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# **The Divine and The State-Scouting the Influence of Religion on Politics: (A Comparative Analysis of Pakistan Vs India)**

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## **Abstract**

Indian subcontinent was a region having multi religious diversities, after independence from British colonialism Muslims tried to sustain their Identity in the shape of Pakistan however Islam as the state religion influencing the politics from start. Meanwhile Indian political phenomenon also has been strongly influenced by religion; there is a positive role of religion in Indian politics and public opinion. The situation of both can be divided into two phases: the pre-partition and post-partition eras. Islam was one of the most effective and super means for political mobilisation during the pre-partition era, helping to found a Muslim state. However, the leadership's in post partition emphasis on the role of religion greatly decreased till the political goal of nationhood wasn't achieved because people wanted an Islamic system while leadership wanted a secular nature of constitution. This article examines that how the different institutes and organizations were involved to have a great influence on politics in Pakistan and India.

**Keywords:** Religious forces, impacts, politics, Pakistan, policy making, India

## **Introduction**

Religion is to be defined as the belief and worship of Allah and Gods, or any type of worship, and the creeds of their religion can be determined of their own thoughts and beliefs. Politics is the system and

rule that people living as a community make decisions. Politics paved way of the agreement and policies between the people and states that they can live together in a social group of community that makes a country. A large number of groups of people, such as countries, have spent more time making such agreements for group countries to regulate those (Naseem et Al., 2024). The subcontinent had historically been consisted of religious and cultural diversities, including Buddhism, Islam, Hinduism, and Sikhism. The clash of political and religious identities occurred during the fight for Independence from British rule. The political, cultural and social dynamics of both countries were significantly impacted by the 1947 religious division of subcontinent into Pakistan and India, respectively, based on regions with a majority of Muslims and Hindus. The intersection of religion and politics in India and Pakistan has significant implications for regional stability and global security. Understanding the complex dynamics at play is crucial for addressing regional conflicts, promoting minority rights, and ensuring democratic governance.

The influence of religion on politics in these countries also highlights the importance of religion for them and the need for inclusive political systems that respect diversity and protect individual rights. By examining the historical and contemporary contexts of religion and politics in India and Pakistan.(Nasr, S. V. 1994) The partition of the both in 1947, for instance, was driven largely by religious differences, with Pakistan emerging as an Islamic state and India adopting a secular constitution that doesn't mean there is no religious impacts in Indian politics. This historical legacy continues to shape the politics of both countries, with religious identity remaining a potent force in shaping political allegiances and informing policy decisions. By exploring the complex interplay between religion and politics in India and Pakistan, we can better understand the complexities of their relationships and the challenges they face in promoting peace, stability, and democratic governance. (Thapar, R. 2014).

Pakistan's founding ideology, laid down on Islamic principles, has created a complex dynamic where religious forces exert significant influence over political decisions. There is a multifaceted relationship between religion and politics in Pakistan. However Indian political system is somehow apartheid from religion, religion and politics are two separate ideologies having their specific responsibilities however Hindu nationalism is the most dominant force having extreme religious ideologies. (Ahmed, Oxford University Press 2013). After independence Pakistani State elites did not make any appreciable programmes which could establish the country as an Islamic state yet Mullahs and Islamic Organizations ever tried to sustain Islamic provisions in the political area.

While, the state elite's established religious ministry after 27 years of the establishment of Pakistan. The ministry was established to implement or enforce religious programmes for Pakistan and also to control religious elites and their institutions which could be used for political gain. (Sanghro et al., 2020)

On contrary India had a constitution having secular nature but as well Hindu nationalism from ever worked for Political norms. Islam remained a dominant force in politics of Pakistan since the country's inception in 1947. The Objectives Resolution of 1949, which declared Islam as the state religion, set the tone for Pakistan's Islamic republic. Islamic parties have wielded significant influence in Pakistani politics, shaping laws and policies to align with Islamic principles. This has resulted in the Islamization of various aspects of Pakistani society, including education, law, and governance. The impact of Islamic ideology on Pakistani politics has been profound, shaping the country's Identity and informing its relationships with neighboring countries. (Khan, M. 2019).

On contrary religion has also a positive role in Indian politics. It has the potential to improve social cohesion safeguard the rights of minorities. Address social issues and grant various religious communities political influence. Religious organization has also played a role in giving the underprivileged and disenfranchised members of society access to healthcare and education. These groups frequently focus on morality, ethics and spirituality and have spiritual agenda. They want to reach wider audience and are not associated with any specific religious groups.(Naseem et Al,2024). In Indian politics, religion has played a significant role in shaping the country's politics and democracy, with various religious movements impacting its politics over time. From the spread of Buddhism by Emperor Ashoka to the influence of Hinduism and Islam, India's diverse religious history has contributed to its rich cultural tapestry. (Ahmed, I. 2020). This diversity has, however, also led to tensions and conflicts between different religious groups, which have often been exploited for political gain. (Bhargava, R. 2010)

### **Objectives of the study**

The main objective of the study is to evaluate that how public opinion and religion impacts the politics of Pakistan and India. How religion role influence the public opinion negatively and positively. The research article aims that how the Islamic institutes and organizations that are deeply influencing the politics of Pakistan repartitions and post-partition as well how Indian politics is being affected by religious contributions towards policy making.

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## Literature Review

Religion has played a vital role in shaping the politics of Pakistan and India, two nuclear-armed states with a complex history of hostility and cooperation. The review of literature analyzing the influence of religion on politics of both, highlighting the key similarities and differences. Islam has been a foremost and commanding ideology in Pakistani politics since the country's inception in 1947 (Ahmed, 2020). The Objectives Resolution of 1949 declared Islam the state religion, it clears the way for Pakistan's Islamic republic (Khan, 2019). Religious political parties, such as Jamaat-e-Islami, have wielded significant influence, shaping laws and policies (Nasr, 1994). Islamic ideology has embodied Pakistan's constitution and rules regulations according to Sharia. (Ahmed, 2020). Religious parties have played a significant role in Pakistani politics (Nasr, 1994). However, Islamization has influenced minority rights and women's empowerment (Khan, 2019).

Through a critical examine of historical events before and after the partition constitutional provisions, and contemporary developments, this study demonstrates how religious forces have influenced political discourse, policy-making, and governance as contrast to the political arena of both states. (Ahmed, Oxford University Press 2013). In contrast, Hindu nationalism has gained elevation in Indian politics, the emergence of the (religious party) Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in politics.(Jaffrelot, 2015). Hinduism's influence on Indian politics is complex, with some arguing it promotes cultural identity and others seeing it as forbidden (Thapar, 2014). Hindu nationalism has shaped Indian politics and policy (Jaffrelot, 2015), but Hinduism's influence on Indian politics is contested, with implications for minority rights (Thapar, 2014).

Secularism remains a midpoint dignity in Indian politics, despite Hindu nationalist challenges (Bhargava, 2010). This phenomenon is confusing that how Indian politics somewhere seems like indifferent from religious ideologies and somehow there is a great role of Hindu nationalism and Sikhism in political process .While both of them have significant religious influences on Indian politics, key differences emerge. Pakistan's Islamic ideology is to be hold sacred in the constitution, whereas India's secularism is protected by the constitution (Ahmed, 2020; Bhargava, 2010). Religious parties playing a more prominent role in Pakistani politics than in Indian politics (Nasr, 1994; Jaffrelot, 2015). Understanding the crux and complicated dynamics of religion and politics in Pakistan and India is giving a pivotal importance we must have a glance on foreign policy, regional conflicts. The study revolves around the influence of religion in all the state institutes through different ideologies and organizations, there

are some key differences and similarities in administration of both the states that are highlighted, second part of study is also based on the critical analysis that how foreign policy, law making bodies and public opinion in both the countries is affected by religious contributions .

### Sources and Methodology

This article is based on qualitative methods. It is mostly based on secondary sources of research for analyzing. Qualitative data is based on non numerical data, such as academic journals, languages, books and news articles. Qualitative data perceived a non numerical data for analysing and interpretation and one can understand that how individual wants to give meaning to their social realities. Such type of data can be held using diary accounts in depth interviews by using ground theory and thematic analysis .Most of the scholars conducted the research on Religious impacts on politics but not provided the enough informative contexts about the closest relationship in both of them in Pakistan and a secular nature about this concept in Indian politics. It is hoped that this study will clear the ambiguities somehow. Here's a statistic data analysis 2024 of both the countries based on religious division.

#### Pakistan

Religious Division	Muslims	Christians	Hindus	Mirzais	Others
Percentage	96.46%	1.6%	2.4%	01%	0.1%

#### India

Religious Division	Hindus	Muslims	Christians	Sikhs	Others
Percentage	79.8%	14.6%	2.3%	1.7%	0.7%

### Historical context

The historical context of religion and politics in India and Pakistan is essential to understanding the contemporary dynamics. Pakistan's creation in 1947 was motivated by the desire for a separate state for Muslims. The country's founder, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, envisioned a secular state, but Islamic ideology was supreme and soon dominated the political discourse. The first Constitution of the country 1956 declared Pakistan an Islamic Republic, and subsequent governments have hyped this identity. India's struggle for independence was entangled by religious

tensions between Hindus and Muslims. The partition of India and Pakistan in 1947 further aggravated these tensions. India's founding fathers, especially Jawaharlal Nehru, envisioned a secular state, but religious forces have reshaped Indian politics. While both of them severely influenced by religion in politics yet have unique nature with unique aspects differs from each other. (Jalal, Cambridge University Press 1990).

### **Analytical Comparison**

The Influence of religion on Pakistani and Indian politics shares some striking similarities. \*Religion-based Politics\* is a common thread running through both countries, with various parties using religious identity to mobilize voters and advance their political framework. In Pakistan, Islam plays a central role in shaping national identity and informing policy decisions, while in India, Hindu nationalism has been a dominant force in politics but secularism is also protected by the Indian constitution. (Journal 127-137 et al., 2024)

### **Similarities**

**Identity Politics:** Political parties of both states using religious identity to gain votes and consolidate power through representatives.

**Communal Polarization:** Religion is ever used to create tensions between different ethnic groups, leading to communal violence and social unrest in the country.

**Religious Rhetoric:** Political leaders in both countries mostly show the dominance of religious language and symbols to get votes from the public.

**Policy Advocacy:** Religious considerations influence policies and decision-making, with politicians advocating for laws and policies that align with their religious beliefs.

**Foreign Policy :** Pakistan's foreign policy is also shaped by the power elite used Islamic identity to shape the country's foreign policy. Indian foreign policy is also affected by religion Hinduism and Muslim community.

**Kashmir Issue:** The most disturbing similar issue is Kashmir which is still hanging out since 1948.

**Promoting Secularism:** Both nations scuffle with the role of secularism in their political systems.

Understanding these similarities is necessary for navigating the complex dynamics of South Asian politics.

### **Differences**

The differences in the influence of religion on Pakistan and India's politics:

1. Islamic ideology: Pakistan foundation was laid on the principle of Islamic ideology, which is shaping its laws, institutions, and policies.

2. Sharia courts: Pakistan has a balanced system of Shariah courts, which adjudicate according to Islamic laws.
3. Blasphemy laws: Pakistan's blasphemy laws prescribe severe penalties to offenders, including death, for perceived insults to Islam.
4. Madrassahs: Religious seminaries (madrassahs) playing a dignified role in Pakistan's education system.
- 5...Secularism: India's constitution dedicates secularism, ensuring equal treatment of all religions but in theory.
- 6...Hindu nationalism: Hindu nationalist parties, like the BJP, promote Hindu values and cultural identity having extreme thoughts of nationalism.
- 7...Personal laws: Indian constitution allows different religious communities to govern personal laws (marriage, inheritance).
8. Ayodhya dispute: The Babri Masjid-Ram Janmabhoomi dispute highlights the tensions between of the two different ideologies.
9. Separation of religion and state: India maintains a separation, while Pakistan's Islamic ideology darken this line.
10. Minority rights: India's secularism protects minority rights; whereas Pakistan's Islamic laws often disadvantage minorities.
11. Extremism: Pakistan struggles with Islamic extremism, while India faces Hindu nationalist extremism.
12. Religion's role in politics: Pakistan's Islamic ideology dominates politics, whereas India's secularism balances religious influences.
13. Impact on minorities: Pakistan's Islamic laws often marginalize minorities, whereas India's secularism protects their rights.

### **Pakistan's Religious Forces**

Islam has a central role in shaping Pakistan's politics since its inception. The country emerged in 1947 as a separate state for Muslims, and Islamic ideology was declared as the foundation of its sustainability. This has led to a complex relationship between religion and politics, with Islamic principles influencing society's laws, institutions, and social values. In the pre-partition era, thinkers like Jamal-ul-din Afghani contributed to improving political Islam's thoughts, aiming to reform and reunify Muslim society in the sub-continent and dignified this view. After partition, Islam's influence on Pakistan's political discourse became even more pronounced, with a stronger phenomenon. (Ahmed et al., 2013). Islam has been influencing still various aspects of Pakistan's politics and ever remained a conflict among liberals and Islamic believers: Pakistan's foreign policy is also shaped by the power elite using Islamic identity to shape the country's foreign politics, Islamic principles have informed laws and regulations, Islam has influenced social norms and values. The role of

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Islam in Pakistan's politics has flared debates about modernity, secularism, and the balance between religion and state. Some argue that Islam's influence has promoted a sense of national identity and unity, while others confront it to consider as a source of division and conflicts.

Overall, Islam is acting as a main actor in Pakistan's foreign policy even overall politics it has a complex character reflecting the country's historical, cultural, and ideological landscape. Recent massacres of religious minorities in Pakistan have focused new attention on the protection of minorities in a country that is generally perceived to be a homogeneous Muslim (Iftikhar Malik, 2002). Jamaat-e-Islami, Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam, and Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan have significant electoral influence. Islamic Organizations have arousing influenced on Pakistan's politics since its derivation. The country Pakistan emerged on the map of the world in 1947 as a separate homeland for Muslims living in South Asia, and Islam was conceived as the foundation of its ideology. This has constituted a complex relationship between religion and politics.

### **Mullah Military Alliance**

Pakistan has been ruled by the military for much of its existence (Iftikhar Malik, 2002). Islamic theocrats and military-authorized persons have historically collaborated to enhance national security policies. The Mullah-Military Alliance has played the most contagious role in shaping Pakistan's politics. This alliance refers to the collaboration between Islamic clerics (Mullahs) and the establishment (military & bureaucracy) of the country to advance their common interests. The alliance appeared during General Zia-ul-Haque's regime, where Islam was used to legitimize his tyrannical rule. (Jalal et al., 1990). The Mullah-Military Alliance has contributed to Pakistan's struggles with extremist ideologies, terrorism, and political instability. Some analysts argue that this alliance has enabled the rise of jihadi movements within Pakistan.

### **Blasphemy Law**

Strict laws governing blasphemy have been used to suppress disunity and minority rights. Constitutional amendments and the Blasphemy Law have deprived minorities of religious freedom and violated their fundamental rights as citizens. In addition, the decision of the current military regime to join the US-led coalition against terrorism has provoked popular grudges and an internal backlash by extremist groups with renewed violence against minorities. (Iftikhar Malik , 2002). Pakistan's blasphemy laws were introduced in the 1980s under General Zia-ul-Haque's regime, with the objective of protecting Islamic core values and norms. The laws were further amended in 1990 and death penalty was added for blasphemy. (Nasar et al., 2001)



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Blasphemy laws have significantly influenced Pakistani politics:  
Blasphemy laws have fueled the fire in religious extremist groups and polarization.

Laws are used to target the minorities, particularly Christians, Ahmadis, and Hindus.

Blasphemy laws are sometimes used to silence political opponents.

Pakistan is criticized for its blasphemy law at international level.

### **Sharia Courts**

Sharia courts have a significant impact on Pakistan's politics, particularly since the introduction of the Sharia Act of 1991. In General Zia-ul-Haq's regime 1983, Sharia courts were established, including local level courts presided over by a religious judge named Qazi, and a Sharia bench in the Supreme Court in Islamabad (Khan, 2017). This step was a significant shift towards Islamization of the country's legal system (Nasr, 1994). Sharia courts played a crucial role in shaping Pakistan's legal framework, and ensures that Sharia does not dominate but plays an significant role in framing the domestic legal structure (Lau, 2017). The Islamization of laws and policies during Zia's regime had far-reaching consequences, driven by political rather than spiritual motivations (Ahmed, 2020). Islam served as a unifying force for Pakistani regimes, resulting in laws that prioritized Islamic principles over modern democratic values (Jalal, 1991).

### **Talibanization**

Talibanization has significantly influenced Pakistan's politics, cultivating an environment of extremists and terrorist groups. The phenomenon of Talibanization refers to the spread of the Taliban's extremist ideology, which has infiltrated various aspects of Pakistani society, including politics, education, and social norms.

- Power ending in regions like FATA (Federally Administered Tribal Areas) allowed Taliban militants to establish tyrannical rule.
- The Taliban's excessive interpretation of Islam has appealed to some Pakistanis, particularly in areas with least economic opportunities and education.
- Afghanistan's Taliban regime and other external factors have contributed to the spread of Talibanization in Pakistan.

Pakistan will effort to counter Talibanization, so it's required a multifaceted approach, including political, social, and economic reforms. Consequently, Talibanization has an influence in politics either negatively or positively.

### **Madrassa Reforms**

Madrassa reforms have been an audacious issue in Pakistan, with significant implications on the country's politics. Madrassas provides

religious education. However, the government has failed to lead reforms to register and regulate madrassas which resulted in the sector existing as an unorganized entity. Overall, madrassa reforms are essential for Pakistan's political stability, social compatibility, and economic development. Addressing the challenges and complexities enveloping Madrassa education will require sustained efforts from the government, civil society, and international partners.

### **C-PEC and Islam**

China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects have beamed debates on Islamic finance and economic progress. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is a game-changer for Pakistan, offering a unique aspect for peace, prosperity, and regional cohesion. But the role of Islam in politics, and how does it intersect with CPEC? Islam plays a significant role in Pakistan's politics, and CPEC is no expulsion. Pakistan's coherence with China, which started in the 1960s, was relatively driven by the country's wish to support Kashmiri Muslims. This cooperation became stronger with laps of time, for both nations sharing a pledge to regional peace and stability.

CPEC can reduce extremism by promoting economic development and cooperation in the region. As Pakistan becomes more accommodated into the global economy, it finds it harder to recruit and operate for Islamic groups. However, some argue that CPEC may lead to Islamic radicalization excessively if not operated carefully. Overall, the connectivity of CPEC and Islam in politics is complex and crux to understand. While CPEC is offering many advantages, it's hard to address the potential risks and challenges affiliated with Islamic extremism. C-PEC is ensuing its benefits to all the citizens of Pakistan regardless of their faith by promoting economic development, regional connectivity, and social cohesion.

### **Indian Religious groups**

As the Indian Political system is secular in nature it doesn't accept any interference of religion in political matters. But in view of some scholars religion has been used positively in Indian politics to promote social connectivity to enhance interfaith dialogue, and worked out for minority rights. However, it has also been exploited negatively to promote religious collation, abolish certain groups, and incite violence (Jafferlot et al.2007). Religion has been used positively in Indian politics to promote social cohesion, encourage interfaith dialogue, and advocate for minority rights. However, it has also been exploited negatively to promote religious segregation, suppress certain groups, and activate violence. (Thapar et al., 2014).

Inclusive governance in Indian politics has been an important focused area, the purpose is to promote equal opportunities for all citizens and advocating the minority rights and their representation in Political processing. Women's active participation in politics nowadays has seen a positive trend, with some states like West Bengal. Research scholars argue that women representation in politics has a positive impact on policymaking and governance, handling the issues like gender prejudices, and violence. (Hassan, 2009). Despite the barriers like challenges stubborn, including unequal opportunities in different aspects of life, social inconveniences, and institutional compulsions. To get rid of these issues like legislative reforms, providing education and awareness campaigns can suppress this ethnicity. The religious groups and organizations are hitting the politics of India are as under (Z et al., 2009).

### **1. Hindu Nationalism**

Hindu nationalism is the most dominant force in Indian politics represented by the Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP) and others, such as the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). Hindu nationalism has a pivotal role in Indian politics to shape the India's identity and coalition with neighboring states. The growing of Hindu nationalism is strongly tied to the Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP), which is a leading dominance in Indian politics. The BJP's ideology is based on a concept that improved Hindu identity and culture. (Jafferlot C, 2015). Hindu nationalism has impacted Indian politics profoundly, shaped the country's identity, connectivity with neighbor nations, and internal appealing. Hinduism is now working barbarically as a Fascist party in India.

BJP's Hindu nationalists are making the policies in a way as:

Ram Temple conflict

Cow protection laws

Anti-conversion laws

### **2. Islamic Organizations**

Islamic religious organizations also have played a vital role in shaping Indian politics, particularly in promoting the interests of Muslim communities. The All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (MIM) party has been declared a key player which is promoting the rights and representation of Muslims (Khalid D, 2019).

Electoral Politics\_: Islamic organizations have influenced electoral outcomes by motivating Muslim voters; and creating a coalition among the candidates who regulate their interests.

Social Justice\_: These organizations ever promoted social justice and equity addressing problems like education, healthcare, and the upgrade of the economy within Muslim communities.

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**Community Development:** Islamic organizations are considered the welfare of the community by taking developmental initiatives, like building up mosques, schools, and health facilities through hospitals. Islamic organizations impacted on Indian politics, cultivating the higher representation and advocacy for Muslims. -Muslim parties and organizations influence policies on:

Minority rights, Education, Social welfare

### **3. Sikh Autonomy**

Sikh parties advocate for:

Greater autonomy

Cultural preservation

Protection of Sikh identity

### **4. Christian lobby**

Christian organizations are influencing the policies on:

Education

Healthcare

Social justice, equality.

### **Conclusion**

The impacts of religion on politics in Pakistan and India have diversities. Islamic ideology has shaped the country's constitutional framework, policy-making, and governance. Understanding this crux dynamic is harsh for addressing Pakistan's socio-political cruxes, hardships and to promote inclusive governance. In Pakistan, Islam plays a central role in shaping national identity and informing policy decisions, with the country's founding principles rooted in Islamic ideology. This has led to a unique relationship between religion and politics, where Islamic parties and organizations significantly impacted. In contrast, Indian political scenario is characterized as a mixture of Hindu and nationalist forces. However Indian constitution has prominence of secularism but Hinduism is also a leading and dominant force which is working having extreme ideologies targeting the Muslim community. As the Hinduism shines up, this nationalism has increased the fierce the tensions between secular and Islamic forces in India. The historical context of separation and still ongoing conflicts over Kashmir has further complicated the relationship between religion and politics in Pakistan and India both. As per aspect of religious force's dominancy in the states, it is condemned that there is only Hindu nationalism is supreme in Indian politics or only Muslim Religious groups are prominent in Pakistani politics.

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