Causes Of Sectarian Extremism in Pakistan: An Emic Perspective Of Religious Scholars

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ABSTRACT

Sectarianism is a problem that has a huge impact on people. The implications of sectarian violence are posing great threats to the peace process in the country. The society of Pakistan is by and large divided on ethnic basis and this issue is badly damaging the society on economic political as well as on societal basis. The purpose for present study is to investigate the reasons of extremism and sectarianism and to highlight the preventive measures for control of sectarianism. The Qualitative research design was used to conduct the study. Present research was conducted with different sect scholars in the district Muzaffarabad Azad Jammu and Kashmir. A six semi- structured, question interview guide was used for data collection and interview was recorded with 7 male and 1 female with their ages range from (35-65) and education (B.A - M.A). The consent form was design to seek consent for willingness to give interview and allow for audio recording of their interview from participants. An In-depth analysis of data was done through thematic analysis by Braun & Clarke (2006). In depth analysis revealed that there is different Islamic views, division of groups, propaganda ,lack of faith, use of power, conflicts, cognitions, following the schools of thoughts and force against Islam regarding opinion of sectarianism. Different preventive measures are given which should be taken as, maintain the level of understanding among sectarian leaders, and work in individual capacity. This research helps researchers for better understanding of causes of sectarianism in Pakistani society.

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1.   Introduction

Sectarianism is a problem that has a serious negative impact on society. History is full of such examples, but the events of last 30 years suggest that the problem is more complex. Pakistani society is deeply divided morally, with sectarian divisions fuelling the fire. The sectarian violence poses a major threat to the country's peace process. Lack of tolerance and the sectarian divisions are a disaster for society. For three decades, sectarianism has damaged both the country and society of Pakistan. Its negative impacts are damaging the society on many fronts i.e. psychological, economic, political and social (Mahsood, 2017)**.**

"The term sectarianism is used in the sociology of religion designate to a particular type of religious group"(International Encyclopaedias of the Social Sciences, 1968).A sec is usually a group of people with a certain opinions that differ from others, usually of the same religion. Usually this word is used for a "separately organized religious group having its typical name and its own places of worship" (The Oxford English Dictionary, 1961). Sectarianism arises when various religious groups, each of whom expresses their own belief and are not ready to unite

with different views, are hostile to each other and apply violence to each other (The Oxford English Dictionary, 1961).

Pakistan is one of those countries of world which was formed on the basis of ethnicity. There was a common national, cultural and religious motive behind its formation. After the formation of Pakistan, the complex circumstances of 75 years has took us to the point of emergence of strong radical thoughts , prevailing in every sect of Pakistan ; whether media, political spheres, elite circle or education institution s. In this article, we have focused on the cause's sectarian extremism in Pakistan: an emic perspective of Islamic scholar.

"Struggle in Pakistan has many meanings, primarily political, religious and social. Although there is no consensus on terms, it makes the job harder to understand''. Unfortunately, 'religious extremism is a major factor in all the apparent radicalization trends and patterns in Pakistan' (Rathore & Basit, 2010).

Before the partition of India in 1947, there was little conflict between Shiites and–Sunnis in what is now Pakistan. They emerged in the 1980s due to Zia al- Haqs policy of Islamization and the Iranian revolution. The Shiites, who make up about 20 percent of the population, have always been interested in Islamization movements and often drive and often supported the more secular Pakistan's People's Party (PPP) in the 1970s, fearing that a rise in military orthodoxy would turn the situation around. Fight them as you fought the Ahmadiyya group before. The leaders of the Congress of Islamic Ulama (JUI) and the Congress of Ulema of Pakistan embraced violence against the Shiites, creating violence in Karachi and Punjab (Grare, 2007).

Shiites make up 13% of Muslims worldwide while 87% are Sunnis. They make up about Muslims 20% in Pakistan and the remaining 80 % are Sunni Muslims (Hunzai, 2013). Pakistan has the second largest Shia population in the Muslim world after Iran (Yusuf, 2012). Shiites make up of 17 to 20 % of Pakistans 30 million population. (Yusuf, 2012)**.**

The two major groups of Islam (Shia and Sunni) have many differences in ideology, culture and religion, but there are also some similarities that set them apart in group action and discourse. According to the specification two religious groups are fighting each other, saying that they are on the right track and that their religious beliefs are better than the others (Shah, 2020). The conflict makes the religion of peace (Islam) a pious and radical religion (Murphy & Malik, 2009).

2.   Theoretical Background of the Study
2.1.   Social Identity Theory
Social identity theory suggested that when you meet with a group so start findings self identity and this thing moves towards from extremism. This theory also suggests that sometime you inspired from group and due to group pressure you start doing violent activities. This concept support our research that In some cases a person is not extremist but when he/she met with extremist group due to group peruse he start doing violent activities (Tajfel, 2010).

2.2.   Social Judgmental Theory
Social judgment theory explains that how people contrast their personal positions on issues to others' positions around them. Aside from having their personal opinion, individuals hold self-rules of what they think is acceptable or unacceptable in general for other people's view. Social attitudes are not cumulative, especially regarding issues where the attitude is extreme. This means that a person may not agree with less extreme stands relative to his or her position, even though they may be in the same direction (Sherif & Hovland, 1961).

This concept support our study that sometime in sectarianism some groups does not tolerate other group's activities and do not accept the fame & popularity of others. Results leads to violent activities and rise in extremism particularly in respect of sectarianism.

2.3.   Frustration- aggression Hypothesis
A society divided by hatred and violence among its groups, the direction of prejudice and hostility is typically from the dominants and mighty groups downward to the down firmed and deprived." This concept support our study that when different people having same ideological believes together they made a group and they have a prejudice for other groups and due to

prejudice they start violence among groups conflict between the two warring sects further promotes intolerance in the country by targeting each other's (Yusuf, 2012).

Fundamentalism in the Pakistani region has recently been seen as one of the most dangerous problems. The rise of Islamic fundamentalism in Pakistan begans in the 1980s. On the other hand, the military leader, General Zia UlHaq, used religion to justify his authority and 'Islamize' laws and society. At the same time, Pakistan became a stronghold of the anti-Afghan revolutionary forces. After Russia,s invaded of Afghanistan, Zia joined the United State and used Islam to consolidate its power, legitimize Islam and establish several religious schools. His rule created a "Culture of Jihad" in Pakistan that continues to this day. Recently, Islamic fundamentalism has emerged as another political movement not only in Pakistan but throughout the Islamic world (Dressler & Jan, 2011).

Several Pakistani militant organizations have been banned and their accounts frozen in recent years. The main banned organizations banned are SSP, LeJ, SMP Lashkear Taiba (LeT) and Tahrik Taliban Pakistan (TTP). In a speech to leading religious scholars in June 2001, former military junta, General Pervez Musharraf criticized religious extremism, saying, "the world sees us terrorists, are trying to spread violence and terrorism abroad''(Spotlight on Regional Affairs, 2005).

Islam is a religion of peace. It represents harmony and happiness for everyone. Violence and anxiety stem from human greed, envy and ego. Some use religion as a source of power. Freedom of religious worship is an important human right.

Allah says in the Nobel Quran, (4:93): "Allahs wrath and curses come upon him, and a great punishment is in prepared for him.

Sectarianism also reflects deep polarization in a society because of rejectionist approach pursued by various groups belonging to the same religion. When a particular sect feels alienated from the mainstream religious realm, it begins a violent path that leads tos sectarian violence. (Grare, 2007).

3.   Literature Review

Jalālzai (1992) believes that sectarianism refers to the religious intolerance perpetrated by a religious sect against others sects because of its different teachings. It also means yes; it is the act of following an ideology, doctrine or school of thoughts, believing the views of others to be wrong and treating followers as religious (Musa Khan Jalālzai, 1992).

Ahmal (2008) the conflict in Pakistan is different, both internal and external. For more than a quarter of a century since the founding of Pakistan, Shiites and Sunnis have been living in peace and harmony. There was some tension between the two communities, but tolerance was maintained on both sides. But things took a turn for the worse as the conflict in Pakistan erupted with violence and terrorism and thousands of people died (Ahmar, 2007).

Nasr (2008) there has been a marked increase in sectarian violence in Pakistan over the past two decades. Since 1979, Sunnis Muslims (the majority of Pakistan's population) and 12 Shiites' (15%- 25% of the population, distinct from the Khoja and Bori Shiites of islam)religious conflict continue between into full-blown sectarian conflict. Militant Sunni and Shi'a extremist groups carried out assassinations, bombing and killing of political opponents,childrens and innocent people praying in mosques (Nasr, 2001).

The influence of the Zia government towards the sectarianism are frequently seen in the Shiite-Sunni conflict,and Zia-ul-Haq dominance of the state over religion and Islamization policy, which refers to the supremacy of sects, makes theology different. Faith means little to ordinary people in Pakistan.Many social thinkers have speculated about the rights of these countries to promote self sufficiency.Some argue that the danger of sectarianism in Pakistan emerged shortly after the Iranian revolution, and accelerated with Zia's Islamization plans. It often leads to conflicts in the region. People are migrating, losing their livelihoods and even their lives (Ahsan & Clarke, 2002).

3.1. Rationale of Study

Pakistan is one of those countries of world which was formed on the basis of ethnicity. There was a common national, cultural and religious motive behind its formation.

In this study, we have focused on the causes sectarian extremism in Pakistan: an emic perspective of Islamic scholar. Therefore, being made on the basis of ethnicity, Pakistan has now unfortunately, been divided into different sects; based on religious sub-beliefs. In this regard, by using qualitative research method, we interviewed people from different sects in order to gain their perspectives about extremism due to sectarianism. This term extremism is an umbrella term which spreads its effect t on every pillar of any society. We have described the socio-political and socio-economic outcomes been faced by a society due to extremism.

3.2. Research Question

To explore the phenomenon of extremism in context of sectarianism

3.3. Objectives

1. To explore the causes of sectarian extremism.
2. To highlight the preventive measures for control of sectarianism.

4. Methodology

The objective of a study to explore the causes of sectarian extremism and to highlight the preventive measures for control of sectarianism. Qualitative research approach was employed in the study to explore the causes of sectarian extremism and to highlight the preventive measures for control of sectarianism in Pakistan society and data collected through the interview from the participants.

The study was conducted in the district Muzaffarabad Azad Jammu and Kashmir. Present research was conducted with different sect scholars in the district Muzaffarabad Azad Jammu and Kashmir.They all were well educated and leading figure of different sects. Their ages range from (35-65) and education (B.A - M.A).

A six semi- structured, question interview guide was used for data collection and interview was recorded with 7 male and 1 female. The consent form was design to seek consent for willingness to give interview and allow for audio recording of their interview from participants. The signature was the symbolic authenticity of their willingness to participate by choice in the study. The demographic sheet was consisting of gender, qualification, position, sect and contact information. Every possible effort was promoted to include meaningful questions so participant respond them clearly for study. The question were formulated in accordance with the previous researchers conducted and their findings. The first question was about the sectarianism. The 2nd question refers to reason of sectarianism in Pakistan society. The 3rd question was about how sectarianism rises to extremism. The 4th question was about why the state is failed to control on it and the steps that have been to control it. The last two questions refer to the role of human cognitions in it.

The procedure consists of two phases. The instruments for data collection was interview guide and demographic sheet. Phase I: In the first phase, consent form, demographic sheet and interview guide was prepared. All questions were related to causes of sectarian extremism in Pakistani. The interview guide consisted of 6 semi-structured questions and prepared in Urdu, so collect in-depth views about the topic of study. Phase II: The objective of 2nd phase was to collect data by conducting interviews for study. The interviews were getting in depth understanding of participants knowledge and experience about the rise of sectarianism in Pakistan society. To conduct the interview for present study, the participants of the study were selected through purposive and snow ball sampling. After introductory session and getting inform consent along with demographic sheet, the questions were asked from participants. The researcher took the audio recording of the interviews with the consent of participants. During the interview the participants shared their opinions. After taking interviews the audio recordings were transcribed into written text form. One interview was conducted at a day and the recorded interview was transcribed into written text form. After the completion of interviews the next stage the data analysis was initialized. The researchers used thematic analysis technique for analyzing the data. At first they developed the theme on transcript of interviews for identifying patterns with in data and then identifying the sub theme on the main theme for the description

of data. Thematic analysis involves identifying the pattern of meanings across a data sets that provide an answer to the research question being addressed (Blanchard, 2009).

5.   Results & Data Analysis

Data was analyzed through thematic analysis. Thematic analysis involves identifying the pattern of meanings across data sets that provide an answer to the research question being addressed (Blanchard, 2009).
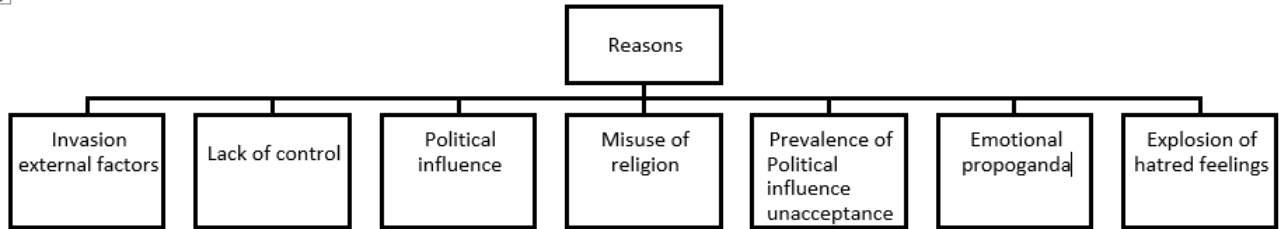
The main themes were opinion about sectarianism, reason of sectarianism in Pakistan society, role of religion extremism in sectarianism, Ineffectualness of Pakistan in controlling sectarianism, preventive measures regarding sectarianism and role of human cognition in sectarianism.

Further analysis revealed that there is positive, negative and neutral opinion about sectarianism like Islamic view, division of group, propaganda, lack of faith, lack of knowledge, use of power, Ideological conflicts, cognitions and force against Islam. Moving towards reasons of sectarianism, different reasons involve in causing sectarianism including invasion of external factors, Political influence, misuse of religion, prevalence of un acceptance, emotional propaganda and explosion of hatred feelings.
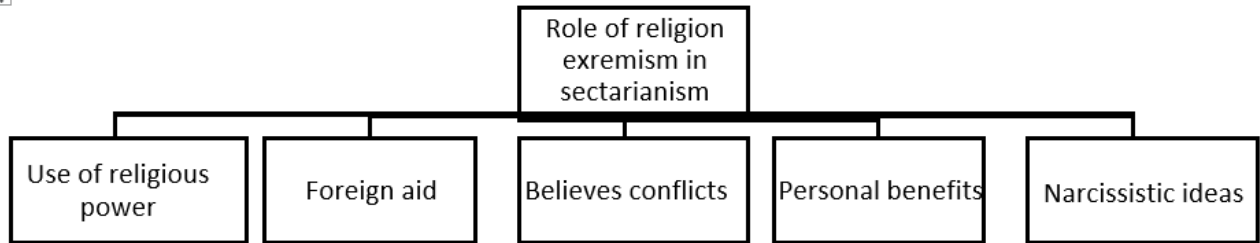
Role of Religion extremism in sectarianism because of diverse factors involvement like use of power, foreign aid, beliefs conflicts, narcissistic ideas and personal benefits. Ineffectualness of Pakistan in controlling sectarianism, because of comprises of involvement of international forces, instability in democracy, nonserious attitude, uniformity in curriculum, political affiliation, governmental flaws and stereotyping. Preventive measures are compulsory to implement in society to stop sectarianism. Different preventive measures were needed like, understanding among 32 sect leaders, implementation of Quranic knowledge, reduce communication gap, implementation of equivalent syllabus and Implementation of proper rules and regulations. Role of cognition is very important in every aspects of life, diverse perspectives consist of different thoughts role, and awareness needed and work in individual

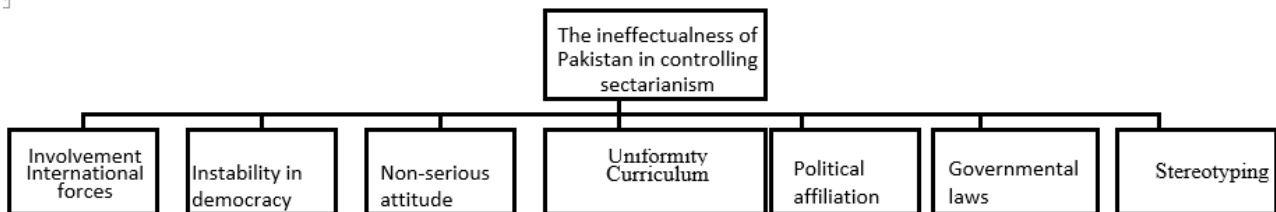**Table 1: Frequency Table of main Themes**

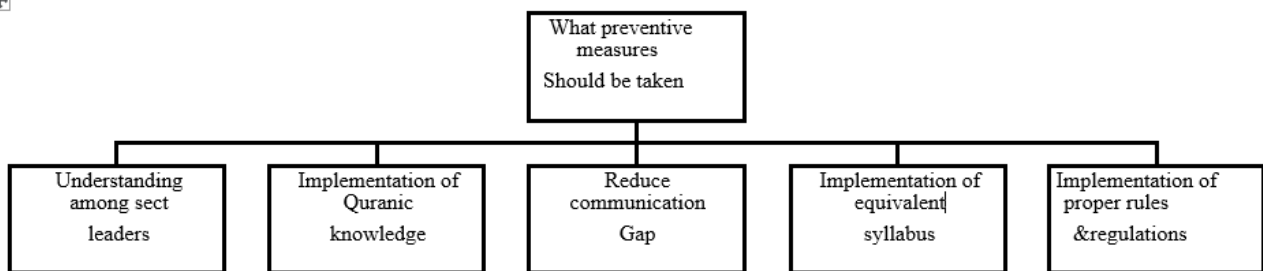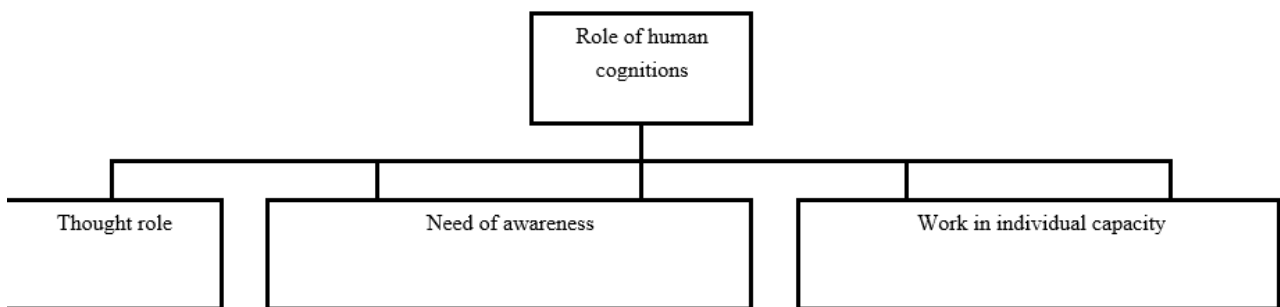| Main Themes	Sub Themes	Frequency
1.Opinion about sectarianism	Islamic views Division of groups Propaganda Lack of faith Lack of knowledge Use of power Ideological conflicts Role of cognitions Following of school of thoughts Force against Islam	6 6 2 5 3 6 4 8 3 2
2.Reasons	Invasion of external forces Lack of control Misuse of religion Political influence Prevalence of un acceptance Emotional propaganda Explosion of hatred feeling	6 6 5 6 2 2 3
3.Role of religion extremism in sectarianism	Use of religious power Foreign aid Believes conflict Personal benefits Narcissistic ideas	6 5 5 7 3
4.Ineffectualness of Pakistan in controlling sectarianism	Involvement of international forces Instability in democracy Non-serious attitude Uniformity in curriculum Political affiliation Governmental flaws stereotyping	8 4 3 4 6 8 2
5.What preventive measures should be taken	Understanding among sect leaders Implementation of Quranic knowledge Reduce communication gap Implementation of equivalent syllabus Implementation of proper rules and regulations	6 8 5 4 7
6.Role of human cognitions	Thought role Need of awareness Work in individual capacity	8 5 4

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                                    Reasons

 Invasion      Lack of      Political    Misuse of    Prevalence of   Emotional    Explosion of
 external      control      influence    religion     Political       propoganda   hatred feelings
 factors                                              influence
                                                      unacceptance
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Theme 1:

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                        Role of religion
                        exremism in
                        sectarianism

 Use of religious   Foreign aid    Believes conflicts   Personal benefits   Narcissistic ideas
 power
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Theme 2:

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                        The ineffectualness of
                        Pakistan in controlling
                        sectarianism

 Involvement   Instability in  Non-serious   Uniformity    Political     Governmental  Stereotyping
 International democracy       attitude      Curriculum    affiliation   laws
 forces
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Theme 3:

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                        What preventive
                        measures
                        Should be taken

 Understanding    Implementation of   Reduce          Implementation of   Implementation of
 among sect       Quranic             communication   equivalent          proper rules
 leaders          knowledge           Gap             syllabus            &regulations
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Theme 4:

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                        Role of human
                        cognitions

 Thought role        Need of awareness              Work in individual capacity
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Theme 5:

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                                    Opinion

 Islamic   Division of  Propaganda  Lack of faith  Lack of     Use of power  Ideological  Role of      Following    Force against
 views     groups                                  knowledge                 conflicts    Cognitions   Schools of   Islam
                                                                                                        thoughts
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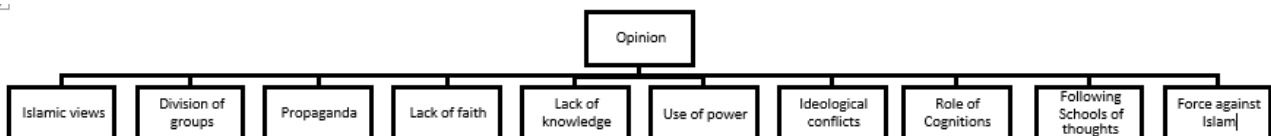
Theme 6:

6.   Discussion

This study contributed to explore the causes of sectarian extremism in Pakistan; and emic prospective of religious scholar. The study was the effort to find out opinions about sectarianism, reasons, role of extremism in sectarianism, Ineffectualness of Pakistan in controlling sectarianism, Preventive measures for sectarianism and Role of human capacity in sectarianism.

People having different opinion about sectarianism. some of the participant said that its always their in the society, its history goes back to early Islamic era, after the death of holy prophet (PBUH) the first political gap that broke out in the Muslim Ummah was the selection of first caliph. some said that it happens due to division of group like people are divided on the base ideological conflict, on the base of division of parties. Every group have its own rules and regulation and every group believes that their ideology is correct, some people have opinion that its one man propaganda, For the sake of popularity some people made group and rise conflict in society. That is based on individual thinking and due to individual thinking groups are divide.

This study concludes that there are several key factors driving extremism,including:for example, the destabilization of democracy, unfortunately through the intervention of authoritarian leaders, fosters sectarian differences for the benefit of the individual. It is a popular tool for exploiting political and social differences in the politics of divide and conquer. The only important factor is the involvement of international forces. due to the deficit, we are obliged to consult with other countries and comply with their terms in return. the report said that religious abuse is the main factor driving sectarian violence in Pakistan. Similar religious parties use it as a means of expressing dissatisfaction when the government is opposed. Understanding real security and threats requires a focus on institutional factor. this is because educational institutions, like religious institutions, are said to be responsible for emergence of intolerance and curricular uniformity.anti-sectarian prejudice is so prevalent in class rooms and mosque that the decline of schools and madras's must be made mandatory to combat extremism.

Different methods, such as channel media ratings, lead to sectarian misunderstandings and are therefore used by people for personal gain. Muslims shy from the teaching of the Holy prophet (PBUH) because of their neglect in practicing Quran knowledge. Similarly, the exercise of power cannot be denied as many scholars holds the same view based power.

A study suggested that sectarianism poses a real threat to Pakistan's security. The history of sectarian conflict in Pakistan is as old as the country's existence. However, in the late 1970s and early 1980s domestic political changes and the impact of the Iranic Islamic Revolution, and the subsequent negative reaction of some Arab countries to the clerical seizure of power,led to a decline in Pakistan. Sectarian divisions increased. Under the military command of General Mohammad Zia-ul-Haq, who seized power on July 5, 1977, he pursued a policy of 'Islamisation' that widened the sectarian divide between Shiia and Sunnis (Singh, 2017).

There are some indications of foreign involvement in Pakistan. Sectarian violence is organized by internal and external factors aimed at persuading young people to pursue nefarious interests. Some Arab and Middle Eastern countries see themselves as custodians of countries with interests in Pakistan. After the Iranian Revolution, the Iranian government began to mobilize the shias communities in other parts of the world to consolidate their power.

Another study concludes that the local residents as well as state government agencies are either embroiled in sectarianism or are unable to cope with the situation. The proxy war between Soviet-Union and the U.S invasion of Afghanistan have accelerated the emergence of sectarian violence in the region, the worst since Pakistan joined the U.S. war on terrorism coalition. Moreover, while mainstream parties show little interest in solving problem, some parties support ideologically cult-based policies (Ejaz, 2016).

Sectarian conflict also occurs in Azad jummu & Kashmir. On 27 June, 2009, a terrorist bombing occurred there in Imam Bargah district Muzaffarabad, Azad Jammu & Kashmir. Four people were killed and 10 wounded in the first ever attack on Kashmir in the state of Moharram on Saturday. Similarly, on September 19, 2017, there was an attack on a Shiite rally on Moharam 9 in Muzaffarabad district near the town of Lara. On February 15, 2017, Shia community leader Tsawaul DJawadi was attacked. Respondents are reluctant to answer correctly because of the prejudice in our society that discussing and investigating this issue equates to extremist status. All respected respondents are major figures in their respective denominations. If the communication gaps begin to reduce among all the sects and government take their responsibility in a proper manner than extremism will reduce in sectarianism.

7.   Conclusion & Recommendation

This study aims to analyze the causes of extremism in sectarianism. After conducting the in-depth interview results concluded that the multiple factors involve in causing extremism such as, democratic instability, involvement of international forces, misuse of religion, uniformity in curriculum, personal benefits, governmental flaws, stereotyping, negligence of implementation of Quranic knowledge, use of power, explosion of hatred feelings and propaganda. This study recognizes and highlights the contributing facto7.rs that are involves in causing extremism in sectarianism. Research findings support the assumptions that these factors does exist.

One of the main problem researchers faced in research was difficult to approach the leading figures of the sects which were the main sample of the study, the participants were not willing to give time due to busy schedule.

Participants were not willing for audio recording of interviews. Most of the time the some of the participants were providing biased opinions. The participants were discussing relevant view points when the audio recording was stopped. It is further recommended that:

- A detailed study on general population's view should be conducted.
- A different seminar and awareness program should be conducted among educational institution.
- Member of legislative assembly should discuss on assembly floor and made policies to control sectarian extremism

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