

## **Radicalization of Youth in Southern Punjab**

**Iram Khalid**

*University of the Punjab, Lahore*

**Mina Ehsan Leghari**

*University of Punjab, Lahore.*

### **Abstract**

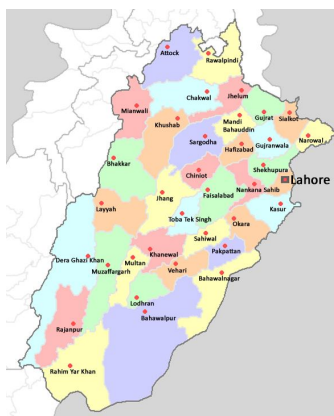
Extremism and militancy is the prime issue of Pakistan in general and Southern Punjab in particular. As far as demographic enormity of the province is concerned, the issue of radicalization has got primacy. Do economic and social conditions echo in the backdrop of this issue or are these religious organizations that are coining their vested agendas? These questions need to be addressed with empirical evidence. This research article prods into issue and brings some genuine results to light. In order to address the issue of radicalization, it is highly required that social and economic grievances of the region should be addressed and effective legislation should be done to monitor and administer the madrasahs.

**Key Words:** militancy, radicalization, south Punjab, social condition, economic factors

### **Introduction**

Radicalization is the burning issue of the Southern Punjab region. There are certain reasons and implication of the radicalization issue both on regional and national political, social and economic scenario. Before shedding light on the ratio of radicalization, its causes and implication it is important to understand the geographic setting and socio-political set up of Punjab and then Southern Punjab region.

### **Demographic Details of Punjab**



Source:<http://www.findpk.com/cities/Explorer-pakistan-Lahore.html>

Demographically this region is under rapid change. The population of the province is increasing rapidly. Although a lot of industrialization is done still agriculture is regarded as the leading occupation of the province. Current population of the province is over 900 million inhabitants. This population makes the Punjab province larger than four South Asian countries Maldives, Bhutan, Nepal and Sri Lanka. 56% population of the entire Pakistan resides in Punjab. (Khan, 2009, pp. 123) The demographic picture of the Punjab province is incomplete without discussing its multi-faceted population. There are several castes living mostly in rural areas. The role of bradris in the politics of Punjab is highly important. Rapid ratio of population growth has become a challenge for the economic projections of government. (Khan, 2008; Talbot, 1999, p. 39) As far as the variation in the population is concerned, according to 1998 census 97.7% Muslims, 2.3% Christian, 0.1% Hindu, 0.3% Ahmadi, and 0.1% others are part of population. There is no one language of the province. 75.2% population speaks Punjabi, 17.4% speaks Saraiki, 4.5% speaks Urdu, 1.2% speaks Pashto, 0.7% Balochi, 0.1% Sindhi and 0.9% speaks other languages. The variety of languages laid basis for the linguistic ethnicity in the province. Saraiki is prime example of it. (PCO, 2001, [http://www.punjab.gov.pk/?q=about\\_punjab\\_geography](http://www.punjab.gov.pk/?q=about_punjab_geography))

### **Location of Southern Punjab**

South Punjab region has no distinct boundaries. It is the southernmost region of Punjab. According to the Population Census Organization of Punjab is comprised of 9 Divisions, 36 Admin Districts and 158 Census Districts. (<http://www.census.gov.pk/adminpunjab.php>. Out of 9 Divisions of the province 3 are considered as the part of southern Punjab. These divisions are;

1. Multan Division
2. Bahawalpur Division
3. Dera Ghazi Khan Division

[http://www.punjab.gov.pk/?q=about\\_punjab\\_geography](http://www.punjab.gov.pk/?q=about_punjab_geography)

These divisions contain 11 districts. In this way total area of southern Punjab is 99572 km. This area makes up 48.5% of total area of the Punjab province. Hence it is almost half of the province Punjab. The region of South Punjab is under-developed and stricken with poverty. Per capita income of the region is low and there is a severe lack of basic facilities of life. (Punjab Developmental Statistics: 2010)

### **Economic Conditions Prevailing in Southern Punjab**

As compare to the rest of Punjab, the South of Punjab is facing severe poverty and deprivation. Three basic indicators of development make the argument clear.

- **Education.** Education is the first indicator of development. It is through education a state can instill the doctrine of nationhood in the youth. If this sector is given due attention there is no other thing that can destabilize the

Entity	Enrollment	Teaching Staff	Student Teaching Ratio
South Punjab	1,805,151	39,766	45.39
Rest of Punjab	3,231,651	80,734	40.03
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,036,801</b>	<b>120,500</b>	<b>41.80</b>

ideological basis of a state. Primary education is much required sector in the overall education schemes. The region of South Punjab which is currently victim of radicalization of the youth presents the sorry figures. The details are the following;

### (Punjab Developmental Statistics: 2010)

These figures are for primary education, the plight of secondary and higher education is even worse. These are the factors that have become main cause of the radicalization of youth.

- **Health Sector.** After education, health sector is another significant indicator of development. Like education, this sector is also suffering a from serious negligence. This is one of the basic reasons behind people's growing sense of deprivation which is rapidly making them victim of radical and extremist groups and organizations. The percentage given below gives the details of health facilities in the region;

### Percentage of Health Facilities in Punjab

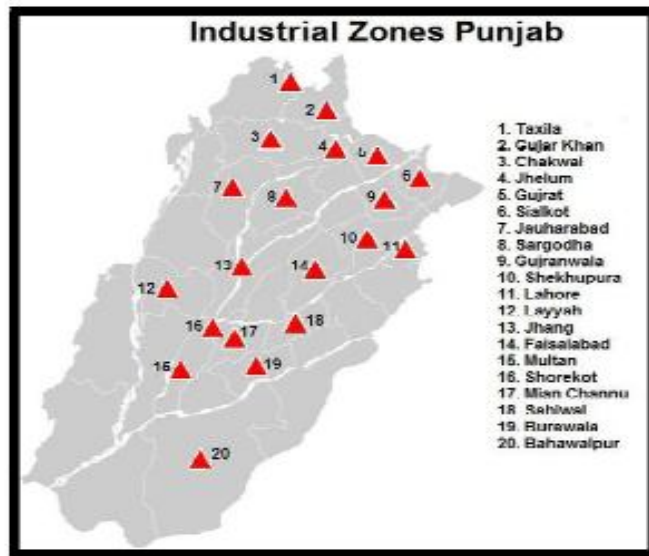
	Number	Percentage
<b>South Punjab</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>26.38%</b>
<b>Rest of Punjab</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>73.62%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>326</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

**Source: Punjab Developmental Statistics: 2010**

The distribution of health facilities indicates the sheer negligence of the leadership. In Southern Punjab many hospitals are in traumatic bad conditions. There is shortage of experienced doctors and the doctor to patient ratio is very low in this region. These pathetic conditions show the seriousness of the regional leadership in the entire grim scenario. After a longer period of patience now the public is vocal about these factors and demanding their fair rights.

**South Asian Studies 29 (2)**

- Industrial Development.** Industrial development is the backbone for the development of the region. Punjab is the most resourceful province. Southern Punjab is equally important in this regard. Trade and employment depends hugely upon this factor. If the map of industrial zones is assessed, again an unequal distribution of industrial zones between North and the South Punjab comes to surface.



(Zaman, 2003, p.12)

According to this development the industrial growth in the North and the South Punjab during 2004-08 is following

Entity	Year 2004	Year 2008	% Growth
South Punjab	1,407	1,837	30.56%
Rest of Punjab	5,114	6,712	31.25%
Total	6,521	8,549	31.10%

(Zaman, 2003, p.12)

Three indicators selected to assess the development of the region show a dilapidated picture of the Southern Punjab. While funds allocated for the development of the region are also given. It is because of the passive leadership that the poverty rate in the region is quite higher than rest of the Punjab province. 43% of the population in Southern Punjab is living below the poverty line while

the leadership of the region is enjoying higher executive post in the power politics of the country. This creates a sharp contrast between the traditional leaderships' claim and the actual plight of the region. The statistical detail of the poverty conditions support the argument given above.

### **Poverty Percentage in Three Divisions**

<b>Division</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>D. G. Khan</b>	<b>50.58%</b>
<b>Bahawalpur</b>	<b>39.86%</b>
<b>Multan</b>	<b>38.91%</b>

**Source: Punjab Developmental Statistics: 2010**

These figures speak high of the performance of the leadership. This grim economic scenario is drifting the social fabric from tolerant to extremist trends as the locals are getting inclined to the radical elements operating in the region. These radical organizations are providing both economic relief and religious cause to the people. Already deprived and poverty stricken people are readily adopting their ways and agendas. This has taken a serious condition in the Southern Punjab region. The prevailing situation in the region is now diverging from the tradition and the demands of public are taking serious shapes in form of rising ethnicities and extremist elements.

### **Implications of Poverty and Under Development in Southern Punjab**

Under development and poverty are the burning issues of the Southern Punjab region. Infect poverty is the major motivating element behind ethnic and extremist activities going on in the region. The reason that had added fuel to the fire is the sharp developmental contrast between south and the rest of Punjab province. As far as demographic balance is concerned, south claims equal fund allocation with rest of the Punjab province. Poverty and developmental crisis has three main implications given below;

- Ethnic Divide
- Leadership Crisis
- Religious Radicalism

Among these implications the issue of radicalization has taken center stage as it is not only affecting the social fabric of the region but also it has become threat for the state as well. There is dire need to address the main causes of religious

radicalism and create a counter strategy which could help to save the future generations.

## **The Issue of Radicalization of Youth in Southern Punjab**

### **Meaning**

Radicalization is the word that is commonly associated with the religious ideas and ideology. Radicalization of the religion is being commonly discussed these days. Before this statement could be applied to any region for a case study, it is significant to understand the meaning of the word 'radical'. The literal meanings of the word conveys that it is something relating to or affecting the basic nature or most important features of something. It is something pervasive, far reaching and thoroughgoing. When this meaning is applied to the religious radicalism, it conveys that in its simplest form it is the practicing of a religion in accordance with its basic ideas. If political agenda is added to such staunch practice then it emerges as a contest of power politics. (Azam, 2009, p.4) Such power politics evolves a distinct ideology. Political contest with a religious or radical ideology is less power sharing and less compromising, it rather tends to transform social, political and spiritual values in accordance with the its own ideology and thought pattern. It is mainly because of this fact that radicalization is seemed as dangerous by the moderate and liberal groups. As all sources are dispensed and distributed in accordance by the will and plan of radical authorities, it is generally resented by the liberal capitalist bloc.

### **Religious Radicalism**

The sticking fact regarding the radical religious people are those who believe in other compromising and peaceful solution of the issue than the extremist and violent action. They lack a genuine focus that where to put their effort in order to attain the viable and logical gains. They are at war the existing with system. They are vocal about the flaws of the system but they are completely failed to present a batter substitute. They want to implement a new world order which is quite utopian in nature. For the attainment of their self-devised goals and ideals they find it legal to use any type action and strategy. They validate their actions in the pretext of the attained goals. They create an environment of emergency and they act in urgency, giving opponent less and less time to counter effectively. (Azam, 2009, p.3) These characteristic are common in radical groups and non-state actors. Their resentments are well defined and open while their actions are covert and abrupt in nature.

The breeding environment of radical groups is characterized by specific factors. Obviously a progressive and enlightened society does not adopt vague and unfocused line of thought and action. There are certain socio-political factors that are responsible for the creation of such elements. Basic reason involves inadequate

educational facilities, sense of deprivation, economic disparities and social cum political marginalization. It is because of these reasons that such groups came into existence. Sometimes it is so happens that some specific ideology is generated in order to over shadow and counters some other prevailing ideology. For example capitalist bloc generated and supported the jihadist ideology in order to defeat socialist Russia in Afghanistan. In such a situation, concerted efforts are done for the propagation of a specific ideology, like the way Madrasah culture was encouraged for the creation of jihadist elements. Religious radicalism was politicized and it was involved in a global power politics. (Ferrero, 2005, p.210-15)

Such type of action creates a chain reaction. They have specific repercussions. In the socio-political set up of Pakistan there are all basic elements present that provide ideal conditions for the creation of radical activities and groups. There is no doubt that Pakistan was created in the name of Islam but at no point of independence movement it was decided and declared that it would be theocratic state. In the early post-independence era no serious and reconciliatory efforts were done for the formation of a unanimously agreed constitution. This delay created short-cuts for military and bureaucracy inclusion in the executive. With the low rate of public participation there created an authoritarian culture. This authoritarian culture played havoc in parochial social set up of Pakistan. People remained without a viable democratic political participation. Their political socialization could not take place properly which could train them for a sustainable democracy. The plight of tribal and rural area was more pathetic than the urban society. (Yusuf, 2012, pp. 86-90)

### **Historical Roots of Radicalism**

The actual process of radicalization started right after the Russian invasion in Afghanistan. Pakistan's long border with Afghanistan creates a distinct type of strategic culture as on the other side of the border lives the same race as in Afghanistan. Pakistan can never ignore power politics taking place across the border. As matter of fact a peace Afghanistan is much in favour of Pakistan as Pakistan has to concentrate much on the eastern border. In such an environment Russian invasion in Afghanistan was as crucial for Pakistan as it was for Afghanistan. (Malik, 1997, pp. 154-60) Capitalist bloc had the same concerns. In the global political setting of early 80s Pakistan had to be a frontline state in the capitalist war against socialist Russia. This war has far reaching impact on the global politics in general and on Pakistan socio-political environment in particular. It is during this war that USA created such a lethal ideological weapon that is has still not gone back to its sheath- Jihadi extremism. The conservative society like that of Pakistan was given boost in the name of religion for the attainment of capitalist goals in the region. Aid poured in both from the West and the Middle East. This aid was utilized in creation of seminaries and religious Madrassahs which act as the breeding points of the Jihadi outfits. The plan 100% meets its

aims and the goal of disintegration of USSR was achieved just in one decade. But the weapon used for the achievement of this goal was left untreated. The seminaries kept on producing fresh breed and these outfits kept on searching new battle fields. This situation became alarming not only for the targets but also for the states they lived in. (Burki, 1991, pp.25-45)

As Pakistan is the only nuclear power in the Islamic world, policy direction of the state of Pakistan matters a lot both for the West and the rest of Muslim states. Radicalization of youth is serious issue faced by Pakistan today. Youth is a big part of Pakistan’s population. Among 180 million population youth population is 101.95 million which makes up almost 59% of the total population. This percentage includes the age group below 24 year age. And if the estimate of age 25-29 is taken into account, the number further increases from 101.95 million to 116 million.(Yusuf, 2012, p. 77) These figures are really significant because it shows the real factor that will mold and form the policy direction of the country. Most important thing about the youth is its education and training. If these two things are utilized by the extremist outfits the situation will surely turns into hostile and dangerous. As the world is engaged in coping the extremism and finding out the reasons and mechanism to find and curb such activities, in such a situation religious seminaries of Pakistan pose a significant threat to the peace of the world.

During the war against the communist Russia, those areas were focused for the Jihadi training and recruitment which were near the borders and which were underdeveloped and parochial. In Pakistan three such big areas include Northwest areas, some parts of Sindh and Baluchistan and the Southern Punjab. It is also suspected that the religious groups rearing in these areas have strong links to Al-Qaeda. They have three common targets that are USA, NATO and the state of Pakistan. From 1979 till this date there are number of big and small organizations and groups with multiple vague titles and goals. These organizations are associated with other foreign and local religious and extremist groups.

Principal Target	Predominantly Foreign	Predominantly Pakistani
Pakistan state	Al Qaeda; assortment of foreign militants based in FATA	Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan; Harkatul Jihad-e-Islami; Lashkar-e-Jhangvi; assortment of splinter groups of homegrown militant organizations popularly termed the Punjabi Taliban
United States/ NATO	Al Qaeda; assortment of foreign militants based in FATA; Mullah Omar’s Taliban; Haqqani network; Hizb-e-Islami	Muqami Tehrik-e-Taliban
India	Hizb-ul-Mujahideen; Al-Baraq	Lashkar-e-Tayyaba; Jaish-e-Muhammad; Al-Badr; Harkatul Mujahideen
Sectarian	Jandullah (Malik Ragi group)	Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan; Lashkar-e-Jhangvi; Sunni Tehrik; Sipah-e-Muhammad

*Source: A Society on the Precipice? Examining the Prospects of Youth Radicalization in Pakistan” by Moeed Yusuf*



Youth is inevitable part of these groups and organizations. This is the fact which cannot be denied. Although state has taken action against these outfits but it has never been as effective it should be and the reason it that they all claim the nationality of Pakistan and they have many sympathizers from within. This situation has become precarious both for the military and the executive. The detail of state action against extremist groups tells another story. At times state seems to be insufficient in its action against the terrorist organization.

Group	State's Response
Al Qaeda; Lashkar-e-Jhangvi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Military and paramilitary action in FATA</li> <li>• Law enforcement* action in rest of Pakistan</li> <li>• U.S. drone strikes</li> </ul>
Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Military and paramilitary action in north-west</li> <li>• Law enforcement action in rest of Pakistan</li> <li>• Broader COIN strategy (development +)**</li> </ul>
"Punjabi Taliban"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Law enforcement</li> <li>• Broader COIN strategy (development +)</li> </ul>
Lashkar-e-Tayyaba	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Containment and appeasement</li> </ul>
Afghan Taliban; Haqqani network; Hizb-e-Islami; Muqami Tehrik-e-Taliban	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Blind eye" apart from minor containment</li> <li>• Constant negotiations/deals</li> <li>• U.S. drone strikes</li> </ul>
Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan; Sunni Tehrik; Sipah-e-Muhammad	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Law enforcement</li> <li>• Broader COIN strategy (development +)</li> </ul>

\* Law enforcement refers to police and intelligence operations.

\*\* Development + refers to nonmilitary aspects of counterinsurgency strategy aimed at instituting a more responsive state; usually includes rapid development, improved governance and service delivery, greater access to education and healthcare, etc.

*Source: A Society on the Precipice? Examining the Prospects of Youth Radicalization in Pakistan" by Moeed Yusuf*

For example against Lashkar-e-Jhangvi and al- Qaeda state has under taken military and paramilitary action. Police and intelligence agency action is also taken against them. Same action has been taken against Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan but nonmilitary actions were also taken for counterinsurgency. These actions include rapid development, improved governance, and service delivery. Same counterinsurgency actions are taken in the prime areas of Punjabi Taliban. In order to prevent their resentment rapid developmental actions were undertaken. Muqami Tehrik-e-Taliban is constantly involved in negotiations and deals. US Drone attacks are also chasing their steps. The sectarian groups Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan, Sunni Tehreek and Sipah-e-Muhammad are being controlled by law

## **South Asian Studies 29 (2)**

enforcement and counterinsurgency measures. (Yusuf Moeed, 2012, p.90) Point to be noted is that there is no uniform policy and pattern of action against these groups and organizations. Although these religious groups are facing resistance still they are involved in the process of radicalization of youth.

These facts clearly show that the state action is not as forceful as it should be. The reason is the same that this breed belongs to Madrassahs and Madrassahs are the part of education system and their breeds hold the nationality of Pakistan. Any action against its own national may be seen as brutal and inhuman by rest of nation and the situation may lead to anarchy. Radicalization is prevalent in the far-flung areas of the state. These areas are under-developed and situated mostly on the borders. They are serving their creating bodies through education system and they are receiving funds both form within the state and from the foreign state. Each sect has a tie with country of that predominant sect. these findings are coming with the package of foreign agendas. Youth is being used blindly in the name of religion. Poor economic conditions, low standards of living, lack of awareness and negligence of the authorities is thrusting the youth in the ditch of ignorance and in the blind conflict against the state and the self-assumed enemies.

### **The Issue of Radicalization of Youth in Southern Punjab**

One of such grim areas is the Southern Punjab. This region is now characterized by the area of Punjabi Taliban. This is far-flung area on the borders of the province with most dilapidated living conditions which offer an ideal condition for the setup of religious radicalism and extremist activities. Once this area was known for its Sufi traditions and tolerance for other religions but presently situation is quite opposite. There are several reasons responsible for this situation. Economic, developmental and educational reasons are the most significant.

The Southern Punjab region is generally considered as the poorest one. Main districts include Jhang, Mianwali, Khushab, Chinot, Sargodha, Bhakkar, Layyah, DG Khan, Rajanpur and Muzaffargarh. The economy of this region is based on feudal setup. Although the Sardars and the Landlord remained prominent in government and administration but this region has not profited from it. There are many issues in the region regarding socio-economic and political sphere which need to be addressed urgently. One of these important issues is the radicalization of youth as well. (Zulfiqar, 2012, p.147)

As discussed earlier that the word radical is not negative in its original meaning but when it is associated with a political agenda and involves in the power politics with practical means then it becomes a threat not only for the system but for the state alike. The region of Southern Punjab is not different from the other regions selected for the promotion of Madrassahs and Jihadi outfits. As the region carries several reasons that could arise resentment towards the government policies, these elements used these weak points to provoke public resentment against the government. Initially they were engaged in the Afghan war and enjoying loads of aid but after disintegration they were involved with the

foreign powers providing them aid and agenda together. In order to check the ratio of radicalization of the youth in Southern Punjab, the education system will be assessed and analyzed in detail.

Southern Punjab region has some valid reasons the prevalence of radicalization other than Afghan war of 1979. This region is victim of disparity from the rest of the Punjab province. If the population is standard of fund allocation than it speaks high of the issue under discussion. According to census reports of 2012 total population of the province is 91,379,615. The urban population is 45,978,451 while the number of rural population is 45,401,164.

### Census Report till 2012

Census Reports			
Census	Population	Urban	Rural
1951	20,540,762	3,568,076	16,972,686
1961	25,463,974	5,475,922	19,988,052
1972	37,607,423	9,182,695	28,424,728
1981	47,292,441	13,051,646	34,240,795
1998	73,621,290	23,019,025	50,602,265
2012	91,379,615	45,978,451	45,401,164

**Source: Punjab Developmental Statistic 2010, Bureau of Statistics, Government of Punjab**

There is no difference between the rural and the urban population. In this connection the allocation of the funds should also be equal in all regions of the province. But it is unfortunate that poverty ratio speaks something grim about the issue. Although efforts are made towards the development of rural areas but these efforts were not well planned and well-coordinated as it should be. Before the education system and the role of seminaries are discussed in the context of radicalization, it is important to understand the ground realities which support and sustain the working of such radical institutions. After population next important thing is the poverty ratio in the region. The statistical detail of the poverty conditions support the argument given above. Poverty percentage in D.G. Khan is 50.58%, in Bahawalpur 39.86% and in Multan it is 38.91%.

These poverty conditions offer worse living conditions to the people of the region. These are the conditions that are most suitable for the emergence of radical outfits. As the role of government goes down in the issues and the problem of an area, other powers come up to fill the gap and use those conditions for the promotion of their own agendas. It is discussed earlier that when power politics agenda is associated with the radical and fundamentalist thinking than it really becomes dangerous for the survival of the state.

Although these Madrassahs were created with the foreign funds and agenda but for the last three decades they are exploiting the worse conditions of the region for their power politics. (Anzar, 2003) They are managing foreign funds and using them on the targeted population which can surely fulfill the agendas sent along with money. Each sect is maintaining its own education system and tools of radicalization. Each school of thought has its specific youth support and

## South Asian Studies 29 (2)

volunteers. They so deeply immerse in the education system that practically no way out is left for the rural youth than to join one of these groups. This is the only choice that can offer them some return and slot of recruitment while in comparison to these Madrassahs there are so many government schools but either they are dysfunctional or they are useless for any type of financial betterment. The statistic regarding the enrolment of students in madrasahs is quite shocking. All major religious sects are operating their madrasahs and there is a keen interest of poverty stricken people towards these religious seminaries. (Kamran, 2010, p.42)

### Statistics of Bahawalpur Madrasahs

Bahawalpur Division	Madrassahs and their Number		Resident/ Non Resident Students				Total Number of Students
			Resident	Non Resident	Resident	Non Resident	
Bahawalpur	Ahl-HAdith-	20	317	Resident	650	Non Resident	967
	Ahl-Sunnat-	15	50	Resident	505	Resident	555
	Ahl-Tashee-	14	211	Resident	190	Non Resident	401
	Barelvi-	275	5153	Resident	9082	Resident	14235
	Deobandi-JI	290	9742	Resident	9999	Non Resident	19741
		05	20	Resident	20	Resident	40
	<b>Total</b>	<b>619</b>	<b>15493</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>20446</b>	Non Resident	<b>35939</b>
						Resident	<b>Total</b>
						Non Resident	
						Resident	
Bahawalnaga	Ahl-HAdith-	16	265	Resident	1019	Non Resident	1284
	Ahl-Sunnat-	06	0	Resident	515	Resident	515
	Ahl-Tashee-	01	1	Resident	30	Non Resident	31
	Barelvi-	146	2948	Resident	8924	Resident	11872
	Deobandi-	141	4322	Resident	7401	Non Resident	11723
	Jl-	0	0	Resident	0	Resident	0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>310</b>	<b>7536</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>17889</b>	Non Resident	<b>25425</b>
						Resident	<b>Total</b>
						Non Resident	
						Resident	
Rahimyar Khan	Ahl-HAdith-	21	869	Resident	410	Non Resident	1279
	Ahl-Sunnat-	48	1665	Resident	1489	Resident	3163
	Ahl-Tashee-	05	218	Resident	30	Non Resident	248
	Barelvi-	249	5353	Resident	1087	Resident	6440
	Deobandi-	206	7230	Resident	9205	Non Resident	16480
	Jl-	0	0	Resident	0	Resident	0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>529</b>	<b>15365</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>27595</b>	Non Resident	<b>27610</b>
						Resident	<b>Total</b>
						Non Resident	
						Resident	
<b>Total</b>	<b>1458</b>		<b>38264</b>		<b>50565</b>	<b>88974</b>	

Source: Siddiq, 2013, p.27

As compare to Madrassahs if the plight of government's educational efforts is analyzed they fell short of the public demands and aspiration. Primary education is much required sector in the overall education schemes. This sector also put a question mark on the performance of the government. Other than primary education, the plight of secondary and higher education is even worse. These are the factors that are now a challenge for the government. This number is further justified when education facilities are further explored in different districts of Southern Punjab. Similarly the number of children who are not attending school at all further explains the gravity of the situation. (Ijaz Ahmad, 2010, Kamran, 2010, p.45)

In such a grim scenario, the opportunity is open for any kind of exploiters to come and utilize the wayward potential of the youth in accordance with their plans. This situation has become quite alarming for the authorities. There is great stress on the government from the super power to amend the policies and make sure a balance and well tolerant society with education and proper training. Many organizations have joined hands with the government and they are providing funds and technical support to check the prevailing trends of radicalization of youth in the remote and underdeveloped areas of the Punjab province. These organizations and funding agencies have a huge task before them because it not easy to challenge a thing which is associated with the belief pattern of a society. (Ijaz Ahmad, 2010) These Madrassahs are not just the place of worship or education; they provide them rationale of their existence and goal for their lives. They indoctrinate them with the wishful thinking of changing the world in accordance with their plans. They provide them food and shelter and nourish their thought and mind. They also ensure them future recruitment and allocate them in different cedars of their organizations. In this way the bulk rural youth is going to Madrassahs as they offer much better returns than government educational institutions. This trend is one of the biggest factors of radicalization of youth in Pakistan in general and Southern Punjab in particular which comes to be known as the area of Punjabi Taliban. Now the issue of radicalization of youth is a glaring reality which needed to be addressed with serious and concerted efforts. The efforts of provincial and federal government on one hand and the foreign organization's efforts on the other hand, are trying their best in order to curb the trends of radicalization of youth in Pakistan in general and in Punjab in particular. Although the growing number of government school is creating challenge that can be effective within reasonable time period but there is a dire need to be realistic in this regard. Unless these funds are utilized in their true spirit no viable change can be achieved.

### **An Assessment**

Southern Punjab region is an under develop portion of the Punjab province. The economic deprivation and disparity between Southern region and the rest of province has generated certain reactions in the region. Mismanagement of political

## South Asian Studies 29 (2)

issues and developmental chaos has set the ground for reactionary forces. These reactionary forces have focused on youth in particular in order to materialize their malicious agendas against the sovereignty and stability of the state. Radical forces adopted a shape of organizations and institutions during first Afghan war against USSR. Religious radicalism, at that time, serves as a logical rationale against secular socialist invasion in an Islamic state. But the end of cold war and disintegration of USSR left these radical forces without proper vigilance. Their economic aid halted by the capitalist bloc and they devised their ways of gathering aid and funds. This activity fed them with the multiple agendas of the donors. This situation not only destabilized the domestic stability but also pose threat to the region and the global entities as well. As the under developed and illiterate population serves as the favorite element for the growth of these organizations, they settled down in poverty stricken parts of the country. South Punjab is one such place.

Youth is focused on religious and radical organizations which really alarming. Youth is over whelming part of the population of Pakistan. For the bright future of the country, it is crucial to use this potential effectively and positively. Unless a workable and logical line of thought and action is provided to the youth, no peace can be ensured. With that, it is equally important to distance youth from the negative activities of the self-motivated Jihadi outfits. South Punjab is center of radical activities of these groups. These groups are manipulating the economic and developmental plight of the region for their strategic political purposes. This is the time when these organizations should be countered with effective political and administrative measures. A few constitutional and practical suggestions and future recommendation are given below;

- In accordance with the Article 256 of the Constitution of 1973, all type of Jihadi groups and militias should be banned.
- The supply line and communication line of Jihadi groups placed in Southern Punjab region should be cut off. They should not be given any space for their planning and execution. Their training camps should be located and destroyed.
- Registration of Madrassahs and their curriculum should be completed within reasonable time. No religious organization and Madrassah should be allowed to spread hatred through their literature and activities.
- All those seminaries and Madrassahs should be closed and banned who are identified with some links to the Jihadi outfits. Likewise all sorts of military and war training should be banned in Madrassahs.
- Public awareness meeting should be held to make people understand the true spirit of the religion.
- The process of political socialization and political participations should be encouraged in order to strengthen the democratic values.
- Along with academics, vocational training programs should be started in order to make youth useful, skillful and self-sufficient.

No challenge can be met single handedly by one institution and no institution can run without proper mass support. It becomes duty of all institutions, parties, groups and general public to come up and work for the betterment of state. Instead of offending the policies and action it would be much better to coordinate, amend and implement policies in their true spirit.

## References

- Ahmed, Imtiaz. Saraiki Schools of Terror. *Saraiki Waseb Organization*. June 23, 2014)
- Aijaz Ahmed, "Madrasahs: A Make-Belief World," Asia Times Online, January 2003, available at <[http://www.atimes.com/South\\_Asia/EA14Df01.html](http://www.atimes.com/South_Asia/EA14Df01.html)>.
- Azam, Muhammad. Radicalization in Pakistan: Socio-culture Realities. N.p.: Institute of Peace Studies, 2009. Web 1 July 2012
- Burki, Shahid Javed. (1991). Zia's Eleven Years. In S.J. Burki and Craig Baxter (Ed)., *Pakistan Under the Military: Eleven Years of Zia-ul-Haq*. CO: Boulder
- Ferrero, Mario. (2012). Radicalization as Reaction to Failure: An Islamic Model of Islamic Extremism. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3002667> . accessed on June 3, 2014
- Income Poverty at District Level. An Application of Smaller Area Estimation Technique. Haroon Jamal 2007
- Kamran, Tahir. (2012). Evolution and Impact of 'Deobandi' Islam in the Punjab. <http://www.gcu.edu.pk/FullTextJour/Hist/V3N205/P28-50.pdf>
- Khan, A.A. (2009). Spatial Analysis of Fertility Pattern in the Punjab. The Islamia University of Bahawalpur: Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis
- Malik, I.H. (1997). *State and Civil Society in Pakistan: Politics of Authority, Ideology and Ethnicity*. Basingstoke.
- PCO. (2001). 1998 Provincial Census Report of Punjab. Islamabad: (Population Census Organization) (<http://www.census.gov.pk/adminpunjab.php>)
- Punjab Development Statistics 2010, Bureau of Statistics, Government of Punjab
- Punjab Developmental Statistics: 2010, Bureau of Statistics, Government of Punjab
- Siddida, Dr.Ayesha. (2013). The New Frontiers. Militancy and Radicalism in Punjab. SISA Report no.2. 2013
- Talbot, Ian. (2009). Pakistan, A Modern History. London: C. Hurst & Co
- Uzma Anzar, "Islamic Education A Brief History of Madrasahs," Mar 2003, <http://www.uvm.edu/~envprog/madrassah/madrassah-history.pdf> (accessed 10 Feb, 2007).
- Yusuf, Moeed. "A Society on the Precipice? Examining the Prospects of Youth Radicalization in Pakistan ." Reaping the Dividend Overcoming Pakistan's Demographic Challenges (n.d.): n. pag. Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars' Asia Program. Web. 5 July 2012
- Zulfiqar, Saman. (2012). Politics of New Provinces in Pakistan: Prospects and Challenges. IPRI XII, no.2 Summer 2012)
- Zaman, Gohar. (2003). Report on South Punjab. Special Committee on Demarcation of Provinces. Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency. [http://www.punjab.gov.pk/?q=about\\_punjab\\_geography](http://www.punjab.gov.pk/?q=about_punjab_geography) accessed on June 14, 2014 [http://www.punjab.gov.pk/?q=about\\_punjab\\_geography](http://www.punjab.gov.pk/?q=about_punjab_geography) <http://www.census.gov.pk/adminpunjab.php>

## Biographical Note

**Dr. Iram Khalid** is Professor, Department of Political Science, University of the Punjab, Lahore. Pakistan.

**Mina Ehsan Leghari** is Ph.D Scholar at, Department of Political Science, University of the Punjab, Lahore-Pakistan.