**Extremism & Tolerance**

**Sample Introductions’ Grabbers**

**1:** Throughout Pakistan, after decades of living under the threat of terror and wide-spread violent extremism, there has been a sigh of relief due to Pakistan’s improving security dynamics. The government, military, and citizens alike, now appear to stand together against violent extremist (VE) groups including the Pakistani Taliban, and others. Statistically speaking, since 2017, there has been a downward trend in the number of overall incidents of violence. Deaths from terrorist violence in Pakistan have decreased by approximately 77 percent, partly due to measures taken by the Pakistani state. Through three successive military operations and partial implementation of the National Action Plan, the government has attempted to deter active participation in terrorism and wider violent-extremism in Pakistan. However, for concrete change to be made, further measures are necessary, including countering passive support for extremist groups, tackling the prevalent extremist tendency that exists in some communities, and addressing other non-violent ways extremists influence the mind-set of the communities. **Addressing terrorism through military operations is not enough.** It is the responsibility of government and civil society to address extremism and we have to work hard to foster a more tolerant, pluralistic, and inclusive society in Pakistan. Moreover, there is a gender gap in preventing/countering violent extremism (P/CVE) response.

**2:** Around a dozen years ago, during a visit to my ancestral village in Pakistan, I joined my brother for Friday prayers at the local mosque. At the time, the country’s military dictator, [President Pervez Musharraf](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/24/opinion/pakistan-general-musharraf-comeback.html), was busy explaining to Pakistanis that they were in the middle of a do-or-die battle against militants—although it seemed that, for ordinary people, this mostly involved dying. People all over the country were wary of prayer leaders preaching about jihad or creating pretexts for others to wage it.

**3:** There was a moment some time ago—however hard it is to imagine now—when Pakistan could have become a center of trade, investment, infrastructure projects, and energy pipelines between South and Central Asia and the Middle East. Pakistan is strategically located and blessed with abundant natural resources. But it has been unable to benefit from these advantages as a result of its frequently disastrous political decisions, which invariably lead to crises. Its security establishment is constantly in conflict with elected civilian governments and is never satisfied with its own immense power. Corruption is rampant at all levels of government, while the country continues to have some of the lowest indices in the world for health, literacy, and nutrition and—as UNICEF recently announced—the worst infant mortality rate in the world.

**4:** The rise of religious extremism in Pakistan started from the USSR intervention in December 1979, against which many traditional leaders and mullahs rebelled in Afghanistan. Almost five million Afghans became refugees, left their homes and stayed in Pakistan Pashtun populated areas, like Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Baluchistan, and Tribal areas. The Pashtuns welcomed and treated them as their brothers. This war was fought by the slogan of holy war (Jihad) with the co-operation of US, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, China, Pakistan, and other Muslims and European countries. All supported the massive Jihad against the Soviet Union. Pakistan and its intelligence agencies supported the religious parties and their followers, Particularly the Jamaat-e-Islami and its extremist wing. The union of all these countries with the support of the internal and external religious extremists, the Soviet Union surrendered and withdrew its armies from Afghanistan in 1989. However, the Soviet Union withdrew from Afghanistan, the trained militants and extremist groups in Afghanistan radicalized Muslims throughout the world and, particularly in Pakistani society.

**Forms of Extremism**

1. **Xenophobia** (dislike of or prejudice against people from other countries)

**Causes of Xenophobia:**

**Consequences on Communities and State**

**Global Case Studies**

**Counter Measures with Successful Examples**

1. **Racism** (the belief that different races possess distinct characteristics, abilities, or qualities, especially so as to distinguish them as inferior or superior to one another.)

**2.1. Causes of Racism**

* 1. **Discriminatory Policies by State**

Policies that discriminate by race and keep people in poverty reinforce racist beliefs. Housing laws are a prime example of this. Many laws kept Black people from owning houses in certain neighborhoods, relegating them to lower quality housing and preventing them from accumulating wealth. Society looks at this and believes it justifies beliefs about how Black people only live in low-income, crime-ridden neighborhoods and that it’s somehow a choice.

* 1. **Maintaining the status quo**

Maintaining a status quo that protects racism is often justified as “keeping the peace” or maintaining law and order. In the book [Stamped from the Beginning](https://bookshop.org/a/8691/9781568585987), Ibram X. Kendi writes that in America, racist ideas have long been used to suppress resistance to racial inequalities. When people believe racist things – like that Black people are naturally more violent and dangerous – they aren’t disturbed by police brutality or mass incarceration. Those who benefit from racist institutions need racist ideas that prop up discrimination or society would rebel against the status quo. “Keeping the peace” becomes more important than justice and equality.

* 1. **Media representation**

How the media (books, TV, music, movies, etc) represents race has a big impact on how society views race. While the media is a reflection of a culture at large, it keeps racial stereotypes alive and well and therefore fuels racism. Racism in the media is often subtle and without malicious intent, but it has incredibly negative effects. As an example, Black men are over-represented in the media as perpetrators of violent crime while Black people are also over-represented in news stories about poverty. This affects Black people’s view of themselves as well as society’s perception of Black people.

## ****“Good” people who don’t challenge racism****

## One of the main reasons why racist ideas continue to flourish is that “good” people don’t speak out against it. Many don’t like racism, but they fail to truly understand it or challenge it. While white abolitionists fought against slavery, they did not go after the laws, beliefs, and societal habits that kept Black people from being full, equal citizens in America. Today, many well-meaning people believe that “loving everyone” will end racism, but given the systemic nature of racism, only systemic change can have a real impact. Martin Luther King Jr. put it well when he said, “In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends.”

**2.2. Consequences alongside Case Studies**

**a. Impact of racism on Individual vis-a-vis future health of adults, and education**

Racial discrimination is recognized as a key social determinant of health and driver of racial/ethnic health inequities. Studies have shown that people exposed to racism have poorer health outcomes (particularly for mental health), alongside both reduced access to health care and poorer patient experiences. There are multifarious forms in which racism can affect health via several recognized direct and indirect pathways. Indirect pathways include differential access to societal resources and health determinants by race/ethnicity, as evidenced by long-standing ethnic inequities in income, education, employment and living standards in New Zealand, with subsequent impacts on living environments and exposure to risk and protective factors [[4](https://bmcpublichealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12889-019-6664-x#ref-CR4), [6](https://bmcpublichealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12889-019-6664-x#ref-CR6), [9](https://bmcpublichealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12889-019-6664-x#ref-CR9), [10](https://bmcpublichealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12889-019-6664-x#ref-CR10)]. At the individual level, experience of racism can affect health directly through physical violence and stress pathways, with negative psychological and physiological impacts leading to subsequent mental and physical health consequences

For decades, black students in the United States have lagged behind their white peers in academic achievement. In 2014, the high school graduation rate for white ­students was 87 percent, according to the National Center for Education Statistics. For black students, the rate was 73 ­percent. Test scores show a similar racial gap.

**b. Racism leads to Racial Behaviors in Institutions.**

Racism influences healthcare via institutions and individual health providers, leading to ethnic inequities in access to and quality of care. For example, ethnic disparities in socioeconomic status can indirectly result in differential access to care, while health provider ethnic bias can influence the quality and outcomes of healthcare interactions

**c. Racist Approach has adverse effects for environment**

Environmental racism is **racial discrimination in environmental policy**-making and. enforcement of regulations and laws, the deliberate targeting of communities of. color for toxic waste facilities, the official sanctioning of the presence of life threat. Poisoned tap water in Flint, Michigan. Toxic waste dumps in the Lower Rio Grande Valley. A town in China where 80% of children have been poisoned by old computer parts. What do these things have in common? All are examples of **environmental racism**, a form of systemic racism whereby communities of color are disproportionately burdened with health hazards through policies and practices that force them to live in proximity to sources of toxic waste such as sewage works, mines, landfills, power stations, major roads and emitters of airborne particulate matter. As a result, these communities suffer greater rates of health problems attendant on hazardous pollutants.

**d. Racism in Economics**

1. Feudal Culture in Third World Countries

2. Rising Poverty Worldwide

**Counter Measures with Successful Examples**

1. **Religious/Gender Based Extremism** (Religious extremism is any behavior, attitude, or belief outside the norm of religious beliefs or practices. Often, this extremism manifests itself in the form of violence or the creation of smaller groups or cults.)

Some groups, like the Taliban, have interpreted select Islamic religious practices in ways which have suppressed human rights. Likewise, extremist Christian, Buddhist, and Hindu groups have committed acts of violence that do not align with the core values of the religions they claim to represent

**3.1. Manifestations of Extremism in Pakistan**

**Religious Extremism**

* Islam performs a crucial part in the social fabric of Pakistan and has been integrated as the guiding concept for the constitutional procedure and governmental systems of the country.
* The Pakistani government did not amend or repeal blasphemy law provisions that have provided a pretext for violence against religious minorities and have left them vulnerable to arbitrary arrest and prosecution.
* **Example** – In September 2020, Asif Pervaiz, a Christian man accused of sending a blasphemous text, was sentenced to death by a Lahore trial court.
* Pakistan’s Information Minister Fawad Chaudhry said last month that the Pakistani state and government are not ready to tackle the rising extremism in the country.
* TLP forced govt. to allow them to operate despite the fact that their workers had killed several law enforcement officials.
* Some of these groups thrive as they receive support from state institutions. For instance, one of the reasons that the TLP has become a significant challenge for the Pakistani state is that the state itself adheres to the narratives that are propagated by the radical group.
* **Example -** A brutal mob killing of a Sri Lankan man, Priyantha Kumara, accused of blasphemy in Pakistan has sparked protests in both countries, with Pakistan's leader condemning the vigilante violence.

**Gender Based Violent Extremism**

* Violence against women and girls—including rape, murder, acid attacks, domestic violence, and forced marriage—remains a serious problem throughout Pakistan
* Human rights defenders estimate that roughly 1,000 women are killed in so-called honor killings every year. Data from domestic violence helplines across Pakistan indicated that cases of domestic violence have increased 200 percent from January-March 2020.
* **Example –** Violent Extremism against Women in Pakistan in form of Motorway Rape Case - The woman was attacked when her car broke down in the early hours of Thursday while she was driving from the city of Lahore, capital of Punjab province, to Gujranwala with her children.
* Child Marriages remains a serious problem in Pakistan, with twenty percent of girls marrying before age 18, and 3 percent marrying before 15. Women from religious minority communities remain particularly vulnerable to forced marrigage. The government has done little to stop such forced marriages.

**Terrorism, Counterterrorism and Law Enforcement Abuses**

* Pakistan failed to enact a law criminalizing torture despite Pakistan’s obligation to do so under the Convention against Torture
* At least 109 people were killed in 67 attacks between January and July, twice the number in 2019, according to the FATA Research Centre. Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) militants targeted security personnel and civilians. In June, four BLA gunmen attacked the Pakistani stock exchange in Karachi killing two guards and a policeman and wounding seven others.

**3.2. Roots of Extremism in Pakistan**

# - **Beleaguer State Policies** - Pakistani state―Islam and a paranoia about India―have led to a regressive form of Islamization in Pakistan’s narratives, laws, and curricula. These, in turn, have shaped its citizens’ attitudes.( Book “**Pakistan Under Siege Extremism, Society, and the State” by Madiha Afzal -** is a fellow in the Foreign Policy program at Brookings. She was previously the David M. Rubenstein Fellow in the Foreign Policy program. Her work focuses on the U.S.-Pakistan relationship, U.S. policy toward Afghanistan, Pakistan’s politics and policy, and extremism in South Asia and beyond. She previously worked as an assistant professor of public policy at the University of Maryland, College Park.) The rhetoric and the strategic actions of three actors in Pakistani politics―the military, the civilian governments, and the Islamist parties―and their relationships with militant groups. The book also shows how regressive Pakistani laws instituted in the 1980s worsened citizen attitudes and led to vigilante and mob violence

- **Emergence of Taliban** - Extremism and radicalism were fortified with the sustenance provided to extremist Taliban in Afghanistan by the government of Pakistan after their emergence in 1994. Pakistan supported the extremist and radical Taliban to favor their own policies towards Afghanistan. This method of extremist and war policies will keep India away from Afghanistan. The Pro-Pakistani Taliban have always used to fight against NATO forces in Afghanistan, but their presence in the tribal areas, inspired and motivated the Pashtun community towards extremism.

- **Role of Madrassas -** Madrassas achieved pioneer place as religious, social and cultural institutions in Pakistani society in general and Pashtun in particular. They were established for Islamic studies, studies of the Quran, Hadith and Islamic jurisprudence. In Pakistan, a large number of madrassas were established which provided shelter, free education and food to their students. But after the Soviet Union invasion of Afghanistan, the madrassas produced religious extremists instead of valuable students and teachers in society. These madrassas were used as fuel in the proxy war between the US and USSR.

* **The Radical Sectarian Nexus -** There has been a relation between Jihadist and anti-Shia organizations in Pakistan having the motives to fight against the Shia community. All these groups have been supporting and operating by Saudi Arabia. The religious political parties in Pakistan JUI and JI always remained a part of a proxy war and a large number of conflicts in the Middle East. The increasing radicalization in the state has heinously affected the socio-cultural and economy. The instability in the country compelled the business community to flow its capital from Pakistan. The extremist organizations such as Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) and Siaph-eSahaba (SSP) Pakistan have a close relation with sectarian extremist groups that are pro-Saudi and anti-Iran. Most of them are influenced by the Deobandi School of Thought -- JUI and JI.
* **Belligerent U.S. Policies -** The policies of the United States of America, have provoked religious extremists in the Muslims world, particularly in Pakistan. The US demand for doing more has created conflict, inside Pakistan and various groups retaliated against the state. After years of war on terror, the US has lost much of its goodwill. Due to war policies, the US lost its moral foundation, and resultantly anti-US sentiments emerged within the global world. Due to the US war policies, extremism and terrorism increased instead of decreasing especially in the Muslim world.

**- Role of Saudi Arabia -** According to Ahmad Rashid in "The Taliban Exporting Extremism," more than forty countries people participated in the Afghan war. Most of them came from Saudi Arabia trained in Pakistan for promoting Islamic extremism and radicalism. During the Soviet-Afghan war, more than one lac mujahedeen were trained and used against the Soviet Union. Moreover, According to George Crile (**an American journalist**) stated in his book, "**Charlie Wilson's War** " that Saudis were convinced that after Afghanistan, Soviet Union will move towards Persian Gulf Oil and warm water. They were also convinced that it is a good opportunity to stop them in Afghanistan and supported mujahedeen in 1979. After the Saudi-US alliance, the CIA began to provide an advanced computer system to Saudi Arab General Intelligence Directorate (GID) and installed sensitive programs to intercept Moscow

* **Inequality in Economic and Social Affairs -** The famous quote of Aristotle that “economic inequality leads to revolution”. This economic inequality became a strong cause for rising religious extremism and fundamentalism, particularly, in tribal areas of Pakistan. Economic deprivation and poverty, below the national average, provide the opportunity to the extremists and radicals in order to criticize the government policies for failure. The economic deprivation leads to social evils and does not lead to radicalism, but prepares the extremist militant groups to contextualize their appeals for sound and popular support in challenge the state under the slogans of equity, social justice, and equal opportunity. These were the tactics used by the extremists and radical heads that go popular among the masses.

The lethargic human and economic development procedure, and the rise in huge population and unequal division of resources established a large number of groups, having no employment and other basic needs. A large number of unemployed students of madrassas consist of youth, create a devastating situation in the country. The increase in poverty also helps to strengthen the roots of religious extremists and suicide bombers.

* **The decline in Tradition of Ijtihad -**

**3.3. Consequences**

**-** At a meeting in Paris at the end of February, the thirty-seven-nation Financial Action Task Force (FATF) approved a motion by the US and Britain to have Pakistan placed back on its “gray list” of countries that have taken inadequate steps to combat terrorist financing. (It had been taken off in 2015.) At the end of June, in another meeting, the FATF officially put Pakistan on the list. This will have significant economic costs: it is likely to discourage foreign investment, force Pakistan to repay its loans, slow down trade, and place a hold on the $60 billion that China has been giving it for infrastructure projects.

**Counter Measures with Successful Examples**

1. **Left-Right Radical Political Thoughts** (the left-wing is characterized by an emphasis on "ideas such as freedom, equality, fraternity, rights, progress, reform and internationalism" while the right-wing is characterized by an emphasis on "notions such as authority, hierarchy, order, duty, tradition, reaction and nationalism")

**For Future of State**

**Pakistan & Global Case Studies**

**Counter Measures with Successful Examples**

**Importance of Tolerance for Societies in the Contemporary World along with Successful Examples**