The Politics of Religion in South Asia

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Abstract – Rise of religious nationalism in South Asia is attributable to the two nation theory which in turn emanates from the communal situation during the British era. This paper traces the roots of religious nationalism in South Asia by referring to the Pre-Partition communal situation in the subcontinent and then by focusing on the development of Islamic fundamentalism in Pakistan and Hindu radicalism in India after the division of the subcontinent. The rise of radical elements in both the countries have been able to effect, quite substantially in Pakistan and in a limited way in India, the view of the people, the state actions and the policies of these two nations towards each other. Thus the aim of the paper is to demonstrate the rise of religious nationalism and its influence on the relationship between India and Pakistan.

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INTRODUCTION

The field of International Relation has seen a return of culture, identity, societal and human approach in the post-cold war era. Macro-social identities such as Religion, Race, Ethnicity, Class, Caste etc. have significantly affected the study of IR. Some of the important phenomenon has been the inter-state tension, territorial division based on religion, ethnicity and race and the rise of religious nationalism, especially in the non-western world. This paper attempts at locating shift from structure to culture and its relevance in understanding South Asian dynamics. Thus it focuses on the rise of religious nationalism in the Indian subcontinent and the impact it has on the relationship between the two nuclear powers of South Asia- India and Pakistan.[1]

The paper is divided into four sub sections. At first it provides theoretical understanding on Nationalism and Religion and how it becomes necessary to probe when it comes to South Asian affairs especially in case of Indo-Pak dynamics. In the next section, it traces the genesis of religious fundamentalism in the Indian Subcontinent in pre-partition era. Third, sections discuss specifically about Hindu radicalism and Islamic fundamentalism. Last section discusses about impact of religious fundamentalism on inter-state rivalry between India and Pakistan.

THEORETICAL UNDERSTANDING ON NATIONALISM AND RELIGION

Anthony Marx in his book *Nation,* states that "Nationalism is defined as a collective sentiment or identity, bounding and binding together those individuals who share a sense of large-scale political solidarity aimed at creating, legitimating, or challenging states. As such, nationalism is often perceived or justified by a sense of historical commonality which coheres a population within a territory and which demarcates those who belong and others who do not." (Marx.2003:7) Nationalism is a binding force that is based on patriotism and the feeling of oneness and togetherness by the inhabitants of a particular country. This binding identity derives its force from shared cultural heritage and history. Religion is also one of the most robust forces that bind people together on the basis of shared faith and belief.

"According to Lewis Namier,'Religion is a sixteenth century word for nationalism, 'or it at least served as potential cement for what would become nationalism' That the social bonds of religion could or would be used as the basis of national cohesion is not surprising, for faith was then the most pervasive form of identity among the populace whose loyalty sought by state rulers or their opponents. Before the enervating effects disparaged by Karl Marx, "Religion as the opiate of the masses" could and did bond. Its salience before state consolidation only added to its perceived power as a form of cohesion that states or opponents could attempt to mimic, deploy, or harness." (ibid: 25) In regions such as South Asia, It can be seen that religion has played important role in determining nationalism in current times.

From a political or sociological perspective, the origin of nationalism can be described from two main ways– Primordialist and modernist. The primordialist theory is based on the theory of evolution and asserts that nationalism is based on the evolutionary tendency of human beings to organize themselves in groups based in common

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[1] In this paper Fundamentalism is used purely in political terms.

features."Roger Masters in The Nature of Politics describes the primordial explanation of the origin of ethnic and national groups as recognizing group attachments that are thought to be unique, emotional, intense, and durable because they are based upon kinship and promoted along lines of common ancestry". (Motyl.2001:273) "Pierre van den Berghe in *The Ethnic Phenomenon* (1981) emphasizes the role of ethnicity and kinship involving family biological ties to members of an ethnic group as being an important element of national identity. Van den Berghe states the sense of family attachments among related people as creating durable, intense, emotional, and cooperative attachments that he claims are utilized within ethnic groups" (ibid:274).

On the other hand, the modernist perspective describes nationalism as a process which is only possible in such modern societies which have self sufficient economies and organized governmental setups. "These modern societies have been described as being associated with having: an industrial economy capable of self-sustainability of the society, a central supreme authority capable of maintaining authority and unity, and a centralized language or small group of centralized languages understood by a community of people" (ibid:508-509)

While religion has been relegated to a private affair between and individual and himself and the modern secular state has theoretical alienated itself from religion, there is some possibility to ascertain the relation between religion and nationalism and how religion can very well be a basis of nationalism. Durkheim defined religion as a "unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden." (Durkheim.1912:47) According to him religion emanates from society. In his book *the Elementary form of religious life* he writes "religious forces are therefore human forces and moral forces". (Guibernau, 1996:26) All the religions of the world involve the living together of a certain number of people and following the same beliefs and rituals thus developing a bond of solidarity and an element of unity among the believers. According to Durkheim religious rituals and civil ceremonies have similar effect of binding the people. Thus religion comes very close to defining nationalism in terms developing the 'we' feeling in a population. Durkheim espouses that "Religion has given birth to all that is essential in society." (ibid: 27)

Gellner draws a parallel between religion and nationalism by proposing that "for if in religious worship society adores its own camouflaged image, in a nationalist age, societies worship themselves brazenly and openly, spurning the camouflage."(ibid) Gellner further maintains that "within Durkheim's framework what makes us social and human is our capacity to be constrained by compulsive concepts and the theory that the compulsion is instilled by

ritual and the ritual is the core of religion" (ibid: 28) It is almost the same end that nationalism achieves by restraining and instilling cohesion within a community as a means to obtain cooperation and communication.

The relationship between religion and nationalism can be of many types. Sometimes the nature of the relationship may be analogous. The similarity between religion and nationalism demonstrated in the works of Durkheim shows the analogous nature of religion and nationalism. The works of Carlton Hayes and Anthony smith throw light on this relationship. The relationship between religion and nationalism can also be seen in the way religion helps explain nationalism. Thus for example, "scholars have traced the influence of Puritanism (and Protestantism more generally) on English nationalism (Kohn 1940, Greenfeld 1992), of Pietism on German nationalism (Lehmann 1982), of Catholicism on Polish nationalism (see for a critical review Zubrzycki 2006), of Orthodoxy on nationalism in the Balkans (Leustean 2008), of Shinto on Japanese nationalism (Fukase-Indergaard and Indergaard 2008), of Buddhism on Sinhalese nationalism (Kapferer 1988), and of the Hebraic idea of covenant on Northern Irish, Afrikaaner, and Israeli nationalism (Akenson 1992)". (Brubaker.2011:7)

However, the focus of this paper is on religious nationalism which "is the relationship of nationalism to a particular religious belief, dogma, or affiliation. This relationship can be broken down into two aspects; the politicization of religion and the influence of religion on politics". (Xypolia: 2011) This relationship between religion and nationalism represents the notion of nationalism based on religion and provides and alternative to secular nationalism. Friedland defines nationalism in statist terms. He characterizes nationalism as 'a state-centered form of collective subject formation'; as 'a program for the co-constitution of the state and the territorially bounded population in whose name it speaks'; and as 'a set of discursive practices by which the territorial identity of a state and the cultural identity of the people whose collective representation it claims are constituted as a singular fact' (Friedland 2002:386). Frieldand's definition of religious nationalism applies to a wide range of settings including Indian, Iran, Israel, Palestine, Turkey, Algeria, Egypt and Pakistan. Along with his attention on Christian fundamentalism, Hindu nationalism, Jewish nationalism he has more deeply focused on Islamic nationalism.

The content of this paper also relates to Hindu and Islamic nationalism. Christophe Jeffrelot, while giving his views on the relationship between religion and nationalism maintains that "there is nothing necessary, automatic and systematic in the rapport between religion and nationalism. Their

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relationship has changed over time and the old never completely disappeared when new configuration emerged. To begin with, nationalism emerged as an emancipatory force including vis-à-vis religion. But this universalistic brand of nationalism gradually, as is evident in the case of France, had to cohabit with an ethnic one, where religion often played a major role as a key component of the identity in question." (Jeffrelot.2006)

Nationalism emerged in the form of an anti-religious force in Western Europe which was considered a subversive and modernizing force. Individual became the focus of the social activities and the supernatural lost its supreme importance. This also led to the emergence of secularization of state and society. However, as a result of resilience of religious force this top down universalistic brand of nationalism underwent changes and in some cases resulted in religious nationalism. An example of this gradual change is witnessed in the case of India where secularism became one of the official mottos. But Secularism did not prevent the state from supporting financially schools established by religious groups, as spelled out in the constitution itself. Indeed, Article 30(1) reads:" All minorities, whether based on religion or language shall have the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice" (ibid:408)

Religion and Politics have intricate linkages in case of South Asian affairs. It has been observed that religion has been such a powerful source of political mobilization in domestic affairs of south Asian state and not only this, it has also effected the inter-state relations which results in the regional instability. In understanding the cause of hostile India-Pakistan relations, it becomes important to trace the role of religion. Religious fundamentalism in South Asia is a result of a number of factors that operated during the British rule. To understand the development of religious nationalism it becomes essential to throw some light on the communal situation during the British rule and how it culminated into religious nationalism during the post-partition times.

STATUS OF RELIGIOUS FUNDAMENTALISM – PRE-PARTITION

The history of the subcontinent reveals the chain of events and the forces that, ultimately, culminated into the bifurcation of the sub continent and became the reason for the rise of religious nationalism. The Indian Sub Continent became home to both Hindus and Muslims since the advent of Islam in India**.** Islam came into India through Muslim traders in Malabar Coast in 7th century and the first Muslim invasion took place in Sindh in 715 AD. The earlier invasions were not that successful and it was only after the establishment of Delhi Sultanate in 1204 that the Muslim rule began to make territorial expansion in India. Almost whole of the India was brought under one regime by the Mughals who ruled India from the 16th century till the advent of British. By the time of colonization of India by the Imperialist forces Hindus and Muslims had co-existed in India for nearly five centuries.

The imperial policies of the British finally led to a situation where the Indian Muslims began to see themselves as a weak minority. They found themselves in a lose-lose situation in context of power sharing in a democratic setup. The British approach was grounded in the policy of divide and rule. They believed that a country divided on religious fault lines will be weak. Thus, it will not be able to pose any challenge to the colonizers. Mahatma Gandhi put it precisely in 1940 when he said **"**The British can retain their hold on India only by a policy of 'divide and rule'. A living unity between the Muslims and Hindus is fraught with danger to their rule. It would mean an end to it." (Mehrotra 1970)

The British idea of divide and rule first found manifestation in 1905 when Bengal was divided. H. Risely, the home secretary to the government of India, said about the partition that **"**Bengal united is a power; Bengal divided will pull in several different ways. One of our main objectives is to split up and thereby weaken a solid body of opponent to our rule." (Bose & Jalal 1997) The revolt of 1857 had made it clear to the British that a united Hindu-Muslim force can become a huge problem for the British imperialist ambitions. The British were also fearful of Muslims as they were the former rulers of the country for several decades. This propelled the British towards devising a policy for weakening the Muslim community. The British started to weed out Muslims from important positions. This included removal of Emperor Shah Alam and other Muslims from important posts. Policies such as replacing Persian by English as the official language led to further dilution of Muslim concentration in the key administrative departments. The British further aimed at elevation of Hindus to create a potent counter against the Muslim.

The Hindus were promoted to become landlords and were given the rights to collect land revenue. The Permanent Settlement of 1773 brought Hindus to important position from where they could develop and amass wealth. Also the introduction of democracy made sure that the country will be governed by the majority. The Muslims could never become a majority in the land where they were a permanent minority. This revitalized the Hindus and developed a permanent sense of insecurity in the Muslims. (Farah 2011)

The Hindu revivalist movement also contributed in alienating Muslims to an inferior position. They deepened the differences between Hindus and Muslims. They were also not very appreciative of Muslims as the former rulers of India and considered them outsiders. Some of the reforms taken by Hindu revivalists were Shuddhi movement

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which sought to reconvert the Hindus who had adopted Islam, establishment of a society which shunned cow slaughter by Muslims and increasing the influence of Hindi over Urdu. (Farah 2011)

By the decade of 1870s the British were again playing their cards to win over Muslims so as to develop this minority community into a significant "other" in the eyes of Hindus. They helped Muslim setup the Mohammedan Anglo Oriental College at Aligarh and played active part in successful conduct of All India Muslim Conference. These were the original institutions from where the leaders of the Muslim league and idea of separate Muslim state of Pakistan emerged. (Keen 1998) Further damage was done to the Hindu-Muslim equation when British came with separate electorates. "With the extension of the elective principle under Ripon's reforms of 1882–3, the British granted separate electorates to Muslims in local government bodies. Separate electorates were incorporated in the 1909 Morley–Minto reforms, which extended the links between the higher and lower councils." (Bose & Jalal 1997)

The effect of communal electorates was even deeper in promoting communalism in India. The power dynamics at the provincial and the local level with separate electoral constituencies for Muslims made them a recognized minority. (Bose & Jalal 1997) The communal award of 1932 which was a result, inter alia, of efforts of Mian fazl-i-Hussain through All India Muslim Conference, upheld the legitimate status of communal electorates and allotted more constituencies to Muslims.

The mistakes made by Congress and the nationalist forces compounded with the new born sense of Hindu superiority also added fuel in the communal fire. The congress' refusal to meet the modest demands of the Muslim League led to the latter going for demanding a separate state. "Jinnah, the Muslim League leader, put forward the Delhi proposal to Congress for a Hindu-Muslim settlement which demanded the introduction of reforms in the North-West Frontier Province and Baluchistan, the reservation of seats for Muslims on a population basis in the Punjab and Bengal and the allocation of one third of the seats in the central legislature for the Muslims"(Ispahani 1970) Congress did not agree to this which prompted the Muslim league to feel more insecure about the Muslims and demand a separate state for Muslims. The Round Table conferences of 1930 and 1931 could also have served as a patch up for Hindus and Muslims but it resulted in a deadlock because of the stubborn approach of both Hindus and Muslims. The approach of Congress alarmed The Muslim League about the future of Muslims in India. Mohammed Ali Jinnah summed up the Muslim League's approach when he said that "The chief reason why the domestic political situation in India has deteriorated to a point which would have seemed almost inconceivable a few years earlier

was the manifest purpose of the Congress to take over the heritage of British raj" (Ispahani 1970)

The elections organized under the British rule also played a role in increasing the rift between The Muslim league and Congress. Before the elections of 1936-37 Jinnah and his associates did a lot of electoral campaigning in the Muslim Majority province to gain some political traction. The league also tried to strike a deal with the congress but to no avail. "Unable to prove its following in the Muslim-majority provinces, the League was spurned by the Congress at the centre. The League won an ignominious 4.4 per cent of the total Muslim vote cast". (Bose& Jalal 1997) The poor performance of the league in the electoral calculus provided a boost for the congress. However, the Muslim identity as a separate community had become very deep at that time. The last two decades had fostered an anti congress attitude in Muslims of Bengal and Punjab. This was because of the conduct of the congress government in provinces which asserted Hindu dominance.

The Muslim insecurity deepened with the arrival of the act of 1935. It was at this point of time that the Muslim League contemplated of a separate nation for Muslims. The idea of a separate Muslim state was given by Muhammad Iqbal in 1930 but his thoughts were rejected. In 1933, Chaudhary Rehmat Ali, a Cambridge student, invented the word Pakistan. Slowly and gradually the idea of Pakistan began to win the support of Muslims and the leaders of Muslim league. "So in March 1940, without specifying the exact geographical boundaries, the All-India Muslim League at its annual session in Lahore formally demanded independent Muslim states in the north-west and the north-east of India on the grounds that Indian Muslims were a nation." (Bose &Jalal 1997) The League's demand of a separate Muslim state was not seriously taken by the British or the Congress. However, Muslim League slowly hardened its stand. Jinnah became extremely stubborn regarding Pakistan and rejected all other offers which were not consistent with Muslim League's demand. The failure of Cripps's Mission, first Shimla Conference of 1945 and the Cabinet Mission plan could not budge the Muslim League." In the 1945–46 elections Jinnah and the League won all the Muslim seats to the central assembly, and polled 75 per cent of the total Muslim vote cast in the provincial assembly elections." (Bose & Jalal 1997) The Muslim League became more and more desperate with the passage of time and the observed direct action day on 16th August 1946.

The division of the country was inevitable by this time and it was during the tenure of Lord Mountbatten that India was divided between two nations, thus, legitimizing the two nation theory and marking the culmination of the communal politics of the British raj. Seeds of Religious Nationalism were

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grown in pre-partition era itself but its consequences which resulted in instability and inter-state rivalry was very much evident even after the partition of the Indian subcontinent. After tracing the status of religious fundamentalism in pre-partition era, in the next subsequent sections this paper brings up the situation of religious fundamentalism in post- partition era.

RELIGIOUS FUNDAMENTALISM – POST PARTITION

After the partition of the subcontinent in 1947, various forces operated in both the countries in order to determine their ideological foundation. While, India- under the resolute leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru and Mahatma Gandhi- declared itself a secular state, it had to face constant challenge throughout its independent existence from the radical right wing Hindu forces which are at their peak since the past two and a half decades. Pakistan, on the other hand, despite the intentions of the Muslim elite to establish a secular nation, had to, initially, deal with ideological vacuum and later succumbed to the radical forces and the developing socio-political scenario and declared itself an Islamic republic. The following section reveals the chain of events that led to the development of fundamentalism in both the nations.

HINDU FUNDAMENTALISM

The rise of the radical right wing Hindutva movement has been one of the most significant developments on the political and communal landscape of the sub-continent. The recent impetus to the movement came from the Babri Mosque demolition. Bhartiya Janta Party – The right wing political party of India – claimed that the spot at which the Babri Mosque stood was actually the place of birth of the revered Lord Ram. The BJP, by flaming the religious feelings of Hindus for whom Ram held a very high position, was able to polarize the electorate on communal ground and made significant political gains in terms of the seat won in the General Elections.

The roots of the rising Hindu consciousness can be traced to the times when certain Hindus, under the influence of western education became the proponent of fairly liberal views. The practice of defying the century old customs of caste, sati and other Vedic dictums alarmed the conservative section of Hindus who tried to stick to the fundamentals of the religion. It was in this way that the seed of hindutva movement were sown during the British raj.

The origin of the word hindutva can be traced to Vinayak Damodar Savarkar who coined the term in his 1923 pamphlet *Hindutva: Who is Hindu*? "It is the set of movements advocating Hindu nationalism. According to a 1995 Supreme Court of India judgment the word Hindutva could be used to mean "the way of life of the Indian people and the Indian culture or ethos" (Agrawal.1995) However, it is used by the Hindu radical groups to denote the idea of Hindu nationalism or "Hindu Rashtra" i.e. a country based on the superiority of Hindu religion and with superior rights to Hindus. In current times the *Sangh Parivar* happens to be the most ardent supporter of the cause of Hindutva movement. There are several dozens of small organizations that work under the umbrella of the *Sangh Pariwar*. Some of the prominent ones are Bhartiya Janta Party, Bhartiya Kisan Sangh, Bhartiya Mazdoor Sangh, Rashtra Sevika Samiti etc.

The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) which is the chief ideologue of the Hindutva movement was formed in 1925. During the Non-cooperation movement in 1920, Mahatma Gandhi had cooperated with the Muslims and the Khilafat movement to make the Muslims a part of the national movement in order to enhance the popular base of the movement. The RSS was born out of the insecurities stemming from the popularization of Khilafat movement which was seen as a pan Islamist threat by the Hindu radicals.

As the subcontinent got partitioned in 1947 on the basis of two nation theory Pakistan chose to be Islamic republic and Islamic extremism slowly developed in Pakistan. In the later years, such religious extremism acted as a provocation for the right wing Hindu groups to assert their supremacy. Thus, the war between *Neo-Hindu* and *Islamic fundamentalism* emanated as one of the dimensions of partition. (Kumar.2013) This ideological division was symbolized by political mobilization giving rise to the hindutva movement at the Indian communal landscape. The whole Hindutva movement is based on the argument that there is a significant threat to the Hindus from Muslims. This feeling of vulnerability has been there throughout the British rule in India. It was this feeling which led to the establishment of RSS as a reaction to Khilafat movement.

"In the 1980s, Islamic proselytism, which appeared in a more fundamentalist light since the Iranian revolution, fuelled a Hindu nationalist counter-mobilization—which ended up focalizing on the Ayodhya incident—and several riots; the terrorist attacks of 2001 made the same impact since they enabled the Hindu nationalist movement to capitalize on the feeling of some threat." (Jaffrelot.2007:173). As long as Pakistan and Muslim jihad movement exists, there will be provocation for the Hindu fundamentalists in India to constitute a Hindu homeland or "Hindu Rashtra", with superior rights for Hindus in the same way as there is superior rights for Muslims in Pakistan. In the wake of the communal violence accompanied by partition, there was a pressure on the Indian side to declare itself as a Hindu nation. But the visionary Prime Minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru and the Father of the nation Mahatma Gandhi

never believed in the two nation theory, resulting in the rejection of the idea that India should be a Hindu nation. In the following decades the secular, liberal and plural politics of the founding father of the nation has faced several challenges from the right wing radicalism. This assertion of Hindu religious identity has also made room for competitive religious radicalism in India.

T V Paul maintains that India's Muslim population plays a very significant role not only in internal affairs but also in its external affairs. India's diplomatic relation to the Middle East is said to be grounded equally in economic and religious contexts. In his view, the lack of a noticeable Indo-Israel relation till 1980s was also because of the fear of the alienation of the Muslim population. It is probably the circumstances like these that have led to the provocation of the fundamental Hindutva forces which inadvertently legitimize the two nation theory.

The culmination of Hindutva movement is the demolition of Babri Mosque in Ayodhya. The sixteenth century mosque built during the reign of Babur was demolished by fanatic *Kar Sevaks.* The Ayodhya issued was raised by the BJP to stoke the religious sentiments of Hindus and mobilize them as a political force. It was the RSS chief M S Golwalkar who called upon the Hindus to stop cow slaughter in 1952. However, this appeal could not religiously motivate the Hindus. In 1980s, however, the Ram temple issue was able to achieve, for the Hindu radicals, what Golwalkar had hoped in the 1950s. The campaign to build a temple where a mosque stood in Ayodhya generated a widespread appeal. Many Hindus across India, and of different castes, were beginning to see this as a 'point of honor in our national life'. To these people, the Babri Masjid is Ayodhya was indeed a reminder of 'our past slavery and humiliation'. After the demolition of the Babri Mosque widespread riots broke out in many parts of the country. These communal riots began to pose a question on the secular bases of the Indian democracy. According to M N Panini "the difference between the flexible and plural Hinduism and dogmatic and radical Hindutva seems to be fast vanishing in India. The ideology of secularism has lost its sheen and politicians who need electoral support can no longer afford to project themselves as persons who adopt a critical attitude towards Hinduism. The Hindutva ideology has also become a key instrument in the Indian politics as it is very easy to mobilize people in the name of gods."(http://www.sasnet.lu.se/sasnet/panel-34-south-asia-changing-social-structural-bases-and-dominance-right-wing-ideologies)

Unlike the countries of Western Europe and North America where religion is considered to be a personal and private issue, in India the effects of religion and religious emotions find reflections in political arena, at times in unpleasant and disturbing ways. India had faced the challenges from the

extreme right since its birth. This challenge is ubiquitous in the post partition history of India. From the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi by a Hindu fanatic and the call given by the then chief of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, M S Golwalkar to stop cow slaughter to the Gujarat riots and the most recent riots in the Muzaffarpur district of Uttar Pradesh, the rise of Hindutva movement is real and potent. However, this challenge was countered at birth by the resolute central leadership and the Indo-Pak relationship had been defined by the stand of a secular Indian state rather than a "Hindu Rashtra." But the current rise of Hindutva movement in the wake of a central government which is not as resolute as was the cabinet of Jawaharlal Nehru is posing some challenge to the secular forces in the Indian democracy.

ISLAMIC RADICALISM

The rising communal situation during the British rule was at the root of the development of Islamic radicalism. The focus towards the assertion of a distinct Muslim identity came during the revivalist movements whose prime motive was to preserve the fundamentals of Islam. They believed that basics of Islam were being compromised in multi-ethnic and diverse Indian society. The religious Muslim leaders also realized that Islam could not survive without its association with politics. This idea later gave rise to the demand for a separate homeland and nation for the Muslims. The rise of Islamic radicalism and its adherence to violence can be seen from the times of Saiyad Ahmad Bareilly who was influenced by the Islamic reform movement of Muhammad Ibn Abdu Wahab in Arabia and conducted Jihadi wars against the Sikhs in the frontier districts during the second and third decade of the nineteenth century. Religious mobilization played a significant role in Pakhtun uprising. The revolt started in 1936 under the leadership of the Faqir of Ipi and the Guerrilla warfare continued in 1940s. Thus, Pakistan was to already inherit political movements based in strong religious emotions. (Talbot.2007:147-160)

The Muslim nationalism rose in the political landscape of the Indian subcontinent from the increasing communal wave in the nineteenth century. This communal wave was partly engendered by the British and was partly because of the other socio-political and economic reasons. Wilfred Cantwell Smith describes Muslim communalism which evolved into the ideology of Muslim nationalism by stating that "Communalism in India may be defined as that ideology which has emphasized as the social, political and economic unit the group of adherents of each religion, and has emphasized the distinction even the antagonism, between each group; the words "adherents" and "religion" being taken in the most nominal sense, Muslim communalists, for instance, have been highly conscious of the Muslims within

India as a supposedly single, cohesive community, to which they devote their loyalty—paying little attention to whether the individuals included are religiously ardent, tepid, or cold; orthodox, liberal, or atheist; righteous or vicious; or whether they are landlord, prince or proletarian; also paying little attention to Muslims outside India." (Chengappa.2008:2158)

The politicization of Muslims and the communal wave on the subcontinent was shaped through the events of the first half of the twentieth century. The partition of Bengal, creation of All India Muslim League and introduction of separate electorate made the situation rife with the possibility of development of Islamic nationalism. There arose a dispute between conservatives who wanted to alienate from Congress and progressives led by M.A. Jinnah who wanted to work in tandem with Congress. Progressives finally prevailed and the Lucknow pact of 1916 laid down the foundation of united working of Congress and the League. The Hindu Muslim unity was also seen when under the leadership of Gandhi, the Khilafat and the Non cooperation movement merged into one. However, the situation took a turn for the worse in 1920s and 30s. Communal riots broke out in different parts of the country and started to become clear that the communal forces will prevail. The Tanzeem and Tabligh movements were started by Muslims to counter the Hindu religious movements such as Sangathatn and Shddhi. Pakistan was finally demanded by the League in the Lahore resolution in 1940 and in the next decade the adamancy of Jinnah, the helplessness of Nehru and Gandhi and the haste of Mountbatten led to the bifurcation of the subcontinent and creation of Pakistan.

Just after the creation of Pakistan a problem of ideology arose in the nation. The Muslim elite who had spearheaded the creation of Pakistan were believers in secular values and wanted to establish a nation build on secular ethos. However, since they had mobilized and motivated the people on the basis of the two nation theory, the people and the clergy wanted an Islamic state. The leadership had to yield to the wishes of people and promoted the concept of Pakistan as a religious nation. Thus Islam became an inalienable part of the development of state system in Pakistan. Under the influence of the radical forces that began to rise towards the end of 1960s the ideology of Pakistan increasingly became rooted in Islam. "In March 1970 General Yahya Khan in a legal framework order to prescribe the basis for the country's first general elections stated that the constitution which elected the members of the National Assembly should ensure that: "Islamic ideology which is the basis for the creation of Pakistan shall be preserved…"However, it was also mentioned that: "Adherence to fundamental principles of democracy shall be ensured by providing direct and free periodic elections to the Federal and Provincial legislatures on the basis of population and adult franchise." (ibid.2008:2164).

Such frameworks led to a dichotomy for it is not possible for a state to both favor a religion and then endow equal rights to all the communities which is the essence of democracy. However, both ideas, depending on the situation, were used by the civilian and the military regimes to gain legitimacy and support of the people. The rise of Islamic radicalism and the influence of fundamentalists on the government began from the Ahmadiya movement in 1950s and then in 70s. The Ahrars, who were opposed to Ahmadiya movement, were purists and fundamentalists. In order to establish themselves in Pakistan as the proponents of true Islam, they along with Jamaat-I-Islami[2] adopted a militant policy towards Ahmadiyas and pressed for the establishment of a truly Islamic state where sovereignty would lie with Allah and where dissenters such as Ahmadiyas would be charged with blasphemy. These radical groups pressurized the Muslim League government led by Liaquat Ali Khan to pass the objective resolution in 1949 to give impetus to the ideology of Islam in Pakistan.

The orthodox Muslims strengthened their control over the political and executive processes and demanded that the Ahmadiyas, who were symbol of anti Islam, be relegated to a position of non-Muslim minority. Martial law had to be imposed to contain the radical voices. The objective resolution had already provided the base for the buildup of an Islamic state. The Basic Principle committee which was created just after the objective resolution provided for a parliamentary democracy with features of theocracy. Ulama was given an advisory role and shariat law was not given a status above parliament. The fundamentalists were highly opposed to this. The second constitution enacted in 1962 under the Ayub Khan Regime was forced to include the word "Islamic" in the constitution and all the laws were brought in conformity of Islam. This led to the consolidation of fundamentalist forces.

The rising influence of the ulama and the radical Islamists was also demonstrated when East Bengal's demand for autonomy was declared anti Islamic because it gave importance to linguistic identity over religious. After the independence of East Pakistan, the Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto regime came under vehement criticism from the fundamentalists for propagating Islamic socialism. Resultantly, Bhutto in the 1973 declared Islam as the state religion of Pakistan. Later Ahmadiyas were proclaimed a non-Muslim minority in 1974 marking the victory of radical forces.

Islamic radicalism culminated in the Zia regime when Islam became state sponsored. The ulama

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[2] Sayyid Abul A'la Maududi (often referred to as Maulana Maududi) is one of the most influential Islamic scholars of the 20th century and the founder of Jamaat-e-Islami (Islamic Party). Maulana Maududi's philosophy, literature and activism contributed to the development of Islamic movements around the world. (Rao.2007:406)

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gained importance and both the internal and external polices of the state came under the influence of Islam. The religious character of the state and the extreme importance to religion made situation ripe for the development of militant nationalism which manifested itself through jihad – The holy war. Madrsas were mandated to provide education to the younger generation and they espoused extreme and violent version of Islam**.** "In international affairs as well as domestically, the Zia regime's identification with Islamic causes marked an important turning point. The roots were laid for the Pakistan state's alliance with militant groups committed to the cause of *jihad*. The ties with what after 9/11 would be termed international terrorists were established by the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), the intelligence wing of the Army. It rose to prominence during the Afghan struggle. Throughout the period of restored democracy in the 1990s it operated as almost a state within a state." (Talbot.2007:153) It is in this way that radical and extreme militant Islam consolidated itself in Pakistan and later had a pre-eminent role to play in both the Pakistani affairs and the South Asian affairs.

RELIGIOUS FUNDAMENTALISM AND ITS IMPACT ON INDO-PAK TIES

There have been very few countries in the history of the world which have been able to move past the legacy of their hostile past. The history of the Indian Subcontinent is no exception. The landmark event of partition of the subcontinent and the subsequent rise of extremism in both the countries still remain in the root of the tension between India and Pakistan. The conflict between India and Pakistan started with the partition. Firstly, the communal riot and then the border disputes marked the beginning of hostilities between the two newly born nations. A cursory look at the history of the subcontinent reveals that there always has been some degree of conflict between Hindus and Muslims. (Chester 2002)

During the freedom struggle it were the British whose policy of "divide and rule" sowed the seeds of communalism in India. The partition and the following riots exacerbated the sensitive communal situations. After the partition, religious fundamentalism became the guiding factor for Pakistan and later manifested itself in India as well in the form of the rising Hindutva movement. The rising religious fundamentalism in both the countries led to the perpetuation of the view that Hindus and Muslims are two separate nations with antagonistic character. It is since the partition that the two nations have fought four wars and the conflict has emerged as an international problem.

Even today, all the prominent points of contentions between the two nations are related to partition and the rivalry between Hindus and Muslims. Whether it is the problem of Kashmir or other border issues, they all derive their origin from the rising religious fundamentalism in South Asia emanating from the communally charged history. Partition has also, artificially, been portrayed as an event that is likely to engender hatred and a sense of revenge and bitterness in the consequent generations. The hatred during the partition was perpetuated due to its intense effect on masses. Sisir Gupta, a noted Indian diplomat and scholar, once wrote, "The India-Pakistan conflict is animated by the memory that elites created of each other as a consequence of partition." (Cited in Ganguly 2006)

The memories of partition, the pre partition rift between Hindus and Muslims and its use by the religious fundamentalists in maintaining the perenniality of hatred and antagonism became instruments that developed a sense of mistrust between the two countries. The fundamentalists in both the countries kept the communal feelings alive for their narrow ends. Thus the Delhi riots of 1984, the Bhagalpur riots of 1989, the Babri mosque demolition, the Mumbai riots of 1993 and the Gujarat communal riots are all somehow concurrent with the historical communal tension. In all these riots partition stories were selectively used to develop hatred and hostilities among people. It is evident that the hostile relations between the two nuclear powers are largely because of impasse brought by the growing religious fundamentalism.

One of the features of radicalization in Pakistan was to portray Hindu not only as a separate nation but also as hostile to the Muslim community. It was this insecurity, engendered on an obscurantist base that provided the communal fuel for sponsoring hatred against India. The obsession to compete with India to show that Muslims are in no way inferior to Hindus not only cost Pakistan dear on the socio-economic front but also pushed it towards violent extremism. "Extremism got laced with fear of India, and bred hatred as a defence mechanism. Translated into practice, this meant waging unending *jihad* against India. In the 1980s, it practiced this in Afghanistan and simultaneously assisted Sikh insurgents in India. In the 1990s, Pakistan graduated to sponsoring *jihad* on two fronts – the Kashmir-specific *jihadi*st groups that operated from Pakistan and the Taliban, who were encouraged by Pakistani leaders to take over Afghanistan, in the full knowledge that these groups were fundamentalists to the core". (Sood.2011)

In order to compete with its stronger neighbor Pakistan sided with the US and its allies during the cold war era. The military generals who were slowly becoming powerful did not hesitate to invoke religious sentiments in order to generate nationalistic feelings. As the reigns of country passed in the hands of military generals with the simultaneous growth of religious fundamentalism in the country, it became a catalyst of anti India feeling. The Zia regime in Pakistan was the regime

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of state sponsored jihad which escalated the problems between India and Pakistan by radicalizing the Kashmir issue, constant jihadist infiltration through the Kashmir border and the ISI aided Mumbai blasts of 1993 which were a reaction to the Babri mosque demolition. "The nineties were difficult years for the Indian state as Pakistan Government, using the *Jihadi* surplus from Afghanistan, sent one terrorist outfit after another into Indian Territory as a revenge for 1971. It suited both the *jihadi*s in their dream for establishing Caliphates in India, and the Army in its dream of splitting India." (ibid) The democratic peace theory also could not hold any ground in South Asia as the nineties were also the times when democratically elected civilian governments were in power in Pakistan. The Indo-Pak ties again took a hit during the Kargil conflict when once again state sponsored terrorism threatened the sovereignty and territorial integrity of India.

Such a strong rise of Islamic radicalism in Pakistan posed a challenge to the Hindu radical in India who saw Hinduism in danger. This led to the rise of Hindutva movement partially as a reaction to the Islamic radicalization of South Asia and Partially as a communal political tool. The right wing radical Hindus tend to vindicate the two nation theory and do not encourage any kind of cooperation with Pakistan. However, these right wing voices in India do not exercise the kind of influence on the government as its counterparts do in Pakistan. Despite this, it is the rise of religious extremism in South Asia that has destabilized the security of South Asia and has created the long lasting rift between the two nuclear giants of the subcontinent.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of religion is to chalk out a framework of moral code of conduct and develop spiritualistic feelings in the masses in order to sustain faith, devotion, peace and non-violence. However, mixed with politics, religion takes up a dangerous shape in the society. The rise of religious nationalism in South Asia is the single most important challenge for the stability of the region. India, which has a secular constitutional base, has seen the rise of Hindu nationalism as a robust force in the last two and a half decades. There is a constant silent battle going on between the constitutional and secular forces on the one hand and the extra constitutional religious and communal forces on the other. While the situation seems to be normal from outside, India seems to be standing on thin ice. The instigation of communal and religious emotions remains at the beck and call of shrewd politician who are not shying away from using it to register political gains. The recent example is that of the Muzaffarnagar riots in UP. Even after 66 years of secular democratic governance, communal riots are not seen as an aberration. The vote bank politics still reaps heavy dividends from dividing the electorate and in the

fifteenth general election of the country, which is a celebration of rambunctious secular parliamentary democracy; the election campaign is fraught with communal references. Similarly, Pakistan has not been able to overcome the religious fundamentalism and military dictatorship that has crept into the governmental apparatus in the last 66 years. Religious nationalism still remains the ideological base of Pakistan and its growing links with terrorist organizations does not augur well for the future of South Asia. Even the so called civilian regimes have failed to make any progress in alienating themselves from religious influences. Undoubtedly, the roots of religious nationalism and fundamentalism run deeper than they seem from the outside and remain a constant challenge to the secular and plural forces in both India and Pakistan.

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