***Journal of Religion & Society* (JR&S)**
*Available Online:*
*https://islamicreligious.com/index.php/Journal/index*
*Print ISSN: 3006-1296Online ISSN: 3006-130X*
*Platform & Workflow by: Open Journal Systems*
*https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.24075920*

# Politics, Religion and Society in Pakistan: A Critical Discourse on National Cohesiveness

**Dr. Muhammad Naveed Akhtar**
Assistant Professor, Department of History and Political Science, Ghazi University, Punjab, Pakistan
Email: mnakhtar@gmail.com

## Abstract
*This study explores the ways in which religion and politics have influenced the history of Pakistan from the time it was founded until the year 2025. It examines the intricate dynamics of political parties, the constitution, and sectarian organisations in articulating their ideological positions and influencing the populace to embrace their constructed nationalist identities. The research argues that the reality is more intricate than the oversimplified perspective about Pakistan's issues, which revolves around the tension between Islam and liberalism. The evolving power relations between religious authorities, political figures, military personnel, and ordinary citizens in their pursuit of rights and identity are the origin of these escalating confrontations. Initially, the research will concentrate on the religious and political occurrences that transpired in late colonial India. These developments include the constitutional framework of the Muslim League, several ulama associations, and the electoral mobilisation that occurred from 1945 to 1946. Furthermore, the document examines the Objectives Resolution, the Constitutions of 1956 and 1962, the Constitution of 1973, the 1974 amendment, the Islamization policies implemented by General Zia-ul-Haq, the Afghan conflict, the National Action Plan (NAP), Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal, democratic transitions, and the Twenty-sixth Amendment. The study differentiates between individual faith, sectarian isolation, and aggressive mobilisation via qualitative historical examination and scholarly references. It asserts that the tenets of equal citizenship, governmental responsibility, an independent judiciary, regional self-rule, and compliance with the rule of law are essential for attaining democratic stability and safeguarding religious liberty in modern Pakistan.*

***Keywords:*** *Pakistan, Society, Politics, Religion, Constitutional Development, Islamization, Theocracy, Ulema, Political Parties, and leadership*

## Introduction
Religion has played a central but often controversial role in Pakistan's political development. Since 1947, leaders have used Islam to shape social identity, argue for constitutional choices, mobilize supporters, and define state goals. However, factors such as regional imbalance, civil-military relations, ethnic and linguistic diversity, patronage, and the absence of parliamentary government have also influenced politics. The relationship between Islam and the state is usually seen as a choice between religious and liberal or secular politics, but there is actually a range of views among Muslim League leaders, religious scholars, politicians, and citizens. Some religious people vote for

mainstream parties for legitimacy, even if those parties are not religious. Many religious voters support local representation and welfare, and often oppose the elites in power.
It is argued in the essay that actions made by institutions have often resulted in the creation and rekindling of ideological disputes. The meaning of citizenship has been influenced by a number of factors, including the Islamization of the country by military rulers, selective law enforcement, shifts in religious authority, and the constitutional role of Islam. In situations when sectarian tensions are related to elections, state resources, legal exclusion, regional conflict, or uncontrolled violence, the severity of the situation that they create increases. In the context of this discussion, liberalism refers to the practice of restricting authority via the constitution, providing equal citizenship, freedom of conscience, due process, representative government, and protection for minorities, and avoiding imitation of Western culture. Those folks who are not religious and those who are religious may both embrace these principles. The article discusses the progress that has been made up to the year 2025. It is argued in the essay that actions made by institutions have often resulted in the creation and rekindling of ideological disputes. The meaning of citizenship has been influenced by a number of factors, including the Islamization of the country by military rulers, selective law enforcement, shifts in religious authority, and the constitutional role of Islam. In situations when sectarian tensions are related to elections, state resources, legal exclusion, regional conflict, or uncontrolled violence, the severity of the situation that they create increases. In the context of this discussion, liberalism refers to the practice of restricting authority via the constitution, providing equal citizenship, freedom of conscience, due process, representative government, and protection for minorities, and avoiding imitation of Western culture. Those folks who are not religious and those who are religious may both embrace these principles. The article discusses the progress that has been made up to the year 2025.
In this study, it is argued that actions made by institutions have often resulted in the creation and rekindling of ideological disputes. The meaning of citizenship has been influenced by a number of factors, including the Islamization of the country by military rulers, selective law enforcement, shifts in religious authority, and the constitutional role of Islam. In situations when sectarian tensions are related to elections, state resources, legal exclusion, regional conflict, or uncontrolled violence, the severity of the situation that they create increases. In the context of this discussion, liberalism refers to the practice of restricting authority via the constitution, providing equal citizenship, freedom of conscience, due process, representative government, and protection for minorities, and avoiding imitation of Western culture. Those folks who are not religious and those who are religious may both embrace these principles. The article discusses the progress that has been made up to the year 2025.

**Research Questions**

The study has addressed three main research questions.

1. What is the impact of the religious and political discourses of the Pakistan Movement on the constitution of the post-colonial state and citizenship discourse?
2. What influences have moulded the interactions among religion, liberalism, and the state from 1947 to 2025, including aspects like political parties, military regimes, constitutional changes, and sectarian groups?

3. What are the socio-political implications that have followed from these changes, and what institutional changes would improve democratic participation, freedom of religion, and political accountability?

**Methodology and Conceptual Framework**

The research relies on scholarly and constitutional sources analysed qualitatively to provide a historical context. It differentiates between four key ideas. A person's beliefs, worship, and religious identity make up their religiosity. The goal of the political Islam movement is to use certain Islamic interpretations to influence public authority. Using religious differences as a weapon of exclusion, inequality, violence, or intimidation is what sectarianism is all about. Rights and liberties guarant**ee**d by law, political participation, judicial independence, and checks and balances on executive overreach are central to liberal constitutionalism. Religious conviction does not always result in sectarianism, and religious political engagement does not necessarily entail opposing democracy. These concepts may overlap.

Subsequent research has connected the legacy of the bureaucracy and military's might to its impact on policy and political rivalry, as Alavi noted (Alavi, 1972, pp. 59-81; Jalal, 1990; Shah, 2014). The options available to religious organisations vary according to political and governmental policies; these groups also exhibit diverse ideologies, organisational structures, and electoral methods (Hussain, 2024, pp. 151-160; Misra, 2003, pp. 186-215; Nasr, 1994).

**Pakistan Movement and Communal/Religious Politics**

A protracted discussion on Muslim representation under colonial authority gave rise to the Pakistan Movement. Many factors, including the disintegration of the Mughal Empire, the expansion of British rule, pedagogical and economic shifts, and the rise of representative institutions, contributed to the formation of Muslim political identity. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan led the Aligarh movement, which focused on modern education and the political interests of Muslims as a separate group. The All-India Muslim League was founded in 1906 to promote Muslim political demands within British India's constitutional system. The Morley-Minto reforms of 1909 introduced separate electorates, and the Lucknow Pact of 1916 showed Congress and the League could negotiate safeguards. In 1929, Jinnah's Fourteen Points called for federalism, provincial autonomy, and Muslim representation. After poor results in some Muslim-majority provinces in the 1937 elections, the League aimed to broaden its electoral base.

Religious politics was diverse. In the early 1920s, many ulama joined the Khilafat and Non-Cooperation movements against colonial rule. The Jam'iyyat Ulama-i-Hind (JUH), founded in 1919, gave a platform to scholars who supported working with Congress and a united Indian nationalism. Maulana Husain Ahmad Madani believed Muslims and Hindus could form one political community without giving up their religious differences. Some JUH members later left and joined the Muslim League before the 1945-1946 elections. Shabbir Ahmad Usmani and the Jam'iyyat Ulama-i-Islam (JUI), formed in 1945, helped shape Pakistan as a political project aligned with an Islamic vision of public life (Hameed, 2024, pp. 683-687).

Founded in 1941 by Abul A'la Maududi, Jamaat-e-Islami took a different approach. Maududi criticized the Muslim League's focus on territorial nationalism and argued that

an Islamic state needed a full ideological program. Other religious scholars also opposed the League. The JUH and figures like Abul Kalam Azad opposed partition and wanted a united India. Religious scholarship failed to provide a definitive answer to the complexities surrounding the question of Pakistan. (Hameed, 2024, pp. 679-687; Zaman, 2018).

The Lahore Resolution of March 1940 was a turning point for the Muslim League. It called for sovereign states in Muslim-majority areas of north-western and eastern India, but did not mention Pakistan or define the states' constitutional structure. Later campaigns and negotiations clarified its meaning. Muhammad Iqbal had already suggested merging Muslim-majority areas in the northwest in 1930. Jinnah's constitutional plan increasingly focused on Muslim nationhood and protections against majority rule. The League's success in the 1945-46 elections strengthened its claim to represent Muslim voters, but not all Muslims agreed on what the new state should look like (Jalal, 1985; Hameed, 2024, pp. 679-682).

Religion played an important role in the election campaign. To reach beyond its urban and landowning supporters, the League used Muslim terms and symbols. Campaign materials featured these themes, and religious scholars, especially Usmani, endorsed them. Constitutional arguments were made accessible to the public through posters, sermons, public meetings, and Urdu publications (Gilmartin, 1998, pp. 415-436; Hameed, 2024, pp. 686-687). According to Gilmartin (1998), the League's campaign in Punjab had the support of local religious networks.

Muslim representation, cultural and religious liberties, fear of majority control, regional negotiations, and a desire for an Islamic-principled society were all factors in the movement. The supreme leaders were unable to reach a consensus on a constitutional balance between these objectives. According to many sources (Akhtar, 2011, pp. 6-7; Devji, 2013; Dhulipala, 2015; Jalal, 1985), Partition created a state with strong religious beliefs but no consensus on how to put those beliefs into law.

**Constitutional Development and Political Contestation, 1977-1994**

At independence, Pakistan's institutions and people were divided by language, region, class, sect, and the effects of Partition. In his speech to the Constituent Assembly on 11 August 1947, Jinnah spoke about equal citizenship and the freedom to practice one's religion. Both the secular and theocratic worldviews are necessary for a complete understanding of the situation (Jalal, 2014; Khan, 2023).

Adopted on March 12, 1949, the Objectives Resolution laid down the ground rules for the next constitution. While acknowledging Allah's sovereignty, it emphasised that elected leaders should exercise power on behalf of the people and called for the preservation of democratic principles like as freedom, equality, tolerance, and social justice. There was a guarantee of religious freedom and cultural preservation for minorities in the Resolution as well. The document did not create a theocracy but did lay out a firm theological agenda for the nation. Disagreements over minority rights and representative government were evident in the Constituent Assembly debates. There has been ongoing dispute and interpretation of the Resolution in courts and politics ever since (Constituent Assembly of Pakistan, 1949; Akhtar, 2011, pp. 2-4).

Pakistan proclaimed itself an Islamic republic with a parliamentary system in 1956 after dissolving the Constituent Assembly in 1954. The Munir-Kayani enquiry and the anti-

Ahmadi events of 1953 demonstrated how difficult it is to designate a Muslim due to the frequent disagreements among religious academics. The investigation cautioned that the abuse of religious authority in politics had the potential to undermine public trust in government and the rule of law (Munir & Kayani, 1954, p. 231). The end of parliamentary politics came in 1958, when General Ayub Khan staged a coup. Modernising and centralising the administration while limiting party rivalry were goals of his reign. Additionally, hardline religious academics opposed its 1961 Muslim Family Laws Ordinance. Political conflicts over the interpretation of religious law and the power to enact social change were an integral aspect of Islam at this time (Jalal, 1995; Khan, 2023). The 1970 East Pakistani elections were a resounding success for the Awami League. Bangladesh was established in 1971 as a result of war, widespread displacement, unwillingness to transfer authority, and Indian interference. As this crisis demonstrated, religious affiliation is no substitute for political participation, linguistic acceptance, and regional autonomy. This cautionary tale from 1972, Jaffrelot (2015), and Talbot (2012) all point to the dangers of associating national identity with a certain ideology. Revised in 1973, the Constitution reinstated federalism and the legislative system. It proclaimed Islam as the official religion of the country, mandated that the head of state and prime minister be Muslims, and codified legislation based on Islamic values. The Constitution also acknowledged the importance of legislative institutions and fundamental rights. For all intents and purposes, Ahmadis are no longer considered Muslims according to the 1974 Second Amendment. Evidence from sources such as the Government of Pakistan (1973, 1974), Khan (2023), and Zaman (2018) demonstrates that constitutional exclusion predates Zia's administration.

In 1977, the Pakistan National Alliance used the slogan "Nizam-e-Mustafa" to oppose Bhutto's government. As part of a broad opposition, religious parties used Islamic symbols for political advantage, even if they disagreed on other issues. In July 1977, General Zia ul Haq took over the government and established a regime with greater religious legitimacy.

**Islamization, Regional conflict, and the rise of religious parties, 1977–2008**

Zia-ul-Haq's Islamization programme gradually transformed the laws and state institutions of Pakistan. In February 1979, his government enacted the Hudood Ordinances. In 1980, the Federal Shariat Court was established, and the Zakat and Ushr Ordinance was introduced. In 1982, the Pakistan Penal Code saw the addition of Section 295-B. In 1984, the Qanun-e-Shahadat Order brought revisions to the law of evidence. In 1985, Article 2A was included in the Constitution, which made the Objectives Resolution a fundamental component of it. In 1986, the Pakistan Penal Code finally received Section 295-C as an addition. (Haqqani, 2005; Kennedy, 1996; Zaman, 2018).

The 1979 Iranian revolution and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan increased the influence and resources of sectarian and militant groups. With foreign support and the creation of armed networks, Pakistan became a frontline state in the Afghan jihad. State policy, regional finance, and conflict determine the behaviour of religious organisations and madrassas; yet, not all of these institutions are militant (Abou Zahab & Roy, 2006; Haqqani, 2005; Nasr, 1994). Zia's policies did not create new divisions but made existing ones worse. Sunni and Shia groups, Barelvi and Deobandi schools, and other religious

traditions have long histories in South Asia. Legal favoritism, patronage, armed groups, and regional rivalries deepened sectarian divides with serious political effects. The key issue is the difference between personal religious belief and political division. Religious identity alone does not cause violence, but political actors can use it to justify conflict (Abou Zahab & Roy, 2006; Akhtar, 2011, pp. 18-20).

Following Zia's death in 1988, although elected governments were reinstated, the military continued to exert control over both security and foreign policy. Sectarian violence persisted, and organisations created during the conflict in Afghanistan adjusted to the new circumstances. Governments engaged in a process of negotiation, selective enforcement, and the banning of groups; however, they failed to dismantle the underlying networks that perpetuated the violence. True democracy was difficult to reestablish because of the uneven rule of law and the absence of civilian authority over security (Fair, 2014; Jalal, 1990; Siddiqa, 2017).

After a coup by General Pervez Musharraf in 1999, the military was once again the driving force behind political power in Pakistan. While dealing with the challenges of religious dissent at home, Pakistan has been deeply entangled in the US-led fight in Afghanistan since the tragic events of September 11, 2001. In the 2002 legislative elections, the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA), a coalition of six Islamic organisations, won a large number of seats and came to power in the provincial government of the North-West Frontier Province.

The success of mixed martial arts was due to several factors. In the wake of the U.S. invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, religious groups temporarily put aside their doctrinal differences and banded together in their hatred of American interference. Dissenting votes helped the alliance grow, and Musharraf's political machinations weakened the conventional civilian opposition. A number of factors, including anti-war sentiment, regional dynamics, and dissatisfaction with the dominant political parties, came together to propel the MMA to prominence (Misra, 2003, pp. 186-215; Nasr, 1994). Ideology and democracy are at odds with one another, as the alliance made clear. Religious parties that criticized liberal democracy still ran in elections, formed coalitions, and joined parliament. The real test of democracy is accepting constitutional limits, peaceful transfers of power, and the opposition's right to participate (Afzal, 2018; Hussain, 2024, pp. 151-160).

**Democratic Transitions and New Modes of Religious Mobilisation, 2008-2025**

In 2008, civilians reestablished parliamentary control over the government, opening the door to possible constitutional changes. Enacted in 2010, the Eighteenth Amendment restored parliamentary features, strengthened provincial autonomy, and delegated substantial powers to the provinces. Complex financial arrangements, the competence of provincial institutions, and federal cooperation were essential to this substantial decentralisation. Because it removes the pressure to see one national identity as the only valid viewpoint, federalism is very important for dealing with ideological and religious concerns (Adeney, 2012, pp. 563-565; Jaffrelot et al., 2024). The 2014 assault on an Army public school prompted a nationwide consensus, which ultimately resulted in the creation of the National Action Plan (NAP). Parliament approved the twenty-point programme on December 24, 2014. Among the items on the agenda were steps to regulate the abuse of digital communication platforms, fight religious persecution, address hate speech, reduce

terrorist funding, and target militant organisations. While several federal and provincial agencies were assigned specific tasks, the National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA) was assigned the responsibility of overseeing the monitoring function (National Counter Terrorism Authority, 2014).

Consistency has been lacking in NAP's progress. For action to be effective, there must be strong prosecution, competent law enforcement, protection of witnesses, openness in dealing with financial crimes, and consistent enforcement against all entities, regardless of their political importance. The fact that militant violence and sectarian attacks continue to occur shows that selectively implementing national policy does not work (National Counter Terrorism Authority, 2014; Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, 2025). With the rise of Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP), a new strategy for religiously motivated public demonstrations emerged. This campaign, which started after the 2011 assassination of Punjab Governor Salmaan Taseer, was born out of popular fury over blasphemy laws and Barelvi networks. As seen in the 2017 Faizabad demonstration, the TLP was able to paralyse the capital and get political concessions. According to Hussain (2024, pp. 157–160) and White (2025), when different factions can gather large numbers, street demonstrations may serve as a political veto.

By deftly blending anti-corruption rhetoric with social programmes, nationalist feelings, and some religious themes, PTI gained considerable traction from 2018 to 2022. Imran Khan used Islamic allusions to support a welfare state modelled after the social institutions of early Muslim societies. But PTI was not your run-of-the-mill religious party; its adherents held all sorts of different views. After a vote of no confidence ousted Khan in April 2022, political strife intensified. The political climate became even more polarised as a result of events on 9 May 2023, such as the arrest of PTI sympathisers and the limitation of political participation. Reported incidents of violence, exclusion, intervention, and result delays marred the general election that took place in February 2024. After having their party insignia confiscated, PTI members ran as independents. Freedom House reports that candidates affiliated with PTI secured the highest number of directly elected seats, whereas PML-N and PPP established a coalition government. (Freedom House, 2025).

A multiparty system can endure despite the presence of an uneven playing field. Confidence in electoral processes is undermined by constraints on political party liberties, the influence of media, disruptions to internet access, and allegations of electoral fraud. Democracy is contingent upon genuine competition, autonomous management of electoral processes, and the tranquil acknowledgement of outcomes. The Twenty-sixth Constitutional Amendment, which came into effect in October 2024, restructured constitutional benches, altered the process for appointing the chief justice, and altered the makeup and authority of Pakistan's Judicial Commission. The government claims the measures would improve court administration, but opponents worry they will undermine judges' ability to remain impartial. According to the International Commission of Jurists (2024), the amendment poses a significant risk to human rights protections, judicial independence, and the rule of law. The federal government cannot instruct individual states on matters of judicial review.

The political and social climate remained challenging in 2025. The Pakistani Human Rights Commission documented a decline in civil liberties, an increase in vigilante and militancy-related violence, and persistent persecution of religious minorities. Its yearly report voiced worries about the effects of the 26th Amendment on judicial independence and pointed out that allegations of election tampering had an effect on the 2024 election. Blasphemy accusations pose a threat of land grabs, extortion, and blackmail, according to Human Rights Watch, which is particularly true for impoverished Ahmadis and Christians. According to Human Rights Watch (2025), there were 475 documented incidents of blasphemy in 2024, and the report detailed the ways in which allegations propagated via social media. Modern religious mobilisation takes place in many places, including local issues, online, on the streets, and in parliament. Equal legal protection for all people, irrespective of religious identification, governmental authority, or compulsion, is the primary concern, not only the reduction of religion's involvement in politics.

**Political Parties, Sectarian Splits, and Liberalism**

Political parties in Pakistan exhibit a lack of adherence to a unified ideological framework. The Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) advocates for a framework that intertwines Islamic principles with socialist ideals, emphasising the pursuit of social justice within its political agenda. The factions of the Pakistan Muslim League (PML) intertwine traditional conservative ideologies with commercial pursuits and systems of patronage. Many changes were made to the Judicial Commission of Pakistan's membership and powers, the chief justice's selection process, and the structure of constitutional benches in October 2024 with the passage of the Twenty-sixth Constitutional Amendment. Judges' autonomy may be jeopardised; however, proponents of the reforms claim they would improve court administration. Judgement independence, legal certainty, and human rights protection were all seen by the International Commission of Jurists (2024) as being gravely jeopardised by the modification. Political directives about judicial action cannot be bestowed upon states.

Even in 2025, social and political climates remained challenging. Reduced civic liberties, growing militancy and vigilante violence, and persistent pressure on religious minorities were documented by the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan. The 2024 election was impacted by allegations of electoral tampering, according to its yearly report, which also voiced worries about the influence of the Twenty-sixth Amendment on judicial independence. Human Rights Watch brought attention to the dangers of blasphemy accusations being used for extortion, property grabs, and blackmail, particularly against vulnerable Christians and Ahmadis. Human Rights Watch identified 475 blasphemy incidents in 2024 and explained how charges are circulated on social media (Human Rights Watch, 2025). Nowadays, religious mobilisation may be seen in many places, including parliament, the streets, online, and even in local issues. We must prioritise the equal legal protection of all individuals, irrespective of their religious identity, governmental authority, or compulsion, and work towards a political climate free of religious influence.

**Societal-Political Implications**

Unequal citizenship is the first major result of long-lasting ideological conflict. Minority groups may face barriers to religious freedom, equal job opportunities, political

participation, and public life engagement when legislative frameworks are based on religious teachings. The consequences go beyond only the law; people may be afraid to speak their minds or engage in social activities for fear of reprimand. Possible dangers may arise in blasphemy trials before the court reviews the evidence. The issue is framed as one that involves religious freedom and the integrity of the rule of law, according to data from Human Rights Watch in 2025. Allegations are often connected to property conflicts and economic pressures (Human Rights Watch, 2025).

Second, less democratic accountability is the consequent effect. While civilian governments have used religious doctrine to manage dissent or avoid direct confrontation with opposition groups, military regimes have traditionally used it to legitimise their authoritarian rule. Without establishing clear rules or enforcing current laws, elected entities may negotiate with street-power organisations. In times of crisis, the state may seem strong, yet there are serious problems with public service delivery and judicial administration (Haqqani, 2005; Siddiqa, 2017; Shah, 2014). The third issue is that political discussions tend to become too theoretical and detached from real-world issues. Unemployment, inflation, healthcare inequalities, water shortages, and local violence are some of the difficulties that people encounter. Political parties that depend on catchphrases end up losing credibility since they are not actual policies. The upkeep of political stability has always relied heavily on education, health, economic stability, and basic rights (Akhtar, 2011, pp. 19–20).

Fourthly, another effect is that public discourse is becoming more limited in scope. Many individuals, including journalists, may feel uncomfortable broaching topics such as minority rights, the activities of influential organisations, or constitutional concerns when their opponents are characterised as anti-Islamic or anti-national. The right course of action is not to censor religious speech but to strengthen protections for free speech, guarantee access to information, and hold inciting and violent actions accountable.

Finally, this affects the unity of the country. There must be fair allocation of resources, reliable election systems, and access to justice if minority groups, border regions, and smaller provinces are to cease being dissatisfied. There should be no room for discrimination based on factors like language, geography, religion, or political beliefs, as diversity helps build stronger national identities.

**Findings and Policy Implications**

The investigation has led to the discovery of five primary findings. Initially, the Pakistan Movement had a multidimensional constitutional framework and a diversified religious landscape. Both of these aspects were marked by a contradiction among the ulama, with some sections supporting the League while others declared opposition to it. Second, the institutions have been unable to successfully maintain a constant balance between democratic or rights-oriented constitutional provisions and Islamic norms. The third point is that the dynamics of military involvement and the design of security policy have had a substantial impact on the prospects for both religious and mainstream political parties. The fourth point is that religious differences are not the only factors that contribute to sectarian violence; legal exclusion, patronage, regional strife, and impunity all play a role. In the fifth place, the effect of religion goes beyond the results of elections; it also involves the

dynamics of street demonstrations and the process of agenda-setting, both of which play a considerable part in the process of determining public policy.

For the purpose of guaranteeing that equality, the right to fair trials, and the concept of free speech are enforced in a consistent manner, the Constitution needs to protect religious liberties in addition to other basic freedoms. It is necessary to have well-defined protocols for the prosecution of blasphemy allegations, as well as measures to avoid fraudulent complaints, mob violence, and economic exploitation. Regardless of the names of those engaged, people who commit acts of violence should be subject to criminal prosecution. This includes both those who instigate the violence and those who take part in it. Transparency, accountability, and independence from political interference are essential qualities that must be characterised by judicial nominations and constitutional rulings.

The supervision of security policies by civilians is very necessary. The National Action Plan (NAP) has to be examined in light of clearly stated goals, which should include the reduction of sectarian violence, the improvement of law enforcement and judicial procedures, the restriction of extremist financial support, and the protection of minority communities. One of the goals of educational reform should be to encourage critical thinking about the constitution and the variety of religious beliefs. Madrasas should not be stigmatised; rather, they should have access to higher education, modern courses, teacher training, and certifications that are accepted all over the world. There should be no portrayal of minorities or other sects as adversaries in the curriculum of public schools.

**Conclusion**

**S**umming up, it becomes evident that religion has been a significant factor in Pakistan's political discourse from the time of the Pakistan Movement until the year 2025, during which time it has had a variety of effects on institutions, parties, state policies, and regional conflicts. The movement voiced support for a variety of concepts related to Muslim nationhood, including constitutional guarant**e**es, cultural autonomy, and political objectives for Islam. Regarding the question of whether Muslims ought to seek a separate state or join a unified anti-colonial movement, religious experts were of different opinions. Despite the fact that the state has made several attempts to merge Islamic identity with representative governance, these efforts have not always been consistent. At the same time, as it contains fundamental rights, the Constitution of 1973 also contains religious elements. Changes that occurred later and the spread of Islam have had an impact on citizenship and governmental power. Military takeovers, selective alliances, and various counter-terrorism programmes have all had an impact on the relationship between religious organisations and political parties, which has been a delicate one. The most important question is whether or not public power can safeguard both religion and equal citizenship, permit peaceful political competition, and guarantee legal responsibility. An unshakable constitutional order is necessary in order to guarantee the freedom of religion, the variety of the provinces, the independence of the judiciary, and equal treatment under the law.

## References


Abou Zahab, M., & Roy, O. (2006). *Islamist networks: The Afghan-Pakistan connection*. Columbia University Press.

Adeney, K. (2012). A step towards inclusive federalism in Pakistan? The politics of the 18th Amendment. *Publius: The Journal of Federalism*, *42*(4), 539-565. https://doi.org/10.1093/publius/pjr055

Afzal, M. (2018). *Pakistan under siege: Extremism, society, and the state*. Brookings Institution Press.

Akhtar, M. N. (2011). *Schism, liberalism and politics in Pakistan*. Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom.

Alavi, H. (1972). The state in post-colonial societies: Pakistan and Bangladesh. *New Left Review*, *74*, 59-81.

Cohen, S. P. (2004). *The idea of Pakistan*. Brookings Institution Press.

Constituent Assembly of Pakistan. (1949, March 12). *The Objectives Resolution*. Government of Pakistan.

Devji, F. (2013). *Muslim Zion: Pakistan as a political idea*. Harvard University Press.

Dhulipala, V. (2015). *Creating a new Medina: State power, Islam, and the quest for Pakistan in late colonial North India*. Cambridge University Press.

Fair, C. C. (2014). *Fighting to the end: The Pakistan Army's way of war*. Oxford University Press.

Freedom House. (2025). *Freedom in the world 2025: Pakistan*. https://freedomhouse.org/country/pakistan/freedom-world/2025

Gilmartin, D. (1998). A magnificent gift: Muslim nationalism and the election process in colonial Punjab. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, *40*(3), 415-436.

Government of Pakistan. (1973). *The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, 1973*. Government of Pakistan.

Government of Pakistan. (1974). *The Constitution (Second Amendment) Act, 1974*. Government of Pakistan.

Hameed, H. (2024). Arguing Pakistan in late colonial India: The political thought of Shabbir Ahmad Usmani. *Modern Intellectual History*, *21*(3), 679-704. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1479244324000106

Haqqani, H. (2005). *Pakistan: Between mosque and military*. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

Human Rights Commission of Pakistan. (2025). *State of human rights in 2024*. Human Rights Commission of Pakistan.

Human Rights Watch. (2025). *A conspiracy to grab the land: Exploiting Pakistan's blasphemy laws for blackmail and profit*. https://www.hrw.org/report/2025/06/09/a-conspiracy-grab-land/exploiting-pakistans-blasphemy-laws-blackmail-and-profit (dated: 09-06-2025)

Hussain, K. (2024). From pulpit to marketplace: The evolution of religious political parties in Pakistan. *World Affairs*, *187*(2), 151-160. https://doi.org/10.1002/waf2.12021

International Commission of Jurists. (2024, October 21). *Pakistan: 26th Constitutional amendment is a blow to the independence of the judiciary*. https://www.icj.org/pakistan-26th-constitutional-amendment-is-a-blow-to-the-independence-of-the-judiciary/

Jaffrelot, C. (2015). *The Pakistan paradox: Instability and resilience*. Oxford University Press.

Jaffrelot, C., Waseem, M., & Faiz, A. (2024). Mapping the post-18th Amendment federalism in Pakistan: Hegemony, centralization or cooperation? *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics*, *62*(3), 185-205. https://doi.org/10.1080/14662043.2024.2419688

Jalal, A. (1985). *The sole spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League and the demand for Pakistan*. Cambridge University Press.

Jalal, A. (1990). *The state of martial rule: The origins of Pakistan's political economy of defence*. Cambridge University Press.

Jalal, A. (1995). *Democracy and authoritarianism in South Asia: A comparative and historical perspective*. Cambridge University Press.

Jalal, A. (2014). *The struggle for Pakistan: A Muslim homeland and global politics*. Harvard University Press.

Kennedy, C. H. (1996). *Islamization of laws and economy: Case studies on Pakistan*. Institute of Policy Studies.

Khan, H. (2023). *Constitutional and political history of Pakistan* (4th ed.). Oxford University Press.

Misra, A. (2003). Rise of religious parties in Pakistan: Causes and prospects. *Strategic Analysis*, *27*(2), 186-215. https://doi.org/10.1080/09700160308450083

Munir, M., & Kayani, M. R. (1954). *Report of the Court of Inquiry constituted under Punjab Act II of 1954 to enquire into the Punjab disturbances of 1953*. Government Printing, Punjab.

National Counter Terrorism Authority. (2014). *National Action Plan, 2014*. Government of Pakistan. https://nacta.gov.pk/laws-policies/nap-2014/

Nasr, S. V. R. (1994). *The vanguard of the Islamic revolution: The Jama'at-i Islami of Pakistan*. University of California Press.

Shah, A. (2014). *The army and democracy: Military politics in Pakistan*. Harvard University Press.

Siddiqa, A. (2017). *Military Inc.: Inside Pakistan's military economy* (2nd ed.). Pluto Press.

Talbot, I. (2012). *Pakistan: A new history*. Hurst.

White, J. T. (2025). *Vigilante Islamists: Religious parties and anti-state violence in Pakistan*. Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/9780197814178.001.0001

Zaman, M. Q. (2018). *Islam in Pakistan: A history*. Princeton University Press.