THE ROLE OF PAKISTAN'S MADRASSAHS IN THE ALLEGED GROWTH OF INTOLERANCE IN PAKISTANI SOCIETY

by

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This qualitative, phenomenological research was conducted to study the causes of increased intolerance in the politically and religiously volatile environment of Pakistan, and if they can be linked to an education system that is rooted in the incumbent madrassah culture, particularly in rural Pakistan. Religious seminaries known as madrassahs have received heavy funding from oil-rich kingdoms such as Saudi Arabia, raising the concern that perhaps a strict Wahabi interpretation of Islam is being propagated in Pakistan through these seminaries (Ali, 2009). Wahabi Islam has been indicted in the spread of intolerant attitudes among Muslims across the world because of its elitist ideology (Ali, 2009). It is a puritanical movement within Islam that started in the 18th century in the Eastern Arabian territories that are now part of Saudi Arabia. Wahabi Islam is characterized by dogmatism and intolerance of divergent views (Eittriem, 2006). Increased incidents of intolerance as manifested in acts of violence have been noted in Pakistan's recent political history (Hoodbhoy, 2009). Sectarian conflict also appears to be linked to madrassah culture (Ali, 2009). This study focuses on the curricula of the madrassahs as educational institutions and attempts to throw light on the potential causes of increased violence and intolerance.

Dedication

I wish to dedicate this research to all those who strive for truth through the pursuit of knowledge. I am also grateful to members of my family: My parents, sisters, brothers, beloved husband, and children urged me to complete my doctorate and helped me during this journey through their limitless love and support.

I also dedicate this research to the innumerable victims of intolerance, and those who shunned intolerance with wisdom and compassion. Last, I want to dedicate the study to the vast majority of peace-loving Pakistani Muslims who repudiate violence in every form.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Leadership in education can be transformational, transitional, or both, depending on the challenges posed by the dynamics and complexities of a particular educational environment (Bass & Riggio, 2005). Pakistan is a populous country with few resources, underdeveloped infrastructure, a failing economy, an unstable political system as well as a faltering educational system (Ali, 2009). Although the state guarantees universal education to its citizens, it has failed to deliver this objective to its population, leaving the

government schools of Pakistan in a state of disarray and decay (Rahman, 2004). According to Khalid and Khan (2006), attempts to reform Pakistan's educational system have failed because of the volatility of its political culture, resulting in too frequent and drastic changes in the educational policy (Rahman, 2004). The lack of qualified teachers, bureaucratic red tape and inconsistent policy continue to pose challenges for the state of education in Pakistan (Rahman, 2004). The prohibitive cost of defense expenditure exacerbates the problem of the lack of funds for Pakistani government schools, as the territorial dispute between India and Pakistan over Kashmir remains unresolved (Kaul, 2003). As a result, parents increasingly, see madrassahs or religious seminaries as the preferred institutions of learning for their children (Rahman, 2004). These seminaries have been implicated in the recent alleged rise in religious intolerance, presumably because of the values and ideology they impart to their students (Hoodbhoy, 2007). The topic under investigation attempts to shed light on possible linkages between madrassah curricula and an alleged increase in incidents of violence and intolerance in an attempt to understand the genuine causes of the problem.

Background of the Problem

The study was conducted with the objective of providing insights on how leadership in education can assist in investigating existing or proposed solutions to Pakistan's failing educational institutions from a societal standpoint. Leadership can be situational or transformational (Bass & Riggio, 2005). Pakistan is faced with a contingency that requires the expertise and know-how of caring individuals, academics, and researchers who are leaders in their respective areas of endeavor. The insights of these scholars and experts may be beneficial if adopted as lessons learned and opinions to the existing body of solutions and knowledge. Research conducted on Pakistan's educational environment may also serve as a case study investigating the incidence of intolerance in other countries that may be curriculum-based.

Pakistan's feudal structure is also implicated in the country's faltering educational system. According to Khalid and Khan (2006), this is due to landlord resistance to the idea of freeing feudal subjects from their age-old subjugation. The feudal classes have, therefore, not looked upon universal education with sympathy (Khalid & Khan, 2006). Additionally, there is lack of consensus on the medium of instruction, contributing to the problem of Pakistan's dysfunctional public school system (Khalid & Khan, 2006). Scholars suggest English should remain the national medium of instruction, yet there are those who advocate the ascendancy of Urdu as the medium of choice, particularly, if educators wish to cultivate a sense of national identity among Pakistani children (Khalid & Khan, 2006). Moreover, the proponents of Urdu also believe that instruction in the indigenous dialects facilitates greater comprehension of the subject matter for students, hence, increasing overall literacy (Khalid & Khan, 2006). English still continues to be presented as a more marketable language, especially in the contemporary global market and economy. In the absence of a shared vision of what education should look like in

Pakistan, disarray, confusion, and divisions arise, producing a state of affairs in the educational system that has lost its appeal for the masses (Khalid & Khan, 2006).

The result is an influx of school-age children into religious schools, known as deeni madaris or madrassahs. As more informal institutions of early learning, the deeni madaris are being perceived as more effective, efficient, and well-funded in terms of providing their students social benefits in addition to an education (Khalid & Khan, 2006). This influx has raised considerable concern about the kind of value system imparted in these religious institutions. According to Rahman and Bukhari (2006), these seminaries are "being accused of spreading fanaticism and exporting terrorism" (p. 323). Again, according to Rahman and Bukhari (2006), the international community, therefore, "insists that radical changes in madaris is long overdue: to the content of their teaching, general setup and outlook" (p. 323). It is noted that since the madrassahs came into existence during the time of the British in 1886 as a parallel tier of education to state-run schools, no change has occurred in the basic curricula of these institutions (Rahman & Bukhari, 2006). The standard curriculum includes lessons in Islamic sciences such as the science of *Tajweed*, the learning by rote of the Quran, hadith, and juristic rulings that have been passed down from one generation to another. The latter embody teachings of a societal nature, regulating the domestic life of Muslims, their interpersonal relations, relations between Muslims and members of other faiths as well as the relationship of the individual with the state or country to which he or she may belong**.** Consequently**,** the civic training imparted to children attending madrassahs is based on a purely religious worldview. According to Rahman and Bukhari (2006), "97 percent of Pakistani society is comprised of Muslim citizens. Islam is considered the bedrock of its culture and values. Muslims look to their religion for guidance in many personal and collective matters ranging from the five pillars of Islam (daily prayers, fasting, zakat, and pilgrimage to Makkah), to family matters (marriage, divorce, inheritance, etc), to social norms, customs and rituals" (p. 327). This comprehensive approach to religion gives credence to the view that the only social values education provided to madrassah students is rooted in religious philosophy rather than in secular principles (Ali, 2009).

As a further validation of the view that religious education plays an important role in shaping a student's values, Ali (n.d.) asserted that Islamic education has a "holistic vision that is termed *tarbiya* in Arabic and encompasses both substantive learning (*ta'lim*) and also ethical conduct that leads to piety (*ta'dib*)" (p. 13). This means that Islamic education is imparted for the primary purpose of developing a character aligned to Quranic stipulations and Islamic cultural and societal norms. Although this would be acceptable insofar as views deemed moderate are imparted, the madrassahs remain implicated for promoting radical ideologies and misogynistic attitudes (Fatah, 2008).

Problem Statement

Pakistan's history indicates a surge in sectarian conflict and religious intolerance reflected in its religious educational institutions (Hoodbhoy, 2009). The problem is that increased madrassah enrolment has been implicated in the growth of intolerance and violence in Pakistani society (Riaz, 2005). Riots often result after clashing clergy take to

the streets, debating minute differences over dogma and religious practice – many of these differences imparted allegedly through madrassah education (Riaz, 2005). According to Riaz (2005), "pungent criticism of the other sects, hatred towards other sect members, and a siege mentality are imparted from the very beginning of the schooling" (p. 20).

This qualitative study investigates ways in which the madrassah curriculum helps or hinders social outlooks that are accommodating of diverse points of view. The research employs the phenomenological approach by drawing from the life experiences of experts and educators who have worked in the educational environment of Pakistan and have written extensively on these topics. These educators have examined the situation dispassionately as evidenced through their writings and public pronouncements. Their conclusions nonetheless, reflect a diversity of opinion. The study attempts to lend insight to politicians and educational leaders in their quest to find solutions to the growing problem of intolerance in Pakistani society.

Purpose Statement

The study is qualitative, employing the phenomenological method of research. As a qualitative research, it attempts to generate theory that may help identify problems and streamline possible solutions (Elverton, 1970). Many studies, both qualitative and quantitative, have been conducted to analyze the social problems faced by Pakistan's educational system from a societal perspective (Rahman, 2004). More theories and ideas are, however, needed to explore ways of countering extremism, as it is ideologically based. The researcher chose to undertake the qualitative phenomenological research to determine the presence of possible ideologies linked to intolerance, as the phenomenological method explores the causes and antecedents of various phenomena.

The purpose of the study is to identify the role of madrassahs by examining their curricula and how they may influence the dynamic of intolerance in the Pakistani educational environment. The research was conducted through a series of interviews with students over eighteen years as well as with educators and administrators. In part, the study was conducted in Islamabad, the capital district of Pakistan. The bulk of the work was undertaken through Internet correspondence, interviews, and the review of the literature.

Significance of the Study

In a world where radical fundamentalism appears to be on the rise, as demonstrated by an increase in terrorist attacks and sectarian violence in many parts of Pakistan, it has become of paramount importance, once again, to explore its possible ideological roots (Hoodbhoy, 2009). Global terrorism is threatening the peace of the world and the security of innocent lives therein. More specifically, for the purpose of this study, the people and infrastructure of Pakistan remain threatened (Riaz, 2005). This study attempts to explore expressions of religion that are possibly more conducive to a peaceful national and

eventually, global environment. The study will explore if such religious expressions can be incorporated into existing madrassah curricula.

According to ICG Asia Report 73 (2004), Pakistan has failed to tackle the problem of extremism within its borders. These extremists are not only a threat to Pakistan's security; they are also providing support for international terrorism (ICG, Asia Report 73, 2004). General Pervez Mushharraf of Pakistan, despite making several promises, was not able to crack down on these extremists (Fatah, 2008). The radicals are being driven by an intolerant ideology, therefore, it is imperative that this ideology is dismantled from within, through systematic efforts at the educational and societal levels (Riaz, 2005). This study attempts to serve as a valuable resource for educational leaders engaged in the process of exploring solutions to Pakistan's extremist problem through the educational system.

The study attempts to engage leadership in education toward finding solutions to the long-standing social problems of Pakistan's religious schools. As society-building institutions, schools strive to impart values to their students through both proclaimed and hidden curricula. Fullan (2006) asserted that the purpose of education ought to be the development of society. Education according to Fullan (2006) must accomplish this goal first. This goal is to be achieved by employing all the leadership resources in society, government departments, and the educational system itself. Educational leaders must work with each other to achieve an equitable social order through the educational system, one that will close economic gaps and bring about social change by eliminating inequalities in society. The study strives to elicit information from educational leaders with a view to aligning it with the educational goals of Pakistani society. The findings of the study will attempt to increase the existing reservoir of knowledge pertaining to possible solutions to the social problems encountered in religious schools in Pakistan.

Nature of the Study

This qualitative study employs the phenomenological approach. It explores the political and religious causes of radicalisation in Pakistan and how it may have affected its educational environment. The study investigates the sociological component of the educational system of the country as a means of examining these causes. The research uses existing data and material on the subject. It attempts to tap into the knowledge and experience of the experts in the educational field in Pakistan who have worked toward finding solutions to continuing flaws within the system.

Phenomenology, a research technique introduced by the twentieth-century philosopher Edmund Husserl, is geared toward understanding the essence of phenomena as they occur within the purview of human experience (Gray, 2009). The phenomenological approach emphasizes the absence of presuppositions during the investigative process. A researcher going into a research employing the phenomenological method will not be entering it with pre-conceived notions or biases (Gray, 2009). The researcher expects that through the lived experience of individual

subjects of the study, a deeper understanding of the causes of intolerance in Pakistan will come to be highlighted.

The design is appropriate for studying sociological phenomena as they occur over time in various societies and cultures. The problem of growing intolerance in Pakistani schools has been observed over the last few years and seems to have exacerbated in the post 9/11 era (Hoodbhoy, 2009). Scholars, academicians, and educators have expressed concern over this growing trend, but thus far, no viable solutions appear to be forthcoming (Hoodbhoy, 2007). The experiences and insights of the experts can be examined and synthesized in order to arrive at a deeper understanding of the disturbing trend of intolerance in the Pakistani educational environment.

The proposed phenomenological study is different from other studies in taking into account the lived experiences of experts rather than documenting empirical evidence or statistical data. Expert opinions on the issue of growing intolerance are scattered in existing research. The study attempts to bring these together in order to shed light on possible themes that may emerge from the opinions of the experts.

The subjects participating in the research on intolerance in the Pakistani educational environment consist of experts and students. A group of twenty such individuals were contacted and interviewed for gathering data for the research. These individuals were selected through a well-defined process that took into account their experience, expertise, knowledge, and commitment to education in Pakistan.

The first category of experts includes scholars, academicians, and intellectuals who have consistently demonstrated an interest in improving the social aspect of the educational environment in Pakistani schools and madrassahs. These experts have written on the problem in schools and have proposed various solutions to these problems from time to time. Another set of experts include officials involved in policy-making roles in the educational boards of Pakistan. The officials belong to the category of high-ranking ministers and supervisors. These individuals have access to classified information and are directly involved in the processes already in place that seek avenues for improving the status quo in Pakistani religious schools. Some of these individuals have also been dealing directly with officials from the madrassah boards and have experienced many types of resistances to change and reform firsthand (Fatah, 2008). Such individuals were able to identify the problems encountered in madrassah and school reform. The experts were also able to offer concrete suggestions on how to overcome some of these impediments and how best to deal with right wing conservative groups in bringing them to agree on a modus operandi that would be beneficial to students and society.

The scholars and intellectuals, on the other hand, were able to provide the philosophical underpinnings of the various social trends in contemporary Pakistani society. The multidimensional aspects of the approach of the two sets of experts will deliver the objective of the phenomenological approach to research that strives to look deep into causes, phenomena, and dynamics within societies and cultures (Magliola,

1977). The findings gained from interviewing the two separate groups of interviewees were synthesized to determine commonality and differences in outlook and approach.

Research Question

The questions are: Do curricula of religious schools engender intolerance in society? Can religious curricula be designed in a way that will foster tolerance in society through more benign readings of religious literature?

According to Linney (1995), students in most traditional cultures are subjected to outdated methods of instruction. The typical scenario involves the teacher handing out directions to students and the child receiving it without any further interaction. In some traditional learning environments, the students are allowed some feedback or interaction with respect to questions. Linney (1995) suggested that teaching methods are most effective when there is multidimensional communication between teachers and students and critical inquiry is encouraged.

The pedagogical techniques used in madrassahs are modelled after traditional learning environments in which students simply receive the coursework, which they must commit to memory (Fatah, 2008). Many times there is coercion involved in the learning process. The use of corporal punishment is quite prevalent in South Asian countries. Pakistan is no exception (Ahmad, 2005). Such pedagogical techniques are not conducive to the development of a healthy personality strong on self-esteem and dignity. The techniques may even be a factor in violent behavior later.

Pedagogy, generally in South Asia and specifically in Pakistan has revolved around learning coursework by rote. The elite schools of Pakistan have replaced rote learning by more innovative pedagogical techniques that accommodate critical inquiry (Rahman, 2004). The madrassahs are lagging behind these schools in adopting such measures (Fatah, 2008).

Merry (2005) stated that Islamic education adopts a worldview that is completely different from a liberal education, which is the prized philosophy in Western education. The latter philosophy is inclusive of worldviews that are at variance with each other. Children are exposed to them in an unbiased manner. Traditional Islamic education, on the other hand, does not accommodate competing worldviews. Although Halstead, whose work Merry (2005) commented on extensively, asserted that an Islamic education cannot be replaced by a liberal education, at least aspects of a liberal education can be introduced in Islamic education, to enable exposure to these philosophies for Muslim children. The presumption is that liberal education yields a tolerant society and its presence, at least partially, may serve to alleviate the problem of intolerance in the Pakistani educational environment.

The research question attempts to elicit information on ways to complement such pedagogical techniques and educational philosophies with modern ones that will provide the student with an overview of competing worldviews. The research question also

attempts to explore ways in which this can be accomplished within the purview of existing Islamic thought, to provide a degree of comfort to the madrassah population that their ideology is not under attack.

Theoretical Framework

Schools are society-building institutions (Fullan, 2006). These institutions of learning often embody carefully formulated social policies meant to simulate real life experiences for children, in order to equip them morally, ethically, culturally, and socially to participate in society when they grow up to be adults according to the norms and mores of their culture. Policies are put in place to achieve a common social and cultural vision, defining goals clearly and regulating personal dynamics according to various codes of conduct. Many of these obvious and hidden dynamics determine the character and culture of institutions (Cunningham & Cordeiro, 2006). In schools, the culture is formed through the interaction of teachers with each other as well as with their students (Marion, 2002).

The madrassahs of Pakistan impart a strictly Islamic education to develop a character aligned with traditional Islamic values. According to Ali (2009), children reproduce what they have learnt verbatim without examining the meanings or understanding the subject matter at a deeper level. The Quran, Hadith, and the principles of Islamic jurisprudence are largely learnt by rote. The value system imparted in this fashion, therefore, remains traditional as few challenges are accommodated because of the absence of critical inquiry (Fatah, 2008). Since the religious seminaries called madrassahs and deeni madaris have come to be the preferred educational choice for children who cannot afford private schooling, they have been elevated to become the primary religious institutions imparting value systems that eventually affect society (Fatah, 2008).

According to Rahman and Bukhari (2006), a madrassah can be defined as a “Muslim educational institution” of two varieties (p. 325). The first kind, known as the maktab, is smaller in scope as it focuses solely on the rote learning or memorisation of the Quran, the primary religious text of Muslims. The second type of madrassah, which has been implicated in stoking sectarian violence and international terrorism, encompasses a much wider curriculum including the study of juristic rulings of the medieval classical jurists of Islam (Rahman & Bukhari, 2006). The madrassah curriculum includes some secular education such as the teaching of history, geography, science, social science, and civics education (Fatah, 2008).

It is also important to mention that madrassahs are divided along sectarian lines and are affiliated with five different religious education boards known as Wifaq (Rahman & Bukhari, 2006). These madrassahs include the Shiite madrassahs, known as the “Wafaq ul madaris al Shi’a.” Each of these madrassah boards follows a set curriculum that is autonomous from the educational policy of the government (Rahman & Bukhari, 2006). Each madrassah board, therefore, believes in consolidating and preserving its curriculum, not only in imparting agreed upon norms and values to its students, but also in formulating lengthy methodologies and arguments to refute the teachings of other madrassahs (Rahman & Bukhari, 2006). Madrassah education may also include the study

of comparative religions as well as a study of positions held by other sects on various religious precepts. Although deep divisions exist between the major sects within Islam, i.e. the Sunni and Shia, such differences also occur among Sunnis alone, with followers of various schools of thought placing greater or lesser emphasis on the importance of the prophet Mohammad and the veneration accorded him (Ali, n.d.).

Madrassah education is, therefore, solely based on a religious worldview (Ali, n.d.). The study attempts to shed light on the existing religious framework to see if it can foster a sense of global citizenry or tolerance for competing religious views. Rahman and Bukhari (2006) asserted that madrassah graduates leave these academies with an exclusionary mindset, a doctrinaire outlook governed by rigidity and an attitude that is both intolerant and unaccommodating of differences. Madrassahs have been implicated in sectarian violence and international terrorism (Rahman & Bukhari, 2006). Riaz (2005) confirmed this view asserting that "The most obvious link between terrorism and madrassah education came from then ruling regime of Afghanistan—the Taliban, who were the products of this type of Islamic education and had been providing a safe haven to Osama Bin Laden and his transnational terror network"(p. 3).

Definition of Terms

A *madrassah* is defined as a religious seminary or a "traditional Islamic school" (Irfan, 2006, p. 119). Education in these institutions is free and students receive additional benefits such as food, clothing, and board. The term *madrassah* is interchangeable with the term d*eeni madaris*. The Government schools of Pakistan are the state-funded primary and secondary school educational institutions with a focus on secular education (Khalid & Khan, 2006). Enrolment in government schools has declined because of declining standards of education.

Feudal classes generally refer to the landed aristocracy of Pakistan. Due to the feudal structure of the economy in rural areas, the aristocracy has generally been resistant to the idea of reform in education, as there is a fear that greater enlightenment among the poor and subjugated classes will become a challenge to the status quo (Ahmad, 2005). *Urdu* is the national language of Pakistan (Rahman, 2004). Its importance supersedes that of regional dialects as a medium of instruction. *Zakat* and U*shr* (Shad n.d.) refer to the annual tax paid by Muslims to the state as an obligatory form of charity. The state must ensure a mechanism for the collection and disbursement of zakat and ushr. *Tajweed* is the "articulating of every letter from its articulation point and giving the letter its rights and dues of characteristics" (Abouttajweed, 2002). Hadith are the oral traditions attributed to the prophet Mohammad. A *Maktab* is a smaller religious institution, dedicated exclusively to the rote learning and memorisation of the Quran (Fair, 2006). This type of school is closely associated with and often housed in a mosque.

The juristic rulings refer to that body of knowledge, which contains instruction of a social, ethical, moral, and societal nature. The discrepancy exists between teachings of a religious nature and the values and norms embodied in secular education that lay greater emphasis on universality, pluralism, and the inherent dignity of man. The juristic rulings

are more Islam-centered, emphasizing the need for strengthening the community of believers. However, there is no imparting of values in *maktabs* other than through the conduct of educators functioning within these structures who may impart values to students as role models. A *wifaq* is a religious education board (Fair, 2006).

Assumptions

The assumption is that a religious curriculum embodying a more accommodating view of differences and competing ideologies will bring about a change in the psyche of those who are taught this curriculum. The values of tolerance, harmony, global citizenry, compassion, respect for life, and respect for human dignity can be inculcated through a religious framework that is consistent with Islam's teachings. Existing studies indicate a correlation between orthodox Islamic teaching and chauvinistic and jihadist worldviews (Rahman, 2004). Radicalism must be countered through a competing belief system that can be perceived by the religious classes as authentic enough to be embraced. According to ICG Asia report 7030 (2004), the Pakistani government's attempt to integrate the madrassah into the mainstream educational system failed because it lacked the vision of reforming the religious instruction imparted to them *per se*. This study could be helpful as yet another attempt at the desired integration. Though the reform alluded to the need for a secular curriculum, the religious classes viewed such reform with suspicion, further alienating them and driving them into enclaves of religious intolerance (Fatah, 2008). Replacing the religious curriculum with a more secular syllabus simply does not tackle the problem of extremism, which is allegedly coming from the madrassah's existing religious worldview (Riaz, 2005).

If one assumes that most of the religious intolerance is indeed stemming from the curriculum taught in madrassahs, and madrassah-style schools (Rahman, 2004), one would have to assume that the best way of fighting it would be to look for opportunities for reform through the curricula. Other assumptions include the contention that Western liberal education is superior to the rote method used in madrassah education. The researcher is also assuming that the participants of the study are offering an objective and accurate analysis of the Pakistani educational environment. Additionally, the researcher is assuming the cause-effect relationship between corporal punishment and the spread of violence and rote learning with the lack of critical thinking skills.

Limitations

In researching this topic in an environment already riddled with religious extremism, there can be barriers to the relaying, communicating, and synthesizing of information. Educators and experts in the field are often afraid of expressing their true feelings as they fear reprisals from the fundamentalists. This is particularly true in the face of madrassah boards declaring they will not allow any governmental interference in their functioning (ICG Asia Report 73). This limitation can be overcome by ensuring anonymity of the respondents who participate in the study.

Although the material available on the madrassah curriculum is part of public information, it is not uniform in content and differs from one particular sectarian school of thought to another (Ali, 2009). The information gathered, therefore, may not yield results that can be easily streamlined, or subdivided into dominant themes. An attempt was, nonetheless, made to sift through the information methodically. Difficulty in procuring government documents on this contentious issue of madrassah reform also posed a challenge to the research. Much of the information is deemed classified and access to it can be ensured only through personal contacts or written approvals.

Delimitations

The study involves a phenomenological approach to examining the influence of religious curricula in Pakistani religious schools. The researcher travelled to Pakistan to research these institutions firsthand. The literature comprised of primary and secondary sources is also adequate in terms of literary and expert opinions on this problem; however, the government documents on curricula, madrassah-reform, and existing solutions are very difficult to decipher because of the poor readability of the subject matter.

Some of these documents are only available in Urdu, the official language of Pakistan. This circumstance posed a challenge because of the researcher's lack of familiarity with technical terms in Urdu. However, Urdu experts were consulted for the purpose of providing assistance in understanding relevant material.

The preponderance of religious terminology in the data also posed a challenge. This was overcome by engaging experts to provide elucidation in the area. Such experts were consulted for assistance in understanding the information. The researcher paid a small fee to the experts for their assistance.

Despite the limitations and delimitations, it is hoped the study will prove to be a valuable resource for those seeking educational reform wherever it can be achieved, whether it is in the madrassah curriculum, the madrassah-type English medium schools, or government-run secular schools. The data gathered as a result of the study can also form a resource for improving situations that pose challenges similar to the problem of intolerance in Pakistani schools. A similar type of worldview is being imparted in other parts of the Muslim world where radicalism has gained momentum (Gesink, 2006). Very young children are being taught an exclusionary worldview that often results in the formation of a resentful mindset (Riaz, 2005). The continuing conflict in the Middle East breeds an environment of hostility that often creeps into the educational system of the countries harbouring animosity. Since the findings of the study attempt to examine solutions to the growing intolerance in Pakistani schools, similar solutions may very well be applied to the educational systems of the countries of the Middle East and North Africa (Gesink, 2006).

Summary

Madrassah curriculum continues to be an area of concern for the Pakistani government, United States agencies, and the international community because of its alleged linkage with militant and radicalized elements (Hoodbhoy, 2007). This situation continues to threaten national peace. The study attempts to understand the causes and dynamics of such behavior by investigating a possible connection between the curriculum taught in madrassahs and intolerance, often leading to violent behavior (Khalid & Khan, 2006). It strives to do so by engaging the opinions of experts and educators in the field. The research attempts to study the sociological aspect of the phenomenon of radicalization in religious schools.

Chapter 1 introduced the dynamic of intolerance in the educational environment of Pakistan (Rahman, 2004). The chapter examined the problem as manifested in increased sectarian conflict, intolerance for competing worldviews, and general unrest within the various educational facilities in the country (Fatah, 2008). Chapter 1 also highlighted the difference between intolerance as a dynamic and its different manifestations including acts of terror, which are allegedly associated with madrassah education (Riaz, 2005). Chapter 2 will examine the problem by reviewing the literature available on the issue as discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Chapter 1 introduced the research question as a tool to explore the dynamics of intolerance in the educational environment of Pakistan (Rahman, 2004). The chapter examined the background of the problem as manifested in increased sectarian conflict, intolerance for competing worldviews, and general unrest within the various educational settings of the country (Fatah, 2008). Chapter 1 also highlighted the difference between intolerance as a dynamic and its different manifestations including acts of terror, which are allegedly associated with madrassah education (Riaz, 2008).

Chapter 2 also touches upon these dynamics and variables while reviewing the existing academic literature on madrassahs, their curricula, their funding, their educational philosophy, proposed madrassah reforms, alleged correlation with the increased violence and intolerance in society, and possible solutions for Pakistani education with respect to this problem. The literature review also examines the scope of existing research in the field and looks at ways to expand theory toward creative solutions to the problem of intolerance in Pakistan’s educational and religious institutions.

In reviewing the literature, it was important to examine the opinions of various academics and experts who have not only worked in the educational field, but who also write regularly in scholarly journals for the purpose of offering solutions to Pakistan’s educational system as concerned citizens. This was important because the study explores social phenomena and its impact on society at large. Both well-known works and lesser

known studies are included in the literature review in order to cover a diverse array of opinions on these social phenomena.

The present literature review, therefore, contains opinions of both experts and non-experts who have either directly or indirectly been affected by the increased intolerance in Pakistani society. The literature review also contains existing literature as well as soon to be published manuscripts. These documents also exhibit numerical data indicating modern educational trends in Pakistan.

Documentation

The search for literature in the field of madrassah education and its purported impact on society occurred in three separate stages. The first stage involved Internet searches for scholarly and peer reviewed articles. The key words typed were as follows: *madrassah*, *religious school*, *seminary*, *madrassah links to intolerance and sectarian conflict* in Pakistan. The second stage involved library searches for books and other documentation on the literature on madrassahs. The third stage involved searches in databases such as Ebscohost and Proquest.

Social/Political Backdrop of the Educational Environment

The partition of the subcontinent into India and Pakistan in 1947 created many conditions in Pakistan that would pose challenges for the new country with respect to formulating a comprehensive and effective educational policy. The exodus of several Hindu teachers, lack of resources, and an ethnically and linguistically diverse population were all factors that exacerbated the problem of establishing an educational system that would be fair to all (Khalid & Khan, 2006). Over the next few decades, Pakistan's population soared from 34 million to 154 million, further adding complexity to circumstances that were already difficult. Khalid and Khan (2006) ably pointed out many of these difficult dynamics.

Rethinking Education in Pakistan by Shahid Siddiqui (2007) also provided background information, confirming the findings of Khalid and Khan (2006). The book also highlighted the documented evidence that Muslims lagged behind in literacy rates compared to other Indians in pre-partition India. Pakistan, being overwhelmingly Muslim, inherited this problem of low literacy. In his exposition of the educational system of Pakistan, Siddiqui (2007) aptly pointed out that by improving this abysmal rate alone, the problem of a faltering educational system in Pakistan will not be addressed. A failing educational system is also responsible for many social ills in Pakistani society. In order to truly address this issue, a holistic approach towards solving Pakistan's social problems through the educational system is needed. As one of the solutions toward achieving this end, Siddiqui (2007) proposed the teaching of basic values in schools alongside the religious indoctrination that continues in Pakistani schools and madrassahs. This conclusion was based on the assumption that religious indoctrination breeds an exclusionary worldview that is contrary to values that engender tolerance and respect for diversity.

Siddiqui (2007) also criticized current modes of punishment used in Pakistani schools to discipline children as one of the factors that may lead to dysfunctional children who then grow up to be intolerant adults. Better student-teacher relationships, better personal dynamics among staff, and more active participation of the community were suggested as a remedy. Developing a creative and friendly environment for students does not cost money and fosters character that is in line with ethical and social values (Siddiqui, 2007).

Among other literature on the condition of Pakistani schools, Qureshi and Rarieya (2007) pointed out the presence of intolerance toward women and female students in Pakistan. *Gender and Education in Pakistan* (2007) listed various prejudices and biases against women that perpetuate the problem of intolerance in Pakistani society toward women in particular. Such biases may include the perception that girls are not intellectually the equals of boys, or that they may lag in certain subjects, or that their education simply does not matter (Qureshi & Rarieya, 2007).

Shahrukh Rafi Khan (2005), in his book entitled *Basic Education in Rural Pakistan,* brought out the disparities in the educational opportunities for Pakistani children based on their socioeconomic background. The book described the various categories of schools. These include the government schools of Pakistan, where the medium of instruction is Urdu and the curriculum is outdated; the private sub-standard English medium schools; the private elite schools, and the madrassahs and madrassah-type schools that focus heavily on religious instruction. The atmosphere in the government schools in particular is one of disarray, with inept teachers, poor discipline, increased absenteeism, and uncontrolled students who exhibit lack of trust as well as intolerance for their peers (Khan, 2005).

Among other literature available on the educational system of Pakistan and its shortcomings, the work of Tariq Rahman (2004) stands out as a comprehensive and insightful analysis of the situation. *Denizens of Alien worlds: A Study of Education Inequality and Polarization in Pakistan* described the various educational institutions of Pakistan including the madrassahs. Rahman (2004) pointed out that madrassahs and madrassah-type schools are geared toward the preservation of Islamic identity. The disparity in educational opportunity for Pakistani children belonging to different socioeconomic backgrounds is immense. Rahman (2004) commented on the differences between the curricula of Urdu and English medium schools: The schools are vastly diverse in their approach toward minorities, Hindus, and other non-Muslims. The indoctrination that occurs against such groups is far more pronounced in Urdu textbooks than in English textbooks and may be a direct cause of greater intolerance among those schooled in Urdu schools (Rahman, 2004).

Khalid and Bukhari (2006) also provided an overall view of the general state of education in contemporary Pakistan. *Pakistan: Religious Education and Institutions* provided focussed and detailed description of religious schools, their funding, their ideology, and their political agenda. The value system is religious, which includes negative perceptions of non-Muslims, minority sects, and women. In addition to

commenting on existing conditions in Pakistani schools, Khalid and Bukhari (2006) also included a historical overview of the state of education in Pakistan.

Other works of importance on the state of education in Pakistan include

Quddus' (1990) work entitled *Problems of Education in Pakistan* and Quddus' (1979) E*ducation and National Reconstruction of Pakistan*. Both works, however, presented information that is somewhat dated. Mumtaz' (2000) work entitled *Continuity and Change in the Traditional System of Islamic Education: The Case of Pakistan* is a detailed account of madrassah education in the country. It used various case studies to examine madrassah education in Pakistan with respect to what is being taught in the curricula as well as the value indoctrination that occurs on an informal basis. Other works that focus exclusively on the general state of Islamic education in Pakistan includes, al Attas (1979): *Aims and objectives of Islamic Education*, Baloch (2000): *Education based on Islamic Values: Imperatives and Implications*, and Ahmad (2005): *Islamist School Chains and the coming New Order*.

Ahmad (2005) equated Islamism with intolerance in society, therefore, the linkage between madrassah education or madrassah-type school education and an exclusionary and elitist worldview is immediately established. Fair (2006), in her seminal work challenged that premise and suggested that while madrassah-education can create conditions conducive to militancy, there is no reason to believe that the majority of militants are madrassah-trained. Fair (2006) concluded that madrassah students may propagate public support for terrorism and militancy nonetheless.

Andrabi (2005), in his work entitled *Religious School Enrolment in Pakistan: A Look at the Data* also endorsed the view that there is no direct linkage between madrassah education and militancy. Less than 1% of the student population of Pakistan in the last few years is enrolled in madrassahs. Only 2% of these madrassah students attend what have been categorized as madrassahs preaching extreme values (Andrabi, 2005).

While Andrabi (2005) contended that there is no significant increase in madrassah enrolment, the sheer growth in numbers of these religious institutions suggests otherwise (Rahman, 2004). As to whether there is a correlation between madrassah education and general intolerance in society, all of the above sources agreed that indeed, such a correlation may exist. Here it is important to separate the two variables: i.e. violence and intolerance, which are often understood as synonymous whereas the two are different. Intolerance is an attitude that may or may not lead to violence. Bergen and Pandey (2006), in their article entitled "The Madrassaah Scapegoat," discounted any alleged linkages between madrassahs and increased violence in Pakistani society. They stated that "careful examination of the 79 terrorists responsible for five of the worst anti-Western terrorist attacks in recent memory—the World Trade Centre bombing in 1993, the Africa embassy bombings in 1998, the September 11 attacks, the Bali nightclub bombings in 2002, and the London bombings on July 7, 2005—reveals that only in rare cases were madrassa graduates involved" (Bergen & Pandey, 2006, p. 1), however, madrassahs may still be linked to sectarian conflict and intolerance in society in general.

Reform of the educational system must of necessity include madrassah reform, inculcating values and philosophies that encourage peaceful coexistence and respect for human life and dignity (Bergen & Pandey, 2006).

Curricula of Madrassahs

Mumtaz (2000) stated that the preservation of Islamic culture is of paramount importance to the *ulema* or clergy of Pakistan and constitutes the raison de 'etre of the institutions they run. This attitude constitutes the guiding philosophy on which the madrassah curriculum is based.

Mumtaz (2000) stated:

> The ulema, as the bearers of the legal and religio-political tradition of the latter Abbasid period, have four primary concerns: 1) the unity and integrity of the Islamic Ummah as a universal religious community; 2) the integrity of orthodox beliefs and practices of Islam as represented in Asharite theology and the consensus of the classical jurists; 3) the preservation of the *shari'a,* especially in matters pertaining to family laws and religious rituals; and 4) the dissemination of the Islamic religious knowledge under their supervision and guidance. As interpreters, they resolve religious disputes and issue *fatwas,* providing the faithful with religious guidance on all kinds of issues (Mumtaz, 2000, p. 1).

Anzar (2003), in her doctoral dissertation on madrassah education in Pakistan, focused heavily on the existing curricula of madrassahs. *Islamic Education: A Brief History of Madrassahs with Comments on Curricula and Current Pedagogical Practices* explained the scope and content of madrassah education in detail. The Dars Nizami, dating back to the 11th century, is still in vogue in the current madrassah education. This syllabus includes what is known as the *al-aloom naqalia* (transmitted sciences) *and al-uloom al –aqaliya* (rational sciences). About 50% of the subject matter involves religious education, while the rest of the subjects include mathematics, astronomy, medicine, and philosophy – these are based on outdated sources from the 11th century period (Anzar, 2003). The outdated curriculum reflects the value system of the era to which it belongs, based more on superiority of creed and supremacy of Islam.

Anzar (2003) also pointed out that while these secular subjects are being taught in the various madrassahs; even these are regulated by religious philosophy and circumscribed by Islamic values, in keeping with the philosophy that all knowledge must be aligned with Quranic knowledge. Anzar (2003) maintained that madrassahs incorporate some secular instruction, which includes subjects like mathematics and geography, but when it comes to the social sciences curricula in particular, the guiding philosophy is religious discourse. Subjects like history are also taught from a strictly Islamic perspective (Anzar, 2003).

The religious knowledge included in the madrassah curriculum focuses on Quranic learning, its content, its rote memorization, and its legal regulations. Added to this is

hadith, which embodies the dicta of the prophet Mohammed on issues pertaining to practically all of the aspects of human life (Anzar, 2003). Anzar (2003) also emphatically stated that the main purpose of a madrassah is primarily to impart religious instruction and to prepare students for religious duties. The following is a breakdown of the madrassah curriculum:

1. First Year Biography of the Prophet (*Syrat*), Conjugation-Grammar (*Sarf*), Syntax
2. (*Nahv*), Arabic Literature, Chirography, Chant illation (*Tajvid*)
3. Second Year Conjugation-Grammar (*Sarf*), Syntax (*Nahv*), Arabic Literature, Jurisprudence (*Fiqa*), Logic, Chirography (*Khush-navisi*), Chant illation (*Tajvid*)
4. Third Year Koranic Exegesis, Jurisprudence: (*Fiqh*), Syntax (*Nahv*), Arabic Literature, *Hadith*, Logic, Islamic Brotherhood, Chant illation: (*Tajvid*), External Study (Tareekh Millat and Khilafat-e-Rashida – these are Indian Islamic movements).
5. Fourth Year Koranic Exegesis, Jurisprudence (*Fiqa*), Principles of Jurisprudence,
6. Rhetoric, Hadith, Logic, History, Chantillation, Modern Sciences (Sciences of cities of Arabia, Geography of the Arab Peninsula and other Islamic Countries).
7. Fifth Year Koranic Exegesis, Jurisprudence, Principles of Jurisprudence, Rhetoric.
8. Beliefs (*Aqa'id*), Logic, Arabic Literature, Chantillation, External Study (History of Indian Kings).
9. Sixth Year Interpretation of the Koran, Jurisprudence, Principles of Interpretation & Jurisprudence, Arabic Literature, Philosophy, Chantillation, Study of Prophet's traditions
10. Seventh Year Sayings of the Prophet, Jurisprudence, Belief (Aqa'ed), Responsibility (Fra'iz), Chantillation, External Study (Urdu texts)
11. Eighth Year Ten books by various authors focusing on the sayings of the Prophet (Anzar, 2003).

Lakshman (2007), in her article on Pakistan's madrassahs entitled "More Muscle to Pakistan's Madrassahs" contended that children are subjected to dangerous types of indoctrination through the curricula. Children are being asked to commit acts of violence in defense of a creed or ideology. Lakshman (2007) also asserted that the madrassahs have thus far resisted all reform to modernize or secularize education, as this sort of move is seen as Western intrusion and an assault on the autonomy of the madrassahs as well as on Islam.

Rupert (2006) confirmed the findings of Lakshman and stated that madrassah students are ready to pick up arms. Several of them were seen carrying guns to fight United States forces to protect the Taliban in Peshawar, Pakistan in 2006. Rupert (2006) also contended that no change has taken place in the existing madrassah curricula. All efforts to modernize it, in order to align it with peace building efforts, have thus far failed. Madrassah curricula, according to Rupert (2006), therefore, remain unchanged in both the content and philosophy that they preach.

According to Mullick and Ruhe (2007), the Pakistan ministry of education has already formulated a policy including a more pluralistic dimension to religious indoctrination in the existing curriculum. This resulted in a "*White Paper focusing on a national-curriculum and teacher-training programme promoting pluralism and patriotism within a framework of Islamic values for both public and private schools"* (Mullick & Ruhe, 2007, p. 1). The White Paper acknowledged the right of every Pakistani citizen to receive an education; however, it did not progress beyond this point to address the issue of intolerance in Pakistani society (Hoodbhoy, 2007).

Ali (n.d.), in his yet to be published work on madrassahs stated that Arabic is prized as a vehicle of instruction in the madrassah curriculum. There is a deliberate attempt to equate Islam with everything Arabic including the culture and language, as that is seen to be more authentic from an Islamic standpoint. An underlying desire to emulate the Arab version of Islam persists, which tends to be rooted more in a traditional understanding of Islam embodying the value system of an era that regards women and minorities as less than equal.

The philosophy behind madrassah curricula has often been a subject of controversy. Several writers among the literature available on madrassahs have come to the conclusion that there is little explicit emphasis on terrorism in the madrassah curriculum. Crock (2004) stated that Qurans and not Kalashnikov's are part of the madrassah curricula and these institutions have been wrongly linked with international terrorism. Yet Crock (2004) did not deny that there is often the incitement of hatred toward anything different that is preached vociferously by madrassah students and their teachers.

According to *Religious Education, Modernization and Conflict: Indonesia, Pakistan and the Philippines* (2005), there is tremendous resistance to any curricular reform of madrassahs by the *Ulema*, the clergy of Pakistan. The report, therefore, suggested a curricular approach that is in keeping with Pakistan's history, culture, and religious tradition. The report stated that very few efforts are under way to change the focus of Islam in Pakistan's national curriculum. Any meaningful effort toward curricula reform of madrassahs will have to take these dynamics and limitations into consideration. The thrust of the report is to inculcate tolerance through a more benign understanding of Islam.

Religious Education, Modernization and Conflict: Indonesia, Pakistan and the Philippines (2005) also noted that many Muslims feel they must choose between modernity and Islam or democracy and theocracy. In order to bridge the gap or reconcile these conflicting ideals, the report suggests a reinterpretation of the texts to allow for more friendly renditions of the Quran with respect to the rights of Muslim women, minorities in Muslim countries, and non-Muslims in general. Limitations to this approach exist as many Islamic scholars are not receptive to the idea of reinterpretation of the scriptures for more modern renditions. An examination of a possible linkage between such instruction and the incidence of intolerance in Muslim societies is recommended according to the report.

Sources of the Madrassah Curriculum

The Islamic Institute of Nottingham (IIN) made the following information available on the sources and philosophy of the Darsi Nizami curriculum, which is taught in the madrassahs of Pakistan:

The Dars Nizami course not only concentrates on academic and educational development, but also lays great emphasis on students' moral and religious commitment and their development within the community; all of which are given equal importance alongside their educational qualifications (IIN, n.d.).

Broadly, the subjects include Arabic literature, Arabic morphology, Arabic syntax, Islamic jurisprudence, *Tajweed* or the science of Quranic recitation and the translation of the Quran. The "seerah" or life examples and biography of the prophet, is studied meticulously, with much emphasis on the prophet's character as a role model, leader, statesman, husband, father, and citizen of Mecca. Islamic history is also taught as part of the curriculum (INN, n. d.).

Madrassah subjects also include the study of the principles of Islamic jurisprudence as formulated by the classical doctors of jurisprudence in the eighth and ninth centuries. The science of "rhetoric" and classical Arabic poetry are also introduced as subjects in the more advanced stages of the Darsi Nizami curriculum. The sources of the Darsi Nizami curriculum, therefore, are the Quran and the hadith or oral traditions of the prophet. Quranic translations and hadith are reintroduced in the last stages of the Darsi Nizami in greater depth. The curriculum is, therefore, based heavily on the Quran as a source. The Darsi Nizami also teaches Quranic exegesis or *Tafseer*. This includes a study of both the principles and the philosophy of Quranic exegesis (INN, n.d).

Government Polices

The inability of the Pakistani government to formulate an effective school policy that will instil values of tolerance, generosity, national, and global citizenry has come under further scrutiny in recent years, especially after the noted increase in sectarian conflict. *Reconciling the Madrassah with the School: Freedom of Religion, Education, and the Dilemma of Contemporary Muslims* looked at the various dynamics at play in the current educational setting of Pakistan and how it impacts society in general. Irfan (2006) asserted that madrassahs have been incorrectly linked to violence, although the lack of religious freedom as a manifestation of intolerance is most definitely linked to madrassah and madrassah-type education. Such intolerance has surfaced in fuelling a sectarian divide that leads to violence including attacks on mosques and houses of worship that belong to other faith groups. In recent years the madrassahs have become far more politically active and potent in the social arena and educational environment of the country. In so doing, they have rejected the government's policies and calls for reform in their institutions. Due to this philosophy, there are limits to the expression of divergent opinions, or on the freedom to question traditional understandings of religion and creed (Irfan, 2006).

“Should Educators Tolerate Intolerance? Mark Halstead, Homosexuality, and the Islamic Case” looked into other dynamics that have thwarted governmental reforms toward a more liberal education. Merry (2005) stated that the reason for an Islamic education is to develop Islamic character. A liberal education, therefore, is regarded as its polar opposite. It is also for this reason that the *ulema* of Pakistan have resisted any reform whatsoever that was initiated by the government as part of its madrassah policy. However, according to Merry (2005), Hallstead, whose views are examined in-depth, suggested a simultaneous exposure to alternative world views for Muslim children, so that they are at least aware of the rationale behind certain ideologies including Western liberalism that has fostered tolerance for competing views in Western societies (Merry, 2005).

Islamic Religious Schools, Madrassahs, Background is a report drafted by Febe Armanios (2003), which highlights various dynamics governing the relationship of madrassahs and the government. Armanios (2003) stated that “Offering financial incentives, the Pakistani government is encouraging madrassas to register as part of what it portrays as an attempt to monitor their curricula and to ensure that madrassas are not promoting violence”(p. 5). Madrassahs, by and large, are peaceful; however, there exist a minority that call for jihad against non-Muslims and Western forces. The indoctrination sometimes focuses entirely on jihad while ignoring other facets of the curriculum (Armanios, 2003). Even if there is only a small percentage of madrassahs inciting hatred, their curriculum will remain implicated as a possible cause for the increased incidence of violence.

Armanios (2003) maintained that the Pakistani government, its intelligence services, and military state machinery have forged private alliances with the militant and extremist factions in the country, many of whom have links with the madrassahs. These include collaboration on funds. The report states that despite Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf’s personal commitment to revamp madrassah curricula, he capitulated to the demands of extremists by not taking any concrete measures to implement proposed reforms.

Armanios (2003) stated that resistance to reform comes from different sources, including Pakistan’s politicians. One example is the April 2004 outcry over proposed changes to ninth and tenth-grade syllabi. The prime minister, education minister, and religious affairs minister had to capitulate to the uproar and reassert their loyalty to orthodox Islam. They retracted their proposals (Armanios, 2003). The report hence highlighted the political pressures faced by individual politicians who may otherwise be sincere in their efforts to revisit the Pakistani madrassah and public school sector curricula to address the issue of intolerance in society.

Correlation between Madrassahs and Intolerance

Almost all of the literature reviewed concluded that there may be a connection between the intolerance noted in the educational environment of Pakistan and madrassah education. This intolerance includes uncompromising attitudes toward women,

minorities, sects that are different from one's own, intolerance of secular ideologies, and the intolerance of other faith philosophies. Kevin Reinhart (1983) concluded that Islamic law and Islamic ethics must be seen as complementing each other. *Islamic Law and Islamic Ethics* embodies the opinion that the legal framework of Islam translates into Islamic ethics. Islamic law constitutes ethical and moral theory (Rienhart, 1983). In so doing, Reinhart (1983) clearly drew a linkage between madrassah value system and the canonical texts of Islam, which are used as resource for the madrassah curriculum and serve as moral guidance.

Kapisthalam (2004) described the differences in outlook between Indian madrassahs and their Pakistani counterparts. Indian madrassahs have largely remained institutes for religious learning minus the indoctrination, whereas Pakistani seminaries are becoming increasingly intolerant and belligerent with respect to who speaks for Islam. Kapisthalam (2004), therefore, suggested a correlation between Pakistani madrassahs and an intolerant worldview.

Riaz (2005) accepted the correlation between madrassahs and intolerance and examined the reasons for these dynamics in madrassah culture. His comprehensive report entitled *Global Jihad, Sectarianism and the Madrassah in Pakistan* examined the events leading up to the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center. Riaz (2005) stated:

> The most obvious link between terrorism and madrassah education came from then ruling regime of Afghanistan—the Taliban, who were the products of this type of Islamic education and had been providing a safe haven to Osama bin Laden and his transitional terror network Al Qaeda at the time of the terrorist attacks in the US (p. 3).

In so doing, Riaz (2005) also drew a correlation between radical Islam's educational philosophy and the exclusionary world outlook that resulted in the policies adopted by the Taliban. Intolerance that leads to violence on occasion is the result of the "sectarian nature of madrassah education in Pakistan" (Riaz, 2005, p. 5). In including the issue of sectarian violence as a manifestation of intolerance, Riaz (2005) pointed out how the Taliban chastise other Muslims who espouse an understanding of Islam that is different from the one endorsed by the Taliban.

Eickleman (1998) wrote in his article entitled "Inside the Islamic Reformation" that 90% of the world's Muslims are Sunni, which by its very nature, is the most orthodox sect of Islam. Jihad, or struggle for Islam, is considered to be one of the basic tenets of orthodox Islam. However, Eickleman (1998) also concluded that there is now a growing intellectual challenge from within, to replace such beliefs with more modern notions based on pluralism and peaceful coexistence. Citing copiously from the work of modernist scholar Muhammad Sharur, Eickleman (1998) stated that reformists argue that the sacred texts of Islam must be reinterpreted in order for the faith to remain a viable force in the contemporary world.

Unfulfilled Promises: Pakistan's Failure to Tackle Extremists (2004) is a report prepared by the International Crisis Group. It highlighted the growth in influence of the religious right. It stated "the religious right is fast expanding its political space while the military is hesitant to intrude upon the mullahs traditional spheres of influence, which include the madrassah sector" ("Unfulfilled Promises" 2004, p. 3). As evidence of this type of radicalization, the report quotes Hafiz Ali Akhtar, the minister of Religious Affairs and Auqaf as differentiating between jihad and terrorism. While the madrassahs promote jihad as a basic tenet of the faith, they do not necessarily promote terrorism, according to Hafiz Akhtar Ali ("Unfulfilled Promises," 2004). Based on an examination of this view, it is obvious that jihad is being promoted in these madrassahs, which can be manifested in various forms of violence including terrorism. The premise is that madrassah education leads to intolerance and intolerance may very well lead to violence.

The Brookings report entitled *Pakistan's Madrassahs: Ensuring a System of Education, not Jihad* (2008) drew a clear connection between madrassah education and the different manifestations of intolerance in society, including violence. Hatred is allowed within the confines of a minority of madrassahs where intolerance and the resultant violence are most palpable. The doctrine of militant jihad, which according to the fundamentalist view condones the killings of men, women, and children who may espouse a worldview different from that of radical Islam, is being taught aggressively in these institutions (*Pakistan's Madrassahs: Ensuring a System of Education,* 2008*).* Although these may be few in number compared to the other madrassahs, where simply a conservative Islamic education is being imparted, they, nonetheless, prepare students to take up arms and may even allow weapons on their premises. These madrassah-trained students then proceed to take up arms in foreign lands such as Chechnya and Kashmir, raising the level of violence in these countries (*Pakistan's Madrassahs: Ensuring a System of Education,* 2008).

Other literature that asserted a direct correlation between madrassah education and the increase in intolerance leading to violence includes Fairweather (2008), M*odernising Madrassahs*. The need to revamp madrassah curricula is clearly stated in the essay. Mir (n.d.) made a similar claim about the madrassah education and the increase in violence and intolerance in the educational setting of Pakistan. Mir (n.d.) established a definite linkage between madrassah education and the rising incidents of violence.

Solutions

The higher Educational Commission, Islamabad, Pakistan held in 2004 looked at ways to improve education both in the secular and religious segments of Pakistani educational opportunity. The commission included a panel of renowned educational scholars with expertise in Islamic education. The coordinator of the commission, Hassan (2004) wrote that the government of Pakistan is at the forefront in the fight to eradicate extremism. Hassan (2004) highlighted the positive outcomes of this struggle and drew attention to the efforts made toward improving relations between the government and madrassahs through the efforts of the government under Pevez Musharraf. Hassan

(2004), however, still stressed the need for moral and educational reform through the strengthening of the educational system of the country.

"Islamists and the Challenge of Pluralism" is a scholarly article that looks at the possibility of divergent opinions within Islamic thought. Haddad (1995) examined the dynamics that limit the growth of divergent opinions within Islam, thus affecting the outlook of those schooled in religious orthodoxy. Haddad (1995) questioned if Islamists can tolerate political differences, whether an Islamic state can have relations with non-governmental organizations or non-Muslim states and if the Sunni majority that is steeped in orthodoxy can accommodate the religious differences of the smaller sects within Islam. Haddad (1995) drew the conclusion that a more pluralistic outlook can be developed through Islamic education as a tenet of the Islamic faith embodying notions of racial, linguistic, and cultural equality. Haddad (1995) stated that "Pluralism as a foundational principle of nature is evident in the revelation of the Quran by which all humanity is treated equally" (Haddad, 1995, p. 5).

Nelson (2006) also looked at possible solutions to religious intolerance in Pakistan's educational environment in his article entitled "Muslims, Markets, and the Meanings of a "Good" education in Pakistan." Contemporary Pakistani parents favor a religious education as opposed to a secular one. This trend has acted as an obstacle toward educational reform. Reformers find themselves confronted with a broad range of complex issues concerning the nature of local demands (Nelson, 2006). The demand Nelson (2006) referred to is the increased preference for religious education among Pakistani parents. Confusion and challenge faced thus far with respect to educational demand resides in the value placed on religious education in general and madrassahs in particular (Nelson, 2006). Disagreement also exists over how much religion should be taught and how it should be balanced with secular education. These trends are noteworthy for an analysis of possible solutions to the educational reforms in madrassah and secular education.

Of the many existing solutions, one offered consistently is that Pakistani government schools must be strengthened in order for traffic to be diverted back to secular institutions rather than to religious institutions where the traffic seems to be moving to at present (Rahman, 2004). The solution, therefore, to an alleged climate of intolerance in the educational environment of Pakistan, requires a multi-pronged approach. The madrassahs, the madrassah-type institutions as well as the public schools of Pakistan must be considered as requiring attention by concerned parties.

Malik (2007) looked at the administrative aspects of how to strengthen and improve education in Pakistani government schools. He looked at the extent of the decentralization and centralization of authority as playing a role in determining the hiring of teachers, making books available to school children, and developing curricula suited for a growing population. His recommendations include focusing on ways to improving education input availability in districts in Sindh. *Five Ways to Improve the Structure of Pakistan's Education* (2002) a "YesPakistan" report, also pointed out this weakness in

the Pakistani educational system. A similar observation of excessive centralization was made by Jan (1999) in his article entitled “Pakistan on the Precipice.”

Other solutions focus on revamping the madrassah curriculum itself. It was previously noted that there is much resistance to any change in the content and sources of the madrassah curriculum, the institutions being conservatively religious. Kronstadt (2004) stated that education must “better prepare young citizens for gainful employment in an increasingly knowledge-based economy, as well as in curtailing or halting the teaching of militant/extremist values that are implicated in breeding terrorism” (p. 2). The existing reforms described in the report once again focused on increasing teacher effectiveness, secularizing the curriculum, and increasing overall literacy. The inclusion of science as a subject was deemed crucial for this secularizing process. The report also mentioned US donations toward achieving this end; however, it noted with dismay that such efforts have not borne fruit and any positive effects on Pakistan’s educational system remain marginal.

Kronstadt (2004) also looked at the more pressing concern within the Pakistani educational environment; that is the absence of instruction on moderate values that foster tolerance in society. In this regard, the US policy makers see the greatest potential of reform in the public sector institutions where reform is most likely to occur and is least controversial in comparison to madrassahs. Pakistani President Pervez Mussharraf was sincere in his effort to bring madrassah education in line with the curricula of the public schools, thus closing the gap in values. Musharraf proposed a madrassah curriculum identical to that of public schools. Some have, therefore, decided to work with madrassah officials to achieve this end. A major change would be brought about by removing the jihadist and militant content from the curricula of the madrassahs; however, the report stated that opposition to this type of meddling in the madrassah policy remains at a predictably high level (Kronstadt, 2004).

Pakistan: Reforming the Education Sector is report no. 84 drafted by the International Crisis Group. This report also elaborated similar reforms toward improving and strengthening Pakistan’s government schools as a viable alternative to madrassah education. It suggested a multi-pronged approach to solving the madrassah problem by luring students away from them through the development of a better government-run system.

The International Conference on Volunteerism (2005) prepared a paper outlining ways in which primary education can be strengthened in Pakistan. The two issues, the radicalization of madrassashs and lack of sound alternatives are, therefore, linked. It is imperative to review the literature on the latter option. The International Conference on Volunteerism (2005) highlighted several means by which primary public education can be improved in Pakistan. The International Conference on Volunteerism (2005) also addressed both secular and religious policies through which education can be improved.

For example, volunteerism to increase parent participation; greater student involvement, and community and teacher participation must be included in any reform

measures. The efforts of several NGOs in Pakistan who have already taken initiatives by extending funds must be increased. These institutions include the Women's Action Forum and a number of social welfare trusts. However, the effects of such efforts are marginal as the demand is phenomenally higher than what is being catered for. The following is recommended: Greater involvement from these NGOs, the need to bring madrassahs into the mainstream educational realm, an updating of madrassah curriculum, the introduction of better instruction and training tools, and a more effective delivery system of education through better teacher-training. The hope is that a better and more conducive educational environment will foster cooperation, harmony, and tolerance (International Conference on Volunteerism, 2005).

From a religious angle, The International Conference on Volunteerism (2005) emphasized a modernisation of the Islamic curriculum itself. This would be achieved through an expansion of content pertaining to Islamic culture and knowledge, and diversity in learning opportunities rather than a set curriculum coupled with expansion in cultural education. Other literature making similar recommendations included the *US Department of State Report* on education policy in Pakistan entitled *Pakistan: Country Reports on Human Rights Practices*

(2003).

Leadership Initiatives

"Pakistan's Educational Gamble," an informative article by Masood (2006), highlighted various proposals for reform in the educational environment of Pakistan. Quoting Javed Ashraf Qazi, former education minister of Pakistan, Masood (2006) stated that illiterate masses produce individuals with unhealthy preoccupations. As part of a general educational reform, an increase in the number of schools in rural areas, increase in the number of trained teachers, increase in the educational budget, subsidising the cost of textbooks and other school supplies, and renovating schools that are failing the test of cleanliness and safety is proposed (Masood, 2006).

A report entitled *Pakistani Education System: No Objectives, Perspectives and Priorities* (2006), identified a lack of clarity and confusion with regards to objectives and a lack of honesty as the main problems confronting Pakistan's long-standing educational woes. *Pakistani Education System: No Objectives, Perspectives, and Priorities* (2006) suggested addressing these issues before a clear-cut policy toward educational reform can be formulated. Policies have thus far been formulated to appease the government or other interest groups and the intended beneficiaries of the educational system; that is the students, continue to suffer in the meantime. The solution is to involve representatives from the teachers, educational experts, parents, and students (Pakistani Education System: No Objectives, Perspectives and Priorities, 2006).

Similar obstacles to the improvement of Pakistani education in general were noted by a report assembled by the "Peace Worldwide NGO." Relevant to this discussion, the report also mentions religious inequity as a cause of Pakistan's failing educational

system. The failure of Pakistan's educational policy in providing religious instruction to non-Muslim children was cited as the reason for this inequity, creating a further dynamic of religious intolerance in Pakistan's educational institutions.

Critique

According to Hoodbhoy (2007), there appears to be a shift in philosophy on how to reform the existing schools and madrassahs of Pakistan. The White Paper discussed in the literature review according to Hoodbhoy (2007), is "an enormous step forward. So is the new school curriculum — which somewhat mysteriously and improperly preceded the White Paper. Hoodbhoy (2007) stated that "these may persuade even a few hardened cynics that the country's school education system still has a future" (p. 1). Hoodbhoy (2007) still pointed out the shortcomings of this report in its failure to address the interests of the minorities in Pakistan's educational reforms. Any genuine reform efforts to build a tolerant society must account for the needs of minority communities. Hoodbhoy (2007), nonetheless, remained hopeful that the reforms proposed in the White Paper, for the very first time, recognize the right of each citizen to receive an education.

Hoodbhoy (2007), like other commentators on the madrassah policy and education policy in particular, pointed out the discrepancy between proposed reforms and their implementation evident in existing research and literature. There is little thought given to how these reforms are to be instituted and monitored. Hoodbhoy (2007) also drew attention to the possibility of technology as a learning tool. The availability of the Internet is a development that can help Pakistan solve its educational crisis. Hoodbhoy (2007) also proposed the use of technology for school surveillance as a possible means of keeping track of students, student–teacher ratios and sundry activities within the confines of the school or madrassah. The literature reviewed does not speak of such possibilities although the idea of using technology to solve the Pakistani educational system's problems is by no means a new one.

Siddiqui (2008) also provided a brief critique of the existing literature and the reforms to Pakistani education that it embodies in his article entitled "Politics of Educational Reform."
"Quoting the number of enrolled students, trained teachers and an inflated literacy rate is a typical view of development. But real development in education comes with qualitative improvement in our lives" (Siddiqui, 2008, p. 1). The amount of money spent to improving Pakistani education has not borne fruit, according to Siddqui (2008). The proposed reforms have been derailed due to the vested interests of competing political and socioeconomic factions of Pakistan's establishment, be it the feudal classes or bureaucracy. Siddiqui (2008) also blames the "hegemonic powers in not being able to solve this problem, as their influence is seen as interference in Pakistan's internal affairs for personal gains" (Siddiqui, 2008, p. 1).

Siddiqui (2008) also suggested that any reform undertaken thus far has been instituted as eyewash to appease donors. This is done by showing an increase in enrolment within schools, without producing any result whatsoever in terms of improving

student performance, improving better instruction and in creating opportunities for students with regard to providing a variety of educational opportunities. By pointing this out, Siddiqui (2008) commented on the general lack of commitment toward bringing about reform:

> It is important to realise that for real improvement in education, money is important. But money alone cannot bring about any meaningful change unless the desire for reform comes from within, appointments are made on the basis of pure merit, planning is done carefully, an effective monitoring system is in place and goals are not limited to demonstrating expansion in numbers. Quoting the number of enrolled students, trained teachers, and an inflated literacy rate is a typical view of development. But real development in education comes with qualitative improvement in our lives (Siddiqui, 2008, p. 1).

In making these observations, Siddiqui (2008) acknowledged the weaknesses in the existing processes and dynamics that have thus far prevented any real and concrete changes from occurring towards an improvement of the Pakistani educational environment. Siddiqui pointed out the grave systemic problems due to lack of funds and lax supervision (Siddiqui, 2008). Economic disparities were also cited as posing challenges to the quality of life of the average Pakistani (Siddiqui, 2008).

The United States has expended time, energy, and resources to improve the Pakistani educational system and environment, particularly the social studies component of its curricula in order to increase tolerance and pluralism within. According to Looney (2002), in his report for the Centre for Contemporary Conflict, it is very much in the interest of the United States to see a stable and prosperous Pakistan. Looney (2002) also discussed the current state of education, both in the madrassahs and the government schools of Pakistan, with a view to examining the failures with existing efforts toward reform:

> A number – probably a significant fraction – of these schools have built with extremely close ties with radical militant groups. In this capacity they have increasingly played a critical role in sustaining the international terrorist network. In addition to their role in terrorism, the schools are a concern because of their non-technical, non-scientific curriculum. Many teach only religious subjects to their students, focusing on rote memorization of Arabic texts. In essence, they are producing a generation of students unlikely to play a productive role in creating the type of modern dynamic economy necessary to reduce the country's grinding poverty (Looney, 2002, p. 2).

The observation, if true, has serious social implications. It clearly puts the blame on madrassahs in creating an environment of hostility and intolerance, which may lend support to terrorism both home and abroad. The Pakistani government has made an effort to offer incentives to madrassahs which may comply with these regulations in “modernizing their curricula and approach to life” (Looney, 2002, p. 2), however, the effects of such reforms will be felt far into the future if at all, as there continues to be

violent opposition to any proposals to modernise madrassah education. As an alternative, it is best to:

1. Develop "a public Madrassah system as an alternative to the current private Madrassahs"

2. Develop alternatives and supplements outside the formal educational system

3. Obtain educational aid from a variety of international sources (Looney, 2002, p. 2).

According to Shah (2005), the reforms in Pakistan have not done adequate follow up with students after they have left or dropped out of primary schools. It is at this juncture that social problems begin to set in. This is exacerbated by the lack of vocational and technical institutions that could accommodate students from the lower strata of society who would normally not advance to the higher levels of education available to the elite classes (Shah, 2005). The lack of opportunity and unemployment, as cited by Shah (2005), lead to frustration, anger, and despair that, in turn, may feed intolerance.

Candland (2005) has also criticized the contention that madrassah education is not widespread. In his article entitled "Pakistan's Recent Experience in Reforming Islamic Education" (2005), Candland criticized the tools used in arriving at figures that suggest low madrassah enrolment, especially the report prepared by Andrabi (2005). Candland (2006) claimed that scholars have shown a lack of understanding about the scope of madrassah influence in Pakistan. Candland (2005) maintained that the conclusion that less than 1% of Pakistani primary aged students attend madrassahs is based on the statistic that 19 million students are enrolled in private and public schools "however, half of these children drop out before reaching the fifth grade. Finally, the report conflates a *madaris* education with an education in religious schools, as suggested by the title of the report. This leads to problems with interpretation of the data" (Candland, 2005, p. 152).

Conclusion

In the discussion on militancy and intolerance *per se* as a social dynamic, the two issues often appear to be conflated in the literature search. Often the current literature available on madrassahs and their alleged association with jihadist movements is confused with the general intolerance that these institutions breed in their students (Riaz, 2005). While such drastic linkages may not exist between madrassah education and militancy, the madrassah graduates espouse an intolerant and exclusionary worldview, creating further bigotry in society. Such bigotry ultimately leads to religious strife (Riaz, 2005).

The conclusion that can be drawn from reviewing the above literature is that there is still need to explore avenues and ways to rectify the faltering educational system of Pakistan with special focus on improving the social environment. The dynamics creating inequities in society and lack of opportunity and inequality in opportunity can all contribute toward an atmosphere of intolerance, preparing ground for militancy and

violence (Shah, 2005). The proposed study attempted to explore these dynamics and find ways to generate discourse on how to solve these issues for a better Pakistani educational environment.

Although there is conflict of opinion on whether linkages can be established between religious education and violence, as evidenced from the review of the literature, the current study attempts to achieve synthesis on these issues, while highlighting certain gray areas, such as the separation of intolerance in society and its manifestations: Violence and extremism. Thus far, studies appear leery of stating direct linkages between a doctrinaire religious education and its social implications (Andrabi, 2005). The literature review has provided a solid basis for further research in identifying the problems and their possible solutions as well as the areas in which there is still room for further debate and improvement.

In particular, the lack of freedoms available to Pakistani students to debate ideas in an open, healthy, and friendly environment have been explored as a possible dynamic leading to violence (Fatah, 2008). Freedom of the press and freedom to debate and explore ideas is a necessary component of healthy democracies. Such forums provide viable outlets for students to settle their differences amicably, rather than take to the streets in violent protests. Violence and intolerance emerge in the absence of such forums (Riaz, 2005). Ways to ensure such freedoms are examined in the study as possible solutions to the problem of intolerance in Pakistani schools and religious institutions. Such forums would also include administrative techniques and mediation tools to help students resolve disputes in a civilized manner (Whitaker & Pollard, 1993).

The literature reviewed provides a basis for the formulation of the research method. The phenomenon of intolerance is being investigated by the researcher. This social dynamic has been examined through interviews, observation, and review of existing documents and literature as discussed in the chapter on the methodology of the research.

CHAPTER 3: METHOD

This research was conducted as a qualitative study employing the phenomenological method to investigate the incidence, causes, and dimensions of intolerance in Pakistani religious schools, with the intention of understanding the problem through the available educational opportunities in the country. In terms of qualitative research, it attempts to generate theory that may throw light on the problem of intolerance (Cone & Foster, 1998). Many studies, both qualitative and quantitative, have been conducted to analyze the social problems faced by Pakistan's educational system (Rahman, 2004). More theories and ideas, however, are needed in order to explore ways of countering intolerance, as it is ideologically based (Riaz, 2005). The researcher chose to undertake the qualitative phenomenological research in order to understand the presence of possible ideologies linked to intolerance, as the phenomenological method explores the causes and antecedents of various phenomena.

The purpose of the study is to identify the role of madrassahs by examining their curricula and how they may influence the dynamic of intolerance in the Pakistani educational environment. The research was conducted through a series of interviews with students over eighteen years of age as well as educators and administrators. In part, the study was conducted in Islamabad, the capital district of Pakistan. The bulk of the work was undertaken through Internet correspondence, interviews, and the review of the literature which includes government documents on the proposed madrassah reforms.

Research Method and Design Appropriateness

Phenomenology, a research technique introduced by the twentieth-century philosopher Edmund Husserl, purports to understand the essence of phenomena as they occur within the purview of human experience (Gray, 2009). The phenomenological approach emphasizes the absence of presuppositions during the investigative process. Hence, a researcher doing research using the phenomenological method will not be entering it with pre-conceived notions or biases (Gray, 2009). It is hoped that through the lived experience of individual subjects of the study, a deeper understanding of the causes of intolerance in Pakistan will be highlighted.

Research Question

The questions are: Do curricula of religious schools engender intolerance in society? Can religious curricula be designed in a way that will foster tolerance in society through more benign readings of religious literature?

The madrassahs of Pakistan impart a strictly Islamic education to develop a character aligned with traditional Islamic values. According to Ali (n.d.), children reproduce what they have learnt verbatim without examining the meanings or understanding the subject

matter at a deeper level. The Quran, Hadith, and the principles of Islamic jurisprudence are largely learnt by rote. The value system imparted in this fashion, therefore, remains traditional as few challenges to it are accommodated due to the absence of critical inquiry (Fatah, 2008).

The research question attempts to elicit information on ways to complement such pedagogical techniques with modern ones that will provide the student with an overview of competing worldviews. The research question attempts to explore ways in which this can be accomplished within the purview of existing Islamic thought, so as to provide a degree of comfort to the madrassah population that their ideology is not under attack.

According to the publication manual of the American Psychological Association (1994), sound research must incorporate three basic components in its method namely: Resources, or the materials used, subjects or participants, and the procedure for data collection. Different types of studies use these components in different ways. Phenomenology relies heavily on the insights of experts and agents within various social setups and movements (Gray, 2009). It is an appropriate design for the study of social and cultural phenomena, as it draws from the lived experiences of individuals who are active participants in these movements and are impacted by them in a real and meaningful way.

How the subjects internalize these experiences, how they think such movements impact society and its members, how they see them evolving are all part of the participants' conscious experiences that the researcher must investigate. This was undertaken in order to understand the perceived causes of intolerance in Pakistan's educational institutions and to shed light on how to best mitigate its harmful effects on the citizenry of Pakistan that has thus far endured terror attacks, violence, and persecution of religious minorities in the name of religion (Riaz, 2005).

The methodology is at least one hundred years old (Elverton, 1970). It involves a philosophical approach to studying various social and psychological phenomena, affording the possibility of touching upon many issues and areas of human endeavor (Elverton, 1970). The study of intolerance as a dynamic in Pakistani society is hence, best understood through a phenomenological method. The phenomenological study may yield information on other phenomena underlying the problem of intolerance in the educational environment of Pakistan. The method is one of reflection, acknowledgement of observed reality, evidential data, and a synthesis of these. It would also include an analysis of human intentions, aspirations, the values that shape these, and the religious elements if any, in these various social movements.

The study does not attempt to quantify the relationship between the subject matter taught in the madrassahs and its effects on the students. However, a possible qualitative linkage was examined to see how much certain types of religious education influence the thoughts and attitudes of students who go through the madrassah system. These were compared to parallel education systems in Pakistan to see if the absence of such education produces a different threshold for tolerating differences.

More clearly defined, phenomenology is the investigation of phenomena within the purview of human consciousness, rather than outside of it. According to Edmund Hussrel, the German philosopher who founded this methodology, phenomenology would also be an attempt to coalesce philosophy with the lived experiences of human beings (Elverton, 1970). Therefore, experts in a particular area of human thought and inquiry would be expected to delve deep into the philosophical and psychological underpinnings of a particular phenomenon or dynamic in a society. Phenomenology also takes into account the study of hermeneutics, which is the study of underlying social and cultural phenomena behind various philosophies and ideologies. Hermeneutics help researchers understand social and political trends at the local, national, and international level, thus providing an opportunity to understand phenomena holistically. Comparing the trends at these different levels from a Hermeneutics perspective can lead to a better grasp of the nuances and subtleties of cultural phenomena (Magliola, 1977).

Sampling

The subjects participating in the research on intolerance in the Pakistani educational environment consist of experts and students. A group of twenty such individuals were contacted and interviewed for the purpose of gathering data for the research. These individuals were selected through a well-defined process that considered their experience, expertise, knowledge, and commitment to education in Pakistan.

Experts

The first category of experts includes scholars, academicians, and intellectuals who have consistently demonstrated an interest in improving the social aspect of the educational environment in Pakistani schools and madrassahs. These experts have written on the problem in schools and have provided various solutions to them from time to time. Another set of experts include officials who are in policy-making roles in the educational boards of Pakistan. These officials belong to the category of high-ranking educators and supervisors who have access to classified information and who are directly involved in the processes already in place that seek avenues for improving the status quo in Pakistani schools. Some of these individuals have also been dealing directly with officials from the madrassah boards and have experienced many types of resistances to change and reform firsthand (Fatah, 2008). Not only did such individuals clearly identify the problems encountered in madrassah and school reform, they were also able to offer concrete suggestions on how to overcome some of these impediments and how best to deal with right wing conservative groups in bringing them to agree on a modus operandi that will be beneficial to students and society as a whole.

The scholars and intellectuals, on the other hand, were able to provide the philosophical underpinnings of the various social trends in contemporary Pakistani society. The multidimensional aspects of the approach of the two sets of experts will deliver the objective of the phenomenological approach to research that strives to look

deep into causes, phenomena, and dynamics within societies and cultures (Magliola, 1977). The findings gained from interviewing the two separate groups of interviewees were then synthesized to determine commonality and differences in outlook and approach.

Student Experts

Some participants of the research had received Islamic education at various stages of their schooling. These individuals were deemed useful to the study for the purpose of determining the causes of intolerance in Pakistan's educational environment. The interview questions attempt to understand areas in the curricula that lead to students developing intolerant views toward their peers based on ideological differences. The students were identified for the purpose of the study based on referrals from the academics in the field. The students were past the age of 18, having completed their various courses of study. They agreed to the interviews voluntarily, without any considerations of past political or religious affiliations (Cone & Foster, 1998).

An attempt was made to ensure that the subjects interviewed belong to a diverse socioeconomic background so as to determine where and in what segments of society the issue of intolerance may be most pervasive. This diverse group of subjects would ensure the external validity of the research (Cone & Foster, 2004). Validity is ensured by corroborating information gained from representatives of diverse backgrounds, as they are in touch with the problems facing their communities and would be able to provide an accurate picture of the nuances and dynamics associated with it. The madrassah trained students usually belong to the lower middle classes who have been placed in madrassahs for board, lodging, and education (Fatah, 2008). It is noted that intolerance is most pervasive in this class as compared to the upper middle classes of Pakistani society (Rahman, 2004). A possible reason for this difference in outlook is often credited to the greater access the upper classes have to a more liberal education. Socioeconomic inequalities are another possible reason for such differences in outlook, as evidenced from the responses of the participants of the research. Some participants cited economic deprivation as a possible cause for intolerant attitudes among the lower classes. The experts were also interviewed with these differences in mind. Their opinions reflect the various class differences, so that a lopsided view of intolerance as a social dynamic is avoided. All this information was procured before the actual study was undertaken (Cone & Foster, 1998).

In order to assess the appropriateness of the subjects to the research, their academic credentials were examined through a list of publications. The appropriateness of their views to solving the educational crises was also assessed. The time availability of subjects for the purpose of participation in this study was also taken into consideration.

Cone and Foster (1998) recommend 20 individuals as the appropriate number of interviewees in a phenomenological study. This number has been arrived at according to convention. In a qualitative study, the purpose is to investigate the causes and dynamics of certain societal trends. This can be adequately dealt with through the knowledge that

experts in the area have already acquired. The idea of a qualitative study is also to generate theory. It is hoped that through this exercise, more insights will be offered on the causes of intolerance in Pakistani schools. A secondary group of experts was consulted for the purpose of clarifying religious terminology.

The research took place partly through the Internet in questionnaires distributed to the various experts. It is assumed that these experts have a solid grasp of the English language in order to respond to the complex questions asked therein. The remainder of the research was conducted in Pakistan.

The political environment of Pakistan is riddled with conflict: Political, religious, and sectarian (Hoodbhoy, 2009). Not the most conducive environment to be conducting such studies, research within Pakistan's territory is, nevertheless, a crucial component of the soundness of the research. The English daily newspapers, such as The News, The Daily Times, and Dawn allow guarded discourse on Pakistan's educational problems including the madrassah problem, but these are read by a very small segment of the Pakistani population who read and understand English. This, however, may be critical as the chief policy-makers have access to these papers and can tap such resources when determining policy.

Procedure

In this phenomenological study, the information was partly obtained through an expanded review of the existing literature on the dynamic of intolerance in Pakistan. The literature was examined for possible causes and solutions. This exercise attempted to give a comprehensive view of the length and breadth of the debate on resolving the issue of intolerance in Pakistan. The study also attempted to highlight the salient features of the debate in a comprehensive manner.

The literature consists of peer-reviewed articles and doctoral dissertations. Certain primary sources and data on madrassahs, their curricula, their funding sources, their goals, and aspirations were also reviewed to shed light on the causes and solutions to the problem of intolerance. Case reports and surveys were also examined as part of other continuing review of the literature.

The additional literature review built on the existing review of the literature discussed in chapter two (O'Brien & Pipkin, 2007). After a review of the literature, and once the experts, volunteers, and the study were carefully selected according to the procedures described in the section entitled "experts," a series of questionnaires were sent to the experts. The questions were based on material that was extrapolated from the existing literature review. These questions were carefully formulated to enable the researcher to elicit as much information from experts as possible, given the tense environment of Pakistan's educational community. In order to assess the appropriateness of the experts to this study, a preliminary questionnaire was sent out to the prospective volunteers for the study. On the basis of the responses, 20 experts were selected from the sample interviewed through this preliminary survey.

Once the volunteers were selected, they were given a questionnaire to respond to over a given period. The data gathered from these experts was recorded as it was being relayed. This raw data was later sifted and organized into identifiable social trends and themes (Cone & Foster, 1998). The data was then analyzed for dominant themes, dominant strains, and main currents among the myriad forces present in Pakistan's educational environment.

The researcher continued to seek help from the experts in analyzing the data after it had been assorted into dominant themes and currents. The implications of the data were discussed through secondary correspondences in order to clarify any gray areas. The data was also tabulated according to dominant themes.

Networking is also a good way of determining who will be volunteering for the study. The network can include one's own friends and acquaintances who have been involved in research (O'Brien & Pipkin, 2007). These friends and acquaintances were contacted for expertise and availability.

The individuals involved in the study were assured that they too might learn something from the exchange (O'Brien & Pipkin, 2007). This strategy eliminated any negative connotations the word *networking* has come to acquire as an opportunistic activity for personal gains. Contact-building and networking are sometimes lengthy processes. They were undertaken well before the actual start of the research.

The three successive stages of questioning also attempted to build on the information gathered in each of the previous stages. The questions went through a refining process, rendering them more focussed and streamlined. There were in all ten questions asked in the questionnaire.

The design is appropriate for the research as it examines the lived experiences of the subjects participating in the study (Elverton, 1970). The experts having lived in an environment where intolerance and violence is a daily occurrence provided a grassroots perspective of the "how" and "why" of the phenomenon of intolerance in Pakistan. The design is also appropriate because the questions asked of the participants speak directly to the issues related to violence and intolerance.

Validity

Validity within the qualitative research paradigm involves objectivity, truth, universal laws, deductive reasoning, factual analysis, and some mathematical data. The purpose of validity in research is to ensure that the research answers the questions it sets out to answer (Golafshani, 2003). The research questions of the study seek to investigate the causes of intolerance in the Pakistani educational setting. It is hoped that the expertise of the participants of the study and their familiarity with the Pakistani educational environment have achieved that objective. The participants of the study represent a broad spectrum of opinion on Islamic education. The participants recognized the importance of sharing information as truthfully as possible with the researcher.

Ethical concerns

In conducting the phenomenological study, due regard was given to ensure the safety of the participants of the research. The risk to the participants in answering tough questions on religious beliefs was duly ascertained. The experts interviewed by this researcher are individuals who have already written articles and books in English and Urdu on the dynamics that contribute to forming the madrassah culture. These individuals are outspoken and candid about identifying possible causes to the surge in sectarian conflict and international tensions in linking some of it to the madrassah culture. Nonetheless, for the purpose of this study, these individuals were quoted as anonymous sources.

The participants agreed to be a part of the study voluntarily. Many of these participants reside in North America, though they remain in touch with developments in the educational environment of Pakistan. Their absence from the tense environment of Pakistan will further ensure their safety. Additionally, all electronic data gathered from the research will be kept in a secure filing cabinet for a period of five years. At the conclusion of this period, the data will be destroyed by deleting files and shredding all paperwork.

In order to assess the soundness of the ethics of the research, one must also take a look at existing research. Chances are that the research was approved because it passed the ethical standards that are consistent with APA requirements (Cone & Foster, 1998). In research, the principle of honesty is also paramount. When and how must information be concealed? This is an ethical question that poses a moral challenge to researchers. It can be resolved by establishing just cause for the concealment, such as the protection of an individual's safety. In light of this, several studies on the phenomenon of growing sectarian violence and terrorism have been approved by various institutes of learning (Rahman, 2004).

There are other ways of assessing the moral soundness of the research. These have been categorized as "goal-based, "duty- based" and "rights based" (O' Brien & Pipkin, 2007). The goal-based researcher believes that the end product of the research will benefit people and that if smaller violations of ethics occur during the research, the end would justify it. The duty-based research shuns this notion (O' Brien & Pipkin, 2007). It relies on the fact that each researcher has an obligation toward the subjects to ensure their safety all the time. The rights-based researcher is subject-focussed and asks questions based on what the subjects are comfortable with in terms of sharing information (O'Brien & Pipkin, 2007).

The researcher of this study adopted the last of these approaches in conducting the study. The participants were not forced into sharing any information that may jeopardise their safety or interests. The religious environment of Pakistan is very tense and individuals are often targeted for holding certain views. The researcher is well aware of these concerns and was extra mindful of conducting the research in a manner that would guarantee the rights of the participants to safety and security (O'Brien & Pipkin, 2007).

As part of ensuring everyone's rights, the researcher provided an "informed consent" form outlining potential risks to the participants.

Informed Consent

The informed consent was based on information that was provided by the researcher. It included a description of the study, the purpose of the study, the type of information the subject or participant will be asked to provide, information on what the subject might be asked to do as well as a list of the potential risks and advantages to the subject. The informed consent form also included a statement declaring that the participant's involvement should be purely voluntary. The participants were also given the opportunity to withdraw this voluntary participation at any time during the course of the study. It also includes a reassurance that the data will be kept confidential (Crone & Foster, 1998).

Summary

The research methodology described above generated information relevant to the question being asked. The purpose of the study was to determine possible causes of intolerance in Pakistani religious schools by focussing on their curricula. With the help of the experts, their extensive experience, their expertise in the field of education, and their identification of possible causes, the research attempted to lead to ideas that will help in providing a broad range of solutions. Some responses of the participants were detailed whereas others were brief. The researcher carefully documented the responses of the participants and tabulated some of the results. The data was then classified into ten major themes.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Introduction

Phenomenology as a method of research attempts to study phenomena in a scientific manner through an in-depth examination of their nature and behaviour. Since phenomena affect individuals, the phenomenological method relies on an individual's perceptions

about his or her own lived experiences. These perceptions may be the result of normal everyday occurrences (Willis, 2004). The purpose of this chapter is to present the findings of the study in accordance with the phenomenological method. The chapter will reiterate the research questions as follows: Do curricula of religious schools engender intolerance in society? Can religious curricula be designed in a way that will foster tolerance in society through more benign readings of religious literature?

In accordance with the rules of the phenomenological method, the researcher proceeded to interview 20 individuals who are familiar with the Pakistani educational system and environment. Additionally, the researcher interviewed other individuals who have commented on the issue through their public pronouncements and writings. These interviews were conducted on an informal basis. The present chapter discusses the results of the findings of these interviews.

Chapter 4 discusses the actual process for obtaining the data collected through the questionnaires as well. Additionally, the demographic breakdown of the interviewees is presented in this chapter in order to determine themes and societal trends that may emerge from these findings. The religious persuasions of the research participants have also been discussed in the chapter.

The purpose of the study is to identify the role of madrassahs by examining their curricula and how they may influence the dynamic of intolerance in the Pakistani educational environment. Some of these madrassahs have been implicated in the recent surge in religious violence (Ali, 2009). Based on the responses of the participants, however, intolerance may or may not exist in the Pakistani educational environment and may or may not be linked to violence. The study explores the personal beliefs of the participants, their education, their role in the educational system as well as their philosophy on education in the Pakistani environment and their vision for an ideal Pakistani society.

Chapters 1, 2, and 3 provided a theoretical background of the problem of intolerance in Pakistani religious schools by examining existing literature and formulating the research questions based on the information. Chapter 3 described the methodology employed to gain further information on the causes of intolerance in Pakistani schools. The phenomenological study looked for emergent patterns and themes from the responses of the interviewees, many of whom live outside of Pakistan, but have experienced the educational system either as educators or students and administrators.

Twenty individuals were interviewed for the purpose of this phenomenological study. The data was collected through Internet correspondence, telephone conversations, and face-to- face interviews. The respondents were scattered over a large geographic area, therefore, personal interviews were not possible in each case. The interviews took place during the period between July 1st 2009 and September 1st 2009. In order to ensure the focus of the study, the research questions of the study were stated as follows:

1. Do curricula of religious schools engender intolerance in society?

2. Can religious curricula be designed in a way that will foster tolerance in society through more benign readings of religious literature?

Research Question One

Research question one was stated as follows: Do curricula of religious schools engender intolerance in society? The question was formulated in accordance with the stated purpose of the study. The purpose of the study was to identify the role of madrassahs and whether or not their curricula contribute to the growth of intolerance in society. This question was also based on conclusions drawn from the extensive literature review presented in Chapter 2.

According to the literature review, it is not advisable to introduce the idea of a secular education in a society like Pakistan which is innately religious. The thrust according to the literature review should, therefore, be on more progressive readings of the scriptures that should be incorporated into the school curriculum to foster tolerance and harmony in the school environment. The participants interviewed for this study offered a diverse range of responses to the research question that did not necessarily agree with this premise.

Research Question Two

Research question two was stated as follows: Can religious curricula be designed in a way that will foster tolerance in society through more benign readings of religious literature?

The rationale for asking this question was derived from the literature review discussed in Chapter 2. The intent of the question was very specific. It attempted to determine if it is possible to deliver religious education in a way that fosters tolerance rather than intolerance in educational institutions. The interviewees were asked specific questions clarifying the intent of the research question in the questionnaire created by the researcher. Many of the respondents are educators who have strong opinions on how such a religious view is to be inculcated in students. Some participants have experience designing religious curricula but were circumscribed in their effort toward reform as described in the literature review.

Demographics

This section describes the demographic makeup of the participants and the processes they employed in answering the questions. For the purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study, 20 individuals familiar with Pakistan’s educational environment were interviewed by the researcher. The data obtained from the interviews was then classified and coded based on the type of response and emerging themes. The emerging themes were subsequently grouped under one heading based on the transcripts of the interviews.

Research Participants

Each participant was asked questions on various aspects of Pakistan's religious education. The responses were recorded. The interviewee was also given the opportunity to review his or her responses in order to verify the authenticity of the record. The research participants were also assured of anonymity to protect their identity. Since many of the interviews took place through Internet correspondence, the transcripts were printed, and the original e-mail communication deleted. The print-outs were then sealed off in a locked case.

Summary of demographics

All of the participants of the research are of Pakistani origin. Some reside in Pakistan whereas others constitute the Pakistani Diaspora living mostly in the United States and Canada. Of the participants interviewed, there were 13 men and seven women. The men have either written about the madrassah and religious school curricula in Pakistan or have received some religious training through the system. The women are mostly educators. One woman was in the top echelons of educational policy-making during the time of the military dictator Gen. Muhammad Zia-ul Haq. All except two interviewees identified themselves as Muslim. These individuals identified themselves as atheist and agnostic of Muslim origin.

Of the interviewees, 15 come from the educational field as educators and administrators. Of these, seven comprise the academia. Of the remaining interviewees, eight have been involved in some policy-making role in the educational field, either with respect to designing curricula or setting country-wide educational standards. The participants were all educated with the minimum qualification being a Master's degree in education. Two of the participants are medical doctors, one specializing in Psychiatry. Four participants also have Doctorates.

Figure 1: Professional Background of Participants

Since education has societal implications, the effects of which can be felt throughout the various segments of society, the researcher developed general criteria for selecting research participants. The researcher, however, considered the knowledge base of the participants as a foremost criterion in making that selection. The researcher originally intended to interview madrassah graduates also, but no one from that community was willing to participate in the research.

Initially, the researcher organized a pilot study to recruit participants (Cone & Foster, 1993). At first, there were 30 potential participants of which 20 were selected to participate in the survey. The following criteria were observed in the selection process: The participants should be able to answer questions in accordance with instructions. They should be able to answer questions in accordance with their own beliefs rather than be influenced by someone else's beliefs.

The selected participants were in the 40 to 65 age group. Nine participants were in their fifties. The general enthusiasm of the prospective researchers was also considered in the selection process. Of the preliminary invitations, those who expressed enthusiasm for participating in the research were selected as participants in the madrassah survey. Many of the participants were genuinely interested in providing input toward “improving” the state of education in Pakistan.

Figure 2: Age Distribution of Participants

Interview structure

Most of the interviews took place as ordinary conversations between the researcher and participants in accordance with the phenomenological techniques (Moustakas, 1994). These informal conversations occurred over the Internet as well as in person. Some participants expressed inadequacy with respect to their own knowledge but chose to answer the questions nonetheless. The researcher assured them that their responses would not be investigated for accuracy, as that was not the objective of the study. The objective of the study was to gain insights from the perceptions of the participants through their lived experiences (Gray, 2009).

The timing for the face-to-face interviews was agreed upon mutually. The other participants who chose to respond through the Internet were given a two-week time frame to respond to the questionnaire. Some participants took longer to answer the questions.

Some participants answered the questions very briefly. The researcher was unable to obtain clarification or elaboration to these brief responses due to the time constraints of the participants. The original understanding between the researcher and the participants was one of flexibility on the part of the researcher with respect to the duration of the interviews.

The researcher refrained from influencing the opinions of the participants during the interviews. All of the participants chose to remain anonymous. This request was accommodated by the researcher. In order to put the participants at ease, the researcher did not rush through the questions and allowed the participant as much time to respond to the questions as he or she needed (Moustakas, 1994). On the whole, interview lengths did not exceed an hour for those who were interviewed in person. The mean length of the interview was 54 minutes with a median of 57 minutes. The researchers were all relaxed during the interviews and showed no signs of stress due to the questions.

The participants were also helpful to the researcher in referring the researcher to other participants. Some were word-of-mouth referrals while others were identified through websites. Some participants were therefore, known to each other, though they did not necessarily share each other’s opinions.

After obtaining the data, the researcher organized the findings according to the methodology described by Moustakas (1994). Some of these techniques include

clustering of questions and data according to the intent of the questions and commonality among responses. Some of the responses appeared biased in favour of Islam as a faith building wholesome societies. The biases are those of the participants and not the researcher of this phenomenological study.

The techniques described by Moustakas (1994) were employed as follows: Preliminary grouping of responses according to those in favour of an Islamic education and those opposed to it, labelling the responses and clustering the experiences as major themes (Moustakas, 1994). In addition to these guidelines, the researcher also ensured that Epoche is achieved, which is an open mindedness to examine the research topic at hand (Moustakas, 1994). This is important to ensure objectivity of the study.

Results: Major Themes

To arrive at an accurate view of the participants responses, the researcher took care to record each statement. Many of the responses appeared repetitious but all of the statements were recorded to achieve thoroughness in the research. The non-repetitious responses were also recorded and flagged as they provided newer insights into the problem (Moustakas, 1994).

Themes

The results of the interviews yielded information that was categorized as ten themes. Many of these themes demonstrated the values that the participants espouse in shaping their understanding of their faith as a primarily moderate faith capable of delivering the most tolerant and humane of worldviews. Their opinions were also reflected in their proposed curricular reforms. The themes will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

There is no conflict between Islamic education and fostering good citizenry. Question one asked if Islamic education was capable of fostering good citizenry. It was stated as follows: Can Islamic education foster responsibility and good citizenship? 10% of the participants stated that Islamic education is incapable of fostering good citizenry. They stated that Islamic education and civic-mindedness as understood by proponents of liberal democracies were mutually contradictory.

Ten percent of the participants stated that an Islamic education is, in fact, the only type of education that can develop a worldview promoting tolerance. Participant Five said that a Muslim by definition implies a responsible and sensitive person. Eighty % of the participants stated that it was important to define Islamic education. They contended that there is potential within the Islamic worldview to foster good citizenry and tolerance provided the more humane aspects of Islamic teachings are emphasized in religious curricula. This conclusion arose out of their perception and understanding of their faith as a positive force in shaping society. These participants consider themselves moderate Muslims who genuinely believe that Islam as a religion and ideology embodies tolerance and respect for diversity. The participants stated that the Islam of the mullah and Taliban is, in fact, a distortion of its true message and essence. They proposed a revisiting of the

definition of Islamic education to mean something other than what is being taught at the madrassahs and religious schools of Pakistan. Their understanding of Islamic education embodies principles of tolerance and respect, which they consider to be an integral part of the Islamic faith. Participant Eleven said that madrassah education is, in fact, neo-Islamic rather than one that is true to the spirit of Islam. Participant Two went as far as to say that Islam is environmentally responsible and strives to inculcate such responsibility among its adherents.

Religious education is rampant in society. Question two was stated as follows: Is Islamic education confined to madrassahs? The rationale of this question was to ascertain the veracity of the claim that much of the intolerance in the Pakistani religious school environment is only coming from madrassahs. The objective was to determine other possible sources of intolerance. All of the participants answered that religious education is, in fact extremely prevalent in Pakistani society.

All participants answered that religiosity is part and parcel of Pakistani society. Every single household believes it incumbent to teach children the basic tenets of the religion.

Participant Three did not view this trend as inimical to society and stated that much of hygiene was learned at home. She stated that Islam emphasizes good hygiene, which is beneficial to society.

Participant Four said that the prevalence of religious education in Pakistani society was leading to a “claustrophobic” society (Interview # 4). Many of the individuals who are hired to teach religion to Pakistani children are in fact graduates of the madrassahs. All participants were aware that under Pakistan’s education policy, all public and private school facilities are required to provide a general religious education to the students. The content of this religious education includes Islamic topics for Muslim students who comprise the majority of the student population, and ethics related-topics for non-Muslim students (Interview # 14). Participant Ten stated that the comparative religions component of religious education was missing in the content and curricula.

The participants stated that “Islamiyat” or Islamic Studies is compulsory right up to the university level. These teachings are then reinforced at home through the observance of religious practice. The participants were of the opinion that society as a whole endorses religious instruction.

Participant Fourteen also drew a distinction between general religious instruction and formal religious instruction. In his opinion, the latter is the sole preserve of the Madrassahs. He makes this differentiation based on the following observation:

> Religious schools approved by the Wafaq, which is in effect government recognition, offer specialized religious qualifications such as the Dars-e Nizami, etc. The offering for these typically comprises a study of the Qur'an and the art of recitation, Hadith - the Prophet's tradition, and selected interpretations of religious discourse, often within the context of a historical narrative acceptable to the

> madrassa's school of thought, augmented by Fiqh - jurisprudence and interpretation of Islamic texts, etc. all with a strong emphasis on Qur'anic Arabic and its translation (Interview # 14).

The generalized education in his opinion has more to do with Islamic anecdotes, Islamic history, Islamic philosophy, culture, and traditions. The fact that the generalized religious education is endemic to Pakistani society reinforces belief in religious education and does not provide any resistance to madrassah education. According to the participant, there would, therefore, be no resistance in society to madrassah education.

Participant Thirteen contended that although religious education is not confined to madrassahs, fundamentalism is. Participant Twelve stated that apart from all public and private schools, military, and civil academies must also include religious education as part of the core curriculum. While 19 participants answered that Islamic education of some sort is being imparted throughout the public and private sectors in Pakistan, what is being taught as content does not at all qualify as Islamic. Participant Eleven stated that there is much emphasis on religious education in the madrassahs, but it is not true to the spirit of Islam and is “neoIslamic” (Interview # 11). He did not explain what he meant by true Islamic education while answering this question.

This particular participant also registered his complaint about how the question was framed. He stated that it was poorly framed and that the researcher had no knowledge of Islam. He also stated that the question reflects a poor understanding of the religious mix that constitutes religious education in Pakistan.

Zia-ul Haq’s rule was the single most defining point in history when tolerance eroded from the Pakistani educational environment. Question three was stated as follows: Do you think deceased military dictator Zia-ul Haq’s educational reforms diminished the level of tolerance in Pakistan’s religious schools? The purpose of the question was to ascertain whether intolerance is a new occurrence in society, or whether a contemporary historical event or a particular orientation toward Islam may have sparked it, bleeding into the existing religious philosophies in religious schools. In varying degrees, 16 out of the 20 interviewees responded in the affirmative to the question. They all agreed that Zia-ul Haq’s dictatorial rule was the defining moment in history when tolerance began to erode from society.

Participant Eleven, who argued that madrassah instruction is neo -Islamic, stated that Zia-ul Haq was a bigot who only preached a neo-Islam. Most respondents said that Zia-ul Haq introduced the so-called reforms that led to equivalencies between religious certification and the certification offered in secular schools. According to him, this move wrongfully validated madrassah education (Interview # 11).

Participant Ten stated that religion cannot be taught through force. She commented that this is exactly what Zia-ul Haq had sought to do. She asserted that outward observance of religion was also being enforced, which often breeds hypocrisy in society.

This kind of enforcement in her opinion resulted in preventing progress and enlightenment for the last few generations.

The dissenting view was expressed most forcefully by female Participant Nine, who was part of the Islamic advisory body during Zia-ul Haq's time. She stated that, in fact Zia ul Haq's policies resulted in much tolerance for the handicapped, for women, and for religious minorities who were now to be included in every professional field under the new quota system for religious minorities. She also stated that after these reforms, the religious minorities would also have a quota system in the government and the seats could only be filled up by elected representatives of the religious minorities. The other dissenting view came from participant Twelve, who stated that Zia-ul Haq's reforms ought not to be viewed as religious but political measures, as he allowed Saudi money to flow into Pakistan to strengthen the madrassahs.

Both religious curricula and mode of delivery are at fault. Sixteen out of 20 participants thought that the problem lay both with the curricula of religious schools as well as the pedagogical techniques used to deliver it. The participants stated that the curriculum is outdated. The dissenting view was based on the perception that one cannot make generalizations about Pakistani religious schools. These participants stated that intolerance exists in various degrees in urban and rural schools as well as in public and private schools and that there is no single curriculum that can be blamed for it.

The participants who agreed that both curricula and delivery are to blame, also stated that the curricula itself was divisive which bred intolerance right across the gamut of Pakistani religious education. Participant Fourteen provided clarification stating that the different niches within the religious communities also exacted unflinching loyalty to one particular school of thought. In his own words, "The leadership of the Madrasah must ensure that no rebel with a cause emerges in their flock. Unflinching loyalty is the order of the day and can be launched in any adventure, blindfolded i.e., Jama't ud Dawa, Lashkar e Jangvi, TTP etc." (Interview # 14).

Participant Fourteen drew heavily from a report conducted by the Social Policy Development Institute. He stated that it is the curriculum itself that has shown much less tolerance over the years for the religious diversity that makes up Pakistani society. He also believes that such attitudes are being aggressively propagated in Pakistani society through the educational institutions. Examples of these are attitudes toward Hindus in particular, because India and Pakistan have remained political rivals since their independence from British rule in 1947. The syllabi according to this particular co-researcher included sentences like "(the) Hindu has always been an enemy of Islam." As for madrassahs in general, he states **"**Pakistan's interior ministry estimates 20,000 madrassas with an enrolment of nearly three million students. Of these, the 7000 madrassas run by the Deobandi school of thought are considered the most avid promoters of Jihad" (Interview # 14).

Co-researcher Eight stated that the curricula of Pakistani religious schools taught a very narrow brand of Islam. The problem of intolerance in her opinion was being

compounded by the fact that the same curriculum was being delivered by semi-literate teachers. She also stated that the non-religious component in these schools was limited.

Participant Seven, who identified himself as an atheist or ex-Muslim stated that madrassah education constituted a very fundamentalist brand of Islam with “literal” interpretations of the Quran. He stated that such schools were indeed being funded by Saudi Arabia because they were in the business of promoting their puritanical beliefs. He also stated that the children were taught not to think critically and said that this skill should be integrated in the curricula of the educational system of any nation. He also said that part of the problem of illiteracy in general and intolerance in particular was that the children were not taught in their indigenous dialects. In other words, Punjabi children were not being taught in Punjabi, Pakhtun children were not being taught in Pashto (Interview # 7).

He further stated that society in general promotes a religious rather than a secular mindset. He said that the founders of Pakistan aspired for a secular vision for the country, but it had turned into an Islamic republic. He said the more religion entered politics, the more theocratic the society had become, which is problematic.

Religious education has scope of delivering a tolerant ethos provided it is interpreted correctly. Question five was stated as follows: Do you think there is scope within religious curricula to impart a more tolerant understanding of religion? The rationale behind this question was that Pakistani society is predominantly religious and solutions provided to rectify its current fractious atmosphere will have to come from religion itself rather than from secular education. This question was crucial to determining if curricular reform within a religious framework can be accomplished in principle. The thrust of the responses was on imparting sound religious values. The respondents answered that the kind of religious education imparted today is not true to the spirit of Islam.

Five out of the 20 respondents answered that in principle, religious education can deliver tolerance only if children are also exposed to other worldviews and religious traditions. Participant Nineteen suggested that tolerance can be injected in the curricula only if children are also exposed to Western liberal thought. Participant Sixteen said that religion can foster tolerance for diversity and different viewpoints only if it is not taught as the best religion or the only truth.

Participant Eleven, who defines the current Islamic education as “neo-Islamic” stated that the scope for imparting tolerance is “nullity” (Interview # 11). He said that the neo-Islamic education breeds cults within cults that are defended with religious zeal. He stated that this state of affairs can be rectified by introducing genuine Islamic teachings, but that the revamping would not be complete in the short run, but will require at least two decades of dedicated work. Short of this, with so many cults in existence, the participant expressed pessimism and stated that inter-cult friction would be rampant.

This sentiment was echoed by Participant Five, who said that there are spurious hadith (oral traditions) attributed to the prophet Mohammed, which have been deemed as

superseding the more tolerant hadith that call for tolerance for humanity: Jews and Christians as an example. He stated that, “So all the interfaith friendly and globally appreciative verses of the Quran have been declared null and void or abrogated” (Interview # 5). In other words, he claims that certain hadith, deemed the secondary source of Islamic teaching, have in fact superseded the Quran, which is the primary text by declaring its more tolerant verses null and void. He stated that whereas this has been the case and the radicals have adopted this line to interpret and practice their fanatical version of Islam, there is scope to revive the more tolerant tradition within Islam. He stated the need to defeat the radicals in order to achieve this end.

Of the 20 co-researchers, four stated flatly that intolerance is embedded in religious thinking. They stated that the scope for inculcating tolerance among religious communities and those who educate students is virtually non-existent. These sentiments were echoed more by the participants who identified themselves as secular Muslims or atheist.

Participants who expressed the view that religions accommodate tolerance stated that the answers lay in understandings of the faith that call for peace, harmony, and cooperation among diverse communities. These participants were careful to distinguish between what they considered non-Islamic and its authentic teachings. Those who responded in this manner considered themselves moderate or liberal Muslims and believed that their version of Islam was indeed the correct one.

Participant Eleven stated that, in fact, Islam is the very embodiment of tolerance. He laid the blame squarely on forces extraneous to Islam for the current state of intolerance in Pakistani madrassahs. He stated that if Western countries would leave Muslims alone, and not promote their agendas or Western hegemony, Muslim societies would become tolerant as tolerance is part of Islam. He also stated that Islam embodies much more than just tolerance. He stated that Islam is also about acceptance of differences. All of the participants who affirmed religion’s positive contribution towards a tolerant society also said that it can be accomplished if children are to be exposed to other worldviews.

A misapplication of religious precept is the cause of intolerance but society as a whole also breeds an atmosphere of intolerance. Question six asked if there was a single cause of intolerance in religious schools. The question was stated as follows: What in your opinion is the single cause of intolerance in Pakistani schools? The rationale of the question was geared toward identifying a preeminent cause of intolerance in Pakistani schools so that this identification could possibly lead to a more accurate diagnosis of the problem. The question was also asked to identify possible sources of intolerance extraneous to the madrassah curricula. Sixteen out of 20 respondents stated that intolerance exists because of what is being taught by way of religious education in madrassahs. They stated that the sects fight over minute differences in dogma. The Deobandis fight with the Barelvis and the Shia fight with the Sunnis leading to an atmosphere of hostility. They all cited various aspects of the curricula as the main reason there is such intolerance on the Pakistani religious education scene.

Three respondents stated that economic factors, social inequalities lack of opportunity and even the history and circumstances that led to the creation of Pakistan may provide answers to why there is rampant intolerance in Pakistani religious schools. They stated that the very creation of Pakistan was the result of a sense of distinctness between Muslims and Hindus. Modern Islamists may be exploiting these sentiments once again to sow seeds of dissent among Muslims of different sects.

Figure 3: Age Distribution of Participants

Education must be balanced with secular subjects and a liberal religious education. Question number seven asked: How can intolerance be minimized? The researcher attempted to address the topic from a different angle by asking this question. By asking this question the researcher hoped to identify other, more subtle dynamics of intolerance.

Sixteen participants responded by saying that the answer lay in a more liberal religious education. As addressed previously, they suggested that Islam had the capability of providing a basis for this more liberal religious education. They stated that examples of the prophet's forgiveness, kindness, humility, and tolerance ought to be emphasized in the curriculum rather than the more militaristic aspects of the faith that the radicals may have overemphasized in recent times.

In addition to this, two participants: Seven and 14 stated that the reasons for Pakistan's creation as a state ought to be revisited. The original founding fathers of the country were "non Islamist," and therefore, it is their vision that needs to be realized. In terms of bringing change to the curricula, it was important to deliver structural and systemic changes to the educational system as well, ensuring that those who deliver the curricula are indeed qualified to address the needs of a diverse student population. Diversification of the curricula would also have to include ensuring students get exposure to all kinds of ethical and moral philosophies. Participant One, who advocated such change suggested that madrassah personnel were, in fact very open to such suggestions and complained that policy makers and mainstream society did not engage them enough to realize this.

Out of 20 participants, only one offered educating the women as a solution. Most respondents simply spoke of the need for systemic and curricular changes. Even the female participants did not speak of educating the women as a solution. The suggestion to solve the problem through educating the women came from a male participant.

Four participants alluded to the need for a purely secular education. They asserted this with the full knowledge that presently Pakistan's cultural and educational environment may not allow such drastic change in the educational system. They stated that for such change to occur it would take decades. They believed the answer lay in a more liberal religious education. The other proponents of secular education simply stated the need for such a change outright without qualifying their response.

Most participants also emphasized the need to remove inequalities from society. They stated that intolerance was born out of such inequalities. These factors were responsible for lack of literacy, which leads to intolerance. Economic inequalities also lead to resentment in society laying the foundations for intolerance.

While responding to the questions, the participants were aware of the many types of intolerance. They cited religious intolerance, sectarian intolerance, and societal intolerance as some of the manifestations of the phenomenon. They seemed to be most aware of general religious intolerance, which included sectarian conflict. Participant Eleven appeared anti- Western. He cited Western interference as the main cause for intolerance. As a solution he suggested that Western nations refrain from meddling in Muslim affairs.

Intolerance is of many kinds and exists at several levels. Question eight sought to identify various manifestations of intolerance. It was stated as follows: Can you identify various manifestations of intolerance in the school environment? By asking this question, the researcher attempted to determine how intolerance is being perceived by the participants and what in their opinion defines intolerance. Some co-researchers had difficulty understanding this question and simply expressed their inability to respond to it. Of the participants who answered the question, they listed several manifestations of intolerance. These bits of information could not be categorized as such, as the responses were diverse and variegated but formed the basis of the theme that there are many manifestations of intolerance in the Pakistani educational environment.

Lack of critical thinking was cited as one such manifestation. The participants stated that the students were being constantly brainwashed about religious beliefs. Participant Fourteen described the “multiple levels at which intolerance exists.” He stated in his own words “From social attitudes and behaviour in a highly segregated and inherently inequitable society, to education policy that still hasn’t defined a clear national identity to promote, to curricula that encompass a hybrid of complex learning objectives”(Interview # 14). Participant Ten echoed these observations by stating that intolerance manifested itself in the unequal opportunities for children, in gender inequalities, class differences, and the fact that there are so many tiers of education in Pakistan. She was comparing the public and private school systems in Pakistan. Co-researcher Eleven, who appeared to be somewhat anti-Western also noted that one should not simply assume that there is intolerance toward non-Muslims.

Religious indoctrination is very rampant across the board in Pakistani religious schools and exists on multiple levels. Question nine was stated as follows: How rampant is religious indoctrination in Pakistani religious schools? Eighteen out of 20 respondents answered that religious indoctrination is extremely rampant in Pakistani religious schools. They also considered the phenomenon to be the major obstacle in achieving the goal of secular education. Participant Ten stated that such indoctrination results in the belief that everything is God’s will, therefore, absolving oneself from total personal responsibility in any endeavor whether beneficial or disadvantageous to society. Nineteen participants stated that religious indoctrination is not limited to religious schools and

occurs throughout society. Echoing this opinion and adding to it, Participant Eleven argued that religious indoctrination, in fact, begins in the Pakistani home and that religious leaders are revered. He also stated that ethics and morals are derived from distorted religious teachings.

Co-researcher Ten stated that indoctrination draws form historical data where religious leaders are revered but no lessons in ethics and morality are ever offered that would enable a student to become a better human being. Because of the absence of such teachings, children grow up to feel no remorse for some of the heinous acts they commit, as long as they are performing the ritual aspects of Islam and according to them, keeping their duty to Allah. According to this co-researcher, there is simply too much emphasis on ritual, giving Muslims the false impression that if that aspect of their religious observance is catered for, they will be considered good Muslims.

Co-researcher Nine stated that while religious indoctrination is very common in the madrassahs, some of these institutions tend to be more political than others. These political madrassahs emphasize Islamist ideology. She stated that the madrassaahs emphasized Islamic supremacy rather than pluralism as part of the curricula.

An Islamic model of education must imbibe liberal values and include units that expose students to other worldviews. Question ten attempted to investigate educational models that would foster tolerance among student communities. It was stated as follows: What model of Islamic education do you propose? By asking this question, the researcher wished to identify aspects of education that might be lacking in the existing curricula of the madrassahs.

The majority of the participants identified themselves as moderate or liberal Muslims. Those who identified themselves as secular or atheist also suggested a model similar to that described by the liberal Muslims with a greater emphasis on secular education. However, they realized that a secular education with no religious component may not be an achievable goal in Pakistan's educational milieu.

Participant One stated that the pedagogical techniques should embody an attitude that fosters openness, critical inquiry, and a desire to undertake research on one's own. She stated that the "faculties of induction and deduction and logical problem solving capability" should dominate any instructional format (Interview # 1). She further stated in her own words as follows:

> A model that is inclusive of the diversity within Islam to encourage tolerance, respect, and understanding is good, as is a model that introduces other faiths in a respectful light drawing on similarities and points of convergence rather than just differences/disparities. The model could primarily focus on the fundamental principles and broad concepts in Islam rather than present rules rigidly under the highly contentious category of Muamalaat, personal dealings (Interview # 1).

According to co-researcher Eleven, the Imams themselves ought to be trained. They must be instructed in Islamic religious education as well as knowledge about other religions. He stated that their focus should be on Allah's "benevolence" rather than his role as a "punisher." He further suggested that someone should write a curriculum for the imams in which the main focus ought to be "thou shalt not promote hatred" (Interview # 11). He stated that the proper training of imams, one that is universally accepted is imperative, as most Muslims, students included, look up to imams for spiritual guidance.

Co-researcher Four stated that the current model of Islamic education is actually in contravention to the spirit of the Quran. He stated that Islamic teachings ought to simply focus on practice and rid the religious education curriculum of any indoctrination. He stated that focussing on Muslim practice is more aligned to Quranic philosophy. Curiously, he suggested a "secular" education with a focus on Muslim practice.

Participant Ten, who has served as an educator in an Islamic school, stated that the current curriculum does not do enough to control the spread of violence. She noted that while there may not be blatant calls for violence, instruction is still inadequate in not providing a proactive approach to curbing it, if indeed intolerance is being propagated in the community. She, therefore, suggested that students should be taught more in the ethics and morals of the faith. All sects should have equal representation in the curriculum and children should be allowed to debate the validity of the divergent viewpoints. She also suggested that schools emulate the policies of universities who have open discussion forums for students. As an added safeguard, she stated that students should have firsthand access to the beliefs of other religions and philosophies, as presently they are only being given information by their teachers who may very well demonstrate bigotry and prejudice.

Participant Eleven, who expressed anti-Western sentiment, stated that while he recognizes the need for reform in education, it is not with a view to minimizing intolerance as he sees that as a by-product of Western interference. He stated instead that the Western mind ought to be understood by Muslim students so that they can better address the problems faced by Muslims due to Western interference. He also stated that this would enable Muslim students to stay abreast of developments in science and technology. Participant Sixteen, who recently completed research on the economics of education in Pakistan stated that her model of Islamic education would have to include emphasis on social causes. In her model, there would be a concerted effort to eliminate class differences, an emphasis on simplicity in lifestyles, and greater equality between men and women. She also added that while the Quran and Shariah ought to be taught, they should be taught in an objective manner without necessarily promoting them.

Co- researcher Seventeen stated that the Islamic model in Malaysia ought to be emulated by Muslim countries. He did not explain that model. He also stated that the past ought to be revisited to see how Islamic education was being delivered in bygone eras of its history. He said that any model should be based on the teachings of the prophet Mohammad.

Participant Eighteen, who did not identify herself as an Aga Khani, a minority Shia sect, suggested that the Agha Khani model is the most liberal and progressive. In her opinion this model ought to be adopted by all Muslims. She stated that they have implemented a successful madrassah curriculum in Africa which is "par excellence" (Interview # 18). She said that the same model can be tailored to the needs of a specific sect, or sub-sect among the rest of the Muslims, based on their own tradition and culture. In a powerful statement she also said in her own words: "Islam is a way of life, so we do not need futile laments. A just man does not even wish to possess privileges to the necessary exclusion of others. General apathy becomes a moral disease, and then it becomes congenital if it is imparted to the children from the formative years" (Interview # 18).

Participant Eleven provided an entire trajectory for instituting a tolerant Islamic education. He suggested that the community must take responsibility for the primary education of children. At the secondary level, the state should determine the curriculum. The curriculum should be focussed on character building and the mullahs should be excluded from the entire school program from Montessori to high school. As far as education for both genders, the respondent appeared to believe in the notion of "separate but equal" based on his understanding of Quranic injunctions on gender relations.

Summary

The phenomenological study yielded information about attitudes toward education, what religious curricula are perceived to be delivering, and what they may be lacking. The majority of the participants identified themselves as moderate Muslims and genuinely believed Islam to be a religion of peace and tolerance. The majority were of the opinion that there is tremendous scope within Islamic belief to lend itself to tolerance and respect for all religious, cultural, and ethnic diversity.

All of the participants commented on what an Islamic model of education ought to be like. The major theme that emerged from these interviews and subsequent discussion was the need to introduce a liberal religious education. The proponents of secularism also stated their case plainly however, the majority were of the opinion that in Pakistan's current cultural climate and religious milieu, such an approach would not be forthcoming. They too settled for a liberal religious education.

The majority believed that Pakistan's current climate of intolerance was brought about by the late president Zia-ul Haq's Islamification of the educational system. However, the majority were of the opinion that Zia-ul Haq's Islamic reforms are a misrepresentation of Islamic teachings and ought to be replaced with a more balanced understanding of Islam. Some participants suggested that the mullahs and clergy ought to be relieved from the responsibility of imparting religious education to children of impressionable age. They suggested that the responsibility ought to be assigned to trained teachers who are familiar with the religious discourse among other faith traditions as well as intra-religious dialogue.

A clear desire to obliterate religious indoctrination from the religious schools of Pakistan was evident in the responses of most of the co-researchers. There was an acknowledgment of the presence of rampant religious indoctrination in madrassahs that manifested itself in the increase of intolerance in Pakistani society. The literature review of this study attempted to draw a distinction between intolerance and its manifestations: Violence and terror. It assumed that the former can lead to the latter and most literature reviewed, revealed an undue focus on terror alone as a manifestation of intolerance, thereby, absolving the madrassahs of breeding it at some point.

The phenomenological study has demonstrated that intolerance exists as a phenomenon by itself, independent of its possible manifestations. The phenomena, i.e. intolerance and violence have to be studied holistically and the current study has attempted to shed light on the two separately. Most respondents agreed that madrassah curricula were at fault in breeding intolerance. It is hoped that future studies can build upon this research and explore the phenomenon of intolerance in Pakistani madrassahs separately from violence and terror.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overview of the Chapter

The phenomenological study was undertaken on the assumption and prevalent view among Pakistanis that Pakistani society has become more intolerant in the last few decades. What was known prior to the study was that educational reforms introduced by General Zia-ul Haq included a much broader religious component. Also known in advance was that religious seminaries known as madrassahs were funded in part by Saudi Arabia, emphasizing a more fundamentalist component in the curricula of these institutions (Ali, 2009).

The purpose of the study was to identify the role of madrassahs by examining their curricula and how they may influence the dynamic of intolerance in the Pakistani educational environment. The researcher interviewed 20 experts on the subject in accordance with the accepted methodology of the research. A summary followed by recommendations based on the interviews is presented below. The research questions included the following: Do curricula of religious schools engender intolerance in society? Can religious curricula be designed in a way that will foster tolerance in society through more benign readings of religious literature?

Ten themes emerged from the findings which were clustered and presented in the previous chapter. In answer to the research questions, an overwhelming majority of respondents stated that it was indeed possible to design religious curricula in a way that would accommodate religious attitudes more conducive to fostering tolerance in society. Responses to the second question further specified how this might be achieved. The question asked if the religious literature *per se* could lend itself to more benign readings. Once again the responses of the majority of participants suggested that indeed this was not only possible, but perhaps it was the only means of achieving tolerance in society, as Pakistan was primarily, a religious country that would not embrace the notion of a secular education free of religious content.

The majority of the participants identified themselves as moderate or liberal Muslims. They were quite concerned about the spread of intolerance in Pakistani religious schools. Many of them blamed the mullahs and clergy for propagating extremism in society. Many of them attributed the growth of intolerance and extremism to General Zia-ul Haq, the military dictator who ruled Pakistan for 11 years. It was during his time that the bulk of religious reforms were introduced (Rahman, 2004). Religious education was then made compulsory right up to the university level (Interview # 14). Evident from the responses of the participants was that religious education was not confined to the madrassahs alone, which have sometimes been singled out as seminaries breeding intolerance, but that it was prevalent in Pakistani society.

Participant Twenty, however, seemed hopeful when he stated:

> This is a superficial observation, but I think the current trend is towards greater tolerance all round. I hope this trend continues. There is always the mullah element in the background. This element is not happy at losing its hold on the masses. A backlash is possible. An important factor in this business is the Americans. They are aware of the dynamics of the situation, but stupidities are possible at any point (Interview # 20).

It also appears from the responses of the participants that the time is right to introduce a more tolerant curriculum, as there is a real desire among people to stop the spread of violence, friction, and lack of cohesion in society. The co-researchers all expressed this desire and came up with their own ideas and solutions as to how to achieve this end. They suggested a number of measures including the following that would influence the curricula as well.

The new curricula according to the bulk of the participants would have to include a liberal religious tradition in accordance with the initial vision of Pakistan as formulated by its forefathers. Mohammed Ali Jinnah had stated that Pakistan would be a Muslim nation, but where no one would be Muslim, Hindu, or Christian in a political sense. All would be entitled to religious freedom, equal opportunity in education as well as equal, free, and unbiased access to the law. In other words, Jinnah supported the idea of a secular nation where the majority of the population would be Muslim, but where all would be equal citizens under the law (Munir, 1979).

As expressed by the majority of the co-researchers, this vision was completely erased by the process of Islamization that took place under Zia-ul Haq (Ali, 2009). He introduced the most draconian of measures in terms of Sharia regulations, greatly marginalizing women and revamping the educational system in Pakistan by turning it into something more doctrinaire (Munir, 1979). This increased doctrinaire outlook resulted in an accentuating of religious differences. Again according to participant Twenty:

> From a rather easy-going, laid-back people, we became faction-ridden and self-righteously intolerant. Murderous attacks and counter-attacks took place on mosques of different denominations. Our minorities were reduced to a position of fear. These developments spilled over into the schools. We are still in the aftermath of that era, though I think (hope) some people have woken up a bit. Remember, though, that General Zia ul Haq did this, or overdid this, under American tutelage. At that time it was thought that a critical mass of tunnel-vision fanatics would help to neutralize the 'godless' Soviet agenda for this region (Interview # 20).

Based on the literature reviewed in Chapter 2, the researcher had concluded that terrorism is being researched as a phenomenon almost to the exclusion of other dynamics that may be related to it such as intolerance. The researcher tried to separate the two to determine whether intolerance could be linked to the madrassah education. According to Fair (2004), the madrassahs were somewhat wrongly accused of being hotbeds of terrorism, but the researcher wanted to know if they could still be linked to intolerance due to what they teach.

The respondents in this study were almost unanimous in their response in identifying the causes of intolerance. They agreed that it was being fostered in madrassahs even though this could not be quantifiably and tangibly linked to acts of terrorism. When the co-researchers were asked about the various manifestations of terrorism, they merely cited sectarian conflict, friction, general lack of cohesion, and a few acts of violence, but they did not indicate incitement of hatred leading to direct acts of terrorism. Participant One had commented as follows:

> A school environment exists that is clearly not conducive for developing children’s potential. It is replete with all forms of violence against children including physical, sexual, and psychological, resulting in a cohort of youth that resorts to bullying and inappropriate behaviour in ordinary social life (Interview # 1).

She did not link this repressive atmosphere to international terrorism. She did, however, link a repressive school environment to acts of bullying. A repressive environment in her opinion would lead to resentment, leading to intolerant attitudes.

The phenomenological study attempted to determine if the current climate of hostility among the various sects of Pakistan, along with the inter-religious tensions as seen in the burning of churches and international terror could somehow be traced back to attitudes

taught in madrassahs. From the responses of the co-researchers, it was evident that indeed intolerance was extremely rampant, bred not just by the madrassahs, but society in general. Its linkage with acts of international terror could not be definitively established. The majority of the participants were of the opinion that intolerance in Pakistani religious schools would result in acts of discrimination against Muslim minority sects or religious minorities. Other participants stated that manifestations of intolerance could be seen more in the denigration of foreign cultures and the glorification of jihadists, but that intolerance was not translating into acts of violence in a massive way. Participant Ten stated that intolerance surfaced most in gender apartheid and that segregation was being practiced in certain religious schools. The responses hence ranged from identifying intolerance as being manifested in class differences, educational opportunities, gender relations, but none of the participants identified violence as a manifestation of intolerance, other than the petty bullying that occurs in religious schools. Even participant Fourteen, who described a range of manifestations of intolerance did not list international terrorism or sectarian violence as manifestations of intolerance when he stated that intolerance is manifested "from social attitudes and behaviour in a highly segregated and inherently inequitable society, to education policy that still hasn't defined a clear national identity to promote, to curricula that encompass a hybrid of complex learning objectives" (Interview # 14).

The participants commented on the existence of religious bigotry in the curricula. They also alluded to what was lacking in the curricula. In this regard they commented on the lack of critical thinking and the lack of ethical teachings in the curricula. The majority of the respondents claimed that Islam was inherently a moderate faith and was being misinterpreted by the clergy. What was being taught in madrassahs was not true Islam according to the majority of the participants. They also believed that Islam was being politicized to a point where the incidence of intolerance had increased manifold because of the increased availability of religious education in the Zia-ul Haq era.

The lack of exposure to other worldviews was often cited as another inadequacy in the curriculum. Including a variety of worldviews in the curriculum would help alleviate intolerance according to the co-researchers. A reinterpretation of the existing religious texts was not suggested as a possible means to accomplishing a more tolerant society. Instead, the inclusion of critical thinking skills as curricular alternatives was often cited so as to enable students to examine their own beliefs as well as the beliefs of others dispassionately.

The emphasis, therefore, was not as much on revamping religious texts, but more on including critical thought in the curricula. The participants emphasized the inclusion of more tolerant and benign aspects of Islamic teaching without necessarily reinterpreting religious texts. The participants suggested a more liberal religious education alongside orthodox religious teachings. Most of the participants did not feel the necessity to replace these orthodox teachings with more secular or liberal ones, but rather to emphasize more liberal aspects of the faith which are already a part of its tradition and understood by the majority of Muslims as more authentic than the radical aspects.

Apart from emphasizing the need for critical thought, openness, inclusivity, and curricular change, the participants offered the following opinions: Participant One stated that a recognition of human rights could be imparted based on the ILO models that have worked in Indonesia and Pakistan previously. She did not explain these models. Again teaching methodologies would have to be revamped. It is the participatory approach and the modeling of such behaviors that serve the school system best. "Good advocacy" was also mentioned by this participant as a better instructional method. She also stated that the madrassah employees may, in fact be open to this idea and that their response was an indication that the current climate is ripe for a change for the better (Interview # 1).

Participant Three was particularly aware of how religious content is being imparted. She suggested that teachers be discouraged from asking children questions like if they have fasted or if non-Muslims are going to attain salvation. She was of the opinion that the religious component of the curricula may not necessarily encourage such prompting and is therefore, benign, but it is in how it is being delivered that often generates hostility toward others. She stated that "Islamic teachers will blatantly say that non-Muslims are impure and they should not be allowed to touch your utensils. Many non-Muslim parents name their children with Muslim names so they can blend in and people do not automatically know their religion" (Interview # 3). These dynamics according to Participant Three exist in the educational setting of the country and must be curbed in order to check the spread of intolerance. She stated that the curriculum ought to emphasize God's benevolence rather than his wrath. She also suggested that the curriculum should include the history of religions to widen the perspective of students about the place of religion in society and human history. This would give students an overview of how religions evolved and the commonality they demonstrate.

Participant Five suggested that "the fundamentals of Islamic values" ought to be investigated within a global perspective (Interview # 5). According to this participant, these fundamental values revolve around notions of tolerance and respect for differences and these can be linked directly to the Quranic discourse. Participant Nine reiterated this view, stating that the basic principles of the Quran and Sunnah ought to be included in the religious curriculum, which calls for exploring knowledge despite the hurdles one might face. She emphasized Islam's openness to ideas but stated that this aspect of the faith was lacking in the current curriculum. Participant Ten, who has taught in a religious school alluded to the absence of ingredients in the curricula that fight intolerance. She stated that there is a very strong religious component to the curricula, but it is missing lessons on ethics. She supported the idea of including a strong ethics unit in the religious component of the curricula. Participant Sixteen emphasized the need to teach students that killing in the name of religion is prohibited despite differences in belief.

Participant Fourteen came up with a comprehensive analysis of what ails the current curricula. He stated that the current religious curricula are replete with rhetoric. He stated that madrassahs promote a politically correct version of Islam. He said that anyone who deviates from this politically correct version is considered a "pariah" (Interview # 14). He also stated that Zia-ul Haq's reforms ushered in an era where individuals like Abdallah Azaam, the modern architect of jihadist ideology was included among the

faculty of the International Islamic University in Islamabad (Hassan, 2008). This has given rise to a jihadi culture in the madrassah as well is in segments of Pakistani society that are falling a prey to the influence of the madrassahs. He stated that the question of an ideal religious education model does not lend itself to a neat little package. He supported the idea of a scientific study of the Quran and Hadith. That would imply a critical approach to the study of the religious texts of Islam. He also stated that the exegesis of these texts must of necessity involve a referral to the Abrahamic faiths. Even orthodox scholars like Maulana Maududi have relied on the Bible to "contextualize certain Quranic verses" (Interview # 14). He further added that "an 'Islamic' education inherently contains an appreciation of teachings of other faiths" (Interview # 14).

Co-researcher Eleven also suggested a comprehensive model of Islamic education. He stated that character building ought to form the major thrust of any Islamic education. He emphasized interpersonal relations when it came to imparting a religious primary education. Participant Eleven had commented that the current curricula is neo-Islamic and lacks these important characteristics. In offering his insights he suggested that the secondary level of education should be segregated compulsorily in line with Islamic teachings, although the curricula should be of the same quality for boys and girls.

He further stated that Islamic education should be about spousal relations, women in particular ought to be educated in how to raise children and how to properly perform their duties toward their families. He was particularly adamant about the "separate but equal" notion in delivering a quality religious education to Muslim children. He stated:

> To facilitate understanding of my concept of Islamic education, I may point out at this juncture that the Qur'an is emphatic in the equal, yet individually responsible upbringing and growth of members of both sexes. On matrimony, it ordains, "*Mature men and women contract (Uqad) matrimony,"* and nowhere does it ordain arranged marriages! Therefore, it is of paramount importance that all girls and boys grow into *very confident, highly responsible* and *right-sensitive* individuals before they get launched into life-processes involving vital decisions of career and life (Interview # 11).

From the above discussion on the curricula of madrassahs, it is clear that the participants were more focussed on pointing out the lack of a values-based education. They stated that the curricula emphasize the learning of rituals or doctrine instead. They all seemed to understand Quranic values as essentially tolerant of diversity. These values include tolerance, respect for diversity, open-mindedness, an acknowledgement of the importance of critical and scientific inquiry of various disciplines including religion, and the acknowledgement that human beings live in a global village where global citizenry must be developed among students. The emphasis of the participants, therefore, was not as much on reinterpreting existing religious content but on emphasizing values that are often sidelined due to undue emphasis on the ritual observance of the faith.

Participant Twenty stated that religious education should not be made compulsory in school. He stated that even though Pakistan is not a secular democracy, religion must be

left to the private sphere and ought to be taught in the home. He further stated that religious education should be made available only to those seeking religion as a profession.

When asked about what model he might recommend anyhow, he stated an "eclectic one," which would mean the best elements of the different worldviews would have to be included as part of the curriculum for the sole purpose of developing good values and global citizenry (Interview # 20). The researcher asked for further clarification on what he meant by an "eclectic" model. Participant Twenty stated that the best of what Islam has to offer, if an Islamic education is indeed what needs to be imparted to the students.

According to the literature reviewed in Chapter 2, most of the solutions to Pakistan's fractious educational institutions include secular education, higher literacy rates, better teaching skills, the need for greater licensure requirements of teachers, and better means of delivering the program at all levels of education. The responses from the co-researchers interviewed in this study reveal a more nuanced approach. While the participants who identified themselves as secular envisioned a secular school system free of a religious component, the majority of the participants appeared cognizant of the fact that such a drastic approach may not be suitable for the strongly religious environment of Pakistan. Their thrust was to accommodate the prevalent religious sentiment of the country. Some participants identified themselves as moderate Muslims and sincerely believed that Islam as a faith is socially responsible. They believe it embodies all the necessary ingredients to foster social responsibility and good citizenship in a community, being mindful of the needs of individuals who do not share Islam's vision of society. Participant Eleven even delineated stages in the religious development of a child, assigning responsibility to the home first and subsequently to various educational agencies.

Participant One had stated that the above value system is germane to Islam but made the distinction between the rights of Allah according to Islam and human rights, that in her opinion are not inherent in the human being as envisioned by Islam. She stated that the rights were basically conferred on human beings by Allah's leave and therefore, the opinion that Islam fosters human rights may be debatable. She draws the distinction as follows:

> The concept of rights does not reside in the person (obligations defined are not because every person has equal rights), but in the rights of Allah to whom the duties are owed.
>
> The concept of universality of rights is debatable. Whereas there is an obligation toward all of God's creation, which includes non-Muslims, the focus is on other Muslims mainly, therefore circumscribing civic responsibility to an extent (Interview # 1).

Judging by her statement, the disparity in the civil rights of non-Muslims may occur due to this intrinsic view of the rights of Allah, the human being's foremost obligation

being to Allah according to this view. A civic-minded Islamic education would have to redefine this principle to include an attitude that does not make a distinction between human beings, whether they are believers in Islam or not. Her opinion would be deemed in stark contradiction to that of Participant Five, who stated that the Quran's worldview is universalistic and that the Quran is a "book for all mankind" (Interview # 5).

According to Participant Fourteen, secular subjects are taught in a "quasi secular" manner, with an emphasis on subjects like history, geography, and science, but all of these subjects are "referenced to religion." The religious component, therefore, exists in parts of the curricula that are ostensibly secular (Interview # 14).

According to Sohail (2009), author of the book entitled *Building Green Zone Schools*, education should begin in the family, continued in schools and subsequently in the community. Sohail (2009) suggests that these communities ought to be built on "humanistic" principles in which all citizens enjoy the "rights and privileges irrespective of the religious, ethnic, gender, and class differences." This he suggests would be the stepping stone to building a "green zone" world. Sohail (2009) states that the cycle of violence must be stopped for this goal to be achieved or else the "emotional and social suffering" will continue (Sohail, 2009, p. 4).

Pointing out that Pakistani children do not receive education in their vernacular

dialects such as Punjabi, Sindhi, Baluchi or Pashtu, he concludes that this is the reason they are unable to think critically as they do not have the language skills to do so. As solutions to the ongoing problem he offers the following:

1. The gap between the rich and the poor has to decrease.
2. The curriculum of schools needs to be reviewed so that children can receive scientific and secular education in their mother tongue so that they can develop critical and creative thinking.
3. Health care education and free health care needs to be provided to all citizens so that they can better plan their families
4. The Pakistani Constitution has to become secular and humanistic so that all citizens, especially women and minorities have equal rights (Sohail, 2009, p. 5).

His observations augmented some of the participants' responses to the questionnaire designed by the researcher. His insight about children not being taught in their vernacular languages echoed the opinion of Participant Seven. According to his holistic appraisal of the current school climate in Pakistan, Sohail (2009) confirmed some of the findings of this phenomenological study.

Sohail (2009) further stated that teachers and educators do not have the right to indoctrinate children. Despite his assertion, he recognized that the Pakistani environment may not allow a complete distancing from religious beliefs. As a compromise he states the following:

> In Muslim history there has been a tradition of the spiritual Islam of mystics that accepts and respects all faiths alongside the tradition of political Islam that is militant and encourages teenagers to join holy wars and become suicide bombers. I am of the opinion that we need to promote those spiritual and secular traditions that are peaceful and protect our children from those fundamentalist and militant traditions that promote violence and war (Sohail, 2009, p. 6).

While the majority of the respondents envisioned a liberal education based on the more tolerant and benign aspects of the Islamic faith, Sohail (2009) named the mystical tradition within Islam as the most liberal of Islam's sects. Participant Eighteen also named the sect of Islam that would have the most positive influence on student outcomes in this regard. She named the Agha Khani tradition as providing the answer to the current climate of intolerance in Pakistani religious schools (Interview # 18).

Post Zia-ul Haq Pakistan has seen a surge in sectarian conflict and religious strife. Whether these are most palpable in the madrassahs or in religious type schools or English medium private schools, colleges and universities, religious education is ubiquitous and supports the Sunni school of thought which is the most orthodox of the Islamic sects (Rahman, 2004). This school, however, prides itself in following the tradition or the "sunnah" or practice of the prophet. Therefore, within the Sunni tradition there is scope of emphasizing the more benign aspects of the faith as exemplified by the prophet of Islam. This course of action was pointed out be Participant Fourteen.

The phenomenological study attempted to answer the question: Is the madrassah education linked in some way to violence and intolerance? The respondents clearly saw a linkage between a madrassah education and intolerance, although when asked about its various manifestations, none of them mentioned violence or terrorism as manifestations. This finding is corroborated by Ali (2009), who while recognizing Jihad as one of the central doctrines of Islam, provides a nuanced commentary on what certain madrassahs or religious institutions may perceive it to be. He categorizes them as follows: Domestic jihad against oppression, Pan-Islamist jihad, and jihad to establish theological purity (Ali, 2009).

The domestic jihad is being actively pursued by the madrassah students as they believe they must fight government "oppression" in not establishing Sharia law. Ali (2009) makes the most direct linkage between madrassah violence and madrassah education for this type of jihad. Ali states "Political rallies around madrassahs often become violent" (Ali, 2009 p. 74.). Ali (2009) further goes on to state that it is such rallies where assassination of leaders deemed hostile to Islam are attempted.

Ali (2009) states that the Pan Islamist jihad is perhaps what Western countries are most afraid of. The Pan Islamist movement strives to transcend national barriers to form a universal brotherhood of Muslims. This was manifested in the willingness of Arab and Pakistani jihadists to fight the cause of Afghan Taliban to liberate them from Soviet rule. Ali (2009), however, states that direct linkage of this type of jihad to madrassahs cannot be established definitively. Clarifying the role of madrassahs further, Ali (2009) stated

that contrary to Western perceptions, jihadists do not strive to wipe out non-Muslims, but to establish Islamic governance where religious minorities would come to live as second class citizens. A comparison of the responses to the questionnaire designed for this study, on the other hand, reveals attitudes that strive for equality for all citizens of an Islamic state. The participants who had identified themselves as moderate Muslims attempted to devise a system where a liberal religious education would regard all citizens of Pakistan, regardless of class, religion or ethnicity, equal under the law.

The third category of jihad described by Ali (2009), defines it as "jihad to establish theological purity and prevent adulteration of Islamic doctrine" (Ali, 2009, p. 79). It is linked to sectarianism and may manifest itself in sectarian violence, although the participants of the study did not identify any such manifestation. He states:

> There are two concepts in Islamic tradition that are often misused and manipulated to motivate this form of jihad and often madrassahs students are indoctrinated with these. The concept of *murtad*, which is a term used to describe someone who has left the fold of Islam after becoming a Muslim. According to most interpretations of Islamic tradition, it is permissible to kill such an individual to prevent doubt from taking hold in the community (Ali, 2009, p. 76).

Ali (2009) further goes on to state: "the other concept is the notion of fitnah or "mischief" that may cause disunity. Often disagreement or dissent is relegated to being fitnah and hence jihad is permitted against this" (Ali, 2009, p. 76). Co-researcher Twenty echoed this view when asked to describe the various manifestations of intolerance. He stated the following:

> Murderous attacks and counter-attacks took place on mosques of different denominations. Our minorities were reduced to a position of fear. These developments spilled over into the schools. We are still in the aftermath of that era, though I think (hope) some people have woken up a bit. Remember, though, that General Zia ul Haq did this, or overdid this, under American tutelage. At that time it was thought that a critical mass of tunnel-vision fanatics would help to neutralize the 'godless' Soviet agenda for this region (Interview # 20).

When establishing a link, therefore, between intolerance and violence, this participant came closest to drawing a link between the religious indoctrination in religious schools and its violent responses. The manifestations of intolerance cited by others reflected tensions in the community rather than actual violence. If violence occurred, it was more in the form of bullying and harassment.

Limitations

Educators and experts in the field are often afraid of expressing their true feelings about religion as they fear reprisals from religious fundamentalists. This is particularly true in the face of madrassah boards declaring they will not allow any governmental interference in their functioning (ICG Asia Report 73). This limitation of the

phenomenological study was overcome by ensuring anonymity of the respondents who participated in the study.

Although the material available on the madrassah curriculum is part of public information, it is not uniform in content and curriculum and differs from one particular sectarian school of thought to another (Ali, 2009). The information gathered therefore, did not yield results that could be streamlined easily. Dominant themes, however, emerged from the responses of the participants on the causes and effects of intolerance in Pakistani religious schools.

The data gathered as a result of the study can form a resource for improving situations that pose challenges similar to the problem of intolerance in Pakistani schools. A similar type of worldview is being imparted in other parts of the Muslim world where radicalism has gained momentum (Gesink, 2006). Very young children are being taught an exclusionary worldview that often results in the formation of a resentful mindset (Riaz, 2005). The continuing conflict in the Middle East breeds an environment of hostility that often creeps into the educational system of the countries harbouring animosity. Since the findings of the study attempt to examine solutions to the growing intolerance in Pakistani schools, similar solutions may very well be applied to the educational systems of the countries of the Middle East and North Africa (Gesink, 2006).

Delimitations

The study involved a phenomenological approach to examining the influence of religious curricula in Pakistani religious schools. The researcher traveled to Pakistan briefly to research these institutions firsthand. A few interviews were undertaken in Pakistan. Some participants agreed to participate in the research, but due to shortage of time, they were not able to provide very detailed responses. These communications took place through the Internet.

Despite the limitations and delimitations, the study was able to shed some light on the causes of intolerance in religious schools. The findings of the research can also be compared to international situations that afford parallels to Pakistan’s educational woes. The study also yielded an array of opinions on possible solutions to the problem.

Conclusion

The phenomenological study concluded that intolerance is a factor in Pakistani religious schools and can be partly linked to its curricula. Based on the responses of some of the participants, the study also concluded that now is the time to quell the growth of intolerance. The participants offered a range of solutions, but no single solution emerged as preeminent, leaving tremendous scope for further research on the topic. A value-based religious education was cited as one possible solution to the growth of intolerance in Pakistani madrassahs. This value-based education would not emphasize ritual or differences in dogma as much as it would impart values of charity, compassion, respect for differences, and respect for life that many among Islam’s moderate adherents believe

to be an intrinsic part of their faith. Secular education was offered as another solution. Further studies on the topic can explore the feasibility of some of these solutions.

In order to further explore some of these opinions, the researcher undertook a private interview with Dr. Pervez Hoodbhoy, author of several articles on the state of education in Pakistan. He stated the following when asked if Pakistani society at large views madrassah education favourably:

> The poorest will certainly approve, but the middle class overwhelmingly disapproves. They know the kid won't get a job except as a mullah. Of course, even among the rich you have some parents sending kids to madrassahs but they lie on the (growing) fringe (Dr. Hoodbhoy, personal communication, September 2009).

According to Khaja (2009), the task of reforming madrassah curriculum must be undertaken by educated Muslims. He writes:

> It is not a matter of doubt that the Muslim societies are in need of reform. This will come about only if the Muslims are able to understand the significance of the universal, inclusive paradigm from which the Quran demands the society to be governed with. People who maintain centrality of the value system over historically and culturally conditioned thought, processes and ritual system are less likely to develop attitude of hostility towards each other and also other religions (Khaja, 2009 p. 1).

Though, as indicated by the study, there are several calls for a madrassah reformation, nothing concrete has yet been accomplished by way of implementing such reform (Dawn editorial, 2009). According to the editorial a deal had been reached by the coalition of madrassahs with the government of Pakistan to establish a regulatory body but with little success.

The editorial stated:

> So far the government has adopted a conciliatory approach. The National Education Policy provides for the establishment of a regulatory authority to work under the interior ministry — not the education ministry, as would have been logical. The aim is to bring these institutions into the mainstream by introducing modern curricula to be taught alongside with courses on religion. We do not know if these will also be streamlined because many of these institutions are known to preach jihad and violence. There is also a need to impart instruction through rational pedagogic methods so that students learn religion by applying reason and comprehension (Dawn Editorial, 2009).

The editorial confirms some of the sentiments expressed by the participants of this phenomenological study. Many of them have suggested introducing a critical study of

religion. The majority also suggested introducing a much stronger secular component to madrassah education. This range of solutions can be explored through further studies.

Summary

The purpose of the study was to identify the role of madrassahs by examining their curricula and how they may influence the dynamic of intolerance in the Pakistani educational environment. A range of insights and expert opinions emerged from the study. This information was synthesized and stream lined into ten themes. The researcher interviewed 20 experts to gain their personal insights on their lived experiences pertaining to the phenomenon of intolerance in Pakistan.

The data was collected through Internet correspondence, telephone conversations, and face- to-face interviews. The respondents were scattered over a large geographic area, therefore, personal interviews were not possible in every single case. The interviews took place during the period starting from July 1st 2009 to September 1st 2009.

The data obtained from the interviews was then classified and coded based on the type of response and emerging themes. The emerging themes were subsequently grouped under separate headings based on the transcripts of the interviews. Each participant was asked about their opinion on various aspects of Pakistan's religious education. All of the responses were recorded. The interview was also given the opportunity to review his or her responses in order to verify the authenticity of the record. The research participants were also assured of anonymity to protect their identity. Since many of the interviews took place through Internet correspondence, the transcripts were printed, and the original email communication deleted. The print-outs were then sealed off in a locked case.

The major themes can be summarized as follows: There is accommodation within religious texts to impart a more benign and liberal education. Pedagogical techniques lack critical thinking in the curriculum. The curriculum is not diversified or eclectic, meaning it does not embody the best components of different religious discourse. The curriculum lacks a strong ethical component that emphasizes character building. It is not pro-active in fighting extremist and intolerant behaviour. It is not values-based, but is doctrinaire.

Through these findings, the study was able to add to the existing body of literature on the possible causes and solutions to the problem of intolerance in Pakistani religious schools. The study could not establish a direct linkage between the prevalent intolerance and acts of violence and terrorism. The phenomenological study can serve as a basis for other studies that can research the hitherto somewhat ignored phenomenon of intolerance in Pakistani schools in order to determine if there is a linkage between intolerant attitudes and acts of violence, local or international. Although the participants were not able to comment on the linkage, the study can still be used as a basis for further exploration on the topic.

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