

History of Sectarianism in Pakistan: Implications for Lasting Peace

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Abstract

Sectarianism is an issue that is badly damaging the society. In history we will find many of its instances but since the last three decades the pattern of events highlights that the issue has become intricate. The society of Pakistan is by and large divided on ethnic basis and sectarian divide further added fuel to the fire. This issue is badly damaging the society on economic political as well as on societal basis. The implications of sectarian violence are posing great threats to the peace process in the country. This intricate issue demands clarity and comprehension.

Keywords: Pakistan; Sectarian violence; Government; Religion; Peace

Introduction

The Holy Quran in Sura Al-Hujarat (The Inner Apartments) says that the believers are but a single brotherhood: so, make peace and reconciliation between your two (contending) brothers; and fear Allah, that you may receive mercy [1].

Lack of tolerance and the sectarian divide are a misfortune for a society. It is against the teachings of our religion. Islam basically stands for peace. It prohibits prejudice. It teaches tolerance. Pakistan got independence in 1947 but the tragedy is that the citizens of Pakistan have not yet become a nation. After Indonesia, Pakistan has the world's largest shares of Muslims. Extremism and sectarianism was not a major issue in Pakistan before 1980s. For the last three decades, sectarianism is damaging the state as well as the society of Pakistan. It becomes a threat to the stability of Pakistan. Its negative effects are damaging the society on many fronts i.e. psychologically, economically, politically and socially.

The most unfortunate thing is that both the sects involved in violence, claims that they are serving the religion. They target the top leadership of opposing sect, religious scholars and innocent worshippers and claim that they are serving the religion. It has negatively impacted the soft image of Islam. It is a religion of peace but he growing attacks on sectarian lines have transformed this image into extremist religion. They considered their opponents as infidels. They want to deprive the opposite sect to the very basic right to live. Immediately, there is a dire need to adopt comprehensive ways for the development and welfare of the state. Pakistan has a long history of sectarian violence and this social evil is damaging the peace process in the country since the last three decades. This paper will explore the long-standing issue of sectarian violence and its implications for lasting peace in the country.

Historical Background of Sectarianism in Islam

In the history of Muslims, different groups emerged because of the explanation which was made to understand the ethos of the orders of

ALLAH and his Messenger Muhammad (SAW) [2]. The first political disparity that broke out in the Muslim Ummah was about the office of the caliph soon after the death of Prophet Muhammad in 632, and the Arab tribes who were following him, split over that who should inherit the both political and religious office of the Muslim Ummah. A group of famous early followers of Muhammad (SAW) nominated Abu Bakr, to be the first caliph. This decision led to the dissatisfaction a group at that time who favors Hazrat Ali for the office of Caliph. The same controversy continued over the second caliph Hazrat Umar e Farooq and the third Hazrat Usman e Ghani as well. When the battles of Jamal and Safeen were fought, these differences turned into religious. These disputed led to the emergence of different sects in Muslim history. For example, per some historians, Kharijites are considered to the first sect. Kharijaites were the supporters of Hazrat Ali until the battle of Safeen. But they withdrew their support to Hazrat Ali by saying that any human being has no right to become a judge in the matters of Din [3].

Another major group that emerged at that time was Shia. They remained loyal even to the offspring of Hazrat Ali [4].

There is a clear discrimination on the bases of religious thoughts between Shia and Sunni.

1. As per Shia School of thought; The Prophet Muhammad (SAWW) in his last Khutba has nominated Hazrat Ali as khalifa because he was the relative of Hazrat Muhammad (Saw). So, Ali was the only person who has spiritual influence to succeed Muhammad. The Shia believed that Ehle-e-Bait i.e Hazrat Ali (A.S), Hazrat Fatimatu Zahra (A.S), Hazrat Imam Hassan (A.S) and Hazrat Imam Husain (A.S) are most respected, most valuable and most honorable than any others peoples even Sahaba at the time of Hazrat Muhammad (SAWW) supremacy and thereafter till Qayamat.

2. As per Sunni School of thought this was the right of Muslim community to determine who would succeed the Prophet Muhammad, Sunni believed that the method of choosing leader clearly explained by Quran is the consensus of Muslim Ummah. So Sunni are following the Khulafa e Rashidin "the rightfully guided Caliphs" i-e Hazrat Abu-Bakr (R.A) was first Khalifa, Hazrat Umar (R.A) 2nd, Hazrat Usman Ghani (R.A) was 3rd and Hazrat Ali (A.S) fourth and this is the basic reason of conflict between Shias and Sunnis.

This was the basic reason of conflict between Shia and Sunni that who will lead the Islam. However, the Islam's split was cemented after the martyrdom of Hazrat Imam Husain (R.A) the Prophet Mohammed's grandson in 680 in Karbala. This was the starting point of violent trend between Shia and Sunni and the differences could not bridge since then.

After the death of Hazrat Ali, Umayyad dynasty started its rule in Damascus. After Umayyad, Abbasside established its rule at Baghdad. Hazrat Hussain rejected the rule of Caliph at that time. In 680, at Karbala, Yazid the then ruler of Umayyad dynasty killed Hazrat Hussain along with 72 other family members. This incident becomes a moral story for the Shias. "He becomes the crystallizing force around which a faith takes form and takes inspiration" [5].

Sunni believes that mostly Shias attribute divine qualities to their imams. They believe that this is a great sin. As per Sunni school of thought it is against the core teachings of Islam [6]. "Twelver Shiism is itself a kind of messianic faith". Their basic creed is that the meanings and words of Quran as well as the messages and Hadis of Prophet (SAW) will only be accepted as just and real, when the 12th Imam will return. Belief on Quran and Sunnah are necessary element of Islam but Shia and Sunni differ on this point which further gave birth to differences in religious and traditional differences [7].

Presently, Shia-Sunni relations are manifested by clashes specifically Saudi Arabia and Iran proxy war. Sectarianism is a major challenge from Pakistan to Yemen and is a major source of division between the Muslim Ummah. The power politics between communities strengthen the gulf between the two groups. Throughout the history, the split between Shia and Sunni were veiled from the public but presently the spit is overt and publicly known by everyone because of violent outbreaks. This extreme enmity between the two sects will strongly affect the sects regionally and globally [8].

Nature of Sectarianism in Pakistan

The sectarian conflict which started in 1980s in Pakistan claimed the lives of hundreds of thousand peoples. Pakistan which is home to many Shias after Iran, have faced serious threats to the stability and security of the state since Iranian revolution (with the treat of export) as well as a long struggle against the USSR occupation of Afghanistan. The sectarian Fatwas issued by the religious scholars and organizations has added fuel to fire. The violent activities of sectarian organizations like Sipa e Sahaba, Lashkr e Jhangvi, Jaishe Muhammad and Harkatul Mujahedin have ignited and resulted a tit for tat Shia response [9].

It is true that religious segregation plays an important role in sectarian violence but power struggle, political climate, cultural climate, and economic gains are the major factors that lead to sectarianism. In case of Pakistan, it has political motives even the perpetrators mostly use religious tactics to appeal the peoples. History witnessed that sometime public policy at national level will invoke a response and sometime there is a power struggle within the region between different stakeholders. Sometime by killing peoples in mass numbers, they are trying to undermine the state authority.

Pakistan undoubtedly blames Iran and Saudi for the sectarian strife since both the countries have funded and trained the people of their side. It is also a well-established fact that Pakistan is subjected to someone else's War. This overtly foreign intervention is the reason behind the fact that most of the Pakistani public is unknown about the internal dynamics of sectarianism. There are many of internal

dynamics of sectarian conflicts along with external. For example, the degrading value system i.e. lack of Islamic values in society, religious segregation and intolerance towards the opposing sect, Mal governance and power politics both at local and national level plays an important role in sectarian divide. Therefore, it can be said that the nature of sectarianism in obsessed with multiple dynamics which is not simple to comprehend in one sentence [10].

The Birth of Pakistan and Sectarianism

Pakistan since its vary inception has been familiar to conflict, but since the last two decades Islamabad had to face the new waves of militancy i.e. terrorism and sectarianism. Sect means a group of people, having multiple views within a same religion [11]. In Pakistan, Sectarianism is the most damaging factor that cause religious, social, political and security order of the country. The history witnessed that Pakistan was the first country on the world's map ever established in the name of religion. Pakistan emerged as a Muslim majority state having more than 90 percent of Muslim population. The main objective behind its creation was to provide a productive environment to the Muslim of sub-continent, to lead their lives per the teaching of Islam and practice Islamic values independently (Figure 1 and Table 1.1-1.3) [12].

The father of nation, Quid e Azam was informed that Pakistan has diverse sects and multi ethnicities. So, he warned the nation at many occasions about the evils of this kind of behavior. In 1948 at Dacca he said, "If you want to build up yourself into a Nation, for God's sake give up this provincialism. Provincialism has been one of the curses; and so is Sectionalism-Shia, Sunni etc. [13].

At that time of Pakistan movement, the sectarian issues were irrelevant. However, within a few years after independence the sectarian strife raised its head. The conservative element in the constitution making body demands the inclusion of certain provisions in the Objective Resolution of 1949 [14]. At the same time, all parties Shia conference were established to safeguard the interests of Shia community. It is followed by another important organization called Idara-e-Tahafuz-e-Haqq-e-Shia. It was established in 1953. At that time too there were confrontation between Shia and Sunnis on the mourning processions and Muharram processions.

Nevertheless, sectarian issues were not major issues at that time. The 1st incident in this regard was anti Ahmdiya riots in 1953 at Lahore. Because of this incident the first martial law was imposed which was limited to Lahore. After this incident, sectarian clashes were there but the conflict was on minor scale. During Ayub khan reign many of sectarian incidents occurred but the most violent incident was the attack on Muharam procession in a town near Khairpur Sindh. At the end of 1970s a number of events led to enhance the sectarian differences that ultimately lead to establish the culture of violence in Pakistani society [15]. Among these events the impact of Iranian revolution and the empowerment of Shia community by the Iranian proxy tactics, the inundation of Afghan refugees to Pakistan as a result of soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the role played by Pakistan in Soviet Afghan war and introduction of Islamization policies by Zia ul Haq are the most prominent factors. These factors increased sectarian violence in Pakistan and the internal security situation becomes worsen. Thus, after the introduction of Zia Islamization policies, the Shia mobilizes themselves and marched toward Islamabad to show the strength and demand their rights. This highly organized movement was named as Tahrik-i Nifaz-i Fiqh-i Ja'fariyya. They demand that

every Islamic school of thought should be free to govern itself according to their own interpretation of what Quran and Sunnah said. This mobilization of Shia community after Iranian revolution cause sizeable dismay to many Sunnis, and Sipah-i Sahaba was established in 1985. The militant clashes between Sunnis and Shia started since early 1980s. There are numerous ups and down in these clashes and a number of innocent peoples have been targeted in this vicious menace. Although in the year 1995 Mili Yak Jehiti Council were established but it did little and the history reveals that the year from 1996 to 1998 were the years that witnesses highest number of brutal sectarian killings.

The organized state of conflict that is presently creating disturbance can be traced back to 1988 when Tehrek e Nifaz e Fiqa Jafria leader Arif Hussain Al-Hussaini was murdered. Similarly, in 1987 when Maulana Habib ur Rehman and Allama Ehsan Elahi were killed at Lahore during a meeting near Minar-e-Pakistan. A registered sharp in violence can be found in February 1990 when SSP leader Maulana Haq

Nawaz Jhangvi was murdered. The history witnessed a number of casualties and burning of houses and shops. At the end of the same year when Sadiq Ganji an Iranian counsel general was killed and the clashes based on sectarianism gain international attention [16]. Today a number of sectarian outfits are working in different parts of Pakistan. Sectarian extremists particularly the Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP, 4,000-7,000 “trained fighters”) and its side shoots, Lashkar-e-Jhangvi. Both are now firmly affiliated with Al Qaeda. Both are mainly operating in southern Punjab, federally administered tribal areas, parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Baluchistan and Karachi [17].

Comprehending the root cause and pattern of violence in the case of Pakistan is extremely difficult as the society is ethnically heterogeneous and is divided on ideological and political lines. However, the main cause of radicalization can be traced back as a result of poverty, economic deprivation, social injustices, sectarian division, illiteracy and political marginalization [18].

Sr. #	Organization Name	Sect	Year
1	Tehreek e Taliban Pakistan	Sunni	2007
2	Collaboration between Jundullah and Alqaeda	Sunni	2004
3	Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ),	Sunni	1996
4	Tehreek-e-Nifaz-e-Shariat-e-Mohammadi (TNSM)	Sunni	1994
5	Sipah e Muhammed	Shia	1994
6	Suni Tehreek	Sunni	1992
7	Popular Islamic Army	Shia	1987
8	Sipah e Sahaba	Sunni	1985
9	Therek e Nifaz e Fiqa e Jafria	Shia	1979

Table 1.1: Sectarian Based Organizations in Pakistan.

Source: Dawn news

Sr. #	Leader	Organization Name	Sect	Year
1	Saleem Qadri	Sunni Tehreek	Sunni	2007
2	Haroon Qasmi	Sipah-e-Sahaba	Sunni	2005
3	Agha Ziauddin	Millat-e-Islamia	Shia	2005
4	Mufti Shamzai	M-e-Tawan-e-Islami	Sunni	2004
5	Maolana Azam Tariq	Sipah-e-Sahaba	Sunni	2003
6	Riaz Basra	Sipah-e-Sahaba	Sunni	2002
7	Zia ur Rehman Faruqi	Sipah-e-Sahaba	Sunni	1997
8	Israr ul Qasmi	Sipah-e-Sahaba	Sunni	1991
9	Sadiq Ganji	TNFJ	Shia	1990
10	Haq Nawaz Jhangvi	Sipah-e-Sahaba	Sunni	1990
11	Allama Al Hussaini	TNFJ	Shia	1988

12	Mufti Jafar Hussain	TNFJ	Shia	1983
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Table 1.2: Leadership Killed on Sectarian Basis.

Source: www.wikipedia.com

Year	Incidents	Injured	Killed
2015	15	140	117
2014	92	312	210
2013	128	914	525
2012	173	577	507
2011	30	297	203
2010	57	1170	509
2009	106	398	190
2008	97	505	306
2007	341	630	440
2006	38	349	201
2005	62	354	160
2004	19	619	187
2003	22	103	102
2002	63	257	121
2001	154	495	261
2000	109	NA	149
1999	103	189	86
1998	188	231	157
1997	103	219	193
1996	80	168	86
1995	88	189	59
1994	162	326	73
1993	90	247	39
1992	135	261	58
1991	180	263	47
1990	274	328	32
1989	67	102	18
Total	2976	9643	5037

Table 1.3: Sectarian Based Incidents in Pakistan from 1989 to 2015.

Source: South Asia terrorism portal.

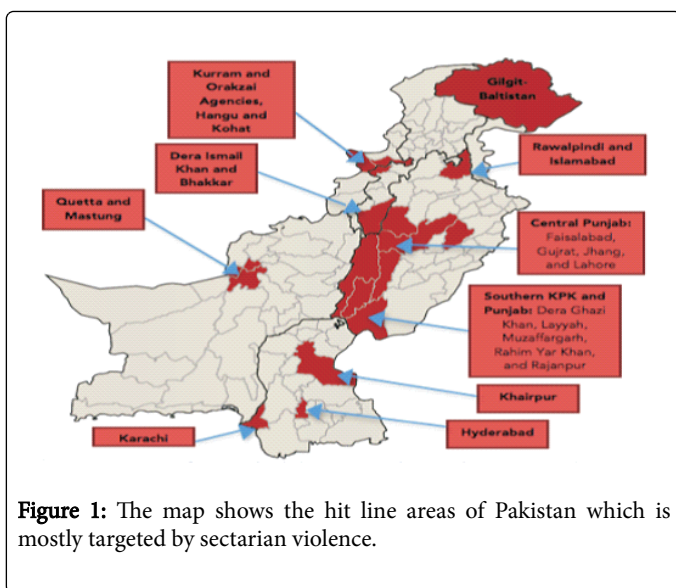


Figure 1: The map shows the hit line areas of Pakistan which is mostly targeted by sectarian violence.

Implications of Sectarianism

Most of the primary data reveals that sectarian divide has been created by the Westerns; and the basic causes behind the promotion of sectarian differences is to defame the nuclear capability of Pakistan and the ideology of Islam about social and economic fields, the historical antagonism of Christians and Jews against Muslims and the enemies of Islam and Muslims find fertile soil in the conservative ideology of our religious institutions and the government failure. These factors lead the Muslim society to become divided into camps of believers and infidels. Religion plays the role of social cement by binding people of different ethnic origin together. The evil of sectarianism breaks this band and generates host of social, political and economic problems for both the state and society.

Social implications

Sectarianism has profound social implications. Free movement, offering prayers and education becomes difficult. It leads to poverty and other social problems are the direct consequence of this social problem. Frequent incidents of target killing displace the local population. It affected the social fabric of society.

Perpetual fear

Sectarianism means possessing intense religious and political views or holding an extreme action on the basis of their convictions. When these beliefs are converted into actions several strategies are planned to attack the opposing sect. these terrorist acts against the opposite sect creates an environment of fear. The primary data of this research reveals that almost all the respondents were afraid of being attacked. The victims were not even ready to discuss the matter [19].

Similarly the primary data reveals that growing sectarian violence creates fear in society. The daily activities are greatly affected. The people cannot freely move to educational institutions, bazaars and other places because of fear. They feel unsafe and insecure. The peoples are in a state of confusion and depression specially the victim families. For example, one of the victim respondents said that "I feel fear, even to go to market and mosque. There is no security of my life and wealth.

As my two sons and brothers have been targeted, therefore I am worry about my other family members".

In general, the people living in Pakistan are living in fear. All the segments of the society like government employees, traders, students are greatly affected. The result of this fear is that hundreds of families fleeing from their host communities and seeking refuge in other areas.

Loss of life

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) declared at Khutba-Huja-Tul-Wida, equating the life, property and honor of human life as sacred, laid down the foundation of judicious, human and virtuous society. These were laid as the foundation stone of an Islamic society. It is said by the Prophet Muhammad that whosoever kill an innocent soul will throw himself out of Islam. It is an act of infidelity. Only that society will be termed as Islamic where the life and honor of human life will be preserved. The growing sectarian conflict in Pakistan is trying to destroy and divide the society [20].

Defamation of Islam

Being the follower of Islam and being a Muslim it's really painful to bear the gulf between the two sects of Islam. Was a statement presented by a Shia Muslim? The differences within the two communities of Muslim gave the way to the western countries to projected Islam as a religion of violence and extremism. Islam is perceived to be the religion of extremists and terrorists. Research reveals that it is even perceived to be coercive with violence, human rights abuses, abuses against minorities, in the western media. Whenever any act of violence is taken place in any part of the world they directly blamed it on Muslim without any evidence. But when we study the Holy Quran and Sunnah of the prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H), it presents the accurate picture of Islam. We cannot found any sectarian split in any verse of the Holy Quran. We cannot found any verse which upheld the violence against humanity [21]. Islam means submission to the will of God and promoting peace on other.

The Saudi sheikh Abdul Aziz while addressing millions of Hajj pilgrims "those spreading anarchy and shedding blood in any community are enemies of Allah and not followers of Islam". He further said that "Islam is a religion of peace and totally rejected the acts of terrorism. The responsibility to spread the message of peace is a responsibility of religious scholars."

Pakistani society is mostly divided on sectarian basis. It is observed that that basic tenet of Islamic society that is tolerance and forgiveness is negated. The Muslim of today is portraying a vengeful Islam where there is no tolerance to other groups. The languages used by them in threatening are harsh. There is no surprise in the fact that sectarianism has greatly damaged the image of Islam [22].

The primary data of this research shows that the genuine cause of sectarianism is that the Muslims have forgotten the real essence of Islam. They are unaware about the teachings of an Islamic culture. I believe that wherever there is anarchy and violence, there is no Islam.

Loss of freedom

It is a matter of fact that Islam stands for peace. It stands for the wellbeing of humanity. Islam is the religion that preaches equality of all the citizens regardless of their creed and cast. Islam is totally against the sectarian divide within the Muslim community. The sectarian divide in Pakistan restricts one's freedom [23]. It is a fundamental

human right to practice one's religion. But the primary data shows that because of sectarian divide, religious intolerance is moving in upward direction. Both the communities are equally responsible for this growing intolerance said a respondent.

Economic Implications

Poverty: Pakistan is state facing acute level of poverty, more than half of its population living below the poverty line, although there are many factors that lead to poverty. Sectarian clashes are one among these factors. Almost all the respondents are agreed to the point that sectarianism led to poverty. The extremist activities greatly damaged the infrastructure. It is said that extremism flourished in poverty [24]. The implications of sectarian violence are many. The one among them is economic turmoil.

Foreign investment: The growing sectarian divide and violence have a severe negative impact on Pakistan economy. The routine basis bomb blasts and targeted attacks restrict the business activities. This situation affects the investor's behaviors. The investors are reluctant to invest money in Pakistan. For a developing country like Pakistan, foreign direct investment is a key component. But the daily basis incidents of sectarianism have damaged the investor confidence and hence it led to decrease the foreign direct investment, as a result lower economic growth [25].

Migration: A number of people migrated from their native places to other areas of Pakistan because of sectarianism. Mostly Shias have left their homes, property and business due to the fear of being targeted. Unemployment is already a great problem and it becomes a serious problem for providing employment to these peoples. For example, one of the migrant people has responded that, "I sold my house on very low price and purchased on very high cost in another city. I sold my house which was 3 ½ canals at D.I. Khan, but I could hardly get 10 Marlas in another city. I also had to take loan because I sold my house at very low price because of the threats posed to our lives"

Infrastructural loss: The infrastructure is badly damaged in Pakistan because of the extremist's activities in Pakistan [18]. Since 1990s when sectarian conflict raised its head, the GDP growth of the country was rapidly slowing. There is a rapid rise in poverty since 1990s [26-28]. The Bloomberg news in 2012, the impact of terrorism in 177 countries of the world since 1970-2008 shows the economic growth as negative. The report shows that impact of terrorism is the shifting of resources from investment spending to government spending.

Political implications

Distrust towards government: Most of the primary research shows mistrust towards the government. They were of the view, that government is responsible for all the wrong doing because they are incapable enough to curb this long standing issue. According to a victim it is said that if the establishment want to tackle the issue it can be resolved. The government is not interested in serving the people and handling their issues. Another respondent gave the example of Para Chinar [29-31]. He said that "after the murder of Arif Hussaini the relations were intense and huge violence were broken out. When the political agent Mehsood ur Rehman took charge, he adopted such policies which created exemplary peace in the region. So if the government and the institutions want to create peace and positive efforts are adopted. No one could dare to create instability". Another respondent said that, "When there will be no justice, no effective government policy, the mistrust will be generated".

Weakens national unity: Sectarianism is a menace that leads to weakens national unity. Almost all the respondents are agreed to the point that Pakistan is a multi-ethnic multi lingual multi religious nation. If the feeling of hatred and bigotry will be created among the different sects and if it is so severe that both the sects are at the point of killing each other. It will lead to state of civil war. Target killing and suicide attacks on mosques and imambargahs, targeting the prominent people of either sect undoubtedly pose threats to the nation of Pakistan [32-35]. And the gulf between Shia and Sunni is so severe that the problem is now challenging the national integration. It will definitely create an atmosphere of civil war. The differences between the two sects were historical but the state of hatred and violence wards each other was not the law of the beloved Pakistan [36]. The sectarian conflict results in the breakdown of rule of law. The breaking of rule of law will be resulted in the weakening of nation state [37]. The western countries are also to moderate religious organizations as a policy strategy since 9/11 to counter the radicalization in Pakistan. This foreign funding is a major cause of sectarian conflict in Pakistan. This intervention is actually harming the national integration in Pakistan [38].

Ruin Pakistan soft image: The gravest challenge faced by Pakistan is the growing violence based on sectarian differences. When the innocent people are killed of either sect particularly at religious places, the image of Pakistan is misrepresented at international community. The growing number of target killing and suicide attacks represents that the state of Pakistan is incapable to check and punish those elements which is involved. Though Pakistan is a victim state but it is labeled to be the sponsor of extremism [39]. Though Pakistan suffered a lot still Pakistan is considered as a safe haven for extremism. So we cannot afford to ignore the growing rate of sectarian violence as it can destabilize Pakistan as well as the region at large.

Presently, the Lashkr e Jhangvi group, the Tehrek e Taliban and Jandullah group is targeting the Shias in different part of the country. The focus of some of these militant groups can be killing of Shias and the focus of others may be targeting the state of Pakistan [40]. One of the Pakistan based professor while interviewing to a TV channel said; Islam teaches honor, respect and peace for all. We are Muslims but our habits and deeds are like Hindus. We cannot tell the truth to our fellow being because we lack tolerance to listen the truth. We are not taught to listen the facts. We become failed to keep Bangladesh with us and now demanding Kashmir at the movement when we are unable to keep Sunni and Shias together. The government of Pakistan is unable to address the problems of the masses. Allah, give the courage and the wisdom to the Muslims so that they stop killing each other's.

Prominent Scholar Christine Fair in 2015, comments on Pakistan in this way; in Pakistan, the religious organizations, have targeted the minorities for a long term including the Muslim Shias, Christians and Hindus, because they are not Muslims. This leads to a common thinking in international community that Pakistan is not safe for the non-Muslims [41].

Conclusion

It can be concluded that sectarianism is an act of utilizing religious means to mobilize one sect against another for political and economic gains. Although the perpetrators of sectarian violence may use religious relics but power struggle, political climate, cultural climate and economic gains are the major factors that lead to sectarianism.

Generally sectarian violence has seriously affected the religious, socio-economic, political as well as diplomatic businesses of Pakistan. Pakistan is a place where tribes, sectarian groups or some political gangs are more powerful as compared to central government. And this is the reason sectarianism is dramatically widening and intensifying in Pakistan. Sectarianism and terrorism had never struck Pakistan with such intensity even since its birth as it has been for the last three decades. Suicide attacks, targeted killing of religious leaders of either sect, bombing or explosions in mosques and imambargahs are continuously increasing the feelings of vulnerability in the Pakistan. This intense situation has put the entire social structure of Pakistan at stake. So, there is an urgent need to tackle the sectarian menace. But there is lack of vision and strategies to tackle sectarian menace in Pakistan.

The research shows that sectarianism is a menace that weakens national unity. Most of the secondary data reveals that Pakistan is a multi-ethnic, multi lingual and multi religious nation. If the feeling of hatred and bigotry will be created among the different sects and if it is so severe that both the sects are at the point of killing each other. It will lead to state of civil war.

The government must adopt measures to address socio-economic inequities which have increased during the last three decades. Unless the government will not strives to identify the root cause of such evils addressed them effectively, ideological appeals and militancy will continue to attract the alienated masses.

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