in population during Partition led to the migration of many Hindus in Punjab to India. A large proportion of the highly educated, upper caste, urban Hindu elite immigrated to India after 1947. Of those that chose to remain, many were of lower castes or dalits, poor and mostly lived in rural areas or in ghettos of Pakistan's urban areas.* They are merely dragging their pitiable lives under very impoverished and inhuman condition. **But till now 'secularists', 'votaries of minority rights' or 'champions of dalits' of India who scream at the drop of a hate over Kalahandi or Gujarat, failed to utter a single word over the current predicament of the Hindu religious minorities, most notably the dalits in the Islamic State of Pakistan. Why this double standard and deafening silence, Indian Secularists?**

#### **The Plight of Hindu Minority Community in Pakistan: A Case Study of Roop Chand Bheel**

This case study reveals an example of violence against a lower caste Hindu labourer, who was burnt alive by a Muslim landlord, Mir Abdul Rehman Talpur. Roop Chand Bheel, an unemployed, 22-year-old had come to a village in Mirpur Khas to work as a cotton picker at a farm. He was subsequently accused of stealing cotton and "detained" by the landlord. His uncle told us that, "First, he was buried in the ground up to the waist and gashed on different parts of the torso with a sharp-edged object. Then he was pulled out and an attempt was made to burn him to death." Roop Chand was taken to Karachi for treatment but died after three days. His family lodged an FIR at the Kot Ghulam Mohammad police station and carried the corpse to the press club to demonstrate and demand the arrest of the landlord involved. According to Roop Chand's uncle, these sorts of crimes against Hindu peasants are common, and, though the other men involved in the crime were arrested, the landlord remains free at large. He went on to say that, "Regarding civil society, I will say that we do not know what civil society is."

"A Question of Faith: A Report on the Status of Religious Minorities in Pakistan", *A Jinnah Institute Research Report* (2011), page 33

**Hindus constitute about 1.6 percent of the total population. Schedule Castes account for 0.25 percent of the national population. If the two segments are added, the Hindus would number 1.85 percent of the national population.**<sup>4</sup> There are approximately 7 million Hindus currently living in different provinces of Pakistan. **The majority of them are settled in Sindh accounting for 6.6 percent in its population.** They live primarily in its urban areas in the lower Indus Valley while over half of them are concentrated in its South-East district of Tharparkar bordering India. The NWFP has over 5000 Hindus and the FATA area 2000.<sup>5</sup>

### Pakistan's Religious Affiliations, by Region

Pakistan's population is about 175 million, of whom 96 percent are Muslim.

	Muslim	Christian	Hindu	Ahmadi
<b>Total</b>	96.28% (168.5 million)	1.59% (2.78 million)	1.60% (2.8 million)	0.22% (385,000)
<b>By Region</b>				
NWFP*	99.44%	0.21%	0.03%	0.24%
FATA**	99.60%	0.07%	0.03%	0.21%
Punjab	97.21%	2.31%	0.13%	0.25%
Sindh	91.31%	0.97%	6.51%	0.14%
Balochistan	98.75%	0.40%	0.49%	0.15%
Islamabad	95.53%	4.07%	0.02%	0.34%

\* North West Frontier Province    \*\* Federally Administered Tribal Areas

**Sources:** Government of Pakistan, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Statistics, Population Census Organization, "Population by Religion," at <http://www.statpak.gov.pk/depts/pcol/statistics/statistics.html> (April 30, 2009). Population figures and calculations are estimates based on press release, "Former USAID Director Recounts Pakistan's Agricultural Development," Embassy of the United States, Islamabad, Pakistan, March 2, 2007, at <http://islamabad.usembassy.gov/pakistan/07030201.html> (May 1, 2009).

## Life in Peril

Various reports and studies confirm that the plight of the religious minorities has got from bad to worse in Pakistan over the years. Violent incidents against members of Pakistan's largest minority Shiite Muslim community have been on the rise. **The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Annual Report (2012) on the eligibility guidelines for assessing the international protection needs of members of religious minorities in Pakistan details well the potential risk profiles of Hindus (1.8 percent in its national population), Christians (1.59 percent), Ahmadis (600000), Sikhs and Baha'is (30000 each) and Shias (25 percent of the Muslim population).**

According to a report, 226 Shi'ites were killed in 63 incidents in 2012 alone. In the **Western Balochistan Province**, more than 100 members of the ethnic **Hazara community**, who are predominantly Shi'ite, were fatally attacked in 2012. More than 400 Shiites were killed between 2008 and 2011.<sup>6</sup> **Another report says that in Dera Ismail Khan, which borders the tribal areas, 540 Shi'ites were killed in between 2006 and 2009 alone. In the Kurram Agency of the tribal border areas in 2007 over 548 Shi'ites were killed. There have been attacks on the lives of Christians and Hindus too. In 2002, Islamist militants attacked a Christian church in Murree, killing seven. The same year 20 worshipers were killed in a church in Taxila.**<sup>7</sup>

### The Plight of Pakistan's Minority Shia Community

The followers of Saudi Wahabiism are historically anti-Shia. With Saudi brand of Wahabiism spreading in Pakistan through Saudi-funded seminaries and the resultant Arabisation of Pakistani society, Shia lives are in grave danger. Shias are bearing the brunt of the pro-Saudi and pro-jihad policies followed by the military Establishment and the Government of Pakistan. Anti-Shia organisations like the banned Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP) and Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) have had the overt and covert support of the military as well as rightwing political parties. It does not seem likely that the grievances of the Shia community in Pakistan will be addressed given how the security forces and the government have turned a blind eye towards their plight. The military Establishment uses these sectarian jihadi outfits to fight proxy wars on its behalf in the region. They are considered as Pakistan's 'strategic assets' despite the fact that these same groups have also been involved in killing both military and civilian targets in the country. Unfortunately, many Pakistanis believe in conspiracy theories and think that these attacks are being carried out by external forces to destabilize our country. This is the height of delusion when slogans like 'Kafir, kafir, Shia kafir' (Shias are infidels) are openly chanted by Pakistani people at public gatherings of banned military outfits.

[ Mehmal Sarfaraz, *Mid Day*, Mumbai on November 23, 2012 (<http://www.mid-day.com/columnists/2012/nov/231112-The-plight-of-Pakistani-Shias.htm>) ]

## Rape, Torture and Conversion

According to a Report of the **Society for the Protection of the Rights of the Child (SPARC)**, as many as 2,000 women and girls from various minority sects were forcibly converted to Islam through rape, torture and kidnappings, while 161 people were charged with blasphemy in 2011.

**The minorities have remained sidelined in Pakistan's State policies. After the 2011 floods, 130,000 Hindus were forced to leave their homes and 86,500 ended up on streets of various cities in Sindh; 27 Hindu children were kidnapped for ransom from different parts of northern Sindh. The primary school enrolment rate of Scheduled Caste Hindu girls is only 10.2 percent. Ahmadi students have been especially targeted by the hate campaigns. In Hafizabad, 10 Ahmadi students, including seven girls and a teacher, were expelled from school on account of their religious affiliation.<sup>8</sup>**

## US Commission on Freedom: Religious Extremism on the Rise

According to the **U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) Annual Report (2012)**, *violent religious extremism across Pakistan is on the rise*. It affects some 10-13 million Pakistanis belonging to the minority communities, including Christians, Hindus and Sikhs. Several Muslim denominations, such as Shias, among whom are Ismailis and Zikris are deeply disturbed by the state's policy towards the minorities.

**Under Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's civilian Government, an amendment to the Constitution was put into effect on September 6, 1974 that explicitly deprived Ahmadis of their identity as Muslims. Since then there have been demands that that all people with interpretations of Islam different from the one of the Sunni mainstream could be declared non-Muslim. Shia Muslims have been targeted under this pretext. Most recently, the *Barelvi Sufi*, a moderate Sunni group, has also come under attack. Various Islamist organizations are attempting to have these *Barelvi Sufis* legally classified as *Kafirs* (infidels) or *Mushriks* (polytheists). Shia and Sufi shrines are now a frequent target of terrorist attacks. The non-Muslim law, created for Ahmadis, is being used to discriminate against all other minorities in Pakistan.**



**According to the Commission’s Annual Report (2012), textbooks used in Pakistani primary and secondary schools foster prejudice and intolerance of religious minorities, especially Hindus and Christians. They contain stories, biographies and poems with an Islamic religious character that students of minority faiths must study and be tested on.** In addition, a significant number of madrassas (Islamic theological/religious schools) continue to provide ideological training and motivation to those who take part in religiously-inspired violence (*jihad*) or terrorism in Pakistan and abroad.

**Madrassa textbooks generally portray Non-Muslims in one of three ways: (1) *kafirs* (infidels) or *mushrikeens* (pagans), (2) *dhimmis* (Non-Muslims living under Islamic rule) and (3) *murtids* (apostates, i.e. people who have turned away from Islam). *Non-Muslims are never described as citizens with the constitutionally protected rights which accompany citizenship.*** Views expressed by teachers about Ahmadis, Christians, and Jews are often very negative. These biased sentiments are transmitted to the minds of the students.

## **Jinnah Institute: Non-Muslims Vulnerable**

The **Jinnah Institute**, one of the most secular and progressive Think-Tanks in Pakistan, also confirms the denial of rights to the country’s religious minorities. In its 72-page long document, “**A Question of Faith: A Report on The Status of Religious Minorities in Pakistan, 2011**”, it says that Non-Muslims in Pakistan have suffered ‘increased social vulnerability’ in terms of access to education, jobs and healthcare.

Focusing on certain minorities such as the **Christian, Hindu and Ahmadiyya** communities, which happen to be “**the most visible targets for discrimination and violence**”, the Report says:

- **Today some 80 percent of Sindhi Hindus are poverty-stricken agricultural labourers.** Scores of them work in slavery-like conditions as bonded labourers, mainly for Muslim landlords and brick-kiln owners. **Numerous Hindu dalit women have been married off to Muslim men against their will. Upper Caste Hindus also face different forms of oppression, including routine kidnappings for massive ransoms. They are attacked on false charges of traducing Islam.**

- **Christians are treated as second class citizens and discriminated against in all aspects of life.** They live in a state of constant fear and insecurity. It quotes a Christian woman whose house was destroyed by a rampaging Muslim mob as saying: ‘**Not a single [Muslim] woman dared to condemn this brutality...Christians should just hear and bear whatever Muslims say to them.**’ On the destruction of a church destroyed by a Muslim land-grabber, the report cites another Christian as saying ‘**Muslims are unsupportive to us in every matter. They consider us people of low rank. We are not allowed to preach our religion. We do not have freedom of expression... We are anxious about our existence in Pakistan.**’
- **In Friday sermons at mosques in many areas of Sindh, mullahs declare jihad (Islamic Holy War) against ‘kafir’ Hindus.** Everyone is scared of them. Lawyers avoid taking up cases of forcible conversions, fearing a backlash from firebrand mullahs, who regard conversion of ‘infidels’ as a source of immense religious benefit. **Most often, the police refuse to even register complaints against violations of minorities’ rights. If any liberal Muslims speak out in favour of non-Muslims and protest against the pervasive discrimination in the name of Islam, they are likely to face disastrous consequences.**

The State has shown ‘**tolerance towards this persecution.**’ It has been complicit, herein, at all levels - judicial, executive and legislative. It turns ‘**a blind eye to the.... cruelty and vigilantism**’ of Islamic fundamentalists. When some places of worship belonging to Hindus, Sikhs Christians and Ahmadis are bombed or members of the minorities are killed, the State often looks the other way. A former Minister of Religious Affairs has even announced on television that members of the Ahmadiyya sect are ‘*wajib ul-qatal*’ (deserving of death, preferably by violent means) and hence it is obligatory on Muslims to kill them.<sup>9</sup>

## **Pakistan Supreme Court: Minorities’ Election Sham**

Even the **Supreme Court of Pakistan has taken cognizance of the plight of the minorities in Pakistan. In October 2002 then Nobel Peace Prize nominee and former Federal Minister Julius Salik (a Pakistani Christian and founder of World Minorities Alliance) challenged the ordinance of then General Pervez Musharraf regime in the Supreme Court of Pakistan.** He said, ‘*I feel that I have a right to bring to your attention those injustices, prejudices and discriminations which Christians and other minorities are facing in this Islamic Democracy of Pakistan, which came into being to be a Welfare State... the major political parties*

*have been given the powers to nominate members of minorities in parliament. Such members are not the true and genuine representatives of the minorities because they are not elected by the votes of minorities... Moreover, in the present parliament there are only two representatives of Christian community... there is no representative of Parsi, Sikh, Buddhist and Ahmadiyya communities in the present parliament.”*

Moved by the plight of the minorities, **Justice Jawad Khawaja** said in September 2010 that more than 30 percent of the members of Parliament are so-called representatives of their people. **Justice Javed Iqbal** said that the present way of ‘selection of minorities’ and reserved seats is antithetical to the spirit of democratic justice. **Justice Khalil-ur-Rehman** regretted the present parliament has not made any law regarding the election of minorities’ seats. **Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry** of the Supreme Court of Pakistan said that the selection of the minority members in the Parliament is against the spirit of **Article 226** that provides for ‘election by secret ballot’ under the Constitution of Pakistan.

## **Pakistan Human Rights Commission: Atrocities on Minorities Growing**

Various other organizations and individuals have also confirmed the growing atrocities on the minorities in Pakistan. **According to the Pakistan Human Rights Commission’s Annual Report of 2010, at least 25 Hindu girls are kidnapped every month.**

In a recent survey conducted by the **National Commission for Justice and Peace (NCJP) of Pakistan** have made this most shocking revelation that *“nearly sixty two percent of Hindu and Christian women have feared that a majority of Muslims would not come to their aid if they are discriminated against. Forty-three percent of them have complained that they have faced religious discrimination at their workplace, educational institution or neighbourhood. Twenty-seven percent have said that they faced difficulties in gaining admissions to educational institutions. Seventy-six per cent of the working women have said that they had to deal with sexual harassment. The survey finds that women of minority communities face “double jeopardy” as they have to face discrimination on two accounts: sex and religion.”*<sup>10</sup>

On September 3, 2012 **Senator Iqbal Haider**, Pakistan’s former Minister for Human Rights, Law and Justice talked of **‘unchecked, unrestrained and repeated barbaric killings of Shia Muslims’** all over Pakistan. He slammed the continuing harassment, victimization, killings and forced conversion of Ahmadis, Sikhs and Hindus who have been forced to leave their places of residence for protection of their lives.<sup>11</sup>

Former Indian High Commissioner in Pakistan, **G Parthasarathy** said that the 2.4 million Ahmadis in the country are the most persecuted ones. They are forbidden to call themselves Muslims and their prayer places as mosques. In recent days the minarets of their mosques have been dismantled and graves desecrated if their gravestones carry any Quranic quotations. Ninety-five Ahmadis have perished in a Taliban suicide bomb attack. As per the police records, 25 Hindus are forcibly converted to Islam every month in the Sind province alone. **The Pakistan Army routinely facilitates the entry of Wahhabi Afghan Taliban into Shia-majority Gilgit region. In Karachi alone 118 persons, mostly Shia, died in 2012 in sectarian conflicts.** Over the past decade most Shia doctors have fled Karachi. Even members of the peace loving Bohra Muslim community have been targeted in Karachi.<sup>12</sup>

Some recent reports have it that in Pakistan today, Christians are not able to find even simple labour jobs, even if employers would like to hire them, without their lives being threatened. Those who have somewhat decent jobs are migrating to the big cities hoping there would be less discrimination there. During the last two decades, a number Christians have migrated to Lahore in search of a livelihood. This has raised their presence to about 10 percent in the city. The economic plight of the Christians is so acute that as early as 2005, then **Bishop of Peshawar Munarwar Rumalshah** had stated: *“If I am asked to single out one major point of discrimination against my community, it is that jobs are not available to its members. As a result, the struggle for survival has left us out. If you close the tap of economic survival on us, there is no need of physically killing us. So, all this talk of protection is meaningless [unless something is done about the economic welfare of Christian community].”*<sup>13</sup>

**In course of his interaction with some of the Pakistani citizens who have since been compelled to flee off Pakistan and taken shelter in different parts of India, this researcher also finds that the existence of the minorities is, indeed, at stake in the country.** The migrants I spoke to have confirmed to me that due to the increasing religious extremism and intolerance, members of the minority communities are feeling desperate and leaving for whatever destinations they think could be relatively safe.

## Chapter –II

### Politics of Radical Islamism in Pakistan

Let's put the record straight. The root cause of the current predicament of the religious minorities in the State of Pakistan is due to the *politics of Islamic radicalization* since its inception. Historians, researchers, journalist's et al have written volumes analyzing this phenomenon. **Ever since M A Jinnah-led communal forces within the otherwise largely secular Muslim community succeeded in achieving a separate State of Pakistan out of then undivided British India, ultra-reactionary and obscurantist forces, such as the Deobandis and their allies equipped with a distorted version of Islam, have expanded their base in the Pakistani society and come to effectively influencing its politics.** In order to capture or retain political power, the politicians of all hues, including its ambitious Army, have sought to cultivate this base. They have done so by showing preference for the *Jamaat-e-Islami* founder **Sayed Abul Ala Maududi** thesis, '*holy community of Islam*' over all other models - Jinnah's '**pluralist**', General Ayub Khan's '**modernist Islam**' and Z A Bhutto's '*folk Islam*'<sup>14</sup> and taking, willy-nilly such decisions as would lead in due course of time to **"the transformation of the country into an Islamic State with a clear Sunni dimension that could rival Shia Iran."**<sup>15</sup>

#### Accomplices to Islamists: Politicians and Generals Alike

One could see the growth of radical Islamism in Pakistan as early as during the rule of Jinnah, whom some of the well-meaning commentators as well as politicians have viewed essentially '**progressive**' and '**secular**'. Rather, he looked the other way when reactionary forces in the State had advanced or indicated an agenda that was anything but modern. For instance, Jinnah overlooked it when his troops asserted their identity by daubing '**786**' which represents the numerical value of the opening line of the Quran, *Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim* (in the name of Allah, the Merciful and the Compassionate) on their barrack gates and vehicles.<sup>16</sup>

#### General Ayub Khan: Islam the Basis

As for Jinnah's successors, they have all been the birds of the same feather competing with each other in openly demonstrating their allegiance to the Islamic agenda. In 1956 General Ayub Khan had the Constitution of Pakistan declaring Pakistan as an **"Islamic Republic."**

In 1959, he circulated a paper defending the theoretical necessity of an **‘Islamic Ideology in Pakistan.’** He stressed in his autobiography that Islam was the basis for Pakistan and described India as the **‘irreconcilable enemy’** of both Islam and Pakistan. He had a new course -**‘Islamiyat’** added to the school curriculum, according to which *“Pakistan was the culmination of a ‘dream’ that originated in AD 712, when the first Arab armies landed on the coast of Sind under Muhammad bin Qasim....”*<sup>17</sup>

## **General Yahya Khan: Armed Forces the Guardian of Islam**

Ayub Khan’s successor **General Yahya Khan** promised that the *armed forces would be the guardian of Pakistan’s ideological frontiers.* In the 1970s **Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto** encouraged the concept of **‘Pan-Islamism’** leading to a close linkage between Pakistan’s radical **Deobandis** and the Saudi **Wahhabis.** **He gave Pakistan a new Constitution accepting the view of the religious parties that the Objectives Resolution of 1949 be declared as the State religion.** *That Constitution made it the duty of the State to enable Muslims of Pakistan to lead an Islamic life and had a Council of Islamic Scholars or Ideologues to advise the Government to ensure that every law in Pakistan must conformed to the tenets of Islam.*

## **Prime Minister Z A Bhutto: Mollifying Mullahs**

Like his predecessors, Bhutto also tried to mollify the Maududi clan of **Mullahs** (Islamic clergy) by appointing former **Jamaat** member Maulana Kauser Niazi as Cabinet member in his newly created Department of Religious Affairs (DRA). **Bhutto had the same cunning communal angle when he recommended Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq, then a Lieutenant-General with an undistinguished service record in the Army, for the appointment as the Chief of Staff of the Pakistan Army in 1976, superseding seven senior most and distinguished Lieutenant-Generals.** When Sardar Mohammad Daud Khan overthrew the Afghan monarchy via a bloodless *coup d’état* in 1973, Bhutto set up a special cell in his foreign office in Kabul to keep tabs on the developments there and authorized the **Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI)**, Pakistan’s external intelligence wing, to fund and arm the Islamic reactionaries of Afghanistan such as **Burhanuddin Rabbani** and **Gulbuddin Hekmatyar.** Rabbani belonged to **Jamaat-e-Islami** while Hekmatyar to **Hizb-e-Islami** linked to the Muslim Brotherhood (one of the largest and most influential Islamic movements in the Arab world founded in Egypt in 1928 by Hassan al-Banna, an Islamic scholar).

**In 1976, Bhutto invited the Imams of Kaaba ('The Noble Cube') in Mecca and the Prophet's mosque in Medina to tour Pakistan and ordered all the first class hotels in the country to keep copies of the Holy Book (*Quran*) in their rooms.<sup>18</sup>**

## **General Zia-ul-Haq: Deobandi Dictator**

Taking a quantum leap in Pakistan's race for Islamization, **General Zia-ul-Haq**, 'a devout *Deobandi*'<sup>19</sup> (the revivalist movement in Sunni Islam, the name derives from Deoband (UP), India where the school of Islamic theology Darul Uloom Deoband is situated.) **aligned himself with the *Jamaat-e-Islami* in 1977 and started Islamizing Pakistan in general and its army in particular.** Zia-ul-Haq favoured a '*legalist interpretation of Islam with a strong punitive bias with an aim to stem both its popular as well as its modernist expressions.*'<sup>20</sup> In 1976, he changed the *motto* of the Pakistan Army from '*imaan, ittehad aur jihad*' (faith, unity and Islamic holy war) to "*imaan, taqwa aur jihad fi sabilillah*" (faith, piety and holy war in the path of Allah). He authorized the Election Commission of Pakistan to deregister any political party "*prejudicial to the ideology of Pakistan.*" In November 1979, **Zia outlined his concept of an Islamic Pakistan wherein - only good Muslims would contest polls; women's rights would need reformulation; a *Majlis-e-Shoora* (officially means the Parliament of Pakistan but here used as the Council of Islamic Scholars/Clergy) would advise the President and have greater powers; armed forces would get a political role; those who did not believe in Islamic ideology would have no place in the system; media would not criticize either the armed forces or Islamic ideology.** General Zia-ul-Haq encouraged the madrassas run by *Deobandi* groups like the *Jamaat-e-Islami* and other such groups to start brainwashing and indoctrinating the youth of Pakistan.

**General Zia declared that Islam had to be supreme in Pakistan as the State was created in its name alone.**<sup>21</sup> Zia-ul-Haq stated: "*The highest priority would be given to the revision of the curricula with a view to reorganizing the entire content around Islamic thought and giving education an ideological orientation so that Islamic ideology permeates the thinking of the younger generation and helps them with the necessary conviction and ability to refashion society according to Islamic tenets.*"<sup>22</sup> This started the process of '*toxification*' of the text books used in Pakistan's educational institutions filled with venomous '*hate-minorities*' (especially Hindus) malicious propaganda which is still in fashion; in spite of growing concern of the international community towards this '*mind polluting*' indoctrination officially sponsored by the Government of Pakistan with complete impunity.

## Hate Content in Pakistani Textbooks



The textbooks used in Pakistan's schools today are rife with factual errors, bias and hate towards a number of religious groups and nations. This is helping fuel the increasing levels of intolerance and extremism being witnessed by Pakistani society today. Given that increasing extremism poses an existential threat to Pakistan; the government, civil society, education experts and citizens all need to contribute to a serious process of curriculum and textbook reform to help combat the growing levels of intolerance and violence towards minority groups in society. According to Pervez Hoodbhoy, a Physics Professor at Quaid-e-Azam University in Islamabad, the "Islamizing" of Pakistan's schools began in 1976 under the rule of the former dictator General Zia ul-Haq.

An act of Parliament that year required all government and private schools (except those teaching the British O-levels from Grade 9) to follow a curriculum that includes learning outcomes for the federally approved Grade 5 social studies class such as: "Acknowledge and identify forces that may be working against Pakistan," "Make speeches on Jihad," "Collect pictures of policemen, soldiers, and national guards," and "India's evil designs against Pakistan." "It sounds like the blueprint for a religious fascist state," says Professor Hoodbhoy. "You have a country where generations have grown up believing they are surrounded on all sides by enemies, they are the only righteous ones, and the world is out to get them", he says.

([http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2012%5C10%5C25%5Cstory\\_25-10-2012\\_pg11\\_7](http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2012%5C10%5C25%5Cstory_25-10-2012_pg11_7) and <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Asia-South-Central/2009/0121/p04s03-wosc.html>)

In 1979 the military regime announced that it would replace the existing penal codes with the **Hudood** (Islamic laws stating the limits ordained by Allah and deterrent punishments for serious crimes.) Ordinances which prescribed strict codes of punishment for criminal offences, including for committing **Zina** (various forms of unlawful sexual intercourse, for instance adultery). **The Hudood Ordinance or the Hudood Laws of 1979** mandated the **Federal Shariat Court** (from 'sharia' meaning Islamic Law derived from *Quran* and from the practices of Prophet Muhammad) to amend an 1872 law and replace it with an **Islamic Law of Evidence (Qanoon-e-Shahadat)** which regarded the **value of a woman's testimony in court to be worth half that of a man.**<sup>23</sup> **This led to the introduction of a parallel legal system creating Sharia benches in all high courts of Pakistan.** The Federal Shariat Court has jurisdiction to challenge any decision by a secular court, a provincial legislature or the national legislature that violates "*the injunctions of Islam as laid down in the Holy Quran and Sunnah*" (*sunnah* denotes practice of Prophet Muhammad) or relates to the Hudood Ordinance and anti-blasphemy laws.



## Prime Ministers Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif: Bin Laden in Heart

In order to display her allegiance to an Islamist agenda, Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto created the Taliban in the nineties.<sup>24</sup> She also protected *al Qaeda* chief Osama bin Laden. In 1996 she directed the Director General of Military Operations (DGMO) of the Pakistan Army General Pervez Musharraf (who rose to become its Chief and later President of Pakistan) to rehabilitate bin Laden (who had then been expelled from Sudan) in the Pak-Afghan border area.

Her successor Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, too, was sympathetic to the radical Islamists. His father Mia Mohammed Sharif was a patron of the *Tablighi Jamaat* (society/believers for spreading Islam). In 1998 Prime Minister Sharif directed the Governor of Punjab and Federal Information Minister Mushahid Hussain Saeed to call on *Lashkar-e-Taiba* (Army of the Pure) chief **Hafiz Muhammad Saeed** of *Ahl al-Hadith* [the people of *hadith* (*acts, sayings or practices of Prophet Muhammad*)] at his headquarters in Muridke, near Lahore. Pertinently, even today the Sharif family including his brother Shahbaz Sharif (former Chief Minister of Punjab) is said to be very close to the radical Islamists. Rana Sanaullah, who was an important Minister in the erstwhile Shahbaz Sharif's Government in Punjab, staunchly supported the Wahhabi oriented Taliban (students of Islam) and *Sepah-e-Sahiba* having strong links with *al Qaeda*.

During his second tenure as Prime Minister, Nawaz Sharif repeatedly evaded US pressure to allow its special forces to mount an operation from the Pakistani territory into Kandahar to kill or capture bin Laden. Sharif also appointed General Pervez Musharraf superseding Lt Generals Ali Kuli Khan and Khalid Nawaz at the Corps Commanders Conference when General Jahangir Karamat was Pakistan's Chief of the Army Staff. *It is no secret that General Musharraf had 'long-standing links with several Islamic fundamentalist groups.'* He was a devout Deobandi too - a reason General Zia had once chosen him to train various Islamic fanatic militant groups or *Mujahideens* (holy warriors of Islamic *jihād*) against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan.<sup>25</sup>

## Zardari-Raza-Kayani Trio: Echoing Islamists on Kashmir

The present Pakistani Establishment of the **Zardari-Raza-Kayani** trio in Islamabad too is hardly any different in this regard. **In order to be seen as the voice of the radical Islamists, Pakistan President Asif Ali Zardari supported the long**

**fanatic cause of Kashmir at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in 2012.** His Railway Minister Ghulam Mohammed Bilfour of the so-called moderate Awami National Party, headed by the grandson of the 'Frontier Gandhi' Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, announced that he would pay \$100000 to anyone who killed the California-based Egyptian Copt (the native Christians of Egypt) who posted his blasphemous film 'Innocence of Muslims' (2012) on YouTube. Needless to add, one may not expect much from futuristic rulers like Imran Khan too. His links with the military Establishment and the Taliban-oriented groups are well documented.<sup>26</sup>

## State Policies Against Minorities

This approach of the successive dispensations in Islamabad from Jinnah to Zardari has resulted in all kinds of anti-minority State policies and programmes in Pakistan since its inception. **An allusion goes that even Jinnah was not really sympathetic to the minorities. The pluralist State he was seen offering immediately after Partition was simply his response to the crisis triggered by the mass communal violence that had then engulfed parts of Pakistan. Jinnah at that time was keen to retain a non-Muslim minority just to use it as hostage to ensure fair treatment for Muslims who chose to remain in India.**<sup>27</sup>

The allusion does not seem to be devoid of substance. The approach of the ruling Muslim League towards Hindus can well be discerned in the way the Party treated the veteran Bengali Muslim League leader H S Suhrawardy's proposal to open membership of his Party to the non-Muslims in December 1947. *He argued that this would enable Bengal's sizeable Hindu minority (almost a quarter of East Bengal's population) to enter mainstream politics and would also reinforce the League's (Jinnah's) new commitment to inclusive ethos as the basis of the new State. Other members of the League opposed it tooth and nail. Sardar Abdur Rab Nishtar, one of Jinnah's closest associates from the NWFP, declared that such a move would 'finish the League' adding, "I say if the League exists, Islam exists, Musalmans exist."*<sup>28</sup>

## Yahya Khan: Branding Hindus 'Fifth Column'

In the Post-Jinnah period, the successive Governments in Islamabad have been almost open about their discrimination against the minorities. *During the crisis of Bangladesh, the Hindu population of East Bengal was about 12 percent of the region's total. General Yahya Khan's Government dubbed them as the 'fifth*

**column'** (refers to any clandestine group or faction of subversive agents who attempt to undermine a nation's solidarity) in the service of India's military supporting Bengali nationalist movement.<sup>29</sup>

## **Z A Bhutto: Declaring Ahmadis as Non-Muslims**

In September 1972 Prime Minister Z A Bhutto had Christian schools and colleges nationalized. His 1973 constitution had the offices of President and Prime Minister reserved for Muslims making *minorities second class citizens* in theory as well as practice.<sup>30</sup> In order to harass the minorities, **Bhutto passed a resolution in 1974 declaring Ahmadis as Non-Muslims.** *The legislation barred Ahmadis from calling themselves Muslims, calling their places of worship mosques or worshipping in public prayer rooms open to Muslims and using the traditional Islamic greetings in public or publicly quoting from the Koran.*<sup>31</sup>

## **Zia-ul-Haq: Targeting Minorities with Blasphemy Laws**

President Zia-ul-Haq introduced additional legislations to target all non-Muslims. It led to the discrimination against religious minorities in military service, education and the civilian bureaucracy in the country. **In 1984 President Zia introduced an Ordinance that added sections 298(b) and 298(c) to the Pakistani Penal Code.** *These sections made it a crime punishable by up to three years in prison for any Ahmadi found posing as a Muslim or propagating his or her religion as Islam in any forum, including in one's own home.*<sup>32</sup>

In 1986 General Zia introduced further restrictions on Ahmadis and non-Muslims by introducing the **blasphemy laws** under **Article 295(c)**, which stated that any person found to have disrespected the Prophet Mohammad or the Koran would face death or life imprisonment.<sup>33</sup>

**Under the blasphemy laws, the Hudood Ordinance and the Qanoon-e-Shahadat (Law of Evidence) the Government has the right to regulate social behavior inside and outside the home, including intimate matters such as extramarital sex and crimes such as rape.** Under the Hudood Ordinance, a Non-Muslim's testimony is not equal to a Muslim's testimony and two women are equal to one man in rape cases!

### On Pakistan's Blasphemy Laws

The vague terminology of the current legislation enables the misuse of Sections 295-298 PPC, and has allowed the persecution of minorities and the poor by providing unscrupulous complainants with a mechanism for settling personal vendettas through the justice system. The law has manifested in society as a tool for promoting intolerance. Even though a majority of those charged under this law are Muslims, the law has made non-Muslims even more vulnerable. In addition, the manner in which the law is propagated by the religious groups in Pakistan has led to vigilantism and mob violence. The state has consistently failed to intervene and protect anyone against violence by maliciously motivated elements and the certainty of impunity has encouraged them to commit lawlessness. Reported incidents reveal that those accused of blasphemy are killed in jail often even before they are sentenced. As recently as November 14, 2010, the accused in a blasphemy case was shot dead near his house in Lahore after being granted bail. Other examples include incidents on July 30th and August 1, 2009, when seven Christians were burnt alive in Gojra, Punjab and dozens injured after riots broke out over to allegations of blasphemy against the Holy Quran.

(“A Question of Faith: A Report on the Status of Religious Minorities in Pakistan”, *A Jinnah Institute Research Report* (2011), page 40)

**As designed, these laws have led to the persecution of the Ahmadis, Christian, Hindus and Shias from time to time.** It may be recalled that in 2007 the *Shariat* Court sentenced **Younis Masih, a Pakistani Christian**, to death under the anti-blasphemy laws. (The Supreme Court eventually overturned the verdict). In May 2007, a district judge in Karachi convicted several Shi'ites after their neighbours registered cases against them under the anti-blasphemy laws.<sup>34</sup>

In addition, these laws have been used all by Islamic extremists and some mischievous elements in Pakistani society. **Pakistan does not provide a legal system for registration of marriages for certain minorities including Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains and Baha'is.** Such elements have used the absence of legal recognition of the minorities' marriages to intimidate and harass them.<sup>35</sup>

The country's blasphemy law has overwhelmingly been used to persecute religious minorities and settle personal vendettas. The story of Roman Catholic Bishop John Joseph,<sup>36</sup> who shot himself in the head to protest against a court's decision to sentence a fellow **Christian Ayub Masih** way back in 1998, has not pricked the conscience of the Pak Establishment. The pattern goes on. The case of **Rimsha Masih**, a 14 year-old Christian girl with Down's syndrome, is still too fresh to be forgotten.

The cleric, Muhammad Khalid Chisti, falsely implicated her in a case of burning holy papers. This came to people's notice only when one of his colleagues confirmed it to the authorities.<sup>37</sup> Among the countries with a Muslim majority, Pakistan has the strictest anti-blasphemy laws.

In 1985 General Zia had the separate electorates restored which constitutionally stripped Non-Muslims of the right to vote in the territorially demarcated constituencies designated for the elections of candidates to the national and provincial assemblies. By this Non-Muslims were divided into four groups: Christians, Hindus, Ahmadis and Sikhs, Buddhists and Parsis clubbed together. These groups were restricted from voting for the candidates from their own religious groups.<sup>38</sup>

### Plight of Christian Minorities in Pakistan: A Case Study of Aasia Bibi



On November 8, 2010 Aasia Bibi, a Christian farmhand from the Punjab province became the first woman in Pakistan to be sentenced to death for blasphemy. The conviction horrified key members of the incumbent Pakistani government.

President Asif Ali Zardari ordered a ministerial review, which concluded that the verdict was legally unsound and sought a presidential pardon for her. But on November 26, in a dramatic reversal, Pakistan's law minister ruled out any change to the blasphemy law under his watch. The same day, the government gave in to a long-standing demand of its coalition partner, the Jamiat-e-Ulema-e-Islam (Fazlur Rehman) (JUI-F), led by Maulana Fazlur Rehman, and appointed a hard-line cleric from the JUI-F to head the Council of Islamic Ideology (CII), a powerful body that determines whether the country's laws are in conformity with Islam. Then, on November 29, in a clear case of judicial overreach, the Lahore High Court barred the president from issuing a pardon despite this privilege being granted to him by the constitution.

Hardliner Islamic groups and religious political parties used the issue to rally popular support in preparation for the next elections. They organized a number of public demonstrations demanding that the government withdraw proposed amendments to the bill. Finally, on December 30, faced with a run on its majority, the government publicly reneged on a commitment to review discriminatory laws, announcing in a policy statement that it had "no intention" to repeal or amend the law. Sensing the government's lack of resolve and supported by sections of the media, extremists offered head money to anyone who kills Aasia Bibi and issued death threats to the opponents and critics of the blasphemy law.

("A Question of Faith: A Report on the Status of Religious Minorities in Pakistan", *A Jinnah Institute Research Report* (2011), pp 4-5.)

## Chapter- III

### Deafening Silence of Governments in Democracies

Given this background, one really wonders why the governments in the world's leading democracies, be that of India or the United States, are still maintaining such deafening silence on the issue of blatant violations of the basic human rights of the minority communities in Pakistan by the Government of Pakistan itself? Not a day passes when one does not come across reports of minorities having either suffered on some or the other count in Pakistan or fled off to some safer destinations. Several Pakistani minority community leaders have approached diplomatic missions of leading democracies, including India and the United States, for help. But the governments in the democracies seem to care a fig.

#### Washington: Little Interest in Minorities' Rights

**The United States Administration, the biggest votary of protection of human rights world over, has shown little interest in impressing upon the Establishment in Islamabad to take care of its minorities' rights. It has just simply urged President Asif Ali Zardari to protect the human rights of Pakistan's minority communities. The American Congress has also not gone beyond filing occasional 'toothless' request letters to Islamabad in this regard.** Recently, Senators Robert Menendez, Ben Cardin and Robert Casey of the Democratic Party and Mark Kirk, Roy Blunt and Mike Johanns of the Republican Senators wrote a letter to President Zardari expressing their concern over the arrest of **Rimsha Masih**, a young Christian girl with Down's syndrome for allegedly burning pages of Muslim holy books. *They noted that the girl had been in police custody since her arrest from a suburb of Islamabad in August 2012 and could face life imprisonment or even death penalty under the existing Pakistani law.* **The blasphemy** law's application to the religious minorities violated their rights. A "mere allegation" against Rimsha Masih had forced the Christians to flee her neighbourhood due to the fear of retribution by the Islamic fundamentalists and terrorists.

*"We urge your Government to do more to prevent abuse, as blasphemy allegations have resulted in the lengthy detention of and violence committed against, Christians, Ahmadis, Hindus and other religious minorities as well as the Shia members of the Muslim majority community... Hundreds of Hindus are fleeing Pakistan due to the*

*growing religious intolerance in the country. Among the acts alleged by Hindus leaving the country are harassment, theft, rape, kidnapping and forced conversion,”* they said.

The Senators also noted that the members of the **Ahmadiyya community** continued to experience acts of murder, violence and discrimination, as did Shia Muslims. The application of Pakistan’s anti-blasphemy laws undermined the State’s obligation to protect the rights of all religious groups in Pakistan. The law had *“repeatedly been used to harass and intimidate the members of the minority religious groups.”* They also reminded the President that *“discrimination, violence and persecution on the basis of religion are a direct affront to the fundamental values of freedom and personal choice your Nation subscribed to as signatory to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.”*<sup>39</sup>

## **New Delhi: Inaction as Usual**

As for New Delhi, it has somewhat religiously adhered to its conventional policy of inaction in this matter too. The successive Governments at the Centre have all looked the other way on the issue of State-sponsored violations of the human rights of the minorities in Pakistan, most notably the miniscule Hindu community which has been the most persecuted one. The Parliament of India has also not taken up the matter with the kind of seriousness it deserves. A few months ago, in the wake of a new batch of around 150 Hindus crossing over from Sindh to India from Pakistan via the Attari border, the matter related to their plight in Pakistan was raised in the Rajya Sabha as well as the Lok Sabha. **The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) demanded that the Government rehabilitate the Hindus who have arrived in India from Pakistan.** Deputy Leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha **Ravi Shankar Prasad** said that the situation was similar to in 1947 when refugees had fled from both parts of divided India. He said that the Hindu refugees had to come here now because they had been persecuted and the women among the refugees were under serious threat. *“There are well known UN conventions which talk about rehabilitation of refugees.... The Indian Government should rehabilitate them”*, he said. Prasad also lamented that there was *“a conspicuous silence on part of those who are so-called champions of minority rights in India”*.

In the Lok Sabha some MPs voiced their concerns over the matter and asked the Government to take up the matter immediately with Pakistan and summon its Ambassador to convey India’s strong condemnations to Islamabad. Members of the **Bharatiya Janata Party, Biju Janata Dal and the Samajwadi Party** referred to



instances of growing violence and harassment of the minorities in Pakistan and demanded that the Parliament should adopt a resolution condemning it.

Raising the issue during **Zero Hour** (the time immediately following the Question Hour in the Parliament wherein the MPs are permitted to take up any issue of national importance. Since it starts at 12.00 noon it is called so), **Member of Lok Sabha and former President of BJP Rajnath Singh** (now once again elected as its new President) **said that minorities, particularly Hindus and Sikhs, were feeling insecure in Pakistan.** Some 20 Hindu and Sikh families had fled to India and sought Indian citizenship in view of the persecution. Around 250 Pakistani pilgrims, who came to India, were asked to give an undertaking by the Pakistani authorities that they would not utter a word in India about their plight. Singh also referred to a recent live TV coverage of the conversion of a Hindu youth and kidnapping and forced conversion of a young Hindu girl and said that leaders of the Hindu community in Pakistan had written to the Indian High Commission as well as the US Embassy in Islamabad seeking protection.

Singh's Parliamentary colleague and a former **President of BJP, Murli Manohar Joshi** too expressed his grief over the fact that young Hindu women were being kidnapped, raped and converted in Sindh. He said that an average of 25 Hindu girls were falling prey to such crimes every month. There had been an exodus of a large number of people from the province and over 400 affected Hindu families had by now fled to India. *"It was a gross violation of human rights as well as cultural rights of the Hindus"*, he said.

But that is all. The number of MPs who raised the matter in the two Houses of Parliament and the language of ambiguity some of them used therein clearly showed the non-seriousness of the Indian Parliament in this regard. *As for the Government of India is concerned, it has done what it has been doing since independence with Pakistan: engaging in futile diplomatic rhetorical niceties sans result-oriented concrete actions on ground.* In response to the aforesaid debate, then **Home Minister P Chidambaram** merely told in the Lok Sabha that the matter required a detailed response. He said that only after consultations with the Prime Minister and the External Affairs Minister, the Government would issue an official statement. On his part, then Foreign Minister S M Krishna stated in the Rajya Sabha that it was the responsibility of the Government of Pakistan *"to discharge its constitutional obligations towards its citizens, including those from the minority community."*

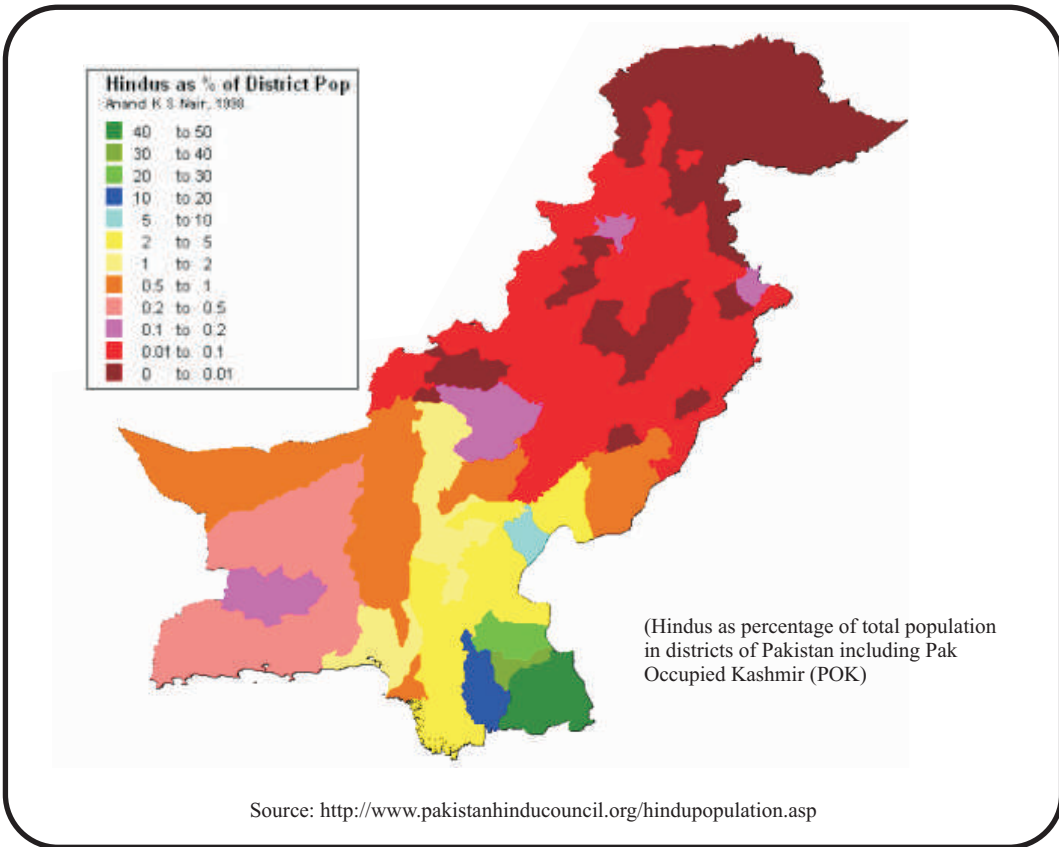
**The Simla Agreement of 1972** between India and Pakistan specifically provided for non-interference in each other's internal affairs and Pakistan has been using this as an alibi for the continuing perpetuation of State sponsored ethnic cleansing of the religious minorities, most especially the Hindus, unhindered and unrestrained. *However, based on reports of persecution of minority groups in Pakistan, New Delhi has been taking up the matter with Islamabad from time to time at the diplomatic level but with little concrete result in ground and that's all. What a great job!*

### **Islamabad: Cosmetic Assurances**

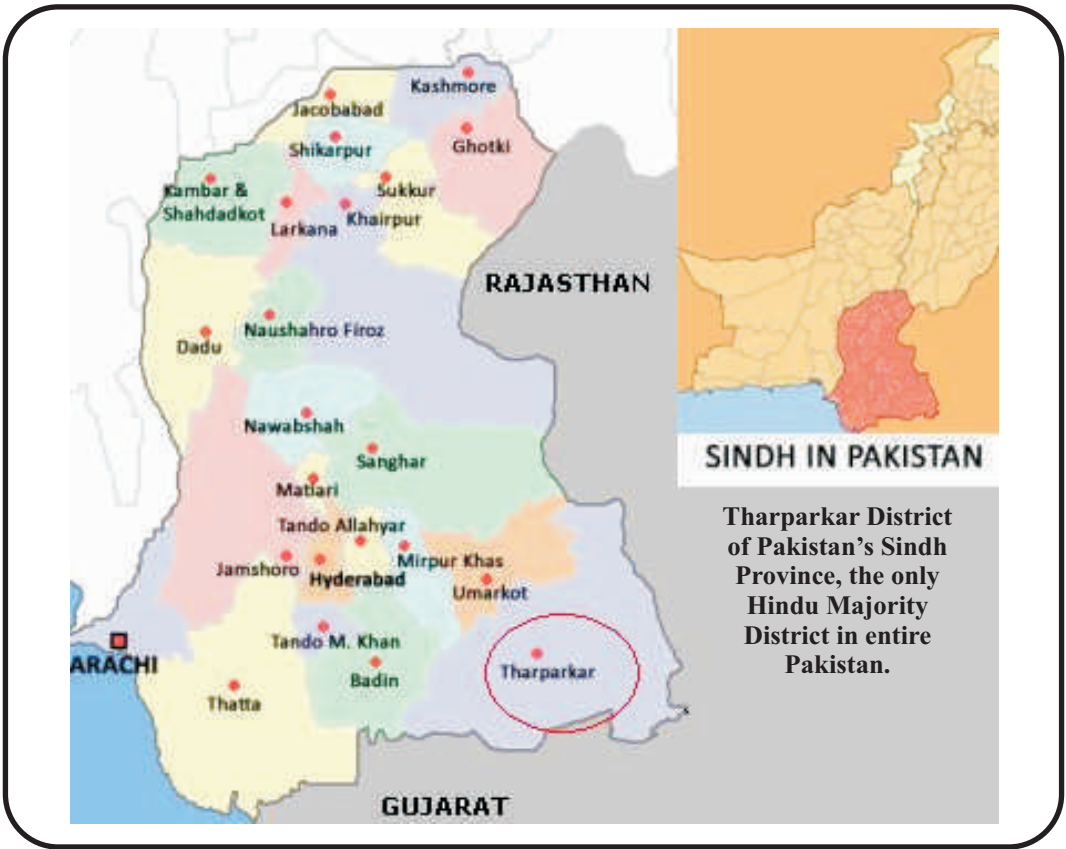
Such an approach of the democratic Governments in India and the United States (and elsewhere) does not but allow Islamabad to ignore the rights of its minorities and tell around the world that *all is well* in the rotten State of Pakistan. The successive Governments in Islamabad just make some *cosmetic assurances* and get away with violations of their rights. **Following reports of insecurity among Hindus and their possible mass exodus from Sindh and Balochistan, Pakistan President Asif Ali Zardari just constituted a three-member *lame duck* Committee comprising of Senator Hari Ram, Lal Chand, Member of National Assembly and Maula Baksh Chandio, the Law Minister to *express solidarity with Hindus on behalf of his Government and instill a sense of security among them. What a travesty of justice!***

Meanwhile, Pakistan continues to befool the international community by issuing occasional official statements and shedding crocodile's tears for the plight of the minorities in Pakistan. On **August 11, 2012**, while celebrating the **Minorities' Day**, President Zardari said, "*We cannot be oblivious of our responsibility to continue making efforts for bringing into the mainstream of national life peoples of all faiths and allay their concerns about their rights and privileges as guaranteed by our religion and the constitution.*" He asked the authorities in Sindh province to alleviate the sense of insecurity among the minority Hindus. Really?

President Zardari also deplored the attack and burning of a church in Pakistan's Mardan region in the wake of a controversy over a recent film (**'Innocence of Muslims'** by **Mark Basseley Youssef**, an Egyptian born US citizen in 2012) on the Prophet Muhammad. In a message, he said: "*...ransacking public and private property, particularly the places of worship of other religions, is un-Islamic and highly condemnable...incidents like this portray Pakistan and Muslims negatively.*"<sup>40</sup>



But Islamabad has done little to ensure its minorities' rights. Its overall approach on the issue remains one of callousness and just passing over the buck to others or playing blame game. It may be recalled that in the case of the recent exodus of Pakistani Hindu minorities to India, for instance, **Pakistan's Interior Minister Rehman Malik** alleged a "**conspiracy**" by New Delhi and demanded to know why the Indian High Commission in Islamabad had issued so many visas to the Hindus for visiting India. He also referred to a recent Federal Investigative Agency (FIA) report which claimed that the Hindus going to India had already given statements that they intended to visit religious sites and were not permanently moving out. Need we say more?



There is nothing new in such occasional official but ‘self-contradictory’ statements until the State of Pakistan really acts in protecting the basic human rights of the minority communities living under perpetual fear psychosis since 1947. Just mere lip service won’t do but only concrete actions will.

Stop pretending; start practicing because in today’s world wide *internet democracy* (read ‘social media’ viz Facebook, Twitter, Wordpress, Blogspot et al as promoter of free information and open democracy) no government on earth can no longer befool anyone by just *iron-curtaining* or *firewalling* it. Wake up Pakistan from your slumber and earnestly act towards protecting the human rights of the religious minorities and end their predicament at the earliest possible, lest the *insaniyat* (humanity) will never forgive you, never.

## Chapter - IV

### Freedom in Peril

It is surprising; indeed, that the democratic governments of the world have not yet appreciated the implications of their current policy of keeping mum on the burning issue of protection of minorities' rights in Pakistan would have on their own security in the long run. The agenda of Pakistan's self-styled Islamists or Islamic fundamentalists poses a great threat not only to its citizens but also to the entire civilized world in general and democracies in particular. The United States and India have already suffered a lot on account of this kind of Pak sponsored fanaticism. Most of the terror strikes on the West from Ramzi Yousef, who bombed the World Trade Center in 1993 eight years before 9/11 to Mir Aimal Kansi who shot dead two CIA agents to Faisal Shahzad, the Times Square "Idiot Bomber", have had Pakistani Islamists' fingerprints. **Failed and frustrated, Pakistan has indeed, become the epic-centre of international terrorism.**

### Need for Realism

If Washington and other democratic capitals of the world did not get tough with Islamabad and neutralize its radical Islamist forces in time, many more terror attacks might revisit them in near future. This demands that all liberal democracies must come together and evolve a concerted strategy to combat the evil. Washington must *"design a diplomacy that prevents threats to fundamental American interests and values."*<sup>41</sup> It could make the democratization of the Establishment in Pakistan a crucial component of its new diplomacy. A Pakistan, democratic and free from its Islamists' influence, would go a long way in ensuring the rights of its minorities as well as the security of the liberal democracies. It is, indeed, an irony that the rulers of Pakistan – both civilian and military - have never been committed to freedom and democracy. They have had a backward agenda throughout history. Yet most of the democratic governments across the world have had a business-as usual policy towards it for some or the other reasons.

The principal reason being advanced in the Post-Cold War landscape to justify uninterrupted American economic and military aid to Pakistan has been that without it Islamabad would fall into economic and political chaos and possibly come under the control of the Islamic fundamentalist elements.<sup>42</sup> Such logic is completely fallacious. Pakistan has always been ruled by Islamist-friendly forces dominating the

Establishment, including the army and the civilian government. **There is some kind of a symbiosis between its army and clergy to deny its citizens freedom and democracy. Wahhabi-Deobandi Islamist elements have also infiltrated the top echelons of the Pakistani armed forces and intelligence agencies to push their fanatic, anti-democratic agenda at home and abroad.** As such the rulers of Pakistan are highly unlikely to really cooperate with their counterparts in Washington in any concerted global war against radical Islamists-led terror. It has already been seen in the case of assassinated Osama bin Laden who had long been hiding in Abbottabad of Pakistan. Commonsense is that Laden could not have been able to do so without the connivance of certain forces within the Pakistani Establishment, most especially the all powerful Army. In addition, the Pakistan Army is likely to continue playing a dangerous game of nurturing some militant groups in the region to support the Afghan Taliban in a bid to extend its reach into Afghanistan, long been considered as its *'strategic backyard'* in the wake of the currently planned US troop's withdrawal from the region.

## **Eisenhower: Peace for All People**

American President Dwight Eisenhower once rightly emphasized his ***“commitment to the defence of the entire free world.”*** In his *State of the Union Address of January 10, 1957* President Eisenhower declared, *“First America's vital interests are world wide, embracing both hemispheres and every continent. Second, we have community of interests with every nation in the free world. Third, interdependence of interest requires a decent respect for the rights and the peace of all peoples.”*<sup>43</sup>

Pertinently, Washington could also heed the advice of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) in this context. The Commission has concluded that promoting respect for freedom of religion or belief must be an integral part of U.S. strategy in South Asia. The conflict with violent religious extremists now taking place in Pakistan requires the United States to understand and factor into its policies an understanding of the roots of this extremism and actively bolster the position of those elements in society that respect democratic values, the rule of law and international standards of human rights, including freedom of conscience.

## **Citizenship to Refugees**

New Delhi needs to be realistic in alleviating the sufferings of the minorities in Pakistan. In his famous classic **‘Train to Pakistan’**, noted journalist **Khushwant Singh** has recounted well the trauma and tragedy of Partition. Being an optimist, he

has hoped that such things would not happen again.<sup>44</sup> **But sadly the train from Pakistan has never stopped with hundreds of Hindu families continuing to come to India for their own safety and security.** It has rather converted into aero planes taking the handful of its relatively rich minorities and liberal citizens/intellectuals to newer 'safe' places across the globe.

Several families from Pakistan staying in Khanna, Rajpura and other towns of Punjab are seeking Indian citizenship, citing that they cannot go back **"as atmosphere of terror prevails there. Despite being in India for several years, the Indian Government is yet to accept their pleas for citizenship"**. They have been allowed to stay in India on year to year basis. In 2007 they applied for Indian citizenship at the Ludhiana Deputy Commissioner's office. Their application had been forwarded to the Department of Home Affairs and Justice, Punjab Government. From there the case had been forwarded with positive recommendation to the Secretary, Union Ministry of Home Affairs on May 26, 2010. Scores of Pakistani Hindu families have also requested Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to listen to their grievances. All such cases must be disposed off as early as possible. In the absence of citizenship rights, they face all kinds of problems related to employment, housing, health, education and others.

The Indian Constitution has various provisions pertaining to Citizenship of India. Under **Article 11**, Parliament may make provisions with respect to the acquisition of citizenship by them. It may apply liberally other relevant constitutional provisions in their case. **Article 6** of the Constitution provides for the rights of citizenship of certain persons who have migrated to India from Pakistan. **Article 7** has provisions for citizenship of certain migrants to Pakistan. **Article 8** provides for the rights of citizenship of certain persons of Indian origin (PIO) residing outside India. In harmony with the spirit of these articles, the Central Government can well assess **(1)** if any person or class of persons has come from Pakistan to India on account of civil disturbances or the fear thereof and **(2)** if he/she constitutes any threat to India. Thereafter, the Government can grant them Indian citizenship.

**Pakistani Hindus living in India for years, say that they don't want to return back**



(For detail see <http://pakistanhindupost.blogspot.in/2010/07/pakistani-hindus-in-india-for-years.html>)

**Needless to mention, New Delhi must never trust Pakistani politicians or generals in the saddle if they assure the needful for their minorities today. Experience shows that they are all birds of the same feather.** They are most likely to keep appeasing the Islamist segments of the population for the sake of their political power. They would care a fig if that leads to their minorities' rights violations.

Also, New Delhi must bear in mind that the Pakistani refugees living in India have no option but to return back home (i.e. India) as long as an Islamist-friendly regime is there in Islamabad. If they still go back, they might suffer worse at the hands of the Islamists. These anti-social elements have over the years become so powerful in Pakistan that none can dare raise his voice against their will. If someone did it, he would pay the price.



One may recall what happened to the leader of the **Pakistani Hindu community Sudham Chand Chawla**. In 2002 he successfully fought a legal battle to ensure voting rights for Pakistani minorities. Acting on his plea, the Pakistan Supreme Court restored voting rights to the minorities. Some Muslim organisations, too, helped him in his endeavour. But later he was killed. One may recall what happened to some other liberal-minded individuals in the country. **Writer Javed Ahmad Ghamidi** was hounded out of Pakistan into exile for denouncing the extremists' interpretation of *Quran*. His close associate **Farooq Khan** was slain for criticizing the extremists. **Salman Taseer, Governor of Punjab and Shahbaz Bhatti, Federal Minister for Minorities** were *assassinated for their defence of Non-Muslims persecuted under the blasphemy laws*.

Sometimes, even judges have had to pay a heavy price if they act against the wishes of the *Mullahs*. One may recall what happened to **Justice Syed Pervez Ali Shah**, who convicted those involved in Punjab Governor Salman Taseer's assassination. The Government has since located a country of exile for him. His fault: he had awarded death sentence to an assassin whom Pakistani Islamic clerics or mullahs gave the title of "**Hazrat**" (most respectable person or pious individual in Islam).

New Delhi should have no doubt by now, as to what these self-styled Islamists' faith is and they are up to. It needs to be aware of these Islamic bigots who preach and practise the doctrines of hatred and violence that they are not the remedy but the very root cause of the disease itself – the disease of Islamic fundamentalism

The Algerian militant Ali Behhadj has already crystallized their central tenet the best:

*"If faith, a belief, is not watered and irrigated by blood, it does not grow. It does not live. Principles are reinforced by sacrifices, suicide operations and martyrdom.... Faith is propagated by counting up deaths every day, by adding up massacres and charnel-houses. It hardly matters if the person who has been sacrificed is no longer there. He has won."*<sup>45</sup> All self-styled Islamists have the same agenda.<sup>46</sup>

## Chapter-V

### Concluding Observations : Ways to End Minorities' Predicament in Pakistan

It is amply clear from the foregoing analysis that the predicament of citizens in general and minorities in particular in Pakistan today is basically the result of the growing Islamic radicalization of the successive governments and their allies (both civilian and military), often working in tandem with each other, have surrendered to or acquiesced in for the reasons of their own self-interests.

After about a decade of Pakistan coming into existence the great Indian nationalist leader, freedom fighter and then Union Education Minister **Maulana Abul Kalam Azad** wrote:

“India gained her freedom (in 1947) but lost her unity. A new State called Pakistan was called into being. Pakistan was the creation of the Muslim League. The League had hardly any members who had fought for the independence of the country. They had neither made any sacrifice nor gone through the discipline of a struggle. They were either retired officials or men who had been brought into public life under British patronage. The result was when the new State was formed; power came into the hands of people who had no record of service or sacrifice. Many of the rulers of the new State were selfish people who had come into public life only for the sake of personal interest. **A majority of the leaders of the new State came from UP, Bihar and Bombay. In most cases they could not even speak the language of the areas which now formed Pakistan.** There was a gulf between the rulers and the ruled in the new State. These self-imposed leaders feared that if free elections were held, most of them had very little chance of being even returned. Their aim therefore was to postpone elections as long as possible and build up their fortunes and their power in the country. Ten years have passed and it is only recently that a Constitution has been framed. Even this does not seem final, for every now and then there are proposals for further changes in the Constitution”.<sup>47</sup>

Things have changed little since then. As a result, the notorious *Deobandi* Sunni stream of the puritanical *Wahhabi-Salafi* order has come to dominate the agenda of the State in Pakistan turning the plight of all its minorities from bad to worse over the years. **A wide net of radical madrassas has come to flourish across Pakistan, including in Karachi, Lahore, Quetta and Islamabad and the Federally**

**Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). Many of the *Deobandi* and *Ahl al-Hadith* madrassas openly preach hatred and violence against minorities (and terrorism against secular and democratic governments across the world).**<sup>48</sup> Some Deobandi Islamic schools have been encouraging and facilitating anti-Shia sectarian groups, such as *Lashkar-e-Jhangvi* (LeJ) and *Sipah-e-Sahaba Taliban* (SST). The Taliban also claim to be *Deobandi* adherents. *Ahl-e-Hadith* strongly supports the notion of armed *jihad* (military campaigns). *Lashkar-e-Tayyiba* (LeT) subscribes to it.<sup>49</sup> But dependent on their support for political power, the politicians can do little against them. Islamabad's decision to allow a parallel Islamic Sharia court system in the Malakand Division of the NWFP demonstrates well its weaknesses in the matter.

### Hope: Liberal and Progressive Forces in Pakistan

All, however, is not lost. Thanks to its original composite culture, the Pakistani society still has progressive-liberal elements “receptive to new ways of imagining their country’s identity...an emancipated media, a newly galvanized legal fraternity, an astonishingly vibrant artistic community, a clutch of combative historians and human rights activists in the forefront of new trends.”<sup>50</sup>

These enlightened, progressive elements seem to be fully aware that the movement for Pakistan was driven not by any genuine religious motives but by sheer economic and political interests of a salary-dependent class,<sup>51</sup> for which to build a State of its choice was necessary to cover up Indian history and to deny the proud centuries that lay just beneath the surface.<sup>52</sup> Like their counterparts in the advanced new world, these progressives believe in the evolution of life and values of social coexistence. **They reject the radical Islamists’ agenda that prescribes practices such as polygamy and early marriage, stoning criminals to death and amputating their limbs, killing homosexuals, lesbians, apostates and infidels, treating women like slaves and hating Hindus, Christians, Jews and other non-believers.**

*“They all seemed to be convinced that the magnitude of the threat posed to their innate composite culture by the self-styled radical Islamists’ is immense. This evil can be defeated with the support of its neighbours, including... India.”*<sup>53</sup> The radical Islamization of the State has not helped Pakistan remaining united even with the fellow Bengali Muslims in what was once East Pakistan (now Bangladesh), thereby, proving the futility of Jinnah’s much derided antediluvian ‘Two-Nation Theory’.

## **Pakistan Imploding Under Sectarian Anti-Minority Violence: A *Dawn*\* Report**

After decades of waging the propaganda war against India for its highhanded treatment of Kashmiris, Pakistan is now the subject of a similar campaign by India who has highlighted the plight of Shias being murdered by sectarian terrorists in Gilgit-Baltistan.

The comparative statistics on terrorist violence between India and Pakistan speak volumes of how the tide has indeed turned against Pakistan. The data compiled by South Asian Terrorism Portal reveals that in the current year alone, approximately 150 civilians, mostly Shias, have died in sectarian violence in Pakistan. In comparison only 23 violent deaths were recorded in the Indian controlled Kashmir in 2012. Even with a six-times larger demographic footprint, 62 civilians reportedly died in terrorist violence in India in 2012, whereas 734 civilians became victims of terrorist violence in Pakistan during the same time period. For decades, Pakistan had pointed finger at India and accused her of failing to protect the life and property of religious minorities. Today, Pakistan stands accused of the same where Muslims belonging to minority sects and others are being murdered. Sectarian violence has spread to all corners of Pakistan.

(For details see <http://dawn.com/2012/04/18/pakistan-imploding-under-sectarian-violence/>) \* *Dawn* is Pakistan's oldest and most widely read English-language newspaper.

Learning lessons from its own dismemberment (following 1971 Indo-Pak War) it can be safely predicted that if the conventional mindset of their rulers and allies were not set right, even the remaining parts of Pakistan viz Punjabis, Sindhis, Pathans and Baluchis might not hold together. **Baluchis, Pathans *et al* are already waging an armed campaign against the State of Pakistan for their independent Balochistan and Pakhtoonistan.** Pakistan will be asking for its own disintegration or implosion if it does not do a policy-correction with regard to the minority communities virtually dragging their lives under the State persecution.

## **Recommendations: Progressive Forces Must Fight Hard**

All such liberal and progressive forces must play a historic role in mitigating the predicament of the minorities in the country. The progressives owe it to the contemporary humanity to awaken the social conscience of the people of Pakistan and foil the designs of its rulers and allies. They should unite together and spread wisdom of democracy and pluralism to corner Pakistan's rootless myopic rulers with vested interests who have led the country to its present state of ruin and turmoil.

There is no alternative but waging the real *jihad* against these most repressive and retrogressive forces in Pakistan. The freedom of minorities is linked inevitably with that of the whole Pakistani society. If the dark forces represented by **Wahhabi-Deobandi** cult that have ruled the country are not rolled back, the evil will spread and cast its gloom over the rest of the country in due course .

Centuries ago, **American President George Washington** had warned: “*If the freedom of speech is taken away, dumb and silent may we be led, like sheep to the slaughter.*” How true! Because of the tolerance shown to the denial of freedoms in Pakistan so far, the nexus between the operators of the Pak system and the **Wahhabists** has now already led to a virtual Taliban-style rule in the entire Pakhtunkhwa (area of Pashtuns) or NWFP province of Pakistan.

The recent attack on **Malala Yousafzai**, “*who was shot in the head by fundamentalist thugs merely because she wanted to go to school*”,<sup>54</sup> shows militancy in the Swat regions is a long way from vanished. Swat happens to be the gateway to Islamabad for the troubled regions of FATA and North and South Waziristan.<sup>55</sup> From there the influence of **Wahhabi-Deobandi** gang can be spreading their ‘*Hate propaganda*’ faster all over Pakistan.

The barbaric acts by **Wahhabi** armed groups are being perpetrated with the support of the civilian and military Establishment of Pakistan to convert it into a **Wahhabi State**.<sup>56</sup> The radical Islamist politicians seek to eradicate sectarian diversity and localized forms of Muslim folk practices in the name of a standardized uniform and globalized version of Islam. The fate of former Pak Governor Salman Taseer, Ambassador Sherry Rahman, journalist Saleem Shahzad and other liberals have met for defending the non-believers or exposing the radical Islamists – all these instances has well shown what they can do in the country. Not to speak of the minorities, even **Sufi-oriented Barelvis** constituting over 50 percent of Pakistan population have, of late, come under their attacks. There were already major shootouts involving the Taliban and the extremist *Sipah-e-Sahaba* against them in 2006, 2007 and 2010.<sup>57</sup>

## Right Side of History

Fortunately, history is on the side of the progressive intelligentsia in Pakistan. The allies of **Wahhabism** - the **Deoband seminary**, **Tablighi Jamaat**, **Ahl al-Hadith** and the **Jamaat-e-Islami** have little social base in the country. **The masses in Pakistan have always been closer to the Islamic traditions indigenous to the undivided India, the traditions** “*characterized by their strong syncretistic bias in favour of*

*exploring common ground between Islam and India's indigenous religions.*"<sup>58</sup> Needless to say, it was perhaps the vital reason that the bulk of the Muslim population in independent India chose staying back in India rather than moving out to Pakistan.<sup>59</sup>

As for the well-informed sections of the Pak population are concerned, they do not think Islam is what the few radical Islamists and their cohorts preach and practise around. There is always existed a *thesis* in harmony with a near consensus across the contemporary enlightened world community on the matter related to religions in general and Islam in particular. The informed sections are well aware that there can be as many spiritual paths as spiritual aspirants or, say, as many gods as devotees. All gods are just the doorways leading to peace and happiness, or call it, unity between the body and the soul. From this viewpoint polytheism, pantheism, henotheism or any-theism is acceptable to the present-day humanity.<sup>60</sup>

### Courage of Conviction

The progressive elements in Pakistan could activate and use this social base in defeating the present rogue Islamist fascist forces in Pakistan. Sometimes, there are elements within who even side with the fascist elements for their own short term economic and other benefits. One might recall what they did in Nazi Germany or are still doing in different parts of the world, including Pakistan.

Pakistan is not different today. There are elements in its general community and intelligentsia, including the media, who act as tormentors or their collaborators to harass the minorities in different ways.<sup>61</sup> Sometimes, a section of the Pak media, is also aligned, overtly or covertly, with Pakistani Establishment. It seeks to project that all is well with Pakistan's minorities and there are no human rights violations.<sup>62</sup> **During the holy Muslim month of Ramadan in 2012, for instance, the television programme of Pak TV "Ramzan ki Shaan" (Glory of Ramadan) had a live broadcast of a young Hindu man's conversion to Islam.** On the show, a cleric asked the man why he decided to change his religion. The man replied that he did so after working at human rights NGO and fasting during Ramadan for the past two years. Afterwards, the man said a prayer to mark his conversion that drew cheers from the audience. The anchor of the programme was heard hailing the conversion. This section of the media also encourages anti-minority presenters and anchorpersons. It discourages progressive elements from presenting their views in the media. One channel has recently cancelled a show featuring Veena Malik an actress known for arguing with clerics.<sup>63</sup>

The progressive and secular forces would have to cut through such garbage. They must retain their courage of conviction and fight on. They are bound to prevail finally. The living fascists lack the moral force and are weak. The progressive intelligentsia of Pakistan may remember the morally bankrupt fascism prevailed in the past only because the conscientious lacked the courage even to oppose. This cannot be allowed to be repeated.

### **Citizens in World Democracies**

In advancing the struggle of the progressive intelligentsia in Pakistan, citizens of the democratic world, in general, and India and the United States, in particular, must come forward and extend it all their moral and political support. **Karl Popper** rightly observes:

“If we think history progresses, or that we are bound to progress, then we commit the same mistake as those who believe that history has a meaning that can be discovered in it and need not be given to it. For to progress is to move towards some kind of end, towards an end which exists for us as human beings. ‘History’ cannot do that; only we, the human individuals, can do it; we can do it by defending and strengthening those democratic institutions upon which freedom, and with it progress, depends. And we shall do it much better as we become more fully aware of the fact that progress rests with us, with our watchfulness, with our efforts, with the clarity of our conception of our ends, and with the realism of their choice. Instead of posing as prophets, we must be the makers of our fate. We must learn to do things as well as we can, and to look out for our mistakes. And when we have dropped the idea that the history of power will be our judge, when we have given up worrying whether or not history will justify us, then one day perhaps we may succeed in getting power under control. In this way we may even justify history, in our turn. It badly needs a justification...”<sup>64</sup>

**Advancing the central message of Popper, the citizens of democracies must prevail over their governments to pressurize Pakistan to respect the rights of its citizens.** It is observed that most often their governments have been guided by considerations other than human rights while dealing with Pakistan. There have, of late, been several protests against Islamic radicalism in Pakistan and other parts of the world.

In the Middle East some of the protests against what the radicals have done under the pretext of religious blasphemy caused to them by a film on Islam are said to have been “as lethal as past ones, including those that followed **Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini’s 1989 fatwa** (a legal opinion or ruling issued by an Islamic scholar) against the British writer **Salman Rushdie**, the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood's campaign in 2000 against Syrian novelist **Hayder Hayder**, the 2004 murder of **Dutch film maker Theo van Gogh** for producing a film called ‘Submission’ critical of Islam’s treatment of women and the 2005 Danish cartoon crisis.”<sup>65</sup> But the Governments of the democracies have, more of less, looked the other way in the matter.

Because of such an approach of the democratic governments, the rulers of Pakistan go scot free despite their blatant violations of human rights of the minority communities. Not only that, they even get rewarded on the world’s prestigious rights fora. Recently, Pakistan has been elected to the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC). *What a cruel joke on the present humanity by today’s rulers!*

It is time citizens of the democracies knock at the door of their own rulers and make them take concrete actions against their counterparts in Pakistan. The peoples of democracies taxpayers of the West, in particular are subsidizing Pakistan with billions of dollars worth of aid. They must tell their governments - this cannot be allowed to go to some tyrants or Islamic bigots in Islamabad.

Pakistan is a signatory to the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)**. It has already ratified the **International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD, 1969)**. **Pakistan also must ratify the UN’s International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR, 1976) assuring its citizens all civil and political rights, including the right to life, freedom or religion, freedom of speech and freedom of assembly, electoral rights and rights to due process and a fair trial.** Unfortunately, Pakistan has not ratified the ICCPR yet and international pressure must be mobilized so as to compel it to ratify it. Once Pakistan ratifies it, it will be left with no alibi for perpetuating the seemingly perpetual predicament of the minorities there.

The linkage between the dark forces in Pakistan and other parts of the world is well documented. **Salafists** (a militant group of extremist Sunnis who believe themselves the only correct interpreters of the *Quran* and consider moderate Muslims to be infidels) like the assassinated bin Laden, who constitute just a tiny minority of the world’s 1.4 billion Sunni Muslims, are on the rise. Ideologically inspired by



**Wahhabism** (the official State religion of Saudi Arabia being projected as the ‘purest’ school of Islam over all other schools) and financed by countries like Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Qatar with petro-dollars, **they are against the use of reason and out to brutalize and Talibanize all Muslim societies.** The radical fringe is also misusing the **Post-Arab Spring** freedoms to disrupt the transition to democracy in the Middle East. The chain of violence that has followed the Arab Spring from Cairo to Benghazi says a lot about their clout.<sup>66</sup>

The self-styled Islamists in Pakistan have had the same dark socio-economic-political agenda. They have to be packed and rolled back in order to defend and promote democracy and pluralism in the entire contemporary world, most importantly in Pakistan. In course of terror strikes such as 9/11, the citizens of the world’s second largest democracy have already tasted what the presence of the successive radical Islamists-friendly regimes in Islamabad could mean to the security and fundamental values of their own nation.

### **The Great American Tradition: Democracy and Freedom**

The citizens of the United States need to take a special interest in alleviating the suffering of the minorities in Pakistan. History bears out that the United States has been committed to the values of democracy since its birth and has contributed enormously to its development the world over. The American citizens could remind their Government of this great tradition and impress upon it to take appropriate measures aimed at making the State of Pakistan respect the rights of its minority citizens. Pakistan, like most of its counterparts in the Middle East, born out of the Wilsonian ideas (like ‘right to self determination’ etc) has claimed equality of sovereign Nation-States but cared little for their minority citizenry. The American citizens must tell their Government that it is just not acceptable. *If the Establishment in Islamabad does not cease oppressing its minorities, Pakistan may be deprived of the status of equality it presently shares with other States in the comity of nations in the UN.*

Significantly, in May 2009 a Carnegie Endowment for Peace study came forward with some pragmatic suggestions to help the suffering humanity (the religious minorities) in Pakistan. It counseled the United States Government to support: development of civil society and democratic institutions; Pakistani efforts to form a public-private education watchdog agency; non-governmental efforts to promote religious tolerance and pluralism; voices against cases of religious persecution and

repression for offenses, such as apostasy or blasphemy and integrating policies promoting religious tolerance into Pakistan's counter-insurgency policy. The American citizens could influence their Government to take them seriously and act.

### **The Great Indian Secular Tradition**

Citizens of India, particularly the members of the Indian Muslim community also must influence their Government to pressurize its counterpart in Islamabad to respect the basic human rights of the minorities there as the secular-democratic India respects and protects. Like other Indian citizens, the Muslims in this land have always been known for their love for freedom and pluralist values. In 1971 when Pakistan was crushing the human rights of its citizens in then **East Pakistan (now Bangladesh)**, they played a commendable role. On April 7, 1971 Congress MP of the Rajya Sabha **Akbar Ali Khan** said that **his religion was one of peace and goodwill**. He loathed that in Bangladesh atrocities and injustices were being perpetrated on a people struggling for freedom and justice.<sup>67</sup> Congress leader from Kashmir Syed Hussain said that Pakistan was created on hatred by Jinnah and it was now crumbling. What was happening in Pakistan had already demolished his fallacious Two-Nation Theory. In a letter to **The Times of India Zafar Futehally, a prominent liberal thinker said:** *“The Muslims of India have an opportunity to atone graciously and effectively for their part in the Partition and its aftermath by offering such relief as lies in their power to offer to the people of East Bengal.”*<sup>68</sup>

**Over 200 Muslims, men and women and children, demonstrated outside Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's house on August 6, 1971 to demand the recognition of Bangladesh.** The demonstration was organized by the *Jan Sangh*. **Anwar Ali Dehvi**, a member of the Metropolitan Council, presented a memorandum to Prime Minister Gandhi. Later, on August 12, twenty Muslim MPs came forward to appeal to all the Muslim countries and the civilized world to raise their voice against President **Yahya Khan's** acts *'which are barbarous and against all ethical values of Islam.'*<sup>69</sup>

The Muslims in India could do the same in the case of the minorities in Pakistan today. *The plight of minorities, if ignored, is prone to lead to the denial of freedom to the entire population of Pakistan in the long run. Given the agenda of the Pakistani Islamists, this negativity might spread to India and the rest of the world as well. All citizens of the Indian Republic must contribute to making Pakistan's struggle for democracy and human rights a success.*

There has been a great affinity between the two peoples since time immemorial. Not long ago, they were one Nation. Their common intellectual culture reflects itself best in the words of the fourteenth century Indian poet **Amir Khusro** said:

*“How exhilarating is the atmosphere of India!/There cannot be a better teacher than the way of life of its people/If any foreigner comes by, he will have to ask for nothing/Because they treat him as their own/Play an excellent host and win his heart/And show him how to smile like a flower.”*<sup>70</sup>

But as ill luck would have it, the people of Pakistan are deprived of that culture, that way of life, today. India’s liberal-progressive forces must reach out to their counterparts just across the border and help them, in whichever way it is possible, achieve back what they have always deserved but long been denied.

## Conclusion

The denial of rights and freedoms to citizens and minorities in Pakistan is against all the established principles of the contemporary political world. **At the root of the problem is a stream of Deobandi Sunni radical Islamism of the Wahhabi-Salafist order. The successive regimes in Islamabad have surrendered to or acquiesced in this radicalism as part of their strategy to capture or retain power.** The international community in general and the world's democratic governments in particular have done little to check this malaise. It is high time progressive forces in Pakistan and their counterparts in the world intervene and assert.

The State of Pakistan has to perform its duties and obligations towards all its citizens, if it wants to retain its present status as a member of the United Nations (UN) and the contemporary political world order. This is the call of the contemporary humanity no conscientious soul can turn away from. Lest, the suffering humanity in Pakistan - the miniscule religious minorities, many of them on the verge of being wiped out from the demography will never forgive us, never.

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APPENDIX I

PAKISTAN - CENSUS\*

POPULATION BY RELIGION (1998)

Administrative Unit		Muslim	Christian	Hindu (Jati)	Qadiani (Ahmadi)	Scheduled Castes	(In percent) Others
Pakistan		96.28	1.59	1.60	0.22	0.25	0.07
	Rural	96.49	1.10	1.80	0.18	0.34	0.08
	Urban	95.84	2.59	1.16	0.29	0.06	0.06
N W F P		99.44	0.21	0.03	0.24	*	0.08
	Rural	99.65	0.03	*	0.22	*	0.08
	Urban	98.42	1.06	0.11	0.31	0.01	0.09
F A T A		99.6	0.07	0.03	0.21	0.03	0.07
	Rural	99.63	0.04	0.03	0.21	0.03	0.06
	Urban	98.16	1.17	0.32	0.10	.007	0.23
Punjab		97.21	2.31	0.13	0.25	0.03	0.07
	Rural	97.66	1.87	0.15	0.19	0.05	0.08
	Urban	96.25	3.27	0.06	0.37	0.02	0.03
Sindh		91.31	0.97	6.51	0.14	0.99	0.08
	Rural	88.12	0.14	9.77	0.12	1.79	0.06
	Urban	94.67	1.84	3.08	0.17	0.14	0.10
Balochistan		98.75	0.40	0.49	0.15	0.10	0.10
	Rural	99.42	0.06	0.15	0.14	0.12	0.10
	Urban	96.61	1.49	1.58	0.16	0.05	0.10
Islamabad		95.53	4.07	0.02	0.34	*	0.03
	Rural	98.80	0.94	*	0.23	*	0.03
	Urban	93.83	5.70	0.03	0.40	*	0.03

\* Refers to a very small proportion.

\* No Government Census Data has been generated after 1998. This is the latest Census Data available.

E-mail: Website:censuspak@yahoo.com http://www.census.gov.pk www.census.gov.pk/religion.htm

APPENDIX - II

**Q&A: Pakistan's Controversial Blasphemy Laws As It Is**

**BBC News South Asia (20 November 2012)**

Pakistan's blasphemy laws carry a potential death sentence for anyone who insults Islam. Critics say they have been used to persecute minority faiths.

**What are the recent controversies?**

The laws have been contentious since the formation of Pakistan in 1947, but attention in recent months has been focused on a teenage girl with learning difficulties, known as Rimsha, who was accused of desecrating the Koran. An imam was later arrested for allegedly planting evidence. Another prominent case is that of Christian mother-of-five Asia Bibi, sentenced to death in November 2010 for insulting the Prophet Muhammad.

The following January Punjab Governor Salman Taseer - a prominent critic of the law - was assassinated by his bodyguard. The assassination divided Pakistan, with some hailing his killer as a hero.

In March 2011 Religious Minorities Minister Shahbaz Bhatti, a Christian who spoke out against the laws, was shot dead in Islamabad.

**When do the laws date from?**

The offences relating to religion were first codified by India's British rulers in 1860, and were expanded in 1927. Pakistan inherited these laws after the partition of India in 1947.

Between 1980 and 1986, a number of clauses were added to the laws by the military government of General Zia-ul Haq. He wanted to "Islamicise" them and also legally to separate the Ahmadi community, declared non-Muslim in 1973, from the main body of Pakistan's overwhelmingly Muslim population.

Christians have often fallen foul of the blasphemy laws

**What do the laws say?**

The law enacted by the British was general in nature, prescribing punishments for intentionally destroying or defiling a place or an object of worship or disturbing a religious assembly. They also made it unlawful to trespass on burial grounds or insult religious beliefs through the spoken or written word or by innuendo or visible representation. The maximum punishment under these laws ranges from one year to 10 years in jail, with or without a fine.



Beginning in 1980, a slew of clauses was added to the chapter of religious offences in the Pakistan Penal Code. These clauses can be grouped into two categories - the anti-Ahmadi laws and the blasphemy laws.

The anti-Ahmadi laws were included in 1984. They bar the Ahmadis from calling themselves or behaving as Muslims, preaching their faith and using Islamic terms for their places of worship and religious rituals.

The blasphemy laws were created and expanded in several instalments. In 1980, a clause was added to the law, making derogatory remarks against Islamic personages an offence, carrying a maximum punishment of three years in jail.

In 1982, another clause prescribed life imprisonment for "wilful" desecration of the Koran, the Muslim holy book. In 1986, a separate clause was inserted to punish blasphemy against the Prophet Muhammad and the penalty recommended was "death, or imprisonment for life", in that order.

### **Who is affected by the laws?**

The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) - a voluntary organisation - has been documenting blasphemy cases. It says that Muslims constitute the majority of those booked under these laws, followed by the Ahmadi community. According to the HRCP, since 1988 around 1,000 cases have been lodged for desecration of the Koran, while nearly 50 cases have been lodged for blasphemy against the Prophet Muhammad.

Lower courts have handed down hundreds of convictions in these cases, but nearly all of them have been reversed by the higher courts due to lack of evidence, faults in due process or obvious wrongful motives on the part of the complainants. Hundreds of Christians are among the accused - at least 12 of them were given the death sentence for blaspheming against the Prophet.

### **Are they fairly applied?**

At the level of the lower judiciary, there is often considerable pressure on the judges to order convictions, especially in cases relating to Ahmadis and blasphemy. But most decisions fail the test of the law at the higher judicial level, where offenders are often acquitted.

One reason is that organised religious groups are able to influence lower judges more easily than judges of the higher courts, although their influence there is growing too. Second, rights groups say most cases are motivated by local rivalries which are more easily exposed by the higher judiciary than the lower courts.

Legal experts say convictions under the law regulating blasphemy against the Prophet are easier to obtain because it does not establish a link between an offence and the intention, so that even an unintentional act can also be treated as a wilful offence. Do most Pakistanis support the laws?

A large majority of Pakistani people support the idea that blasphemers should be punished, but there is little understanding of what the religious scripture says as opposed to how the modern-day law is codified.

The response to recent events suggests that they largely believe the law, as codified by the military regime of General Zia-ul Haq back in the 1980s, is in fact straight out of the Koran and therefore is not man-made.

The organised religious groups are promoting this view and have been able to mobilise mass support in their favour. Their highest point came when the assassin of Governor Salman Taseer in 2011 was hailed as a hero by a large section of people across the country.

Hindus and Christians have often fallen foul of the blasphemy laws

### **Why do the authorities appear reluctant to amend them?**

Amending the blasphemy laws has been on the agenda of nearly all the popular secular parties. But none of them has made much progress - principally because of the sensitivities over the issue, but also because no major party wants to antagonise the religious parties which have on numerous occasions proved capable of bringing large numbers of protesters on to the streets.

In 2010, a member of the ruling Pakistan People's Party (PPP), Sherry Rehman, introduced a private bill to amend the blasphemy law. Her bill sought to change procedures of religious offences in such a way that these offences would be reported to a higher police official rather than the usual police station chief. In addition the cases would be heard directly by the higher courts instead of going through the local courts first.

The bill was passed on to a parliamentary committee for vetting. It was withdrawn in February 2011 under pressure from religious forces as well as some opposition political groups. Given the growing religious conservatism in Pakistan, the government is wary about losing public support over the issue, correspondents say.

(URL link: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-12621225>)

APPENDIX III

**Pakistan Penal Code (Act XLV of 1860)**

**Act XLV of 1860**

**October 6th, 1860**

Amended by: Protection of Women (Criminal Laws Amendment) Act, 2006, Criminal Laws (Amendment) Act, 2004 (I of 2005), Criminal Law (Amendment) Ordinance (LXXXV of 2002), Criminal Laws (Reforms) Ordinance (LXXXVI of 2002), etc.

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Whereas it is expedient to provide a general Penal Code for Pakistan:  
It is enacted as follows:-

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**CHAPTER XV**

**OFFENCES RELATING TO RELIGION**

**295. Injuring or defiling place of worship, with Intent to insult the religion of any class:**

Whoever destroys, damages or defiles any place of worship, or any object held sacred by any class of persons with the intention of thereby insulting the religion of any class of persons or with the knowledge that any class of persons is likely to consider such destruction damage or defilement as an insult to their religion. shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to two years, or with fine, or with both.

**295-A. Deliberate and malicious acts intended to outrage religious feelings of any class by insulting Its religion or religious beliefs:**

Whoever, with deliberate and malicious intention of outraging the 'religious feelings of any class of the citizens of Pakistan, by words, either spoken or written, or by visible representations insults the religion or the religious beliefs of that class, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to ten years, or with fine, or with both.

**295-B. Defiling, etc., of Holy Qur'an:**

Whoever wilfully defiles, damages or desecrates a copy of the Holy Qur'an or of an extract therefrom or uses it in any derogatory manner or for any unlawful purpose shall be punishable with imprisonment for life.

**295-C. Use of derogatory remarks, etc., in respect of the Holy Prophet:**

Whoever by words, either spoken or written, or by visible representation or by any imputation, innuendo, or insinuation, directly or indirectly, defiles the sacred name of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) shall be punished with death, or imprisonment for life, and shall also be liable to fine.

**296. Disturbing religious assembly:**

Whoever voluntarily causes disturbance to any assembly lawfully engaged in the performance of religious worship, or religious ceremonies, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to one year, or with fine, or with both.

**297. Trespassing on burial places, etc.:**

Whoever, with the intention of wounding the feelings of any person, or of insulting the religion of any person, or with the knowledge that the feelings of any person are likely to be wounded, or that the religion of any person is likely to be insulted thereby, commits any trespass in any place of worship or on any place of sculpture, or any place set apart for the performance of funeral rites or as a, depository for the remains of the dead, or offers any indignity to any human corpse or causes disturbance to any persons assembled for the performance of funeral ceremonies, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to one year, or with fine, or with both.

**298. Uttering words, etc., with deliberate intent to wound religious feelings:**

Whoever, with the deliberate intention of wounding the religious feelings of any person, utters any word or makes any sound in the hearing of that person or makes any gesture in the sight of that person or places any object in the sight of that person, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to one year or with fine, or with both.

**298-A. Use of derogatory remarks, etc., in respect of holy personages:**

Whoever by words, either spoken or written, or by visible representation, or by any imputation, innuendo or insinuation, directly or indirectly, defiles the sacred name of any wife (Ummul Mumineen), or members of the family (Ahle-bait), of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him), or any of the righteous Caliphs (Khulafa-e-Rashideen) or companions (Sahaaba) of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to three years, or with fine, or with both.

**298-B. Misuse of epithets, descriptions and titles, etc., reserved for certain holy personages or places:**

- (1) Any person of the Qadiani group or the Lahori group (who call themselves 'Ahmadis' or by any other name who by words, either spoken or written, or by visible representation-
  - (a) refers to or addresses, any person, other than a Caliph or companion of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), as "Ameer-ul-Mumineen", "Khalifatul-Mumineen", "Khalifa-tul-Muslimeen", "Sahaabi" or "Razi Allah Anho";
  - (b) refers to, or addresses, any person, other than a wife of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), as "Ummul-Mumineen";
  - (c) refers to, or addresses, any person, other than a member of the family "Ahle-bait" of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), as "Ahle-bait"; or
  - (d) refers to, or names, or calls, his place of worship a "Masjid";shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to three years, and shall also be liable to fine.
- (2) Any person of the Qadiani group or Lahori group (who call themselves "Ahmadis" or by any other name) who by words, either spoken or written, or by visible representation refers to the mode or form of call to prayers followed by his faith as "Azan", or recites Azan as used by the Muslims, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to three years, and shall also be liable to fine.

**298-C. Person of Qadiani group, etc., calling himself a Muslim or preaching or propagating his faith:**

Any person of the Qadiani group or the Lahori group (who call themselves 'Ahmadis' or by any other name), who directly or indirectly, poses himself as a Muslim, or calls, or refers to, his faith as Islam, or preaches or propagates his faith, or invites others to accept his faith, by words, either spoken or written, or by visible representations, or in any manner whatsoever outrages the religious feelings of Muslims shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to three years and shall also be liable to fine.

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