

Are Suicide Bombers Coming from Madaris (Islamic Schools) in Pakistan?

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Abstract

This paper studies the association between suicide terrorist and Madaris (Islamic Schools). There is a general myth (at least in the media) that the Madaris in Pakistan are the factories of producing suicide terrorists. After every suicide attack in Pakistan, fingers are pointed towards some unknown tribal Islamic fundamentalist group and the association of the attacker is linked with a Madrassah (singular or Madaris) where he was supposed to be indoctrinated for years to become a holy warrior. We took the secondary data on suicide terrorism from various sources and attempted to answer the sudden rise of suicide terrorism in Pakistan after 2006. We find no primary association between Madaris and suicide terrorism.

Keywords

Suicide, Suicide Terrorism, Attacks, Madaris, Madrassah, Pakistan, History, Islam, Islamic Fundamentalism, Religion.

Introduction

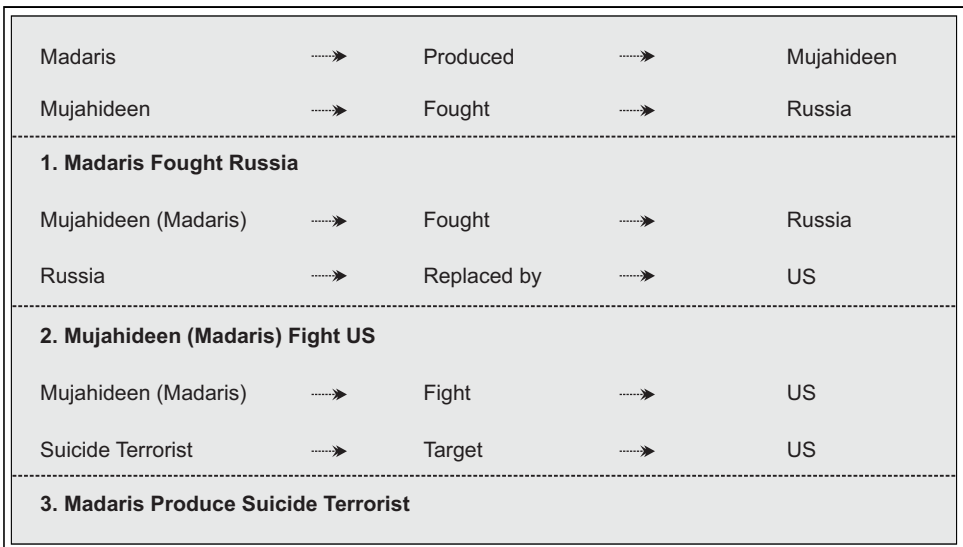
Soldiers fight to protect a cause and sometimes also get killed in the process. However, the suicide terrorists fight by killing themselves to kill others in order to protect the cause. It is a tactic of warfare with such rigour that the world never experienced before. While suicide attacks are not a phenomenon unknown to history, nonetheless, since 9/11 they have received a significant impetus and new dimensions. The recent trend in suicide attacks is alleged with the Madaris (plural of Madrassah, meaning Muslim education institutions, Islamic seminaries). The Madaris are constantly labeled as factories of terrorists and suicide bombers.¹ The Feb 15, 2010 story of one of the leading newspaper of Pakistan—The News—while quoting Dr. Fauzia Saeed, a Social Scientist from Pakistan with a PhD from the University of Minnesota, reported that “Every suicide bomber is coming from Madrassah.”² Reporting the same seminar, The News severely criticized the role of Madaris in Islamabad. This is not limited only to Pakistan's self defining “progressive” circles but it has become a common norm for the leftists around the world to allege the Madaris for promoting terrorism and producing suicide bombers, though little evidence supports their claims.³

In Pakistan, the Madrassah structure was used against the Russian invasion of Afghanistan in last quarter of the previous century. However, during Afghan Jihad, no suicide tactic was used against the Russians. Nonetheless, the suicide attacks are used against the US and allied forces in Afghanistan as well as in Pakistan—against

the security forces and also against the civilians. Now that the Madaris were used against Russia and the students of the Madaris were made into holy warriors, it is quite logical to assume that the same Mujahideens (holy warriors) who battled against Russia are also fighting against the US. In this process, they are using every mean to compel US to withdraw its forces from a land they consider as their own. Suicide attack is one of these means utilized by the supposed Mujahideens who were produced by the Madaris (See Box 1 for the logical relationship).

At first glance, the conclusion seems valid. However, a little more depth of analysis and reasoning arises numerous questions regarding the claim. Why were Madaris not opting for suicide attacks against Russia but are using against US and NATO forces? Besides this, a more fundamental question one would ask is that are the Madaris really involved in producing suicide bombers? Is there any actual link between suicide terrorists and Madaris? Does the research support the common perception? These are a few questions which this paper will discuss. Before taking them into full consideration, we need to understand the background of Madaris in the Muslim world in general and in Pakistan in particular.

Box 1: Madaris - Suicide Logical Relationships



Uzma Anzar informs the readers to understand the difference between a Madrassah and a Maktab. For her, a Maktab (or a Koranic School) is a place where Muslim children go to read and recite only the Koran (also spelled as Quran or Qur'an). She adds that a Maktab can function in varying environments, in mosque, under a tree, in the house of the Koran teacher or under an open sky. [It needs to be

be added here that each and every mosque, in general, in the Muslim society functions as a Maktab, providing only the facility of reading and reciting the Koran, even if the children do not understand it]. The term Madrassah, for Uzma Anzar, is used for a bit more organized institutions with classrooms and teachers for different levels. Many Madaris, she adds, provide boarding facilities for students free of charge. [The term, Darul Ulum is also sometimes used for Madaris]. In other words, a Madrassah is an institution of advance studies in Muslim societies while a Maktab teaches only the basic skills of reading and reciting the Koran.⁴ The term Madrassah is derived from Dars (درس) which means to learn, therefore, the official reports of the Ministry of Education, Islamabad, Pakistan use the term Deeni Madaris to describe the Islamic schools in Pakistan because a Madrassah literally means any learning institution, both secular and religious.

History of Madaris

Acquiring knowledge has a significant position in Islam. Muslims are encouraged to acquire knowledge and for this purpose there are no geographical boundaries. One of the Hadith (sayings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (SAW)) states that “seeking of knowledge is the duty of every Muslim (man and woman).” In the initial years of Islam, the teachings of Koran and Hadith were being imparted through the mosques. However, as Islam started to expand gradually throughout the East and the West of Arab, it became necessary to cater for the needs of the non-Arab Muslims for religious knowledge and understanding. Thus, a cadre of Muslim experts was created who would develop sophisticated writings and textbooks on Fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence), Sunna (Prophet's traditions), Hadith (Prophet's sayings), and Tafseer (the interpretation of the Koran). It began the tradition of Madrassah, the center for higher learning the initial purpose of which was to preserve religious conformity through uniform teachings of Islam for all.⁵

The first proper Madrassah was established by the Saljuk minister Nizam-ul-Mulk Tusi in Baghdad in the year 1067.⁶ Tusi introduced two types of education in this Madrassah: scholastic theology to produce spiritual leaders, and earthly knowledge to produce government servants. Similar kind of Madaris were later established by Tusi all over the empire which, in addition to imparting Islamic knowledge also imparted education in varying fields such as science, philosophy and public administration and governance. Haqqani credits Nizam-ul-Mulk to be the father of the Islamic public education system.⁷ Further, Tusi himself is the author of a renowned book (among early Muslims) on public administration called Siyasat Nama (the way to govern).⁸

For much of the later centuries, the Madrassah system remained unchanged, produced numerous renowned scholars both in religious and secular fields. e.g. Ibn Rushd, the mathematicians, al-Zarqali and al-Bitruji, and the physician Ibn Zuhr,

Al-Ghazali, Ibn Sina and Ibn Khaldun to name a few. However, with the gradual decline of Muslim world by the hands of Crusaders, Mangols, and later, by European colonization, the Muslim scholarship also went into a decay, resulting in closing of the door to Ijtihad (independent reasoning).⁹ However, the Indian Sub-continent was one of the many regions where the Muslim Madaris went through a radical shift.

Indian Sub-continent and Madaris

One editorial paper by Jamiatul Uloom-ul-Islamia, Banuri Town, Karachi, finds out that before the arrival of the East India Company to the Indian Sub-continent, Madrassah education was the only formal means of educating the Muslim masses. Delhi, Agrah, Lahore, Multan, Jonpure, Lakhnaw, Kherabad, Patna, Ajmer, Deccan, Madras, Bengal and Gujrat were the famous cities for their advance institutions of education. The paper also finds out that “before the arrival of the British to Bengal, there were about eighty thousand (80,000) Madaris in Bengal, which averages at 400 populations per Madrassah.”¹⁰ Similarly, in the times of Muhammad Shah Tughlaq, there were 1,000 Madaris in the city of Delhi.¹¹ The source of income for these Madaris was the properties allotted to them by the Nawabs (local rich and royal chief) etc. However, with the arrival of British and their commitment to introduce an alternative system of education in India, the old system of Madaris gradually started disintegrating. Particularly, the 1857 war of independence brought a very hard time on Madaris in the Indian Sub-continent as Madaris were alleged for producing Mujahideens (holy fighters) for this war.¹²

The education system, which is prevalent in Indian and Pakistani Madaris today, was devised by Mullah Nizam-ud-Din Siharvi (1747), Lakhnaw, India. The curriculum he devised included twenty one (21) different subjects. Medicine, Physics, History, Geology and Mathematics were compulsory subjects. However, these very important subjects are taught nowhere in Madaris in India or Pakistan today. Further, the curriculum consisted of seventy two (72) renowned and authentic books on these subjects (See Table I for details of subjects and books).¹³

After the war of independence in 1857, Maulana Qasim Nanotvi established Madrassah Deoband at a small village in Soharanpur district in 1867. It was the first formal Madrassah establishment after 1857. It was different though. The Madaris before the British arrival were funded by the Nawabs.¹⁴ However, Dar-ul-Uloom Deoband was funded through public charities and donations. The other difference, though no reference is available for this, was that this new Madrassah imparted only the religious knowledge to the students. The secular education was left to the British education system. This was the beginning of the present environment which prevails throughout majority of the Madaris in India and Pakistan. This radical shift in

Madaris education in Indian Sub-continent reduced the influence the Ulema (religious scholars) had on the society. Further, the role of Madaris was significantly reduced. Their graduates were excluded from government employment and there was very little substitute for this.¹⁵

The reason for this “pauperization” of Madaris needs to be researched in details. In brief, on the one hand, the British missionary policy of Christianization of the masses through missionary schools and colleges created fear amongst the Muslim Ulema about the future of the faith. While on the other hand, preservation of the religion as a duty compelled them to take steps and revert to the very basics of the religion. The picture seems to be similar to as when the Mongols started conquering the Muslim states. At that time, the same happened. The Madaris reverted to the very basics of the religion and the doors of Ijtihad were closed down. Mufti Taqi Usmani also concludes that the secularization of educational policies of the British in India and the bias towards religious education created a stir in the Muslim scholars. They feel apprehensions over the future of religious teachings. This was the reason why the education system was divided into two: religious and secular, by Muslims of the sub-continent.¹⁶

This brief historical picture concludes that whenever the Muslim society is under invasion from another force, it reverts to the very basics. Table I puts some more light on this thesis. It is obvious from the table that along with religious subjects, the secular subjects were also part of the curriculum of Madaris in Dars-e-Nizami (the curriculum of Nizami). Logic, Philosophy, Mathematics, Medicine, Physics, and History were part of the curriculum. However, much of these subjects have been excluded today, particularly after the 1857 war of independence, the Madaris reverted to the very basic subjects of the curriculum—Serf-o-Nahw (Arabic Grammar), Fiqh, Tafseer, Hadith etc—because of the perceived threat to the faith. It is pertinent to note that out of these seventy two (72) books, neither a single book mentions any teaching on suicide jihad / suicide terrorism nor the subjects promote radicalism. Similarly, never in history the Madaris in Indian Sub-continent were ever used as a safe-heavens for terrorists.

S. No.	Subject	Books	Author	Year of Publication (Hijri)
1	Serf - o - Ishtiqaq - e - Arabi (Arabic Etymology)	Meezan - us - Serf	Muhammad bin Mustafa bin Al - Haj Hassan	911
		Manshab	- do -	
		Punj - Gunj	- do -	
		Serf - Meer	Mir Syed Sharif Al-Jarjani	816
		Ilm - us - Seegha	Mulana Mufti Inayat Ullah	1277
		Fasool - e - Akbari	Qazi Muhammad Akbar	N/A
2	Arabi Nahw (Arabic Grammer)	Nahw - e - Meer	Mir Syed Sharif Al-Jarjani	816
		Sharh - e - Matul Amil	Mullah Muhammad Sadiq Al-Jarjani	1190
		Hadyat - un - Nahw	Abu Hayyan Nahwi	745
		Kafya	Imam Jamal-ud-Din ibn Hajab Nahwi	620
		Sharh - e - Jami	Mulana Shiekh Abdur Rehman Jami	850
		Sharh - e - Ibn - e - Aqeel Ali Alfye - Ibn - Malk		887
3	Balagha (Rhetoric)	Talkhees - ul - Miftah	Allama Jalal - ud - Din Muhammad bin Abd - ur - Rehman Qazwini	739
		Mukhtasar - ul - Ma'ani Sharh - e - Talkhees - al - Miftah	Saad ud Din Taftazani	792
		Matlool Sharh - e - Talkhees - ul - Miftah	do	do
4	Arooz-o-Qawafi (Geography)	Arooz-ul-Miftah	Abu Ayyub Sakaki	626
5	Mantiq (Logic)	Sughra-o-Kubra	Mir Syed Sharif Al-Jarjani	816
		Eisa Ghoji	Aseer-ud-Din Abhari	661
		Sharh-e-Tahzeeb Taftazani	Abdullah Yazdi	981
		Sharh-e-Shamsya (Qutbi)	Qutb-ud-Din Razi	866
		Salm-ul-Ulum	Muhibullah Bihari	1119
		Risalah Mir Zahid	Mir Muhammad Zahid Haroi	1101

S. No.	Subject	Books	Author	Year of Publication (Hijri)
6	Falsafa (Philosophy)	Sharh - e - Mibzi Alal Hidayat - ul - Hikmah	Mir Hussain Mibzi	1092
		Sharh - e - Sidra	Muhammad bin Ibrahim Sadrud Din Shirazi	1050
		Shams Bazigha	Mullah Mehmood Junpuri	1062
7	Adab - e - Arabi (Arabic Literature)	Maqamat - e - Hariri	Abu Muhammad Qasim bin Ali Hariri	516
		Deewan - e - Mutanabba	Ahmad bin Hussain Abu al - Taib Mutanabba	400
		Deewan - e - Hamasa	Abu Tamam Tai	222
		Sibgha - e - Mualiqah	N/A	N/A
8	Tareekh (History)	Tareekh - e - Khulfah	Allama Jalal - ud - Din Muhammad Sayuti	981
		Tareekh - e - Abi Al - Fida	Abu-al-Fida Hamudi	742
9	Aqaid-o-Kalam (Theology)	Sharh-e-Aqaid-e-Nasfi	Saad - ud - Din Taftazani	762
		Musafirah	Kamal - ud - Din ibn Alham	905
		Khyali	Shams - ud - Din Khyali	870
10	Tib (Medicine)	Al-Mojaz	Abul Hassan ibn Al-Nafees	687
		Qanooncheh	Muhammad bin Umar Chaghmini	8
		Hamiyatul Qanoon	Sheikh Bu - Ali Seena	427
		Sharh - ul - Asbab	Burhan - ud - Din Nafees bin Ewaz Karmani	827
11	Heyyat (Physics)	Al-Tasreeh	Imamud Din bin Lutfullah Lahori	1145
		Sharh-e-Chachmini	Musa bin Mehmood Qazizada	814
12	Hindsah (Mathematics)	Bast Bab	Naseer-ud-Din Muhaqiq Alvi	672
		Aqleedas	Abul Hasssan Tsabi bin Qurrah	289
13	Munazrah (Polemics and Debate)	Risalah Rashidya	Shams - ul - Haq bin Sheikh Abdur Rashid	1080
14	Fiqh (Jurisprudence)	Noor - ul - Izah	Hassan bin Ali Sharbnali	1196
		Mukhtasar-ul-Qudoori	Abul Hassan Qudoori	428

S. No.	Subject	Books	Year of Publication (Hijri)	
14		Kanzud Daqaiq	Abul Barkat Nasfi	470
		Sharh-Wiqaya	Sadr - us - Shariah Ubaidullah bin Masood	543
		Hidayah	Burhan-ud-Din Ali Murghyani	573
15	Asool - e - Fiqh (Basics of Jurisprudence)	Asool - e - Shashi	Nizamud Din Shashi	754
		Noor-ul-Anwar Sharh-e-Alminar	Sheikh Ahmad Mullajyoon	1105
		Mukhtasar - ul - Hassami	Hassamud Din Muhammad bin Muhammad bin Umar	644
		Al - Todeeh	Sadr - us - Shariah Ubaidullah bin Masood	543
		Al - Talweeh	Saad - ud - Din Taftazani	792
		Muslim - al - Saboot	Muhibullah Bihari	1119
		16	Meeras—Faraiz (Inheritance Law)	Mukhtasar - ul - Siraji
Sharifyah	Syed Sharif Jarjani			816
17	Asool - e - Hadith (Basics of Hadith)	Sharh - e - NaKbat - ul - Fikr	Hafiz ibn Hajr Asqalani	852
18	Hadith (Traditions)	Mishkat-ul-Masabih	Sheikh Waliud Din Iraqi	
		Jami-ul-Bukhari	Imam Muhammad bin Ismail Bukhari	252
		Sahih Muslim	Imam Muslim bin Hujaj Qashiri	261
		Jami-Tirmizi	Imam Muhammad bin Eisa Tirmizi	279
		Sanan Abi Dawood	Imam Abu Dawood Sulaiman bin Ashas	275
		Sanan Nasai	Imam Ahmad bin Shoib Nasai	206
		Sanan Ibn-e-Maja	Imam Abu Abdullah Muhammad bin Majah	273
		Kitabu-Shimail	Imam Abu Eisa Muhammad bin Eisa Tirmizi	279

S. No.	Subject	Books	Year of Publication (Hijri)	
66	Hadith (Traditions)	Sharh - e - Muani - ul - Asar	Imam Abu Jafar Ahmad bin Muhammad Slamo Tuhawi	361
		Almota	Imam Malik bin Ans	179
		Almota	Imam Muhammad bin Hassan Sheebani	N/A
19	Tafseer (Commentary of Quran)	Tafseer - e - Jalalain	Jalalud Din Sayuti & Jalalud Din Mahli	981
		Anwar - ut - Tanzil	Qazi Abdullah bin Umar Bidhavi	716
		Midrak - ut - Tanzil	Imam Najmud Din Umar Nasfi	753
20	Asool - e - Tafseer (Basics of Commentary of Quran)	Al-Fozul Kabir fi Asool-e-Tafseer	Imam Shah Waliullah Dehlwi	1172

Pakistan and Madaris — a Deep Rooted Relation

The Madaris system in Pakistan is not much different from the pre-independence system. Even after the creation of Pakistan in 1947, the role of Madaris remained restricted and the doors for government employment were still closed to their graduates.¹⁷ The objectives of the religious institutions remained the same as they were under British rule in India: preparing imams (leaders) for mosques, teachers for schools, orators for weekly sermons, and religious leaders to carry out rituals and social responsibilities such as nikah (marriage contracts), divorce, inheritance, and funerals.¹⁸

However, Akhtar Ali Shah, a senior police officer of Pakistan, sees Madaris as deeply intertwined part of the social fabric of Pakistani society. After an historical analysis of the role of Madaris in the politics of Pakistan, he concludes that Madaris have been providing livelihood, education, and essence of identity to those millions who happened to be the sons of lesser gods.¹⁹ Prakhar Sharma also holds the similar view. According to him, the people of Afghanistan [and Pakistan] consider Madrassah and religious scholars to be integral parts of their history and identity, but the West generally views them as a breeding ground for extremists.²⁰

Statistics on Madaris in Pakistan

According to the Ministry of Education 2008 report, there were a total of 12,448 Deeni Madaris in Pakistan.

Table II: Details of Madaris and Teacher/Student Enrollment in Pakistan 2008

Type of Madaris		Teachers			Students		
		Male	Female	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
Public	321	1,189	351	1,540	25,049	15,143	40,192
Other Public*	42	119	35	154	3,247	1,963	5,210
Private	12,085	41,689	12,297	53,986	971,343	587,211	1,558,554
TOTAL	12,448	42,997	12,683	55,680	999,639	604,317	603,956

Source: Pakistan Education Statistics 2007-08. Academy of Educational Planning and Management, National Educational Management Information System, Ministry of Education, Islamabad, Pakistan.

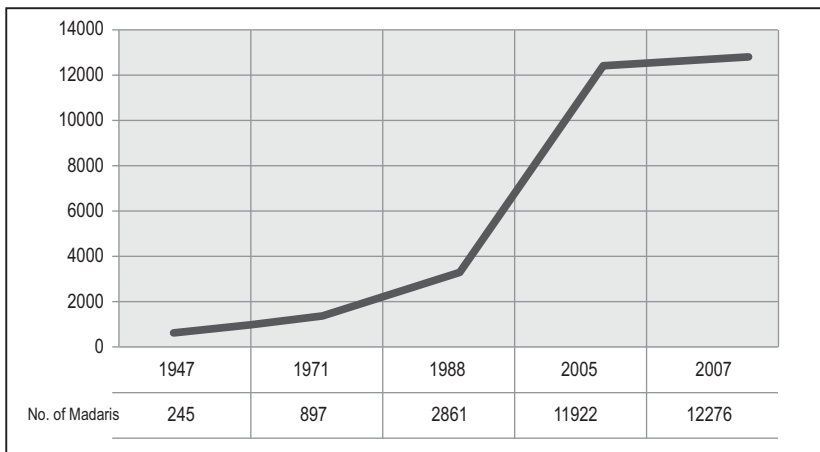
*Other Public are those institutions which are public but are not run by Ministry of Education/provincial or federal.

There were a total of 12,448 Deeni Madaris in Pakistan in 2008, of which 363 (3%) are in public sector, whereas 12,085 (97%) are in private sector. The total enrolment in the Deeni Madaris is 1.603 million of which 0.454 million (3%) are in public sector, whereas, 1.558 million (97%) are in private sector. The total male enrolment in Deeni Madaris is 0.999 million (62%), whereas, the female enrolment is 0.604 (38%). The total teachers in Deeni Madaris are 55,680, out of which 1,694 (3%) are in public sector and 53,986 (97%) are in private sector. There are 42,997 (77%) male teachers and 12,683 (23%) female teachers (See Table II for details).

When Pakistan came into being in 1947, the presence of Madaris was very limited as compared to today. However, as the time moved on to 1971, the Madaris rose upto 897, only 72% increase in 24 years. During the next 17 years there was also a significant increase in Madaris, i.e. 68% increase. Astonishingly, there was 76% increase in Madaris between 1988 and 2005. Graph I shows a normal increase in number of Madaris between 1947 and 1988. However, the curve suddenly moves upward during 1988 and 2005. Why this sudden rise in Madaris? It is always attributed to the Afghan-War against the Soviet Union during 80s and the successive Taliban rise to the power in Afghanistan during 1996-2001.

Graph I: Details of Madaris in Pakistan (1947-2007)

No. of Madaris in Pakistan



(1) Pakistan Education Statistics 2007-08. Academy of Educational Planning and Management, National Educational Management Information System, Ministry of Education, Islamabad, Pakistan.

(2) Syed Akhtar Ali Shah. (2011). The Role of Madrassahs (Islamic Seminaries) in the Politics of Pakistan. Pakistan Journal of Criminology. Vol.3.No.1.Jan 2011. pp.9-34.

(3) M.Taqi Usmani (1989, 2005). Our Education System [Hamara Nizam-e-Taleem Kya Hua] Urdu. Karachi: Maktaba Darul Uloom. pp.71-73

Out of the total 12,448 Madaris, only 321 (3%) are in Public sector while 97% are in private sector. The private Madaris are imparting education to a total of 1,558,554 students out of which 971,343 (62%) are boys while only 587,211 (38%) are girl students, which is not significantly different than the educational enrollment in public sector schools and colleges (about 44% girls in all schools). Teacher students' ratio is 1:28 at average. The number of registered Madaris is only 6,803 (55%).²¹ It is pertinent to mention here that the Madaris also give admission to the foreign students. According to one report of the Ministry of Interior, there were 2,606 foreign students in Madaris of Pakistan in the year 2005.²²

The province-wise break-up of Madaris also presents an interesting picture. A significant number of Madaris are located in the Punjab (44%) followed by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) 21%, and Sindh 15%. There is a very small number of Madaris in Balochistan. FATA, with a population of 3,341,070, contains 498 Madaris, which makes it one (1) Madrassah for every population of 6,709 numbers of people, compared to 14,956 in Punjab, 16,327 in Sindh, 1,1420 in Balochistan and 7,976 in KP²³ It is easy to infer that there are more Madaris per population in FATA and KP than the other provinces of Pakistan (see Table III: for details).

Table III: Province - wise Details of Madaris Teacher / Students Enrollment 2008

Province/Area	Institutions				Enrollment		
	Male	Female	Mixed	Total	Male	Female	Total
Punjab	2,018	1,072	2,348	5,438	424,363	274,635	698,998
	47%	54%	38%	44%	42%	45%	44%
Sindh	493	143	1,226	1,862	196,079	120,585	316,664
	12%	7%	20%	15%	20%	20%	20%
KPK*	1,197	476	960	2,633	247,632	107,575	355,207
	28%	24%	15%	21%	25%	18%	22%
Balochistan	214	28	441	683	45,226	23,371	68,597
	5%	1%	7%	5%	5%	4%	4%
AJK **	158	160	862	1,180	43,735	49,041	92,776
	4%	8%	14%	9%	4%	8%	6%
Gilgit - Baltistan	44	6	42	92	10,861	3,002	13,863
	1%	0%	1%	1%	1%	0%	1%
FATA***	130	71	297	498	27,155	19,715	46,870
	3%	4%	5%	4%	3%	3%	3%
ICT ****	24	14	24	62	4,588	6,393	10,981
	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%	1%	1%
Grand Total	4,278	1,970	6,200	12,448	999,639	604,317	1,603,956
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source : Pakistan Education Statistics 2007 - 08. Academy of Educational Planning and Management, National Educational Management Information System, Ministry of Education, Islamabad, Pakistan.

* Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

** Azad Jammu and Kashmir

*** Federally Administered Tribal Area

**** Internal Capital Territory

Note that FATA and KP are the regions which are severely hit by suicide terrorism. Further, these two are the Pashtoon dominant regions as well. It may seem fit to jump to the conclusion that the more the Madaris the more the suicide attacks in the region. However, it is very naïve and seems over-simplification. This point will be discussed later in details.

Madaris Degree and Awards Systems in Pakistan

The level of Madaris education system corresponds to the levels of mainstream state education in Pakistan (see Table IV for details of Madaris curriculum and levels). The first five years of a child are busy learning to read the Koran, i.e. Nazirah, simple recitation. It is equal to the Primary or 5th grade education in Pakistan. The Hifz or learning to memorize the Holy Koran by heart takes about three years and is equivalent to 8th grade education of the mainstream state educational level. Next comes the Tajweed and Qirat, i.e. recitation of the Koran in an accurate Arabic accent and in a beautiful tone which takes about two years to complete and is equivalent to a Secondary School Certificate educational level of the state. The Higher Secondary degree is termed as Thanviyah-Khassa while the Aliya is the graduate level degree and takes 13 to 15 years of overall education to complete.

Table IV: Curriculum in Deeni Madaris in Pakistan

Level (Darja)	Level	Class	Duration	Certificate (Sanad)	Certificate (Sanad) Comparable to Mainstream Education
Ibtidaya (Primary)	Nazara (Recitation)	01 - 05	4 - 5 yrs	Shahadatul Tahfeez ul Quran	Primary (5th Grade)
Mutawassitah (Secondary)	Hifz (Memorization)	06 - 8	3 yrs	Shahadatul Mutawassitah	Middle (8th)
Thanviyah - e - Ammah (General Middle)	Tajweed, Qirat (Recitation with style and accent)	Ulla va Thanviya (9, 10)	2 yrs	Shahadatul Thanviya ul Amma	Matric (10th)
Thanviyah - e - Khassah (Special Middle)	Tehtani (Higher Secondary)	Arbiat va Ashara (11, 12)	2 yrs	Shahadatul Thanviya ul Khaassaah	Intermediate (F. A.)
Aliya (Higher)	Mohqufaleh Khasa va Sada (College)	Arbiat va Ashara (13, 14)	2 yrs	Shahadatul Aliya	B. A.
Alamiya (Highest)	Daura Hadiths Sabia va Sanniya	Master phil Arabic phil Uluum al Islamia (15, 16)	2 yrs	Shadatul Alamiyah phil Uluum ul Arabia vul Islamia	M. A. recognized as such, in Arabic and Islamic Studies by government
Takmeel (Completion)	Post Graduate	Varies with specialization	1 yrs	Varies with specialization	Post - M. A.

Source: Ayesha Jalal. (2008). *Partisans of Allah: Jihad in South Asia*. Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publication.

Alamiya, a more general degree of Madaris, is equivalent to the post graduate or M.A. degree of the mainstream state education. It is pertinent to note that an Alamiya degree holder is given an equivalence certificate by the state which is equal to M.A. in Islamiyat (Theology or Islamic Studies) or Arabic from a University. Besides this, there are also others courses for different competence and professional sections like Molvi Fazil course, Mufti Course, and Imam Course. However, no study has taken these courses of Islamic education into their discussion.

Suicide Terrorism, Religious Motivation and Madaris in Pakistan

The Question: Is there any association between Madaris and Suicide Terrorism?

With every suicide bombing in Pakistan, fingers are pointed towards the possibility of a relationship between the bomber and an Islamic school, Madrassah.²⁴ Usually a young boy of 13-18 is suspected to have done the deadly blast who, in the educated guess and considered opinion of the investigation staff, is said to have had some links with the tribal groups as the sketch being prepared by the officer in light of the statements of eye-witnesses is reportedly indicative of his ethnicity and background. A more general depiction of the story is like this:

- A hand/foot/skull is found from the scene of crime
- Footage from CCTV/mobile attained
- Young boy, 12-14, 15-17 seen and suspected
- White clothes, new shoes, beads in hands, white cap/turban/hanki on head
- Small beard, medium height
- Afghani, Tribal, or Pushtoon by appearance
- Sketch prepared from eye-witnesses and footages / videos
- Probably a student of Islamic Madrassah

This is the most common practice of our media and investigation staff in Pakistan to fix the responsibility on some unidentified suicide bomber, who is reported to be a religiously motivated tribal or Afghani, with a tender age and in most probability being radicalized in some Islamic school of an unidentified place, and furthermore, some unknown Islamic school master (s). This is generally believed and released to the media even before any forensic sciences applications, laboratory tests or tracing police criminal record or national identity card data base.²⁵ This practice saves the police from many hurdles and fatigue of cumbersome investigation, as police of the cities have no authority and jurisdiction in the Pakistan's tribal territories. Moreover, the propaganda against Madaris is trumpeted

so vehemently to the tune of those who want a ready scapegoat in the long war on terror. Madaris or some radical militant Islamic fundamental groups are the first to be blamed for carrying out suicide terrorism. However, is there any relationship between suicide terrorism and the Madaris? Is it the Madrassah structure and system which promotes suicide terrorism? Is this a common norm in Madaris to carryout suicide terrorism? Do the data support the same claim?

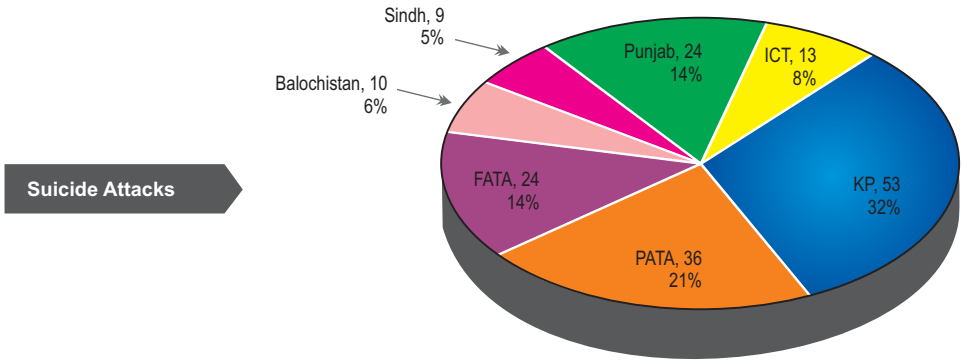
The Findings:

Association between Madaris and Suicide Terrorism

As we discussed earlier that the more the Madaris the more will be suicide attacks in the region is too simplistic to conclude. It is visibly found that KP and FATA share more number of available Madaris for population than the other parts of the country(498 Madaris, which makes it one (1) Madrassah for every population of 6,709 numbers of people and in FATA, 7,976 for KP).²⁶ Similarly, Graph II shows that KP and FATA are the two regions which are severely hit by the suicide attacks. KP with a total of 53 suicide attacks between 2002 and 2009 shares 31% of all attacks followed by 24 attacks in the Punjab and 9 attacks in Sindh. However, FATA and PATA²⁷ also experienced 24 and 356 attacks respectively. Ethnically, both FATA and PATA are predominantly Pashtoon regions. Further, these are the regions where military has started to move in post 9/11 scenario. Never in history, before 9/11, KP, FATA, or PATA had ever experienced any suicide terrorism. In post 9/11 scenario, they did, however, experienced them more severely than anywhere else in the world. The question still remains why in post 9/11? The answer is in Robert Papes findings which we will discuss later.

For the time being, the point of focus here is that first, in Table II, we said that there were 1.6 million students enrolled in *Deeni Madaris* in Pakistan in the year 2008. Secondly, there were a total of 303 suicide attacks in Pakistan since 2002.²⁸ Astonishingly, 12,448 Madaris with 1.6 million of enrolled students are producing only 303 suicide bombers in a decade! The facts denounce the claim of suicide bombers coming from Madaris or religious motivation is seen in all suicide bombers. Holmes, while analyzing statements issued by Al-Qaeda, has emphasized that Osama bin Laden's rationale for 9/11 has usually been secular rather than religious, focused towards 'punishing Western injustices, not impieties'.²⁹

Graph II: Suicide Attacks in the Administrative Units of Pakistan



Source: Dr. Muhammad Irfan and Zeeshan-ul-Hassan Usmani. (2011). Suicide Terrorism and its New Targets—Pakistan. In Unaiza Niaz (eds). Wars, insurgencies, and Terrorist Attacks, a Psychosocial Perspective from the Muslim World. Karachi: Oxford University Press. pp.78-9.

Holmes' conclusion also stands valid when we analyze the statements of one of the suicide bombers, arrested before detonating himself in Lahore. He said that he became suicide bomber when he saw the military operations in Lal Masjid (Red Mosque) and Bajur, meaning his motivation was not to bring Islam or Shariah (Islamic Law) but to take revenge against the injustices of the military.³⁰ In the same interview, the suicide bomber revealed that none of his batch-mates at the training center at Miran Shah were from the Deeni Madaris, all were from the secular schools.³¹ The KP police also revealed the same findings through investigation.³²

Similarly, the religious scholars, at least in Pakistan, denounce suicide attacks. The supreme religious leader of Pakistan, Mufti Munib - ur - Rehman, who is also the Chairman Royat - e - Hilal Committee, issued that

“Fighting in the way of Allah, for the uplift of religion, for the superiority of right things, giving your life, and when the time comes participating in Jihad, showing courage, vigilantism, and gallantry are not only valid in Islam but in the time of need it is also termed the Superior Prayers (Afzal Ibadat) and have superior degrees for the life hereafter. But vigilantism and gallantry is that when you come to the battle field and fight, sometimes you also got killed but you do not start the battle with killing

yourself first. In suicide attack, the attacker begins by killing himself and his own person, any valid argument for this has not come into my knowledge and to the extent I know the religion, I never came across any such justification from Quran and Hadith.” [translated from Urdu]³³

While Mufti Munib is from the Barelvi school of thought (which are considered religious liberals), the Deobandi School (a relatively religiously conservative school of thought) also denounces suicide attacks. One of the most influential Deobandi clerics of Pakistan, Maulana Hasan Jan, while signing a fatwa (decree) against suicide bombing in Pakistan, described the perpetrators as 'cruel and ignorant people', and that these people have 'no knowledge and education'. He said that suicide bombing was haraam (forbidden) and against the Shariah, and added that the situation in Afghanistan and Iraq was different from Pakistan. He concluded: 'We are completely against suicide activities in our country.'³⁴ However, later on, Maulana Hasan Jan was killed in a terrorist attack on September 17, 2007 in Peshawar.

Analyzing the data over the past thirty years (30) Pape asserted that religion is neither an essential, nor a sufficient factor in the generation of suicide attacks and the taproot of suicide terrorism is nationalism not religion.³⁵

Christine Fair discusses the connection between Madaris and militancy to a greater length in her book, *The Madrassah Challenge*. While remaining impartial, she argues that evidence counters the most sweeping contemporary claims that Madaris are extensively involved in the production of militants in Pakistan and elsewhere. In her study of 141 militant families in Pakistan and find out that only 19 were reportedly recruited from Madaris. Less than a quarter of the militants (33 of 141) ever attended a Madrassah. Of those thirty-three 27 attended a Madrassah for four or fewer years, and most also attended public schools. Eighty-two out of 141 were well educated on Pakistani standards (at least tenth grade).³⁶ These findings indicate that the militants in general are not uneducated or from Madaris. While Christine Fair tried to find an association between Madaris and militancy, she failed to consider the presence of military or foreign occupation as the essential condition for suicide terrorism.

Moreover, Naushad Ali Khan, a police officer in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police department, and Superintendent of Police (Research), finds out that none of the 'living bombers' (those who couldn't blow themselves up and got arrested), had exclusively religious education. Only 10% had only secular education and 90% had both religious and secular education. Further, not all but majority were from tribal origin (70%), a predominantly Pashtoon territory.³⁷

Finally, Papes conclusion remains significantly valid that 'religions do play a role in suicide terrorism, but mainly in the context of national resistance.'

Why Suicide Attacks?

The Answer:

Foreign Occupation not Islamic Fundamentalism

Since independence of Pakistan in 1947, not a single suicide terrorist attack was ever recorded. The first known suicide attack in Pakistan was carried out on Nov 11, 1995 on Egyptian Embassy, Islamabad. A suicide bomber rammed a pickup truck packed with explosives into the gate of the Egyptian Embassy in Islamabad, killing 15 people and wounding 59 others. There were no other suicide attacks during 1995 and 2002.³⁸ The present bloom of suicide attacks in Pakistan grew after the US invasion in Afghanistan.

The director of the Chicago Project on Security and Terrorism (CPOST) and the author of the book, *Dyeing to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism and Cutting the Fuse: The Explosion of Global Suicide Terrorism and How to Stop It*, Robert Pape presented his thesis that religion is not the basic motivation of suicide terrorism and that the Islamic Fundamentalism is not the cause of suicide terrorism.

He finds out that during the period 1980 to 2003 there were 343 completed suicide terrorist attacks. About 88% of these attacks had ideological affiliations. The world leader (in terrorist attacks) during this period is not an Islamic group but are the Tamil Tigers of Sri Lanka—a Marxist group, a secular group, a Hindu group. The Tamils in Sri Lanka did more suicide attacks (78 suicide attacks) than Hamas or Islamic Jihad in Israel. The other group of suicide attacks is the PKK of Turkey, which is purely a secular Marxist, anti-religious suicide terrorist group, which carried out 14 suicide attacks in Turkey. Over 50% of these suicide attacks were not associated with Islamic fundamentalism (See Table V).

Table V: Suicide Terrorism Attacks World-wide (1980 - 2002)

Total Suicide Attacks	343
Ideological Affiliations	298
Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka	78 Attacks
PKK in Turkey	14
Al - Aqsa Brigade	25
Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) on West Bank	6
Syrian Social Nationalist Party (SSNP)	8
Baa'th Party in Lebanon	8

Source: Robert Pape - Cutting the Fuse The Explosion of Suicide Terrorism and How to Stop It (1 of 4). Retrieved Feb 1, 2012 from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gp17H7aIYNA>

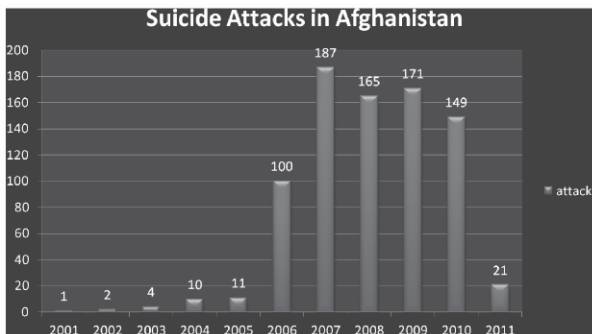
He questions the myth of suicide terrorists coming out of Islamic fundamentalism on the basis of data and argued that what most people think is that suicide terrorism is driven by religion, particularly Islamic fundamentalism. However, the data negates it. The facts don't fit. What is common in 95% of the world-wide suicide terrorist attacks is not religion, but a specific strategic objective to compel democratic forces to withdraw combat forces from the territory the terrorist consider to be their homeland. From the Lebanon to the West Bank to Chechnya and Iraq and Afghanistan today, every suicide terrorist campaign has been waged by terrorist groups for this strategic objective. It doesn't account for every suicide attack, it does, however, account for over 95% of the attacks of all the suicide terrorism we have experienced since 1980.

The point to focus is that the foreign occupation triggers the secular and religious suicide terrorism much like smoking triggers lung cancer. In Afghanistan before 2001, there were zero suicide attacks in the history of this country. For the first few years, there were some tiny numbers of suicide attacks but in 2006 suddenly there is a spike and it stays high (Graph III). Why?

Looking at the targets of the suicide attacks, majority were the US and Allied troops (73.7%). Over 90% of the suicide attackers were Afghan nationals. A few percent were from the border regions and only 5% were from the regions out of the conflict. But why sudden spike in 2006?

The reason is this. In the first few years, there were only a few thousand US troops in Afghanistan stationed specifically in Kabul, not spread around the country, basically giving security to Karzai, until in 2006, when the UN gave the mandate to the US to spread around Afghanistan. First, the forces went north, where the Northern Alliance were allies with the US, so no problem, then to west, also allies. Then in 2006 the forces moved to South and East (Pashtoon territories), that's when the suicide attacks explode suddenly. The pattern is similar for Pakistan.

Graph III: Suicide Attacks in Afghanistan (2002 - 2011)



Source:

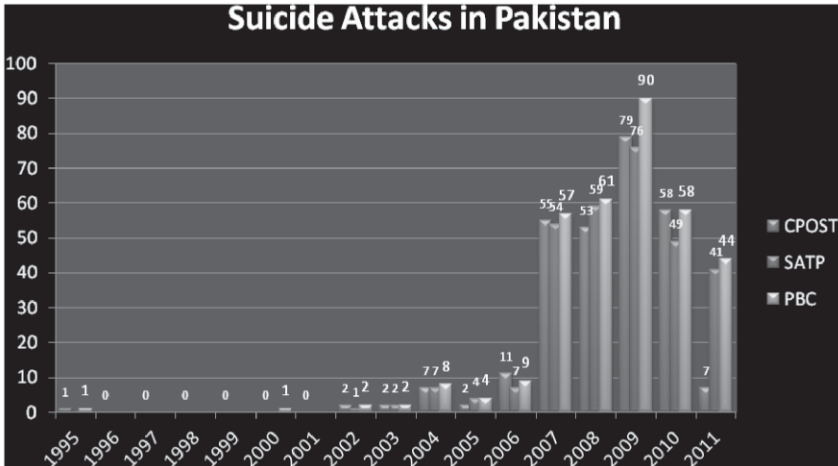
Chicago Project on Security and Terrorism (CPOST) Database.

Retrieve Jan 30, 2012 from

http://cpost.uchicago.edu/search_results.php

According to the Graph III, before the US occupation of Afghanistan, the suicide attacks were very rare in Pakistan (only one case before US occupation). However, as the US attacked Afghanistan, the suicide terrorism started to grow gradually. However, the point is, it didn't grow suddenly after the US invasion. For the first few (5) years, till 2006, the suicide attacks remained relatively lower, both in Pakistan as well as in Afghanistan. However, it mushroomed in 2006-07. In 2006, as mentioned earlier, the US forces moved to East and South of Afghanistan to occupy the Pashtoon territories, at the same time they put pressure on Musharraf (the then President of Pakistan) to withdraw its one hundred thousand (100,000) troops from the Indian border to the Western Pashtoon area. The aim was to indirectly occupy the other half of the Pashtoon area in Pakistan (as the Pashtoon lives on both sides of the Pak-Afghan border). This military presence triggered the suicide terrorism, both in Afghanistan and in Pakistan from 2006 onward.

Graph IV: Trend in Suicide Attacks in Pakistan since 1995



Sources :

- (1) *Chicago Project on Security and Terrorism (CPOST) Database*. Retrieve Jan 30, 2012 from http://cpost.uchicago.edu/search_results.php
- (2) *Fidayeen (Suicide Squad) Attacks in Pakistan*. South Asian Terrorism Portal (SATP). Retrieve Feb 10, 2012 from <http://www.satp.org/satporgrp/countries/pakistan/database/Fidayeenattack.htm>
- (3) *Pakistan Body Count (PBC)*. Retrieved Feb 12, 2011 from http://pakistanbodycount.org/suicide_bombing

We find out earlier in Graph IV that KP, FATA and PATA experienced significantly more suicide terrorist attacks than any other part of Pakistan. In Pape's paradigm, it is obvious to conclude that this was a response to the military operations in these areas (predominantly Pashtoon areas).

The major target of these attacks was security forces (57%).³⁹ The trend is still moving on and the curve didn't go down significantly (Graph III and IV) in both of the countries—Pakistan and Afghanistan. Robert Pape claims that this suicide terrorism is not a Global Jihad but a local opposition to the US and NATO military presence in Afghan territory. The suicide attackers are not just Afghan nationals but Pashtoons from the South and the East in Afghanistan and West in Pakistan (see Table VI for details of suicide attacks in Pakistan).

Table VI: History of Suicide Attacks in Pakistan (1995-2011)

Suicide Attacks in Pakistan												
Year	Attacks			Killed			Wounded			Lethality		
	CPOST*	PCB**	SATP***	CPOST*	PCB**	SATP***	CPOST*	PCB**	SATP***	CPOST*	PCB**	SATP***
1995	1	1	-	17	15	-	60	60	-	17	15	-
1996	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1997	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1998	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1999	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2000	-	1	-	-	3	-	-	3	-	-	3	-
2001	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2002	2	2	1	26	27	15	76	91	34	13	13.5	15
2003	2	2	2	66	65	69	102	115	103	33	32.5	35
2004	7	8	7	143	82	89	270	399	321	20	10.25	13
2005	2	4	4	24	83	84	80	230	219	12	20.75	21
2006	11	9	7	139	161	161	263	230	352	13	17.888889	23
2007	55	57	54	724	842	765	1315	2008	1677	13	14.77193	14
2008	53	61	59	769	940	893	1729	2426	1846	15	15.409836	15
2009	79	90	76	1038	1090	949	2847	3462	2356	13	12.111111	12

Suicide Attacks in Pakistan

Year	Attacks			Killed			Wounded			Lethality		
	CPOST*	PCB**	SATP***	CPOST*	PCB**	SATP***	CPOST*	PCB**	SATP***	CPOST*	PCB**	SATP***
2010	58	58	49	1160	1153	1167	2775	2954	2199	20	19.87931	24
2011	41	44	41	628	625	628	1183	1386	1183	15	14.204545	15
Total	311	337	300	4734	5086	4820	10700	13364	10290	15	15.09199	16

[1]Source: *Chicago Project on Security and Terrorism (CPOST) Database*. Retrieve Jan 30, 2012 from http://cpost.uchicago.edu/search_results.php

[2] *Pakistan Body Count*. Retrieved Feb 12, 2012 from http://pakistanbodycount.org/suicide_bombing

[3]*Fidayeen (Suicide Squad) Attacks in Pakistan*. *South Asian Terrorism Portal (SATP)*. Retrieve Feb10, 2012 from <http://www.satp.org/satporgrp/countries/pakistan/database/Fidayeenattack.htm>

**Chicago Project on Security and Terrorism*

** *Pakistan Body Count*

****South Asian Terrorism Portal*

Questions are raised about the confidence in the data which Robert Pape collected through CPOST. However, the data of SATP and Pakistan Body Count (PBC) does not significantly vary from that of CPOST. In Graph IV, the data from CPOST, PBC and SATP are shown side by side. The bars in the Graph do not show any significant variation between the two. It is inferred on the basis of these two independent data sources that the basic motivating factor behind suicide terrorism is not the religion, though religion is used in the national context to fight the unjust and oppressive militaries and their allies, not to bring Sharia or Islamic rule in the land.

Conclusion

Madaris hold a significant position in the Muslim societies and Pakistan is no different. Its influence is deep rooted in Pakistani society, its history and politics. Madaris are a platform to mobilize the masses of Pakistan against or for any cause or force. Though conservative in orientation, the Madaris hold independent thinking and its independence is dear to them. Indeed, reforms are a need of the hour in the Madaris of Pakistan. However, blaming the Madaris for producing suicide terrorist is only a myth created by the Western and Pakistani print and electronic media. The purpose behind which is not still clear. The media need to reconsider its policies of biasness. Media reporting should be on the basis of research.

End Notes

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- ²Rasheed Khalid. (Monday Feb 15, 2010). "Every Suicide Bomber is Coming from Madrassa". *The News*. Retrieved Feb 3, 2012 from <http://www.thenews.com.pk/TodaysPrintDetail.aspx?ID=224355&Cat=2&dt=2/15/2010>
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- ⁷Haqqani, Husain, Islam's Medieval Outposts, *Foreign Policy Magazine*, November 2002.
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- ¹⁷Khalid Rehman. (2009). Madrassah in Pakistan: Role and Emerging Trend. In Amit Pandya and Ellew Laipson (eds). *Islam and Politics, Renewal and Resistance in the Muslim World*. Islamabad: Institute of Policy Studies. P.57.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹⁸Syed Akhtar Ali Shah. (2011). Role Madrassahs in the Politics of Pakistan. In *Pakistan Journal of Criminology*. Vol.3.No.1.Jan 2011.p.31.

²⁰Prakhar Sharma. (2009). Role of Religion in Afghan Politics: Evolution and Key Trends. In In Amit Pandya and Ellew Laipson (eds). *Islam and Politics, Renewal and Resistance in the Muslim World*. Islamabad: Institute of Policy Studies. P. 38.

²¹Syed Akhtar Ali Shah. (2011). The Role of Madrassahs (Islamic Seminaries) in the Politics of Pakistan. *Pakistan Journal of Criminology*. Vol.3.No.1.Jan 2011.pp.9-34.

²²Ibid

²³*Pakistan Education Statistics 2007-08*. Academy of Educational Planning and Management, National Educational Management Information System, Ministry of Education, Islamabad, Pakistan; the population estimates are taken from the Wikipedia with different search terms for each of the provinces of Pakistan.

²⁴Michael Georgy. (Friday, Feb 11, 2011) *Brainwashing drives young Pakistan suicide bombers*. MARDAN, Pakistan Retrieved, Jan 12, 2012, from <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/02/11/us-pakistan-bombers-youth-feature-idUSTRE71A35I20110211>

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²⁷PATA (Provincially Administered Tribal Area) includes Malakand Agency, Swat, Shanglah, Upper-Dir, Lower-Dir, Chitral, and Buner districts of KPK. It is administratively connected with KPK.

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