



**RESEARCH PAPER**

**Terrorism and Extremism as a Non-Traditional Security Threats in Post 9/11: Implications for Pakistan's Society and Politics**

**<sup>1</sup>Dr. Muhammad Tahir Rashid\* <sup>2</sup>Dr. Tahir Jamil <sup>3</sup> Shahid M. Minhas**

1. Assistant Professor, Department of Sciences & Humanities, FAST NUCES, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan
2. Assistant Professor, Area Study Centre for Africa, North & South America, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, Pakistan
3. Advisor Capacity Building, Sustainable Development Policy Institute, Islamabad, Pakistan

**\*Corresponding Author:** tahir.rashid@nu.edu.pk

**ABSTRACT**

This paper examines the implications of terrorism and extremism as non-traditional security threats on Pakistan's society and politics in the post-9/11 era. The objective of the study is to gain a comprehensive understanding of how these threats have influenced societal dynamics and political structures within the country. The background section provides context on the rise of terrorism and extremism globally, particularly after the September 11, 2001 attacks. The methodology involves a comprehensive analysis of scholarly literature, government reports, and data to assess the impact of terrorism and extremism on various sectors of Pakistani society. The results indicate that these threats have significantly affected social cohesion, religious tolerance, and political stability in Pakistan. Based on the findings, the paper presents recommendations to address these challenges effectively, emphasizing the need for inclusive governance, deradicalization programs, and counterterrorism strategies that focus on both military and socio-economic dimensions.

**KEYWORDS** Extremism, Non-Traditional Security Threats, Politics, Society, Terrorism

**Introduction**

Over the course of the 21st century, significant changes have occurred in global politics and diplomacy. One of the most significant threats to global security and confidence is terrorism, which has affected people worldwide throughout history. However, the issue came to the forefront after the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York. The United States, in particular, saw a seismic upheaval in its foreign policy, and the international community began to view terrorism as a truly transnational security threat. Later, the attack Bush Administration identified Al-Qaeda. In retaliation, NATO revoked Article 5 for the first time and the US declared war against terrorism and demanded that Afghanistan surrender Osama bin Laden (Muzaffar, Yaseen, & Afzal, 2021)

The events of September 11, 2001, marked a turning point in the global security landscape, as the devastating terrorist attacks on the United States ushered in a new era characterized by an increased focus on non-traditional security threats (Muzaffar, Nawab, & Yaseen, 2021; Afzal, Iqbal, & Inayat, 2012). Terrorism and extremism emerged as formidable challenges, transcending national borders and posing significant risks to both national and international security. In the wake of 9/11, countries worldwide, including Pakistan, found themselves grappling with the complex ramifications of these modern threats.

Pakistan, located at the crossroads of South Asia, holds a unique and strategic position in the fight against terrorism and extremism. Despite its rich cultural heritage and diverse society, the country has experienced its fair share of internal and external challenges. In the post-9/11 era, Pakistan has become a critical battleground in the global

fight against terrorism, witnessing a surge in extremist activities and radicalization (Yaseen, Muzaffar, 2018; Afridi, Yousufi, & Khan, 2014).

Due to its geographic location, Pakistan was forced to become the US's first ally in this war. But this was not the only reason. It was stated by President Pervez Musharraf in his book 'In the Line of Fire: A Memoir,' that the USA threatened Pakistan that if it would not join the global war on terrorism, then it should instead be prepared to be bombed back to Stone Age (Musharraf, 2006). However, this decision was met with opposition from various groups, including religious and political parties. As a result, Pakistan has suffered the brunt of this plague. The consequences for the country were catastrophic, with terrorism becoming increasingly severe and damaging. The number of deaths rose significantly from 38 in 2001 to 11,704 in 2009, 5,496 in 2014, and 691 in 2018. Pakistan has faced severe consequences, including the need for armed forces to launch operations against terrorist organizations in tribal areas. Although the security situation in the country has improved at times, terrorism remains a persistent threat.

To address the weakening of the state and a range of factors that contribute to it, including poor governance and the presence of local and foreign militant groups, a counterterrorism strategy is necessary. In response to this global threat, many countries have implemented practical measures to ensure national security, such as rigorous airport screening and stricter visa regulations. However, these measures alone are insufficient to completely eradicate terrorism and its long-term threats. For instance, the Pakistani government enacted more stringent anti-terrorism measures after the Army Public School attack in Peshawar in 2014, but some of these policies remain unimplemented to this day. Therefore, it is essential for countries to reassess their national security and foreign policies to combat terrorism effectively and ensure the safety of their citizens.

This study delves into the intricate nature of terrorism and extremism as non-traditional security threats in the context of Pakistan's society and politics. We will examine the implications of these threats on various facets of Pakistani society including culture, religion, economy, and governance. Moreover, we will explore the measures taken by the Pakistani government and society to counter the menace of terrorism and extremism while navigating the complexities of regional and international relations.

Pakistan has faced significant non-traditional security threats, particularly terrorism, and extremism, in the post-9/11 era. These threats have destabilized the country, resulting in loss of lives, property damage, and economic decline. While various studies have explored the causes and implications of terrorism and extremism in Pakistan, there is a need for further research that examines the effectiveness of existing strategies and policies in addressing these challenges. This study aims to analyse the implications of terrorism and extremism as non-traditional security threats in Pakistan's society and politics and evaluate the strategies and policies adopted by the government and other stakeholders to counter these threats.

## **Literature Review**

Haider, Azad, and Warrich, (2020) discuss the impact of terrorism and extremism on Pakistan post-9/11. The authors identify the deterioration of internal security, drone attacks, and the need for effective governance to address these challenges. They also note that the conflict with India is evolving into hybrid warfare, which, along with domestic challenges such as terrorism and separatist movements, poses significant threats to Pakistan's stability. The paper stresses the importance of understanding and countering hybrid warfare to protect Pakistan's national interests. Furthermore, the article delves into Pakistan's internal challenges resulting from being a key partner of the US, such as terrorism, poor governance, sectarianism, and separatist movements. It is stated that

Pakistan's participation in the War on Terror has created hybrid threats that have led to confusion, poor law and order, and a deteriorating security situation.

On the other hand, Syed and Javed, (2017) in their article "Deterrence: A Security Strategy against Non-Traditional Security Threats to Pakistan" examine the effectiveness of deterrence as a security strategy against non-traditional threats, specifically terrorism in Pakistan. The authors state that the post-9/11 security landscape has led to a redefinition of security strategies, with non-traditional threats now being considered a necessary part of security planning. Pakistan is reassessing and reorganizing its security strategies to protect against these threats, but more deliberate efforts are needed to address factors that are slowly weakening the state, such as terrorism and extremism.

Pakistan has long been facing various security challenges, both domestic and external. (Nawaz, 2013) article "Security Challenges for Pakistan" provides an overview of these challenges, highlighting terrorism, extremism, sectarianism, and separatism as major internal security threats, and the growing influence of India and the presence of US troops in Afghanistan as the major external security threats faced by Pakistan. The article emphasizes the role of the Taliban and other militant groups in destabilizing the country and discusses the factors contributing to the rise of extremism in Pakistan, including poverty, illiteracy, and political instability. The author argues that Pakistan needs to adopt a detailed approach to address these security challenges, which includes improving the economy, promoting education, and addressing the root causes of extremism and terrorism.

In contrast, (Yousufi, 2016) paper "A Theoretical Study of Islamic and Western Perspectives on the Causes of Terrorism After 9/11 in FATA and KP Pakistan: A Comparative Analysis" offers a comparative analysis of Islamic and Western political perspectives on the causes of terrorism after the 9/11 attacks in the former Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) regions of Pakistan. Yousufi argues that Western perspectives on the causes of terrorism focus on external factors such as poverty, lack of education, and political oppression. In contrast, Islamic perspectives prioritize internal factors such as moral and religious decay, corrupt governance, and failing to uphold Islamic values. The author concludes that both perspectives are relevant to understanding the causes of terrorism in KPK.

Another article "War on Terrorism in Pakistan: Challenges and Strategic Steps" Malik, He, and Rafay, (2019) provides an extensive review of the challenges faced by Pakistan in its fight against terrorism. The authors analyse the evolution of terrorism in Pakistan, its causes, and its impact on the country's political, economic, and social systems. The authors highlight the factors that contributed to the growth of terrorism in Pakistan, including its proximity to Afghanistan, weak governance, corruption, poverty, and sectarianism. The article goes on to discuss the various challenges faced by Pakistan in its fight against terrorism. These challenges include the lack of a thorough counter-terrorism strategy, inadequate intelligence gathering and sharing, weak law enforcement and judicial systems, and the presence of safe havens for terrorists in the country's tribal areas.

In response to these challenges, the article outlines a series of strategic steps that the Pakistani government can take to address the issue of terrorism. These steps include the development of a good counter-terrorism strategy, improved intelligence gathering and sharing, strengthening law enforcement and judicial systems, and addressing the root causes of terrorism through economic development and social welfare programs.

According to the Global Terrorism Index, Pakistan ranks among the top five countries most affected by terrorism. The article "The Homeland Security Initiatives for Pakistan: A Grand Strategy" by (Khalid, & Kamal, 2015) discusses the homeland security initiatives taken by Pakistan in response to the challenges posed by terrorism. The author argues that Pakistan needs to adopt an integrated approach to deal with the security

challenges it faces. The article provides a detailed account of the measures taken by Pakistan in response to the security challenges it faces. These measures include the establishment of the National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA), the implementation of the National Action Plan (NAP), and the creation of the National Security Committee (NSC).

The article also discusses the challenges faced by Pakistan in its fight against terrorism. These challenges include the lack of political will, the presence of safe havens for terrorists, and the lack of coordination among different law enforcement agencies. The authors argue that Pakistan needs to adopt a grand strategy to deal with the security challenges it faces. This grand strategy should be based on three pillars: intelligence gathering and sharing, capacity building of law enforcement agencies, and countering the ideology of terrorism.

The paper concludes with the argument that Pakistan is encountering difficulties in controlling the transnational terrorist syndicates present in KPK. The optimistic statement that was made by President Obama about progress in Afghanistan and FATA is deemed questionable, as the increasing number of terrorist attacks in major cities of Pakistan highlights the government's intelligence failure and raises pertinent concerns.

In "Tackling Terrorism: Traditional Security Approaches," Latif and Khan, (2011) propose securitization as a more comprehensive and effective approach to counter terrorism than traditional state-centric security methods. They argue that securitization presents terrorism as an existential threat requiring urgent and extraordinary measures. The authors use Pakistan as a case study to illustrate how securitization can be more effective than traditional security approaches. They emphasize the need for a multidimensional approach that considers the inter-sectoral cyclic relationship and dependence among different fields, such as politics, economics, and military. The article also provides historical context, highlighting the changing nature of international security dynamics from the end of the Cold War to the post-9/11 period. During this time, armed groups evolved into more complex and sophisticated entities. The authors offer valuable insights into the limitations of traditional security approaches and the potential benefits of securitization in addressing terrorism.

## **Material and Methods**

To conduct this research, a qualitative approach was used to gather and analyse data. The data collection process involved a comprehensive review of relevant literature on terrorism and extremism in Pakistan, as well as the implications of these phenomena on the country's society and politics in the post-9/11 era. The review process involved searching various online academic databases, including Google Scholar, JSTOR, and other relevant sources, using a combination of keywords such as "terrorism," "extremism," "Pakistan," "security threats," and "post-9/11 era".

After identifying relevant sources, the articles were screened for their relevance and usefulness based on predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria. The inclusion criteria included articles that focused on terrorism and extremism in Pakistan, their implications for society and politics, and their relation to the post-9/11 era. The exclusion criteria included articles that were not related to the research questions, or those that did not meet the predetermined quality standards.

Once the relevant articles were identified, a critical appraisal was conducted to evaluate the quality and validity of the sources. The appraisal process involved assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the research methods, data collection techniques, and the relevance and applicability of the findings to the research questions.

The data analysis process involved a thematic analysis approach, which involved identifying patterns, themes, and categories in the data. The analysis process focused on identifying the main themes and patterns that emerged from the data, and how they related to the research questions. The findings were then used to develop the discussion and conclusions sections of the research article.

This study used a qualitative approach that involved a comprehensive review of relevant literature, a critical appraisal of the sources, and a thematic analysis approach to analyse the data. This approach was chosen to provide a deeper understanding of the security challenges posed by terrorism and extremism in Pakistan, and their implications for society and politics in the post-9/11 era.

## **Results and Discussion**

The findings of our literature review and qualitative analysis highlight the multifaceted and complex nature of the security threats posed by terrorism and extremism in Pakistan. The post-9/11 era has seen a significant rise in terrorist activities, with various militant groups and extremist factions carrying out attacks across the country (Burki, 2013). This has had a severe impact on the country's socioeconomic fabric and political stability, with implications for both domestic and regional security.

Our research findings indicate that terrorism and extremism in Pakistan have deep-seated roots that are closely intertwined with socio-economic, political, and religious factors. Poverty, unemployment, and illiteracy are significant drivers of extremism, as they create a conducive environment for radicalization and recruitment (Hassan & Ali, 2014). The weak governance structures and corruption in the country also provide fertile ground for extremist ideologies to take hold (Khan, 2017). Moreover, sectarian and religious differences have fuelled violence and extremism in the country, with militant groups exploiting these divisions to further their agendas.

Terrorism and extremism in Pakistan as a country on the forefront on the War on Terror, have had profound impacts on the country's social, political, and economic fabric. The security situation has led to a decline in foreign investment and adversely affected trade and tourism, exacerbating existing challenges of poverty and inequality. Moreover, millions of people have been displaced, leading to severe humanitarian consequences.

Regional security has also been impacted, with tensions rising with neighbouring countries due to the presence of militant groups (Haqqani, 2010). The ongoing conflict in Afghanistan has contributed to the destabilisation of the region, with Pakistan being one of the primary victims of spill over effects. Furthermore, the growing influence of extremist groups in Pakistan has raised concerns about the country's nuclear program, with fears of these groups gaining access to nuclear materials and technology.

Pakistan is surrounded by India, Afghanistan, Iran, and China. Despite having good relations with China, Pakistan suffers from international security threats from all three sides. Friendly interactions between Pakistan and Afghanistan have diminished since 2001, leading to a series of crises. Non-state actors have destabilized peace, as evidenced by the attack on the Sri Lankan Cricket Team in 2009. The Taliban has turned against Pakistan, attacking government institutions and its people, creating a culture of terrorism. TTP and Al Qaeda troops are still active in Pakistan and are responsible for most suicide bombings and attacks.

Terrorism in Pakistan has led to political instability, brain drain, and security issues, with thousands of people killed in terrorist attacks in the KPK regions. Poor administration and power struggles between the government and judiciary have worsened the situation.

Adding more fuel to this cause, are religious radicalism and intolerance furthering the divide between different religious groups. This sectarianism is further exacerbated by foreign forces, using it as a proxy for their own interests. Radicalization through religious schooling has led to hate crimes, unrest in the country, and a bad international reputation. The Taliban's prohibition of women's education in tribal areas has worsened the situation, leading to the destruction of over 190 schools in a country with already high illiteracy rates. The use of madrassas by radical organizations to propagate their agenda has only added to the problem.

As a result, a prompt and effective response that includes public declarations and legal management of such actors is needed as a result of Pakistan being significantly impacted by terrorism since 9/11. However, Pakistan's use of military deterrence has caused instability and anxiety, especially when dealing with non-traditional threats like these. Effective deterrence against such threats requires influencing the cost-benefit calculation of offenders and their enablers, along with managing non-state actors impartially through a proper security plan. Yet, the most significant effect of terrorism in Pakistan has been the insecurities in the hearts of the people living here. The situation might have gotten better for a couple of years now, but the first decade after the War on Terror was inherently troublesome for Pakistanis. Living in fear every day because of unrest in the country, being scared for their children's lives after the attack on APS 2014 took place; this is only an overview of how people felt like, living here. The blanket of fear that surrounded these people's minds after watching people die so easily at the hands of terrorists, is unimaginable.

In light of these challenges, our research suggests that addressing the root causes of terrorism and extremism in Pakistan is critical for promoting peace and stability in the region. This requires a comprehensive approach that tackles poverty, unemployment, and illiteracy, as well as improving governance structures and addressing sectarian and religious differences. Promoting education and providing opportunities for youth is also essential in countering extremist ideologies and preventing radicalization. Furthermore, regional cooperation is critical in addressing the cross-border dimensions of terrorism and extremism, with Pakistan playing a vital role in promoting peace and stability in the region.

Finally, our research indicates that terrorism and extremism in Pakistan pose significant non-traditional security threats to the country's society and politics. Addressing the root causes of these challenges is critical for promoting peace and stability in the region. The findings of this study have implications for policymakers, analysts, and researchers interested in understanding the complex nature of security threats in Pakistan and designing effective strategies to promote peace and stability in the region.

## **Findings**

The study revealed that terrorism and extremism are major non-traditional security threats to Pakistan's society and politics. The causes of these security threats include poverty, illiteracy, political instability, corrupt governance, and moral and religious decay. The study found that Pakistan has been facing significant challenges in addressing these issues due to a lack of resources, ineffective governance, and external pressures (Zulfiqar & Haq, 2020).

Furthermore, the study found that there is a need for an exhaustive approach to address these security challenges. This includes improving the economy, promoting education, and addressing the root causes of extremism and terrorism. Policymakers need to take into account both Islamic and Western perspectives on terrorism in designing effective strategies to promote peace and stability in the region (Rana & Chaudhry, 2019).

The study also highlighted the role of the Taliban and other militant groups in destabilizing the country. The continued presence of US troops in Afghanistan and the growing influence of India poses external security threats to Pakistan (Mumtaz & Ahmad, 2020).

Another thing brought to light by the study is that the National Internal Security Policy (NISP) is Pakistan's first-ever internal security plan. Its goal is to establish a secure environment where the country's citizens can live freely and peacefully. The policy is founded on the ideas of integration of all national initiatives, with a focus on three key areas: cutting off terrorists from their networks of support, dialogue with all stakeholders, enhancing deterrence, and the capability of Pakistan's security apparatus to counter threats to its internal security. The Comprehensive Response Plan (CRP), a soft component of the NISP that includes discourse and national narratives, infrastructure development, rehabilitation, monitoring through NACTA, and legal reforms, lays out the necessary policy framework for implementing this approach. The Composite Deterrence Plan (CDP), which integrates specialised abilities and skills to counter both conventional and non-conventional threats, is the hard component of NISP.

However, the need is to implement these policies by law and order and to make our judiciary systems strong enough to enforce punishments on those who fail to follow them. Pakistan has also addressed the paradigm shift of jihadists through a comprehensive war on terrorism codenamed Zarb-e-Azb and has announced the development of National Action Plan (NAP) to combat terrorism in order to eradicate extremists as a national policy.

### **Way Forward**

Based on the discussion above, it is clear that terrorism and extremism continue to pose significant non-traditional security threats to Pakistan's society and politics. To address these threats, policymakers and stakeholders need to adopt a comprehensive approach that addresses the root causes of these issues. This includes promoting education, improving the economy, and addressing political instability.

Furthermore, policymakers should consider both Islamic and Western perspectives on terrorism to design effective strategies to promote peace and stability in the region. This includes engaging with religious leaders, civil society organizations, and local communities to promote tolerance, non-violence, and respect for human rights.

Effective intelligence gathering and sharing is essential to anticipate terrorist threats and criminal activities in a homeland security structure. In Pakistan, police suffer from a legitimacy crisis, making it necessary to allocate sufficient funding and establish reliable information exchange systems. Additionally, assigning police duties to paramilitary groups like the army and rangers could significantly contribute to the idea of homeland security.

Additionally, to counter the impact of terrorism in post-9/11 Pakistan, more sophisticated and redesigned strategies are needed. Improved strategic communication is necessary to convey a clear message against terrorist networks. Tactical denial policies of deterrence should be adopted to deter criminals and terrorists, and no demand of any terrorist groups should be fulfilled.

To counter the ideology of terrorism, media can be utilized to instil a sense of patriotism in the hearts of people, focusing on national unity rather than sectarian differences. To prevent growing polarization, extremism, radicalism and hate crimes should be punished severely. However, for all of this to work, Pakistan needs good governance, a strong judicial system that maintains law and order, and a foreign policy that improves

relations with neighbouring nations while prioritizing national interest. National interest must include protecting the state's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Lastly, based on the increasing threat of non-state actors as discussed above, harsh and precise messages should be conveyed to them, and legislation should be enacted to punish them through state laws. Understanding of non-state actors' knowledge should be collected to decide how to deal and destroy them. The political government and military should collaborate to handle actors that attempt to destabilize Pakistan. Overall, the study suggests that Pakistan needs to adopt a multi-dimensional approach to address its security challenges. This includes addressing the root causes of terrorism and extremism, promoting education and economic growth, strengthening governance and rule of law, and improving relations with its neighbours (Aslam, Aslam, & Umar, 2021).

## **Conclusion**

To conclude, this research has provided us with deep insights on the security threats followed by 9/11 and the War on Terror that our country has faced ever since. It analysed the root causes of the complex security challenges posed to Pakistan due to terrorism and provided us with different ways on how to tackle them after gaining a comprehensive understanding of them.

The various articles highlight the grave threats that terrorism, extremism, hybrid warfare, and other emerging security issues pose to Pakistan. Insights on modern warfare's effect on Pakistani politics and society emphasize the necessity for a comprehensive strategy, including political dialogue, social development, and empowerment. These analyses benefit foreign policy experts' understanding of Pakistan's intricate security environment and its struggles in countering terrorism and other non-traditional security threats.

Moreover, this research investigated terrorism and extremism's threat to Pakistan's security, and the underlying causes. Terrorism has caused severe political and economic turmoil in Pakistan, with a surge in terrorist attacks and suicide bombings leading to unrest and insecurity. Ineffective administration and over-reliance on military solutions have worsened the issue of extremism. The nation's involvement in the war on terror following 9/11 has had a profound effect on its foreign policy and relationship with the US. Despite some progress in countering terrorism, significant challenges in security, education, and economic development remain.

It would also be important to note here that Pakistan's insecurity stems from its unstable birth as a Muslim state, surrounded by hostile neighbours. Its involvement in the Afghanistan-Soviet War and the War on Terror has had serious implications for its internal security structure. Despite Pakistan's commendable security initiatives, the actual hindrances are political instability and conflict between civil-military leadership, which hinders national unity on internal security matters.

Therefore, the real problem is not to find solutions to resolve these threats, it is to implement them strictly. This lack of implementation exists due to unrealistic and impractical governing policies and extremely sets back the progress of Pakistan in dealing with terrorism.



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