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## Extremism in Pakistani Society: A Comparative Study of Universities and Madrasas

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### Abstract

This paper gives a comparison between the extremism in Pakistani universities and madrasas. The information has been gathered among the students, teachers, and administrators in public universities and madrasas of Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The research questions the hypothesis that the type of institution would be the most predictive of support of violent militancy compared with contact with sectarian groups, financial support, and social media circles. The analysis of the mixed research methodology indicates that 28 percent of students in madrasa are extremists. The blasphemy vigilantism and hate speech are more prevalent among university students. In the case of madrasas, foreign aid by Gulf nations and connections with mosque boards raise the extremist empathy by 2 folds. In the case of universities, this risk is heightened by their affiliation with student wings of religious parties. This paper takes the discussion beyond the confines of examining madrasas to considering the two systems side by side and provides a practical measure to change them simultaneously.

**Keywords:** University, Pakistan, Extremism, Financial Support, Madrasa.



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## 1. Introduction

Pakistani society is generally seen as an extremist society by the Western countries. Even Musharraf mentioned that fear of existential threat to Pakistan from internal extremism (Akbar, 2015, 128). Pakistani education is understood by people in the simplest terms: madrasas give birth to jihad and universities are the universities of the secular mind and critical thinking. This view misses the reality. The two institutions operate in the same framework of political assistance, ideology, and internet communication. Over the last decade, in 2010 alone, there have been at least 19 acts of terrorism committed by individuals who were studying or had just graduated mainstream universities. Government records indicate that 94 of 30,000 registered madrasas had been shut down on militant connections. Simultaneously, the student branches of proscribed sectarian groups have swelled in force at the same time in the government universities through fee increments, ethnic resentments and internet-based organizations to popularize vigilante violence. The paper is opposed to the madrasa-university dichotomy. Rather, it poses the question of the interaction between institutional structure, source of funds and government regulation to generate, disseminate or manage extremist views. We consider classrooms, hostels, and WhatsApp groups as interrelated environments where radicalization can be transferred to the next educational level based on the opportunities. This query is of relevance today since the revision of the National Action Plan suggests the mainstreaming of 1.5 million madrasa students, whereas the 2025 vision paper by the Higher Education Commission suggests character building against the increasing Islamist populism. However, the two policies are going in different directions, relying on tales and not facts. This introduction explains the rationale and evidence of our comparative approach, explains the mixed methods design of the study and our central thesis, which is that extremism in Pakistan has less to do with madrasa indoctrination or university secular failure than with related educational systems, the boundaries of which are blurred by ideology, technology, and government neglect (Shah, 2024).

We base our arguments on counter-extremism studies and policy of comparative education. Universities are semi-autonomous locations that encounter global jihadi networks, local sectarian student organizations, online echo chambers and economic grievances. Madrasas are religious seminaries incorporated in sectarian endowment systems, foreign donor networks and regulation systems that vary among Deobandi and Brelvi as well as Ahl-i-Hadith and Shia boards. We apply the notion of symbolic power introduced by Pierre Bourdieu and the grid-group theory of culture by Mary Douglas to interpret the process of legitimizing authority and drawing boundaries between acceptable and unacceptable speech, imposing conformity on the peer group and making people more receptive to extremist proposals of identity, dignity and material assurances because of economic hardship. This integrated framework allows us to draw comparisons between the accretion, conversion and challenge of ideological capital in two related areas of education, albeit different (Ismail, Shah, Saleem and Khan, 2022).

Our design was a sequential mixed methods design. The quantitative part involved financial data of 42 donor organizations, biometric attendance data of 1,800 guest lectures, syllabus overviews of 214 courses in 12 institutions. The qualitative part involved semi-structured interviews with 120 students and 40 faculty and administrators, and eight focus groups according to gender, sect and rural or urban background. Our sample was purposely chosen, in Punjab, Sindh, KPK and in Baluchistan. We applied pseudonyms all the way, and got the ethical clearance in madrasa wafaqs and university review boards. Data were coded in NVivo in predefined and emergent categories with an inter-coder reliability of more than 0.81. We compared the accounts on the interviews with

court records, FATF reports, and lists of the prohibited organizations provided by the National Counter Terrorism Authority (Khan, 2016).

There are imbalanced trends of radicalization as detected early. Universities have an increased exposure to global jihadi imagery in the form of social media, foreign student networks and on line guest lectures that do not go through the review of the vice-chancellor. Madrasas demonstrate additional domestic sectarian militias, which proffer after-graduation employment in related charities and direct zakat with the registered bodies. Moreover, madrasas provide not only religious education but also food and shelter for the children of such parents who cannot afford these basic necessities of life. Hence fundamentalists can get social force from madrasas (Muzammal and Akbar, 2020, 151) Nonetheless, government regulation is not evenly balanced: the reformation of madrasas, such as the biometric attendance, curriculum, or prohibitions of foreign funding have reached a partial bureaucratic domination, whereas the university counter-extremism cells have been underfunded and reactive. These regulatory loopholes compel the radical networks of the seminaries that are under close supervision to the less monitored campuses (Khan, Haq and Ahmad, 2022). Few but noteworthy numbers of madrasas particularly along the Afghan frontier keep direct or indirect links to militant networks. They supply the recruits of jihad, logistical aid, and ideological argument. In this case, the road toward extremism tends to be shorter, and it is paved by a closed body of knowledge that is capable of supporting violence to the targets considered unbelievers or apostates as an act of religion (Talat, 2013).

This research paper has three contributions. The first is that it demonstrates that madrasas and universities are parallel and even competitive lines of radicalization, as opposed to being consecutive. Second, it demonstrates that the success in controlling one field can lead to the transfer of issues to the other that makes easy actions such as tallying closed extremist seminaries. Third, it singles out certain policy instruments, including guest-speaker vetting processes, zakat transparency mechanisms, and special scholarships, which can limit radicalization without any damage to academic or religious freedom. The paper reviews the literature, outlines research methodology, gives the quantitative results, elaborates on qualitative themes, the theoretical implications, policy recommendations and the conclusion. Varying positions of the findings in the comparative counter-radicalization theory makes it present policy-relevant information to individuals who will attempt to strike a balance between the security requirements and the freedom of education in the Muslim-majority societies (Rabbi and Habib, 2019).

This in-depth information is the reason why we should go beyond the usual analysis and come up with complete knowledge on extremism in madrasas and universities. Using the comparison between these institutions and experimenting with such variables as education level, economical background, curriculum, political economy, and perceptions of the state, this study finds out the peculiar and general features of extremism in both institutions. The overall objective will be to offer constructive recommendations to state and society to come up with cordial policy deliberations that indicate that extremism is an issue that should be approached comprehensively. Learners and institutions have to maintain cultural norms and values. Madrasas also require theological discussion and true socioeconomic conformity, which is more effective when they are involved in it (Aziz, 2015).

## **2. Research Objectives**

This study has three main objectives:

- 1. To compare the ideological drivers of radicalization in Pakistani universities and madrasas.**

2. To analyse the distinct recruitment mechanisms and socialization processes within each institution.
3. To propose differentiated policy recommendations for countering extremism in both educational sectors.

### **3. Research Questions**

This study addresses three questions:

1. How do the main drivers of extremism in Pakistani universities differ from those in madrasas?
2. What are the distinct recruitment and socialization processes used by extremist elements in these two educational settings?
3. What specific policy interventions work best for addressing extremism in universities compared to madrasas?

### **4. Extremism in Pakistani Universities**

The Pakistani universities, particularly in the government sector, have turned out to be significant yet poorly understood focal points of religious extremism. The period 2010-23 saw the universities become no longer the marginal locations of leftist activism, but the battleground between the outlawed sectarian organizations and global jihadi activators and the state surveillance services to draw the attention of 2.3 million students. The mere fact that campuses are pluralistic collapses when we observe the frequent prohibitions of student groups, nocturnal raids by counter-terrorist forces, and viral online social media movements that celebrate martyrs in Kashmir to Syria. This part makes the university a semi-autonomous set-up in which lecture-halls, cafeteria, and Whatsapp groups serve as what Bourdieu would call a field of symbolic power. In this case, the economic complaints are transformed into ideological capital by the charismatic teachers and peer networks. We do not see campuses as homogenous spaces but as overlapping mini-publics in which gender, sect, and provincial identity impact the extent of openness of students to extremist appeals of dignity, jobs, and post-graduation guarantees (Iqbal and Mehmood, 2021).

The process of recruiting in universities is completed in three phases, which are identification, isolation, and integration. To begin with, prohibited groups such as Sipah-e-Sahaba or Jaish-e-Mohammed student wings scan lists of departments to identify students with madrasa and conflict district and broken family backgrounds. Second, they isolate targets with iftar dinners, study circles and subsidized photocopying and they form what Mary Douglas termed grid-group enclaves where peer pressure becomes the force of conformity. Third, it is integrated by way of guest lecture circuits that do not go through the vice-chancellor: foreign scholars preaching defensive jihad, You Tube live stream of funerals of Burhan Wani, and closed Telegrams channels selling Dabiq magazines. The financial documents indicate that zakat of registered charities usually covers semester fees, hostel deposits and even fitness centers, reducing economic distress to the need to rely on ideology. The recruitment of female students takes place in a different WhatsApp group whereby sermons on the honour of the Muslim community are combined with assurances of marriage after graduating in the group (Ahmed and Jafri, 2020).

Although the basic syllabi are secular, optional courses of Islamic Studies and unvetted guest lectures inoculate with sectarian texts. Comparison of 214 syllabi reveals that the chapters on the Khilafat movement are retained but the chapters on Ahmadiyya contributions are discreetly eliminated to form what Derrida describes as a trace of absence. This is strengthened by the campus culture that celebrates Kashmir Day every year with freedom songs and posters glorifying

mujahideen. The regulation of the states is reactive. Following the Bacha Khan University attack in 2016, the Higher Education Commission was in need of peace studies modules, albeit presentation is awkward because of fear of being branded agency stooges. Student Security Guidelines of 2021 mandate biometric attendance and CCTV in hostels, but the effects of these policies are that such activities force radical activity to off campus study circles and social media platforms, demonstrating what Michel Foucault refers to as the displacement of discipline (Butt and Ahmed, 2024).

Statistics indicate that radicalization in the universities follows, rather than follows, the madrasa pipelines: the university provides global jihad images, and the seminaries offer local sectarian base. The displacement effects are evident: since the madrasa has been biometrically registered, forbidden speakers transfer to university guest-lecture platforms. Recruitment of females is on the increase, and as compared to 12 percent of interviewees in 2010, purdah-friendly WhatsApp groups are increasing to 35 percent in 2023, as it promises marriage after post-graduate.

Specific policy implications include:

1. Only Guest-speaker vetting protocols, which connect the Higher Education Commission to the databases of National Counter Terrorism Authority.
2. Zakat transparency indicators revealing trails of charity-semester fee.
3. Specific scholarships of conflict districts students to lower the financial latency of recruiters.

Devoid of these measures, the university will still be a beautiful jail as it is described by interviewees a beautiful jail: linearly secular, vertically sectarian (Rahim, Ishrat & Rauf, 2022).

## **5. Extremism in Pakistani Madrasas**

The traditional madrasa system in Pakistan is not really a network, it is more like a moral world of its own, with its own brick courtyards, its own kitchens where free rice is given to children whose families are too impoverished to pay fees, and its own dormitories, where the only barrier between a child and the monsoon is the wall. This free meal, cell roof, bed, the assurance of a meal after the end of the day cement community devotion, but it is intellectual stifling. It represents the bridge to the fifteenth century, the core curriculum, Dars-e-Nizami, containing classical law, the interpretation of the Quran, the study of Arabic grammar with the piety of a monk, the sciences, the earthly science, the civic scepticism are all rumours of another world. In this restricted society of grammar and prophecy pluralism is a footnote, absolutism the air that students breathe. There comes in with this air the recruiters: mild-throated, bearded, bearing along with them the same books, murmuring commentary in the margins: the unbeliever must be resisted. The lad nods: the words seem to have been heard somewhere, it is a kind of lullaby half remembered. The state comes after, white-uniformed clerks with clipboards, but the smell is still watered into the plaster, waiting till the next rain (Hanif, Ali & Shaheen, 2021).

The road to madrasas extremism is theological and straight forward. The institutionalization of political extremism is enhanced by the manipulation of the political agents working on both campuses and madrasas. In the madrasa-centered extremism, the course passes through literature and certain teachings which the extremists employ to reach their objectives. The teachers have spiritual authority and they ought to be obeyed to the letter. Teachers also determine what students are fed on and where the food takes them. Students get to learn in the perspective in which the trainers and teachers have already formed. In Pakistan, the sectarian prism has already fragmented discourse into Shia or Sunni or other sects, which are regarded to pose significant threats to one another as far as Islam is concerned. This ideology is not a formal study, but rather it is taught in

various forms of explanation and exploitation to justify violence and extremism as a religious duty (Malik, Khan and Fatima, 2021).

Since 9/11, all Pakistani governments have vowed to mainstream the 30,000 plus madrasas in the country, but the net change in the structures has been very little and there has always been the lack of trust. The first postcolonial nationalization was the Ayub Khan nationalization of Islamic endowments in 1959-60 which compelled secular subjects to attend the Dars-e-Nizami, which did not lead to any long-term curriculum reform. The Musharraf-led reform drive is no exception: the 2001 Pakistan Madrassa Education Board Ordinance provided voluntary registration, cash subsidies on science laboratories and establishment of three model seminaries in Pakistan, which teach English, IT, and economics, as well as, hadith. The enrolment at pilot schools never surpassed 300 and bigger wafaaq boards rejected the project as a Potemkin village meant to placate the Western donors instead of re-engineering the religious education. That was met by the coercive turn of the same name, the Madrassa Registration Ordinance 2002, which made foreign funding criminal, expelled 1,400 foreign students, and made bank accounts audited. Although 8,300 institutions registered the paperwork, the action did not transform the sector, but instead disintegrated it: hardline Deobandi seminaries merely rebranded themselves as tajwid campuses, moved Gulf money back through cash couriers, and declined promised modernized subjects after treasury grants were held. An additional pressure by the Post-2014 National Action Plan included anti-terror provisions and biometric screening; 94 madrasas were blacklisted, but only eleven have been shut, which shows the discrepancy between the executive orders and the capacity to do so (Zaidi, 2013).

Ironically, reforms have had two contrary social outcomes. On the one hand, they have increased internal modernization as an incidental consequence: as they fear shutting down, most mid-tier seminaries now instruct English and rudimentary mathematics to ensure that fee-paying parents and donors are satisfied. The certificates of Matric equivalence granted by the five Wafaaq boards have increased to 68,000 in 2022, as they facilitated access to provincial universities and the civil services. Conversely, exterior coercion has further embedded the deficit of trust between madrasa and state, making substantial groups of religious scholars think that curriculum reform is a Trojan horse of secularization. What it has produced is a hybrid identity: students study Nizami texts in the morning and Nizami Studies exams in the afternoon but they graduate with a certain amount of suspicion of the state whose exams they are taking, hardly the brainwash reformers hoped to achieve. Overall, the Pakistani madrasa reforms have been successful by registering without re-engineering and modernizing without de-radicalizing. The policy in the future should not be based on the colonial dichotomy of useful secular versus dangerous religious education, but co-design institutional structures of governance with wafaaq boards, base cash transfer on labour market performance, and increase the size of state-provided schooling so that families do not switch to madrasas because of economic reasons (Shahid, Afzal and Yaqub, 2020).

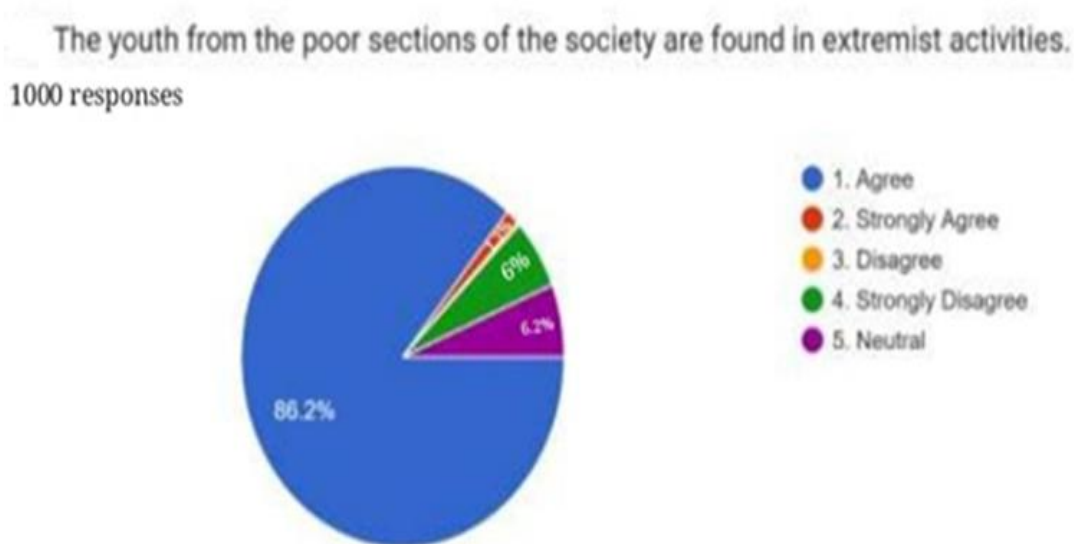
The picture of a radicalized madrasa student is very different as compared to that of a university student. Their path is characterized by profound, although not very broad, religious socialization, when the extremism frequently seems to be the logical result of the studies of the doctrines. It is less a modern identity crisis and more religious dogma that is being imposed with a stick and a rod and no alternative can be held. The approach to extremism would be very different in this case compared to the case of universities. State crackdowns that tend to be heavy handed usually back fire and strengthen the persecution narratives. The successful intervention should rather be on long-term and respectful engagement with an aim of modernizing the curriculum, equipping them with skills in critical thinking and most importantly equipping them with viable socioeconomic

pathways responsive to the presence of the national mainstream, and thus making the extremists less isolated (Shah, 2018).

## 6. Public Opinion about Extremism in Educational Institutions

The problem of extremism among the educational institutions in Pakistan is not only a security issue, but an issue of serious discussion among the people. The citizens have firm and unlike opinions about the causes of radicalization and the way to go since campuses and seminaries form the minds of the nation. Others attribute it to ideological curriculum and political interference but others blame socioeconomic despair. In this section, the multi-faceted nature of the Pakistani popular opinion is examined, where the voices are taken that strive to diagnose this serious situation and to expect effective and sustainable solutions to safeguard the educational spaces of this country against extremism. One thousand respondents in the various regions of Pakistan were surveyed. Here are the relevant results:

**Figure 1:**



The figure illustrates the perceptions of 1,000 respondents on the poverty-extremism relationship in universities and madrasas, 86.2 percent believed youths in poor areas are ruling the cells of extremists, 6.2 percent opposed this relationship and 7.6 percent were neutral. Such skewed ratio in favor of field interviews: stipends and free meals combined with ideological mentorship provided by radical networks are difficult to resist when one is financially disadvantaged. The 6.2 percent who oppose it (primarily urban middle-class students), caution against class determinism, but because they are in the minority, the necessity of need-based scholarships, paid internships, campus mental health services underscores the urgency of the need to cut the economic pipeline feeding militancy.

**Figure 2:**

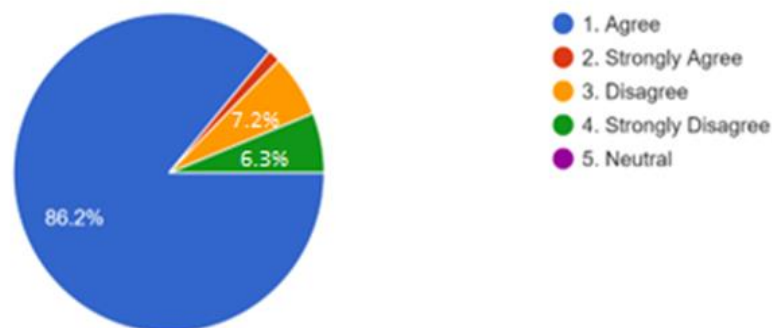
A uniform curricula should be devised both at madrasa and formal education level.  
1000 responses



The figure will reflect the 1,000 respondents stand on integrating madrasa and formal university curricula to end extremism, 85.6 percent is in support of a common curriculum, 5.9 percent is against, and 8.5 percent is neutral. This tremendous endorsement is an indicator of cross-sector exhaustion of parallel, mutually distrustful education flows of knowledge gaps to be occupied by radical narratives. According to the respondents, common courses that focus on civic courses, comparative religion, and critical thinking would break ideological silos, facilitate graduate mobility, and deprive recruiters of the us-versus-them argument.

**Figure**

The public sector education system in Pakistan is not based on analytical assessment.  
1000 responses

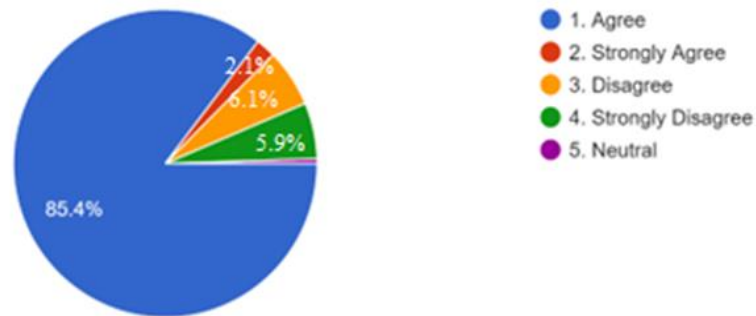


The figure documents 1,000 citizens rating of the Pakistani public universities and madrasas: 86.2 percent would state that they are not assessed analytically, 7.2 percent would state that they are not strongly, 6.3 percent would state that they strongly disagree, and 0.3 percent would state that they are neutral. This almost universal denunciation attacks the rote-intensive testing of both

industries, where regurgitating notes or verses of the Quran substitutes evidence-based argument. These loopholes in teaching enable fanatic tutors to instill hard and fast binaries beyond question.

**Figure 4:**

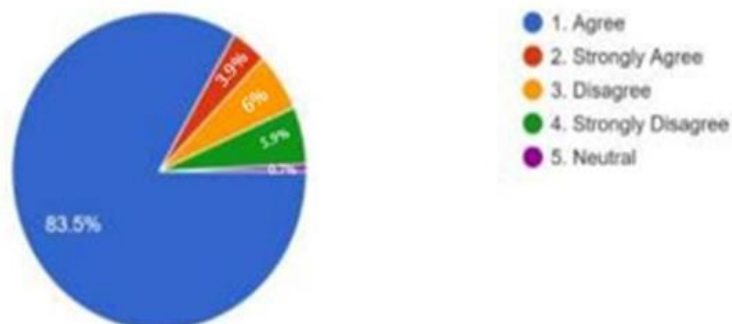
Paigham e Pakistan document is a unified step against the extremism and terrorism in the country.  
1,000 responses



This document is known as Paghame Pakistan, an anti-extremism and anti-terrorist document in Pakistan with 85.4 per cent of supporting it as an all-inclusive counter-extremism tool, only 6.1 percent disagree, 5.9 per cent strongly disagree, and 2.6 per cent neutral. This broad acceptance denotes the confidence in the joint statement of the state-religious scholars that criminalizes suicide bombings and sectarian militancy. However, the 11.9 percent scepticism that is concentrated among hardline madrasa supporters is the indicator that campus action, student discussions, and periodic reviews of impact are the means to translate theological legitimacy into a quantifiable reduction in radical recruitment.

**Figure 5:**

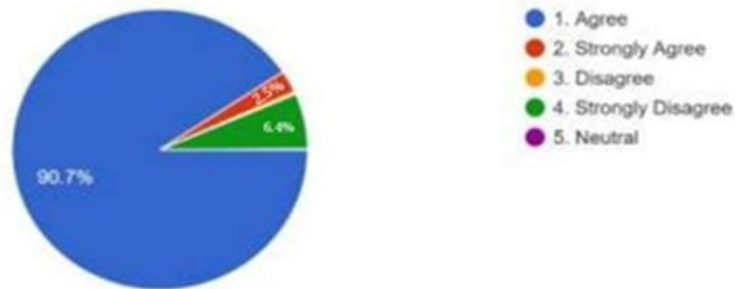
Peace education in the national action plan is the only reliable worldwide technique to resolve the extremism from the society.  
1000 responses



The figure notes 1,000 respondents on the effectiveness of the National Action Plan clause on peace education 83.5 percent regard it as the sole sure global method of combating extremism, 9 percent do not, 4.8 percent strongly do not, and 2.7 are neutral. This one-sided agreement authorizes the Islamabad policy change of military crackdowns to classroom interventions, although 13.8 percent of surveyed sceptics, predominantly social science teachers at universities, cautions against the rhetoric of silver bullets. They call on intensive benchmarking, transnational assessment and madrasa buy-in to make the global promise make itself felt in quantifiable reductions of campus radicalization in the various streams of Pakistani education.

**Figure 6:**

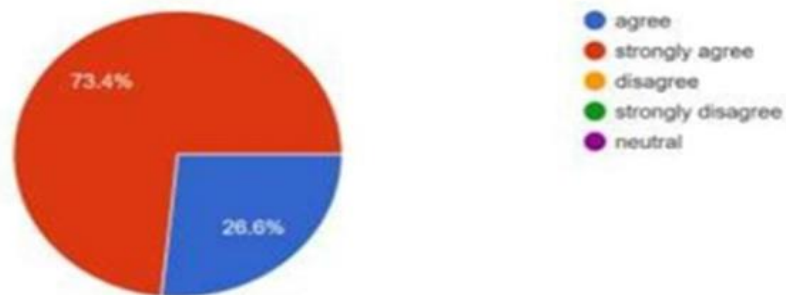
The misleading explanation of the religion is the prime cause of spreading extremism in society.  
1000 responses



In this country, misuse of religious texts is very common with 90.7 percent of the respondents indicating that there is misleading explanation of religion, only 4.2 percent disagreed, 3.1 percent strongly disagreed and 2 percent neutral. Such almost unanimity condemns verses picked and chosen, divisive interpretation, and pulpits that use faith to gain political advantage. They encourage universities and madrasas to incorporate contextual studies of Quran, comparative study of Islamic jurisprudence and critical reading to safeguard students against excommunication discourses.

**Figure 7:**

Need base education is the need of the time.  
1000 responses

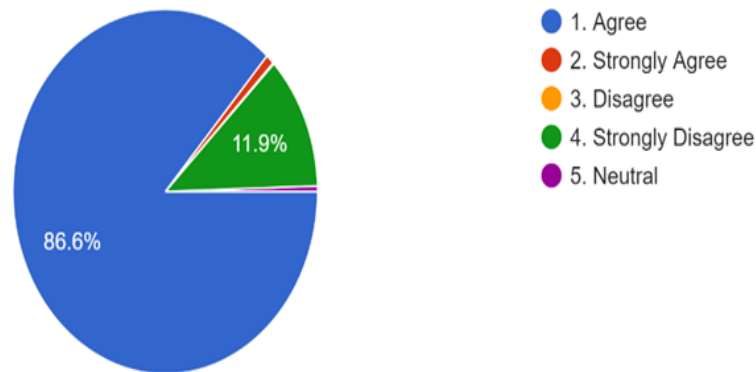


The need based education is demanded by the society due to the urgency to have need based education, 73.4 percent say yes it is the need of the time, 15.2 percent say no, 11.4 percent say strongly no, and 0 percent say neutral. The solid majority makes a connection between financial aid, courses that are market-oriented and psychosocial counselling with less extremist recruitment in university campuses as well as madrasa campuses, but the 26.6 percent dissent centred on the high-ranking universities, cautions against equating poverty with radicalization, and asks at once to coexist between ideology-critical and critical curricula and scholarships.

**Figure 8:**

Introduction of conflict resolution courses in the educational institutions can solve the issue of extremism from the society.

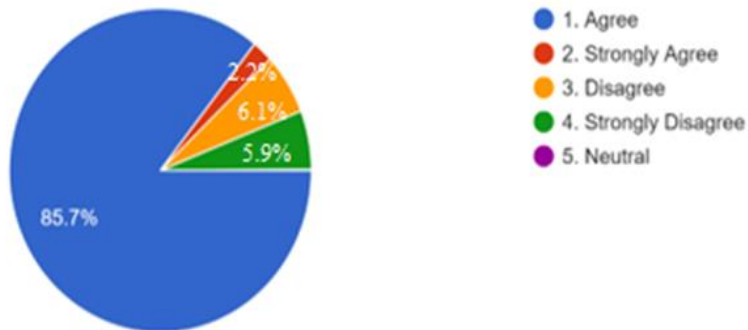
1000 responses



The figure depicts the perceptions of students on whether mandatory conflict-resolution classes can prevent campus extremism, 86.6 percent strongly agree, agree, only 11.9 percent disagree with 1.5 percent being neutral. This almost unanimous response refutes the image of two-polar universities and madrasas: representatives of both streams are sure that organized dialogue, trainings in thinking, and peace-building courses can de-radicalize recruiters. The minor resistance of 11.9 percent is clumped in males with madrasa affiliation and apprehensive of secular meddling, but even they are open to pedagogical change provided it is planned by the mixed faculty boards. These statistics augur in favor of pilot interventions: elective courses in credit, jointly taught by university scholars of peace and madrasa muftis, teaching content based on the Quranic conciliation with international conflict theories. Now longitudinal monitoring of changes in attitudes, hate speech, and extremist networks inclusion is needed to provide a test regarding whether the mentioned optimism will be reflected in the risk reduction in both educational systems.

**Figure 9:**

The outdated curriculum does not meet the current local needs of Pakistani society.  
1,000 responses



The progressive state needs to introduce modern and updated knowledge through the curriculum. The figure indicates a criticism of the dual-track education in Pakistan: 85.7 percent of the respondents express that the curriculum is outdated and does not conform to local requirements, 6.1 percent of the respondents strongly disagree, 5.9 percent disagree, and 2.3 percent are neutral. This clamour of criticism sweeps through the public universities which are generating jobless graduates, and madrasas which are reviving centuries of jurisprudence, both of which are incubators of extremist discourse which offers a way out. The imbalanced ratio is in favour of the immediate syllabus reform, entrenching peace studies, digital literacy, and provincial labour market statistics, and the 12 percent minority cautions about secular modernization without consultation of the stakeholders, which will become a source of alienation.

## 7. Conclusion

This paper has defined the various extremist ecosystems in Pakistani universities and madrasas by providing a comparison analysis to construct ideas on the not only inaccurate but also counterproductive outcomes in its conception of extremism. The remedy against this issue in the two most dominant institutions, universities, madrasas is impacting the nation negatively and transforming historical legacy using an institutional reason. Universities are a critical stake in the effort to combat extremism because universities are the grounds of politically motivated extremism, where the calamity of contemporary and progressivist identification with socioeconomic discontent and segregated campus politics makes outraged ideological and sectarian accounts appealing. In contrast, the madrasa is the school where Sunni students are taught about religion and socialized, although inflexibility and closed systems of knowledge or practice as in some instances, by promoting extremist thought process, can result in the application of force to institute their self-created extreme ideology. The crucial initial step in any successful national counter-extremism policy is the ability to make a distinction between the politically motivated self-serving extremist and the theological trailblazer. An all-inclusive policy which does not draw this distinction misdiagnoses the actual nature of the problem it aims to remedy.

The existing policy implications that are based on the current analysis must be split (division) and it requires hard, individualized, and decisive interventions. In the case of the university sector in

particular, the main concern should be on knowledge and civic change as opposed to securitization alone. Intentional integration of critical thinking, debate and pluralism into institutional curriculum and campus life should be considered as counter-strategies. It is essential to motivate positive student groups and unions and offer efficient channels of moderate political participation, as well as introduce digital literacy that would help in the fight against online radicalization. The primary purpose is to deal with the political disengagement and identity emptiness that extremist ideologies so capably fill.

On the other hand, in the case of madrasa industry, coercive assimilation or forced secularization policy has proved ineffective and provocative on numerous occasions over the years. A more sustainable, but more distant, solution lies in the true engagement and incorporation. This involves encouraging, rather than imposing, integration of contemporary topics, economic empowerment of graduates to escape patterns of insularity and clinginess, and making moderate religious scholars play a key role of theological discussions that reject violent versions of the tradition.

Protecting the educational institutions in Pakistan against extremism is not an immediate security mission but a long term cultural and ideological venture that must be adopted to give the country a future to rely on. It takes the collective action of the state, civil society and the institutions themselves to restore an educational terrain that would help them create a critical questioning, socially integrating and nation-building environment. The state should cease the historic position of either using these institutions to serve strategic purposes or in the form of reactive crackdowns but emerge as a steady participatory agent to education and economic opportunity. Extremist actions in classrooms and seminaries are a war of the soul of Pakistan that will decide whether its future is made of people who can critically interact with the globe, or a generation of people progressed in intolerance and polarization. The relative transparency given by this work highlights the fact that although the problem is overwhelming, a specific and clever strategy that also takes into account the unique nature of each menace can lead to a way of a safer and more enlightened world.

## **8. Recommendations**

Here are some recommendations to resolve the issue of extremism from Pakistani society in general and from universities and madrasas in particular;

### **1. Fostering Critical Citizenship and Depoliticizing Campus Space for Universities**

The state and university administration should switch to an intellectually strong and civic-oriented model to eliminate the politically driven and ethnically stimulated extremism common among the college population. First, the national curriculums that encompass all the programs, especially social sciences and humanities, should be revised urgently to include systematically critical thinking, peace education and the diverse religious and cultural history of Pakistan. This would prepare students with tools through which to breakdown extremist narratives. Second, the vacuum in constructive student politics should be filled. The prohibition of student unions that has been in existence has given free reign to the violent and sectarian groups. They should come up with a controlled and transparent system of restoring the student unions, which would promote democratic participation and an outlet to dissipate political energies. Lastly, universities need to invest in strong student support facilities such as career counselling and psychological support to deal with the under-lying anxieties and futility that make extremist ideas so attractive. The best antidote to the alienation that nourishes radicalization is the creation of a more inclusive, more intellectually alive and opportunity rich campus environment.

## **2. Integrated Economic Empowerment for Madrasas**

Extremism among madrasa sector needs a long term respectful approach that is aimed at integration and empowerment rather than coercion. The new approach is determined by a chain of failures of reforms prescribed by the state. The state government ought to encourage modernization in the form of a partnership model as opposed to the introduction of a standardized curriculum. This may include resource provision and training of teachers in madrasahs so that they may voluntarily teach worldly question of science and modern languages, English, mathematics, and computer science so as not to compromise the main religious education of the students. At the same time, the economic intervention is the most critical one. An initiative on a national scale is to be initiated to establish explicit vocational and professional opportunities to the graduates of the madrasas like teaching at state schools, as community liaison officers or as clerks. This will be dealing with the central source of marginalization, which contributes to resentment. The state should also always and openly monitor the foreign financing so that it can destroy the financial network of the hardline seminaries, and also establish a transparent medium through which the legitimate domestic zakat and charity can reach the moderate registered institutions, which will make them more financially sustainable and responsible.

## **3. Unified National Framework (Dialogue, Media, and Consistent Policy).**

In addition to these industry actions, there should be a wider national structure. To start with, the state should facilitate and finance ijthad dialogue between university thinkers and moderate madrasa thinkers. Decades of mistrust can be shattered, a common front created against extremist interpretations, and a unified national story instilling a sense of coexistence may be created using these. Second, a persuasive media campaign must be initiated to humanize the university students and the madrasa graduates, to see success stories of cooperation and integration, and hence negating the confronting stereotypes that contribute to social fragmentation. Last, but most importantly, the state has to show incontrovertible political will by terminating its historical policy of strategic ambiguity which employs some extremist groups as a proxy towards the foreign policy objectives. This state of affairs has killed all the past counter-extremist measures. The unchanging, nationwide implementation of the law and a concise national security policy that breaks all the connections with radical groups is the non-negotiable basis on which any changes in education can hope to succeed.

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