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**THE POLITICS OF RELIGIOUS PARTIES IN PAKISTAN: AN ANALYSIS**Muhammad Rizwan,<sup>1</sup> Hafiz Nasir-Ud-Din,<sup>2</sup> and Shahab Ali<sup>3</sup>**Abstract**

*Present research work is an effort to describe the nature of the relationship between religion and politics in the society of Pakistan. It is generally agreed that Two Nations Theory provided a solid foundation for the religion in the societal framework of the country. It has been incorporated as a guiding standard for the political system and constitutional mechanism in Pakistan. Nevertheless, several régimes, individuals and political parties have practiced the religion for their pursuit of political legitimacy and power. In addition to this, the growing influence of religious parties in the politics of Pakistan has subsequently contributed to consciousness rising sectional fights, harassment of religious minorities or disempowerment of certain religious leaders and institutions, etc. Unfortunately, on most of the occasions, Islam, the religion of peace and tolerance, has practiced by the religious parties either to avoid public pressure or to gain political power.*

**Key words:** Islam, politics, Pakistan, constitution, independence, ulema, role, parties.

**INTRODUCTION**

Two-Nation theory, primarily founded-on the religious identity, was a central aspect in the creation of Pakistan. In the post-independence era, religious issues, one way or the other, remained an important choice for the political and non-political elite in society to extend their policies. The autocratic rule has dependably been utilized the holy card as a reasonable instrument to increase open pity and guarantee authenticity for their authority. Among others the fundamentalist party was Pakistan Muslim League (PML), it assumed an indispensable role in autonomy development. In point of fact, before getting independence, Islam was utilized by PML leaders as an apparatus for the reason to bring Indian Muslims at one stage. Later in 1947, the mediation of the religion in politics or their adequacy in politics has been expanded in an organized fashion in Pakistan by the decision world-class on whom the responsibility of forming Pakistan's political imminent rested (Misra, 2003). When the Muslims of the sub-continent began battling for a different country, it proved a defining moment for the South Asian Ulema to assume a crucial part in politics. In the presence of the mainstream way of moderate Muslim leaders, the Ulema chose to take a noticeable role in politics. By advocating the Indian nationalism, most of the Ulema rejected the stance of the moderate Muslim leaders who strongly believed in the Two-Nation theory; Muslims and Hindus are twofold distinct nations and they have a place with two distinct religions, social traditions, methods of insight and literature (Bandopadhaya, 1991). Consequently, most of the League leadership, after the creation of Pakistan, chose to establish a popular government instead of theocracy. However, few religious scholars, at that time, did not bolster flexibility in light of the perception that moderate elite under Jinnah would secularize the society.

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Before 1947, the majority of the Muslim religious class of British India did not endorse the partition of the sub-continent. Utmost critics were the Ulema of the Jamiat-e-Ulema-e-Hind (JUH). Under the leadership of Maulana Hussain Ahmed Madani, their definitive goal was the establishment of a state based on Islamic injunctions by contradicting the dual country philosophy (Osman, 2009). He said, "The Muslims ought to be faithful to the state country of their introduction to the world alongside their non-Muslims individual national" (Pirzada, 1999). By firming this perspective, he gave the contention of the advantageous of Madina, which he supposed that a sanction for non-Muslims and Muslims together breathing with each other in a tranquil atmosphere. He, in no condition, restricted separate country for Muslims of India furthermore into two country-hypotheses. A dominant part of JUH restricted leaders of the League and deliberated the interest for a different terrestrial scheme to divide the Indian sub-continent. In this regard, Maulana Maududi and Allama Iqbal firmly condemned the point of view of JUH. Maududi exhibited the opinion that Jews and Muslims were stayed collected for a timeframe in the helpfulness of Medina and it ran an organization together amongst Jews and Muslims for a brief era. In any case, that insusceptibility for other non-Muslims and the Jews of the world was repealed upon the Prophet's success of Makkah (Osman, 2009). Maududi believed that every aspect of Hindus and Muslims were inverse from each other and thus would certainly not amalgamate.

Maududi touched the group made out of a wide range of Muslims who were secularist, comrade and communist would block efforts in making a true Islamic state. There was a group of Deobandi Ulema who upheld the leaders of the League. Similarly, Ashraf Ali Thanvi of the JUH contended that it is the main legitimate and permissible approach to bolster leaders of PML and thought for Indian Muslims (Pirzada, 1999). In August 1945, there apprehended a meeting in Calcutta under the leadership of Maulana Shabbir Ahmed Usmani to shape the All India Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI). Alongside the JUI, the Bareilvi for the leaders of the League to upheld the freedom movement of Pakistan (Osman, 2009). In the same year, shaping of the Jamhuriyah-i-Islamiyah in accordance with desire of the Muslims of India grew behind it (Qureshi, 1972). This day and age were essential since ulema assumed their part in Pakistani politics and ulema's place was characterized in Pakistan. The state of mind of various ulema of the various schools of thought was blended however the bigger section of the ulema upheld leaders of the league and heated Pakistan development to make it religious legitimacy (Osman, 2009).

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

A great deal of research has been carried out on the subject of religious politics in Pakistan. Although the majority of the literature available on the subject matter can be categorized in different facets, yet their role of perusing the power unanimously concurred:

Khan (2011) explains the nature of the relationship between religion and politics in Pakistan. It further explains how Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) has tried to keep the politics alive in the lives of Muslim society by intermarrying the religion with politics. In point of fact, JI demanded the establishment of an Islamic system of governance under the guidance of the Islamic judicial and economic system. All the same, having the opportunity to get power under the Martial Law regime of Zia-ul-Haq has shaken the barriers of their ideological boundaries up to a greater extent. Pirzada (1999) provided a detailed study about the history, formation, structure, and policies of JUI. He pointed out that how in spite of having conflicting ideologies the JUI joined hands with National Awami Party (NAP) during the early 1970s in NWFP and Balochistan. Shah

(1996) describes that how Islam provided strong social fabrics to the fundamentals of Pakistan. However, most of the religious parties, by using Islamic slogans and symbols, in one way or the other tried their best to get a share in power. From PNA to Islamization process of Zia, religion was used to legitimize their standpoint and position in order to stay in power. Tanwir (2002) discussed the formation of Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA), an alliance of six major religious political parties, to participate in elections against PPP and PML (N). By winning 46 seats in the National Assembly and 80 seats in the four provinces, the alliance was in the strongest position ever in the political history of Pakistan. However, their power was mainly focused on the more insolvent areas of Pakistan i.e. NWFP and Balochistan much affected by the ongoing Afghan crisis. Similarly, Toor (2011) illustrates the role of Pakistan from the Cold War era to the current wave of terrorism. It further describes how religio-political elements of the country successfully used this situation in their own favour. Kennedy (1990) offers analytical insight into the process of Islamization and legal reform in Pakistan between 1979 and 1989. Although, the Zia regime introduced a socio-political system mainly based on the Islamization of society by establishing Majlis-e-Shura, Shariat Courts, Islamic banks, social welfare tax, *Ushr* etc. However, most of the scholars agree that Islamic slogans were used to justify and prolong dictatorship. Similarly, Hussain (2014) explains how religious parties tried hard to incorporate Islamic provisions in the 1973 Constitution, especially JI due to which Zulfikar Ali Bhutto had to bring a number of religious reforms. However, the same party joined hands with Zia-ul-Haq who suspended the same constitution by declaring himself as the Chief Martial Law Administrator (CMLA). In the same way, Akbar (2015) describes that both sects of society, i.e. Islamists and secular sections wanted to examine the newly created state of Pakistan as per their aspirations. This situation not only merely produced a rift in society but also caused a delay in constitution-making in Pakistan, which further complicated the already tense political situation of the country.

## **HISTORY OF RELIGIOUS PARTIES IN THE POLITICS OF PAKISTAN**

The role of religious parties in Pakistan set off soon after obtaining independence, however, the insurgency in Indian occupied Kashmir (IOK) and foreign invasion in Afghanistan provided appropriate opportunities to channelize their agenda. Although these parties greatly affected Pakistani politics by having an immense measure of road forces, they rarely have the capacity to get the authority through the ballot. Major religious parties of the country, including JI, JUI, and Jamiat-Ulema-i-Pakistan (JUP) etc. could never acquire a majority in the National Assembly despite of having huge gatherings during the election campaigns. Moreover, they have used many issues i.e., enactment of Sharia laws, Islamic legislation, a proper system of Usher, Zakat and the issue of Blasphemy etc. Although they trusted that Islam is finished code of life, the JI has been the main supporter of this perspective and they were against the development during the 1940s from reservation going to be greatly westernized (Kumar, 2001). After independence, during the early 1950s JI including other ulema, remained extremely dynamic and hostile to the Ahmediyas and later on against the Family Law Ordinance.

In December 1970, the Islamic forces, in order to support the “the ideology of Pakistan” gathered against Bhutto’s Islamic Socialism. The Ulema pronounced it as unfriendly to the Islamic values. They additionally assaulted on the Six Points program of Sheikh Mujib-ur-Rehman as anti-Islamic and anti-state which lasted for more noteworthy independence and

thorough rebuilding of the economy. Though, in the contest Sheik Mujib got triumph in East-Wing and Bhutto in West-wing of Pakistan. The Islamic parties were vanquished. In the 1970 general election to the National Assembly three major religious parties JI, JUI and JUP got just 13.95 percent of total votes (Kumar, 2001). The JI won just four seats out of 300 seats, which was the best finishing of JI. However, during 1977 the JI performed comparatively well. It additionally assumed a decent part because of General Zia's Islamization policy. Zia began requiring an effort to adopt the doctrinal standards and practices that began by Maududi in Pakistan. The main Islamic party was JI which challenged the election of 1985 (Kumar, 2001). Moreover, a partnership of Saudi and JI turned into the moral consultant of the new setup.

In 1985, elections were held under 1973 constitution for the National Assembly on the non-party basis. However, in spite of General Zia-ul-Haq and his partners support a few contenders the JI could secure victory. In June 1988, the Ordinance regarding Shariat declared by President Zia did not embrace by the majority of Ulema. It is on account of that the Zia delivered the statute did not encounter their figuring and missed the mark regarding the draft put together by the committee which directed by the director of the Islamic Ideology Council (IIC) designated by Zia himself. Likewise, during the 1990 contest to the National Assembly, the JI secured just 3 percent of the well-known vote and 4 percent, 3 percent and 0.8 percent of the vote in Provincial Assembly contest in NWFP (KP), the Punjab and Sind Province separately. However, in contrast to the 1988 election in these polls they did sound. Out of 18 challenged general seats, it secured 8 seats and 20 out 37 challenged seats at the provincial level (Kumar, 2001). The issue of jihad has always been an important component in the manifestos of religious parties of Pakistan. Maududi was a prominent figure in advocating the issue. From August 1948 he upheld the contention argument regarding rationale of Jihad in Kashmir. When in September 1965, the Pakistani government formally declared association in the Kashmir conflict, then inside time lost assistant a Jihad in request to demonstrate the rationale of his position. Conversely, in January 1966 the Tashkent Accord turned out to be disliked by the Ulema and Maududi censured it for around the further of Kashmir and for its unstated inferred acknowledgment of "no-war situating with India" (Kumar, 2001). Among other religious organizations, JI is one of the most organized body under elected leadership. Before the emergence of Mohajur Qumi Mahaz (MQM), it had a stronghold in urban Sindh, particularly in Karachi. Yet it is mostly criticized for its support to the dictator. Its students' faction Islami Jamiat-e-Tuleba (IJT) bolstered for the arrangements of General Zia on several occasions. Up to the mid-1980 in Sindh, the JI was great and strong in spite of the fact that in election its execution was not altogether that much tempting. However, in any case, while it reassured for Zia may have facilitated, the Jammat-e-Islami upset a reliability crevice amongst the self-ruled forces.

As far as the case of JUI is concerned, like other religious parties it was not content with the Tashkent statement, however, it went without joining the resistance reinforced movement against it (Kumar, 2001). Due to internal conflicts, JUI split into two groups during the late 1960s one was under the initiative of Ghulam Ghaus Hazarwi and the other group pioneer was Mufti Mahmood. Hazarwi segment joined PPP in 1977 and Mufti Mahmood a more preservationist group was against it. However, the Pakistan National Alliance (PNA) was additionally supervised by Mufti Mehmoood in the presence of other leaders, including Mian Tufail Mohammad and Ahmad Shah Noorani, the leader of JUP. Contrary to the expectation, the resistance of PNA brought about General Zia's Martial Law. Because of the sluggish course of

Zia's Islamization, JUI partitioned and its individuals did not partake in the elections of 1985. In June 1988, JUI General Secretary Fazlur Rehman unequivocally contradicted the Shariat Ordinance issued by Zia and called it an endeavor to digest Pakistan's constitution. Two provinces of Pakistan with some tribal structure NWFP and Balochistan has remained a support base for JUI.

The third major religious group JUP having its support base in Punjab and in Sindh. During 1970 Elections, it got the second-highest seats under the leadership of Ahmad Shah Noorani. For the restatement of democratic norms, the JUP remained the utmost dynamic movement. Embracing the Barelvi School of Thought the JUP consists of few *Sajjada Nashins* and *Mashaikh*, providing it a grass root foundation. Unlike other religious parties, the JUP is stuck with "Pakistani nationhood" rather than the comprehensiveness of Islam.

In point of fact, the majority of the Muslims use to gather around the name of Islam than any other political issue. Formulation of laws in the light of Islam is not arguable, however, interpretations of Islam may lead to the factional conflict. The rise of Sunni-Shia contrasts which regularly turn vicious, ethno-provincial splitting up inside the ulema and Iran-Saudia rivalry in Pakistan to cut not good voting demographics were all components which discouraged Pakistanis from making an aggregate bargain to the religious-political parties. Interestingly, international political actors used religious cleavage in their own pursuit. Parties like the JUI, JI, and Jamiat Ahle Hadith (JAH) have been backed by Saudi Arabia whereas *Tehrik-i-Nifaz-i-Fiqh-i-Jefria* (TNFJ), speaking to the Shia school of thought, used to get the support of Iran.

### ISSUES OF RELIGIO-POLITICAL PARTIES

As discussed earlier, after the creation of Pakistan, the most crucial issue was the acceptance of an appropriate constitution. Different schools of thought tried to adopt a constitutional set up related to their aspirations. There was a moderate Muslim League leadership who had successfully achieved Pakistan and wanted to see it a modern and secular state. On the other hand, the majority of the religious class who fought back the separation of British India by advocating Indian Nationalism wanted to see it as an Islamic state. Consequently, heated debate with arguments and counter-arguments started in the first Constituent Assembly of Pakistan. On this occasion, numerous ulema including Usmani and Maududi and those who had turned into the league member compelled to mark a constitution based on Islam for the newly created state of Pakistan (Pirzada, 1999). The JUI, in this regard, showed extreme activeness to form the constitution based on Islam. JUP also sponsored the religious movement in order to guarantee the members of this organization for *Sharia* (Kumar, 2001). Under the shelter of these major religious political parties, all religious groups consented to get together in order to achieve their shared aim of a constitution based on Islam.

As far as the role of JI for the constitution formulation is concerned, it drove the crusade for the arrangement of a constitution based on Islamic injunctions. The JI leaders trusted that Pakistan has been created as a state based on Islam and it ought to be dispensed by Islamic law. Time and again JI wished to see the control in the light of the Quran and Sunnah and the constitution based on Islam. Nonetheless, the establishment by adopting these measures against the western norms not only shut the *Tasnim* and *Tarjuman ul Quran* but Maududi was referred to prison



(Jamaat-e-Islami, 1992). In the response, the ulema amalgamated Zafar Ahmad Thanvi, a conspicuous researcher, Sayed Sulaiman Nadvi individual from JUI, and thirty-one other famous and unmistakable ulema to request a state based on Islam extraordinarily. They outfitted the administration with a rundown of twenty-two principles for the state to trail (Binder, 1961). These efforts bore fruit when the first constitution of the country officially declared it as the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, where no law would be made in contradiction to the teachings of the Quran and Sunnah (Choudhary, 1969).

It is believed that the ulemas' collaboration had restricted many governments to utilize Islam for their specific advantage. Instead, it offered them opportunities to demonstrate a system mainly characterized by the precepts of Islam. In point of fact, the ulemas were in a solid position to restrict both popular and dictatorial rules to exercise western norms. Nevertheless, many ulemas suspected that a vote-based democratic system may allow the individuals to change laws as indicated by their desires instead of their practicability in light of Sharia (Mawdudi, 1960). However, religious parties also performed those functions mainly driven by the secular elements of the state. During Ayub Khan's period, Combine Opposition Parties was a secular group, but it was endorsed by the religious elements (Nasr, 1994). The matter was taken in 1967 when Maududi framed another resistance party's collusion named as Democratic Action Committee (DAC). Similarly, when Z. A. Bhutto assumed authority after the separation of East Pakistan, PPP successfully signed a Tripartite Accord with JUI and NAP. Under the leadership of Mufti Mahmood, a comprehensive package of Islamization in the NWFP (presently known as Khyber Pukhtunkhwa) was introduced. All the same, this alliance could serve less than a year.

Another significant role of ulema could be seen during Pakistan National Alliance, which later on converted into *Tehrik-e-Nizam-e-Mustafa*. However, this situation benefited General Zia-ul-Haq to impose the longest Martial Law in the history of Pakistan. The role of JI, at this occasion, is severely criticized by the majority of the political analysts who believe that it took an amicable approach and kept a concordant connection with the army. However, the explanation behind the collaboration with the army was that Zia's support for Afghan policy and his intentions for the Islamization of society. Even, it is said that General Zia had a copy of Maududi's *Tafhimul Quran* as a cost to the officers who had possessed a verbal confrontation rivalry composed by the Army Education School (Wolpert, 1993). The Jammah, by having a benevolent connection with Armed forces, secured four posts, including a ministry, judge of Federal Sharia Court and Appellate Court with the power of legal evaluation (Osman, 2009).

The situation took a violent turn when the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in 1979. This interference established a new connection of Zia-ul-Haq with religious parties, especially with JI. However, the battle in Afghanistan allowed the Zia administration to approach with other conspicuous ulema parties like JUI. As discussed before, JUI has its firm roots in Balochistan and NWFP and the vast majority of the Islamic madrassas were operated there under the JUI. On the other hand, JUP was the main party that did not bolster Zia-ul-Haq while all through the nation all ulema straightforwardly upheld Zia's administration. Nevertheless, the scene from 1977 to 1985 was not all that considerably vibrant and it is a blend of accomplishment and disappointment for Pakistani ulema. However, year 1999 proved a turning point in the life and history of Pakistani ulema. Terrorist attacks of September 9, 2001, affected the whole world,

including Pakistan up to a greater extent. It provided a podium to the religious parties of the country to restructure their strategy.

Apparently, there was a considerable influence of Pakistani Ulema on the Taliban regime. Subsequently, the USA chose to begin maneuver in Afghanistan directly affected the politics of Ulema in Pakistan. Both JUI (F) and JI openly supported the Taliban regime against US aggression. Ulema of both major religious parties put a great deal of battle to build up new Islamic institutes; the madrassas, functioning under the JUI (F) expanded from 1840 to 7000 and those madrassas which are linked to the Jammat expanded from 95 to 500 during 1988 and 2002 (Osman, 2009). They expanded their impact in Afghanistan through the Taliban who were taught in madrasas under the mechanism of JUI (F). Due to their joint struggle, the ulema successfully framed the Afghan Defense Council (ADC) altered to the Pak-Afghan Defense Council.

However, the main achievement of PADC was to unite the Ulema in constituent cooperation for the General Election of 2002. Different political parties representing different ideologies, including JUP, JUI-F, JI, TNFJ, JAH and JUI-S decided to form an alliance as MMA (Osman, 2009). The alliance tried its best to attract its voters through a 15-point manifesto that represented different future strategies including affection to Islam, to make Pakistan an Islamic welfare state, to provide uniformed and quick justice and to ensure free education for all, etc. Although the alliance successfully formulated its governments in Khayber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan, and city government of Karachi as a junior partner of the establishment, however, it split in 2005 and officially collapsed in 2008 Elections.

## **CONCLUSION**

At the end of this discussion, it can be concluded that the Pakistan Movement was primarily taken out by the moderate westernized Muslim elites. Alama Iqbal, the Poet of the East and the founder of the nation Muhammad Ali Jinnah, were in leading front. Most of the religious parties, including JUH were in favour of Indian nationalism. Nevertheless, during the 1940s the leadership of the All India Muslim League used to speak around the Islamic ideology and practices, etc. in order to obtain the support of all the Indian Muslims. Likewise, after the establishment of Pakistan, religion always stayed a favorite slogan for the government, political parties, and religious groups, etc. to attract the masses or to sustain the policies.

In point of fact, the role of religion in the political area during the pre-partition period has broad consequences for the eventual destiny of Pakistan. Uncertainty about the very belief system of the nation made terrible issues for the policymakers inferable from the fierce polarization amongst advocates and adversaries of ideological politics in Pakistan. It is generally thought that political matters constrained the strategy makers to transform Pakistan into an Islamic state on an assortment of grounds extending from a demand for national unity to earning political authenticity for disagreeable leaders. Resultantly, Islam saturated the political and established domains of the nation.

It is acknowledged that religion has compound roles in ethnically diverse Pakistani society. From the day first of its existence, religion has not merely been the principal component of the country's constitutional history, it has also served the political pursuits of several governments.

Nevertheless, on most of the occasions, the stunt of Islam has been practiced against many political governments and their policies by avoiding public pressure. In the same way, religious parties often use religious sentiments, slogan, and symbols to attract a common Muslim hardly having knowledge of Islam. Accordingly, the state's political and social atmosphere has been branded by tensions between countless approaches towards religion. It has been noted that conflicting approaches towards religion frequently created differences in Pakistani society where every group and party claim to have a 'correct' version of Islam.

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