

Determinants of Radicalization and Militancy amongst the Youth in Pakistan

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Abstract

Radicalisation has been a problem for Pakistan from the earliest days of its existence. However, after the 1979 invasion of Afghanistan by the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and Pakistan's joining hands with the West and the Arab World in backing the Jihad against the former USSR, the society was in the throes of radicalisation and militancy. The youth has been hurt the most in terms of both actors and victims. The study aims to identify the key factors that can be attributed to inducing radicalisation and infusing militancy amongst the Pakistani youth and examine their role in violent extremism to devise the means for its control in Pakistan. Qualitative case study-based interviews have been conducted with de-radicalised former militants. The study exudes three main findings: first, the state remains ignorant of the movement of the radicalised youth; second, the state has launched various phases of anti-terrorist operations. Third, the state is unable to discourage militant organisations from recruiting the youth for militant training. The conclusion is that the confluence of societal dogma and extremist (religious) ideologies offered significant resistance against preventing violent extremism.

Keywords: Terrorism, Radicalisation, Radicalised Youth, War on Terror, Extremism, Militancy, Violent Extremism, Countering Violent Extremism

1. Introduction

It is commonly believed that radicalisation and militancy emerged as indirect and unexpected outcomes of the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. While it is true

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that since 1979, Pakistan has been in the throes of radicalisation and militancy, it should be added that the problem has been there from the earliest days of Pakistan's existence (Haqqani, 2013; Aslam et al., 2020). This assertion can be proved by examining the events such as the 1950 East Pakistan riots, the 1953 Lahore riots, the 1963 Therhi Massacre, the 1964 East Pakistan riots and the 1974 Anti-Ahmadiyya riots. An examination of the ideological root causes of these events shows that they all were rooted in religious and sectarian radicalisation. What, then, one might ask, is the importance of the Soviet invasion in the Pakistani discourse? For starters, it introduced elements of radicalisation and militancy in the mainstream discourse. As the state sought to weaponise religious ideology to help the Afghans expel the Soviets from Afghanistan, what once used to be a foreign conflict became a part of the mainstream life and has been creating a wedge of differences in society ever since, and has caused fracturing along political, sectarian and religious lines (MacDonald, 2016; Khan et al., 2022). The ensuing conflict has consumed the lives of thousands of people and hundreds of security personnel. The youth has been hurt the most as actors and victims (Phillips, 2016; Ullah et al., 2022).

Many scholars have discussed the post-1979 explosion of radicalisation and militancy at length. However, a key gap that remains unexplored at both the academic and policy levels is the apparent propensity of the youth to be radicalised and, subsequently, take up arms. Hence, the primary aim of this study is to identify the key factors that can be attributed to the post-1979 scenario of inducing radicalisation and infusing militancy among the youth in Pakistan. Instead of trying to come up with non-contextual theorisation about how and why the youth is radicalised, the study takes a hands-on approach by conducting interviews with rehabilitated former militants. This study aims to find out what motivates the youth to take up arms and how these findings can be used to explain rising radicalisation and militancy in the Pakistani youth.

2. Literature review

The literature review of this paper is divided into two parts. The first focuses on the rise and subsequent spread of radicalisation in Pakistan post-1979. As highlighted in the introduction, there needs to be more academic research on the determinants of radicalisation amongst Pakistani youth. For this purpose, the second part of this section looks into the literature on the determinants of youth radicalisation in other jurisdictions.

2.1 Rise of radicalization in Pakistan

In the post-1979 era, Pakistan witnessed an upsurge in sectarianism and associated conflict, though society was already divided into sectarian lines (Ahmed, 2015; Khan et al., 2020). There are present two deadly Sunni sectarian organisations in Pakistan. One is the Sipah Sahaba Pakistan (SSP), and the second is the Lashkare Jhangvi (LeJ).

The meaning of the SSP is the Guardians of the Companions of the Prophet (PBUH). The SSP was a sectarian Sunni organisation founded by Maulana Haq Nawaz Jhangvi and his companions (followers of Deobandi school of thought) on 6th September, 1985 in Jhang, Punjab. Its objective was to counter the influence of Shia and make efforts for declaring Pakistan a Sunni state (Cohen, 2016; Aslam et al., 2022). Deoband is with reference to the Darul Uloom Deoband (Metcalf, 1982; Ali & Mingxing, 2021). The organisation did both sectarian and political activities. The SSP was a broke away faction of the Deobandi Sunni political party, Jamiate Ulemae Islam, in 1985. The SSP was also against the Bareilvi Schools of Sunnis, who were inclined to Sufis and Sufism. The SSP run about 17,000 religious seminaries (Sunni sect) and does social and charitable works to woo conservative voters for electing their representatives in the elections (Cohen, 2016).

The organisation was popular in South Punjab, rural Sindh and all parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. It maintained closer ties with Tehrek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and al-Qaeda (Haqqani, 2013). One of its splinter groups was Lashkare Jhangvi (LeJ). The organisation got generous donations from certain Arab countries in the Middle East. On 12th January 2002, President Musharraf proscribed the organisation under the Anti-Terrorism Act of 1997 (Cohen, 2016). The Act was promulgated on 17th August 1997 by his predecessor Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, to include a broader definition of terrorism, and the Act provided for setting up special Anti-Terrorism Courts (ATC) and Anti-Terrorism Appellate (ATA) Tribunal (Anti-terrorism Act 1997). However, the SSP reappeared shortly afterwards as the Millat-e-Islamia Pakistan, which was again banned in 2003. In March 2012, the SSP was again banned in Pakistan. On 26th June 2018, before the general elections, Pakistan's interim (caretaker) government lifted the ban on the SSP to let its members participate in elections (Chaudhry, 2018). In 2018, it re-emerged as the Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat, which also does political activities (Jamal, 2018).

The Lashkare Jhangvi (LeJ) was considered a splinter group of the SSP and was founded by Riaz Basra and his companions in 1996 when the SSP got engaged in reconciliation talks with Shia militant groups. The LeJ was also anti-Shia and was more

lethal in its action than the SSP. The LeJ was initially based in southern Afghanistan, from where it used to launch attacks on Shias in Pakistan (Woodward, 2010). In August 2001, the government of Pakistan banned it, and the US banned it in January 2003 (The Express Tribune, 2012). On 3rd February 2003, the UN also banned it.

Lashkare Taiba (LeT), the Army of Good, Pure, or Righteous, was founded by Hafiz Saeed and his companions in 1987 to fight Jidad against the former USSR in Afghanistan (Cohen, 2016). The organisation established headquarters in Mureedke, near Lahore. However, it remained active in Pakistan's Azad Kashmir by running *Jihadi* training camps (MacDonald, 2016). India accused the LeT of the 2008 Mumbai attacks in India on 26th November 2008 (Woodward, 2010). Certain countries (such as Russia, Australia, Britain, India and the US) banned the LeT by declaring it a terrorist organisation. Besides, the UN banned it under Resolution No. 1267, a list of al-Qaeda related sanctions (Khan, 2018). On 12th January 2002, the military regime of President General Pervez Musharraf also imposed a ban on the LeT in Pakistan (Cohen, 2016). However, the LeT established itself in the name of Jamatud Dawah (JuD). After the 2008 Mumbai attacks, the JuD was also banned by the Pakistani government. Hafiz Saeed was declared an international terrorist in December 2008 under the UNSC Resolution No. 1267. The US also declared the JuD a terrorist organisation in June 2014. On 7th August 2017, the JuD decided to jump into politics and founded the Milli Muslim League (MML) to participate in the general elections in 2018. However, on 2nd April 2018, the US Department of State declared the MML an affiliate of the LeT. Resultantly, the Election Commission of Pakistan refused to register the MML. The JuD decided to contest elections from the platform of Allahu Akbar Tehreek, another religiously motivated political party (Ghauri, 2018). After the Pulwama attack on 14th February, 2019, Pakistan imposed a ban on the JuD on 21st February 2019 (Yousaf, 2019).

Jaishe Mohammad (JeM), the army of Muhammad, is an organisation associated with the Deoband school of thought. Maulana Masood Azhar founded the JeM in 2000 (Cohen, 2016). The organisation is based in Pakistan and is accused of militant activities in the Indian-held Kashmir. Hitherto, the JeM is alleged to have attacked the Indian security forces in Indian-held Kashmir, people who are demanding freedom from India (Cohen, 2016). A branch of JeM in the Indian-held Kashmir claimed the responsibility of attacks on the Legislative Assembly of Jammu and Kashmir in Srinagar on 1st October, 2001 and the Indian Parliament on 13th December, 2001 (Cohen, 2016). The JeM also had closer ties with like-minded militant organisations, Deoband-

thought-inspired such as the Tehrek-e-Taliban Pakistan and al-Qaeda (Woodward, 2010).

The military regime of President General Pervaiz Musharraf banned the JeM on 12th January, 2002 under international pressure. Besides the UN, several countries, including Russia, India, Canada, Great Britain, and the United States (US), have also declared the JeM a terrorist organisation and slapped a ban. However, the members of JeM established another organisation to continue their militant activities. In March 2016, the Indian government asked the 1267 committee to include Maulana Masood Azhar, the Chief of JeM, on the list of international terrorists because JeM was already listed as a banned organisation in 2002 (MacDonald, 2016). The international pressure after Pathankot attack led to the arrest of the JeM Chief Maulana Masood Azhar, however, in April 2016, the Pakistani government released him. On 1st October 2016, China vetoed the decision of the 1267 committee (Dawn, 2016). China extended its technical hold on India's listing application. The hold was meant to allow more time to deliberate on the matter and consult the relevant party, Pakistan. The hold was valid for three months. In February 2017, China blocked a move by the US to get Maulana Masood Azhar banned by the UN. China is still not permitting the name of Maulana Masood Azhar to be included in the list. The JeM has claimed responsibility for the attack on Pathankot airbase and Uri in 2016 and the attack on a convoy of the Central Reserve Police Force at Pulwama on the Jammu and Kashmir Highway, consuming 40 lives on 14th February 2019 (The Indian Express, 2019).

2.2 Factors that lead to youth radicalisation

Researchers across the world have investigated the causes of radicalisation among youth. One such study investigated the radicalisation of Muslim youth in the Netherlands (Doosje et al., 2013). The researchers focused on a sample of 131 Dutch Muslims and determined that personal uncertainty, perceived injustices, and group threat helped create a radical belief system. This, in turn, created an environment where youth were most susceptible towards ideas of violence. While this study brings up many important ideas, it is not entirely applicable to states like Pakistan. This is because the sample of this study represented individuals who were in a minority in a predominantly non-Muslim society. In comparison, radicalised youth in Pakistan are mainly from the majority Sunni sect. That said, not all these individuals belong to the same school-of-thought (sub-sect) within Sunnism.

In another study, El-Badayneh and El-Hasan focused on a sample of 2709 university students from Arab countries (2017). The study categorised the determinants

of radicalisation into personal factors, family factors, and societal factors. This study has potential relevance with the radicalisation of youth in Pakistan, given that the students studied are part of the Muslim majority in their respective countries. That being said, the scope of the study is narrow in that it only looks at university students. This is not a suitable metric for a country like Pakistan where, according to World Education Services, only 6% of the population receives an intermediate-level education (post-high school). Furthermore, these countries' socio-economic and demographic indicators differ from Pakistan's. Therefore, there is a need to conduct focused research on the Pakistani youth.

3. Research Methodology

Exploratory research using qualitative methodology has been used. In order to conduct interviews, a nonprobability sample (purposive and snowball) was taken of four individuals who were associated with a militant organisation and later rehabilitated (Adler & Clark, 2008). All participants have been given pseudonyms to meet the ethical standards of research (Taylor et al., 2009). Two of them (Anwar Makki and Abdul Ghaffar) were engaged in militant activities related to sectarianism inside the country. Makki, a former recruit of SSP, loathed the Shia sect. This came from bantering with his friend, who held similar views. He displayed violence against Shia on multiple occasions. However, his wish to marry a woman he liked convinced him to change his ways. However, Ghaffar, formerly a member of LeJ, developed his views with his family's complete support and encouragement. Once he was arrested, he was rehabilitated with the support of his wife. The other two (Waleed Ahsan and Noor Dahri) were involved in militant activities related to cross-border *Jihad* in Indian-held Kashmir. A group of friends influenced Ahsan at 14-year age to join JeM. He ran away from his home without informing his family of his plans. However, he started rehabilitation after witnessing his friends killed by law enforcement agencies, and the organisation showed no remorse. Dahri, on the other hand, was pushed to join his organisation, JUD, by his lack of familial ties. The loss of his mother and abandonment by his father made him detached from the fact that he would not live long as a jihadist. His rehabilitation started after he discovered the political agendas of his organisation and his disillusionment with their motives. These four interviewees hailed from three provinces: Punjab, Sindh, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

All of them believed that the youth should be educated and not waste their lives in these extremist mindsets and therefore achieve the status of social pariahs as a result.

The interviews of Anwar Makki, Abdul Ghaffar and Waleed Ahsan were conducted at their homes between 12 to 15th February 2019. The interview of Noor Dahri was conducted via Skype from London on 13th February 2019. Similarly, another nonprobability sample (purposive and snowball) was taken of two individuals who were high-ranking serving police officers (Adler & Clark, 2008). Pseudonyms were also allotted to them (Taylor et al., 2009). In Lahore, the interview of Police Officer Sohail Tajik was conducted on 14th February 2019, and that of Police Officer Mukaram Khan was conducted on 15th February 2019. Police Officer Tajik was of the opinion that academic learning, critical thinking and a more significant input of knowledge would prevent jihadists and extremists from forming, whereas Police Officer Khan explained how some Madrassas became the stepping-stone towards extremism and told of measures to monitor them more strictly.

4. Analysis and discussion

Radicalisation is not an automatic process to ravage society, as orthodoxy precedes radicalisation on the lineage of happenings, whereas militancy follows radicalisation (Cohen, 2016). This has led to massive casualties in Pakistan and its neighbouring countries. Several factors contribute to orthodoxy taking root in individuals and society.

Militancy adversely affecting a religious sect may be called sectarian militancy. Militancy is rampant inside the country. The terrorist organisations previously mentioned, although banned, are still at large—case in point: the targeting by Lashkar-e-Jhangvi of the minority Hazara Shia community. However, militancy adversely affecting an opponent across the border may be called cross-border militancy (MacDonald, 2016; Malik & Jan, 2021). To reiterate, the relevance of sectarianism and related militancy is inside the country where sectarian conflicts take place, whereas the relevance of cross-border interference and related militancy called *Jihad* is outside the country, especially in Indian-held Kashmir, where a cross-border conflict takes place (MacDonald, 2016). Though the trajectory of both phenomena, sectarianism and jihadism, differs, certain points on their respective paths bring them close.

5. Determinants

The study found eleven significant factors which could be implicated in playing some roles as key determinants in enhancing radicalisation and promoting militancy amongst the youth in Pakistan.

5.1 Sectarian sermons

Religious orators use the skill of their oratory full of religious quotations bequeathed from the past to provoke the youth into harbouring sectarian hatred (Jones, 2012). The orators impress upon the listeners to abide by the religious edicts and help their religious sect to overpower the competing or rival sects (Jones, 2012). In this struggle for control, a sectarian hatred-monger concentrates preferably on the lapses in the rival sect and declaims that unorthodox practices have polluted the religion. After provoking the followers on these grounds, the sectarian orator calls upon his followers to annihilate the followers of the rival sect to purify the religion, be it the religion of Islam (Gonzalez, 2009).

Such sermons are not precisely religious; these are sectarian in flair (Gonzalez, 2009). Followers may unknowingly attend the sermons and get incrementally indoctrinated, sometimes imperceptibly, when the same ideas are poured into their minds each time they visit a religious place or attend a sectarian gathering (Gonzalez, 2009).

Sectarian scholars try to protect their sect while they launch a barrage of criticism against the rival sect (Wehrey, 2017). Lapses are found and construed as immoral acts to pollute the pious name of a given religion, be it the religion of Islam. The pliable minds of the youth are swayed by such sermons, which are sectarian in essence but remain shrouded in the broader rubric of religion, Islam (Wehrey, 2017).

Anwar Makki, a young unmarried man from Sargodha, central Punjab, was an affiliate of the SSP. The sectarian tinge prevalent in the sermons motivated him. Nevertheless, these sectarian sermons were a secondary source of inspiration for him. The first source was his friends, who were already disposed to sectarian hatred.

Anwar Makki said: "My friends and I used to listen to *bayans* [sermons] of Maulana [religious elders], and we cultivated anti-Shia sentiments."

Makki's quote highlights the problem that religious sermons alone might not be enough to push a person towards radicalisation and militancy- the presence of an enabling social environment also plays a part. In Makki's case, listening to the *bayans* with his friends provided a perfect echo chamber where feelings of radicalisation and hatred could easily blossom.

5.2 *Jihadi sermons*

Jihadi sermons motivate the youth to *Jihador jihadi* militancy (Phillips, 2016). There are present two deadly *Jihad*-promoting organisations in Pakistan. One is the Lashkare Taiba (LeT), and the second is the Jaishe Mohammad (JeM).

Around 1994, when the talk about *Jihad* in Kashmir motivated the youth, many youngsters decided to sacrifice their lives for the cause of *Jihad*. Noor Dahri was one such youth hailing from Larkana, Sindh. He joined Markaze Dawah al Irshad (now called Jama'at ud Dawah), the mother organisation of Lashkare Taibah (LeT), the headquarters of which was in Mureedkay, a town near Lahore.

Noor Dahri said:

"It was about 25 years back when everyone talked about Jihad in Kashmir. I was a religious Salafi guy and wanted to become a Jihadist."

Dahri's case provides an excellent example of how unfettered rhetorical exercises can have far-reaching social consequences. While such exercises can be essential in a state's strategic pursuits, measures should also be taken to keep the youth from being led astray by them.

5.3 *Societal space*

That multiple sects of Islam constitute Pakistani society is a reality. The two major sects are the Sunnis (a majority) and the Shias (a minority). Their disagreement is known, but both sects lived harmoniously at the village and city levels in Sargodha and Jhang. An evident discord has been witnessed in the recent past, especially since 1979, when the Islamic revolution took over Iran. Consequently, the talks of a spillover effect of the Iranian revolution overwhelmed Pakistani society (Phillips, 2016; Qadir, 2022). In Pakistan, some members of the Shia sect might have been motivated to borrow some ideas from Iran, an overwhelmingly Shia state. However, members of the Sunni sect took any supposed overflow from the Iranian revolution as a challenge to their monopoly. Receptivity and tolerance of sectarian hatred are the banes of society (Phillips, 2016; Jan & Rehman, 2019). Both are present in Pakistani society. The study found that the first source of pro-sectarian motivation was friends, who remained undeterred socially in promoting sectarian hatred.

Anwar Makki said:

“I used to sit at a grocery store of my friend who was against the Shia sect and who used to taunt the Shias.”

As highlighted in the previous section, Makki again goes on to show the role played by an individual's friends and social circle in allowing radicalisation to flourish.

5.4 Youth under circumstantial pressures

A balanced youth cannot tumble into the fold of a sectarian outfit without a push from contributory factors, such as circumstantial pressures, taking their toll on the mental or social well-being of the person (Koomen & Plight, 2016; Mehmood et al., 2021). The cantankerous atmosphere of home is one such factor.

Anwar Makki said:

“I did not share [my jihadi ideas with any member of my family because the atmosphere at the house was tense] as two my sisters were married and every other day their husbands used to beat them, and they were a constant trouble factor in our house.”

Such belligerent circumstances offer two problems. First, the troubles from the extended family keep the family engaged in bearing or solving them instead of focusing on any new challenge. Second, the troubles of the extended family remain a source of disaffection for family members towards the world. Together, both problems compel desperation and anger to be vented elsewhere. Religion becomes a refuge for disgruntled youth, and militancy becomes an alternative expression (Koomen & Plight, 2016).

The frustration from family life opens the path for looking elsewhere to find a reason for life. These individuals often confide in friends, and it takes a few mentions of heaven and all the bounties they will receive to make them prefer having a radicalised life rather than the difficult one from which they are currently suffering. Sometimes, the family also offers the necessary support or encouragement to proliferate and solidify the ideas of religious extremism.

Abdul Ghaffar said:

“I shared my ideas with my family. I inherited these ideas from my father and grandfather. They had no issue with my inclination towards these jihadi ideas.”

Hence, it is no surprise that Ghaffar did not consult with his wife or think of his children before deciding to plunge into sectarian militancy. This shows that once an individual crosses their respective threshold of radicalisation, familial bonds stop playing a role in preventing them from going down this route. Moreover, he had consulted and been encouraged by the elders in his family, and their similar ideologies had pushed him towards abandoning his responsibilities towards his family and society in general.

5.5 Youth in search of a cause

Often, it is observed that the youth try to vent their feelings in society, but they are prohibited from doing so. Whether social or religious, right-wing conservatism offers prohibitions such as banning music, singing, and several sports (Pilger, 2016; Jan et al., 2019). In the activities of militant organisations, the youth find a chance to vent to their otherwise trapped energies (Koomen & Plight, 2016).

In Pakistan, one choice with the youth is to dawdle their time away by lazing around or chatting with friends for hours.

Amir Makki said:

“I used to sit at a grocery store of my friend.”

Makki only justified spending time at the grocery store with someone else to pass the time chatting. The favourite topic of the host, however, was anti-Shia rhetoric; resultantly, the whirling storm of anti-Shia sectarianism sucked Makki into it. The lack of creative ways to expend his energies and lack of opportunities such as education and sports brought him closer to his friend, who increased the anti-Shia rhetoric in his mind.

This study showed that it is not that religious extremist organisations were taking rounds of areas to look for prospective militants. Instead, the youth were influenced by extremist religious thoughts and searched for such organisations to find a better cause for their lives. It means that fifty per cent of the job is already done when a prospective militant knocks at the door of any such organisation. He is already self-motivated and stands in line with the ideology of the sectarian organisation. The rest of the job is to train and send him to the path of fighting.

5.6 Youth with a puerile mind

The youth are vulnerable to heresy. The worldly education imparted to youth does not incite critical thinking to evaluate whether whatever is being stated in front of them is valid or not (Pilger, 2016). Sectarianism is one dimension.

Anwar Makki said:

“[My friend] said it is *haram* [prohibited] in Islam sitting with them [the Shias], communicating with them [the Shias] and even looking at them [the Shias].”

The listener kept believing in the words uttered without questioning the assertion. He might be a victim of the maxim: Religion promotes blind following. In a society where the youth remain illiterate or semi-illiterate, people believe in superstitions, myths, and notions and tend not to explore the truth, which is an expected response (Koomen & Plight, 2016). He did not question or critique what his friend was telling him. Moreover, in radical/religious situations, to question is to deny, which someone being radicalised cannot do.

5.7 Sectarian organisations

The youth might be adventure-seeking young men trying to find a reason to live life through a sectarian expression (MacDonald, 2016). Sectarian organisations such as the SSP and LeJ play their role in shaping the minds of the youth, be it for radicalisation or militarisation.

Anwar Makki said:

“I used to attend processions in Faisalabad, and our organisation [Sipahe Sihabah Pakistan, SSP] used to pick us up in buses and drop us back.”

The organisation offered to pick and drop service to facilitate its affiliates, who had to be at the bus stops at a prescribed time. In this study, through the interviews conducted, there was found no evidence of sectarian organisations coercing the youth to join their groups or camps and compulsorily complying with their advice. These organisations relied on motivated youth ready to serve their cause (MacDonald, 2016). Of the available lot, those persuaded or volunteered to seek military training were consigned to the next stage of affiliation under whatever appellation.

Police Officer Sohail Tajik said:

“The ideological conviction propels them [the youth] towards militant organisations.”

The youth are already pushed in a direction to make the work of the militant organisations easier. All these organisations have to do is put the finishing touches on minds already halfway radicalised by family, friends and society.

5.8 *Jihadi* organisations

The possibility is that, at the state level, some organisations and certain sub-organisations (the splinter groups of known organisations) are approved militant groups. Similarly, there are sub-organisations which are disapproved militant groups. The approved militant groups are sponsored, sheltered, and condoned by the state authorities, whereas the disapproved ones are rejected, busted and condemned (Woodward, 2010).

For instance, in certain parts of the country, law enforcement agencies do not touch people affiliated with one militant organisation; however, in other parts of the country, the state conducts a crackdown on groups affiliated with another militant organisation (Cohen, 2016). Similarly, certain groups run training camps, which demand money from an organisation to train their recommended people. Ahsan volunteered to join the training camp to get militarily trained and then be sent to Indian-held Kashmir to fight against the Indian army.

5.9 State's laxity

The State of Pakistan takes matters of militancy and terrorism seriously. However, in relative terms, the state does not cognise the circumstances leading to militancy and terrorism and makes little effort to obliterate them (Cohen, 2016; Rehman et al., 2022). The state acts to prevent a mishap and loss of human lives, but it leaves the crisis to linger on to the extent that it has to take another action against the miscreants. The state offers no guidance to counter the extremists' ideologies; it offers nopoor-quality education, so questioning minds cannot be nourished. The abysmal employment sector and the lack of opportunities to expend youthful energies push the youth to do what they believe is right and what will get them the pleasures of heaven. This all and more promotes militancy and leads to circumstances which finally make the state intervene with extreme measures.

Anwar Makki said:

“I wanted to kill [the] Shias to get to Heaven, but unfortunately, I got arrested before I could get a chance.”

Rehabilitation is one measure, but forestalling an emergent crisis is another measure. The homicidal tendencies in the youth, though for sectarian purposes, is a dilemma. Sectarian organisations take such volunteers for military training in Afghanistan (Haqqani, 2013). The laxity of the state is not just internal but also external (Cohen, 2016). It is known to all and sundry that Afghanistan offers open access as a hub of terrorism training (Haqqani, 2013; Rehman et al., 2018). The lack of control by the state with regard to cross-country movement is a massive factor in the increase in the number of militants in Pakistan.

Abdul Ghaffar said:

“I was trained of my own free will. I was trained for 45 days in Afghanistan... the LeJ bore my expenses of Rs 30 thousand.”

This study found that the low cost of training and unchallenged and unrestricted access to the hilly terrain of Afghanistan to get militarily trained were also contributing factors to enhance militancy in the realms of sectarianism and jihadism (Dawn, 2016; Mehmood et al., 2022). That is, it was not just the sectarian organisations who took advantage of the military training available in the confines of the hilly areas of Afghanistan; the *jihadi* organisations also cashed in on the same opportunity.

6. Conclusion

The study aimed to identify the key factors attributed to inducing radicalisation and infusing militancy among the youth in Pakistan. The study identified eleven determinants of radicalisation and militancy amongst the youth in Pakistan. The determinants, which can be extrapolated for this exploratory study to draw a conclusion, can be grouped in the following four ways. First is the role of religious sermons (both sectarian and *jihadi*) to convince the impressionable youth and join the organisation's cause. They came from various circumstances, which provoked them further and pressured them to change their lives easily. Secondly, society is becoming increasingly divided with regard to sectarianism and purifying religion. This has let hatred and violence breed. Third, the activities of sectarian and *jihadi* organisations to train their

followers militarily for action, both locally and abroad. Fourth, the negligence of the State of Pakistan to forestall or check the nefarious two-pronged process of radicalisation and militancy. All these determinants work in tandem with one another or other socio-economic factors to give rise to radicalisation and militant tendencies in the youth. Although religious sermons are the final push needed to get the youth radicalised, they cannot reach that step without their family, friends and the environment's collective effort. The step from radicalisation to militant violence can usually be achieved after the person has been indoctrinated into militant organisations and their ideologies. Such organisations would be impossible to exist had the state served its purpose with regard to law and order and implemented a zero-tolerance policy along with constant vigilance. Hence, one can safely conclude that all these determinants are cogs of one extensive system, and it would be wrong to pinpoint any single determinant as the sole cause behind the radicalisation of the youth.

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