

Analyze extremism in Pakistan as a major social issue.

Extremism in Pakistan: A Major Social Issue

Pakistan is facing religious extremism, ethno-political extremism and anti-state extremism. This extremism is caused by ideological clash within society, exploitation of religion in politics, divisive curricula, lack of inclusive governance and hate speech fueled by the misuse of social media. This extremism is causing security issues, economic losses, weakening of state authority and erosion of state's reputation at international level.

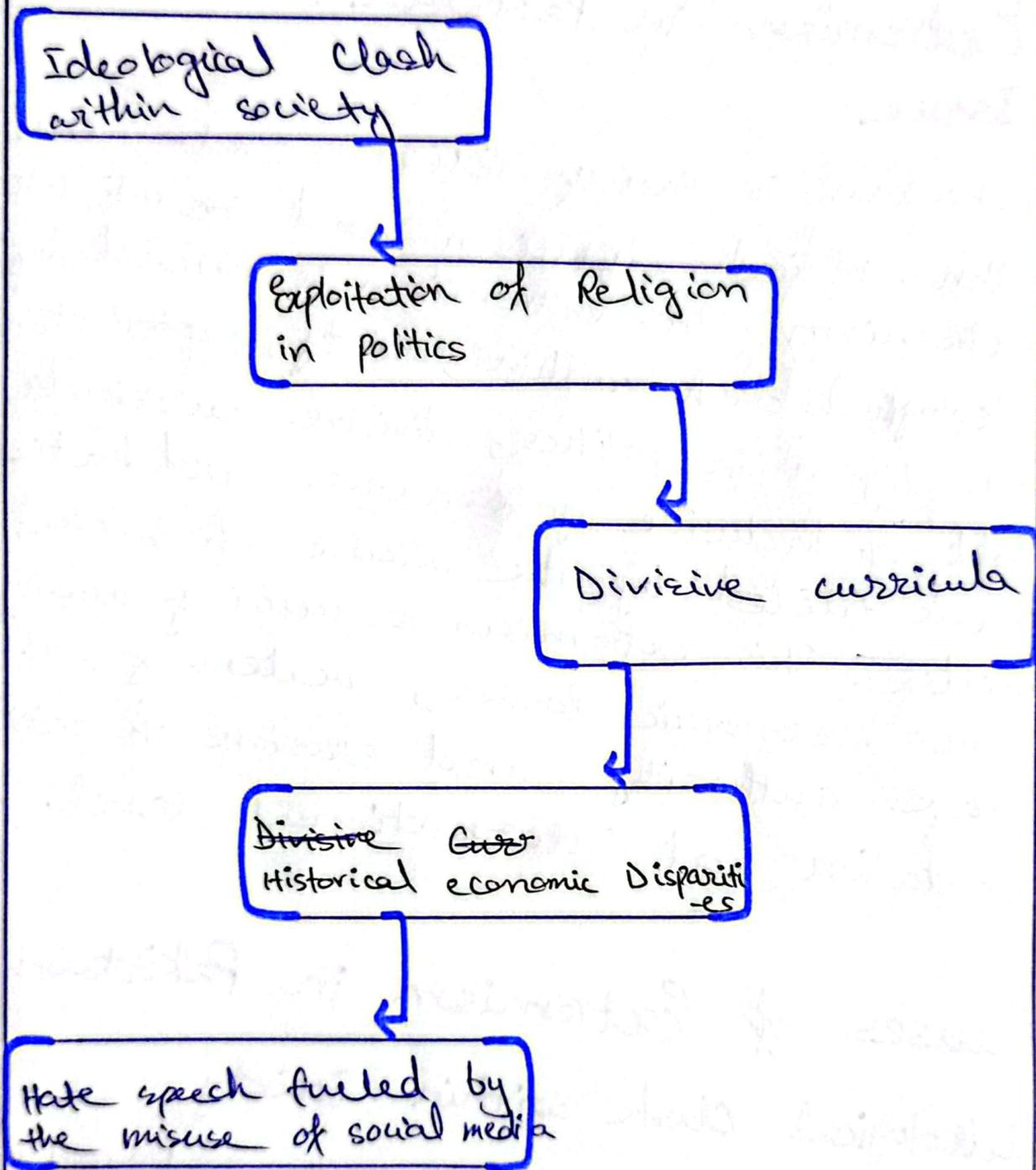
1- Causes of Extremism in Pakistan

i- Ideological clash within Society

The rise of *lshkar-e-Tangri* and *Sipah-e-Sahaba* (hardline Sunni Deobandi groups) against *Sipah-e-Muhammad* and *Tehreek-e-Jafri* (Shia Islamist groups) reflect ideological clash within

society. This is a major cause of religion extremism.

Fig: Causes of Extremism in Pakistan



ii- Exploitation of Religion in Politics

For example: In Zia era, religion was used to shape public narrative in favor

of "Jihad versus Communism". This led to birth of Taliban, Haqqani network and TTP. Moreover, exploitation of Blasphemy laws in Pakistan's politics is fueling extremism and it is quite evident from Assassination of Salman Taseer Case (Dawn, Religious extremism in Pakistan, Sept 2020).

iii. Divisive Curricula

Example: Zia's Islamization era coincide with Jihad-oriented and sectarian oriented literature which played a key role in fueling religious extremism (Tribune, History of Divisive Curricula, Dec 2024)

iv. Historical Economic Disparities

Example: Balochistan accounts for 55% of Pakistan's mineral outcrop area. It has one of the world's largest ^{untapped} copper-gold reserves such as Reko Diq, it has natural gas reserves in Sui, Pir Koh; however, its HDI index stands at 0.341 which is significantly

lower than the national average : 0.51. This reflects historical economic disparities in Pakistan which is a major cause of rise of BLA that is an insurgent group (Al-Jazeera, Historical economic disparities in Pakistan, Aug 2025)

v. Hate Speech fueled by the misuse of social media

Low digital literacy in Pakistan makes society an easy target for extremist writings or anti-state narratives circulating on social media. External saboteurs wage information warfare against state for fueling anti-state extremism. For instance, ^{from 2020 to 2025} nearly 280 fake media outlets promoting hate speech against state ^{institutions} were allegedly accused of being reported by Srivasta Group home to New Delhi Times (EU Disinformation Task Force, Hate Speech ^{fueled} in Pakistan from India, July 2025)

Impacts of Extremism on Pakistan

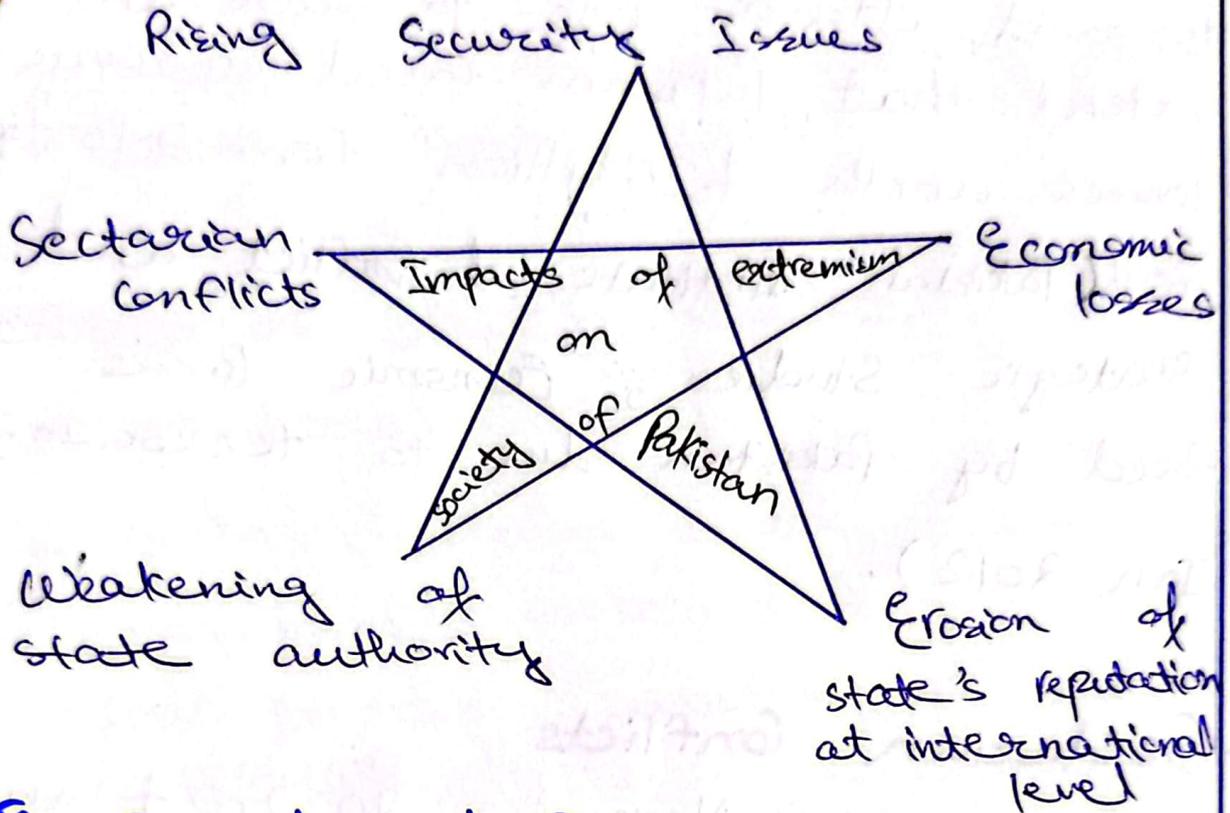


Fig: Impacts of Extremism on Pakistan

i- Rising Security Issues

Example:

Due to growing radicalization in Pakistan, terrorism is rising due to which there has been an unprecedented surge of 74% in terrorism in Pakistan in 2025 compared to 2024 (The Guardian, Rising Terrorism in Pakistan, May 2025)

ii- Economic losses

Example: Due to religious extremism fueled

in the era of war on Terror, the terrorist attacks rose to such an extent that Pakistan faced economic losses worth \$26 billion from 2010 to 2011 (Pakistan Institute of Conflict and Strategic Studies, Economic losses faced by Pakistan due to terrorism, Jan 2012).

iii. Sectarian Conflicts

Example: On November 20, 2024 an ambush on Shia convoy in Kurram District killed 34 people (The News, Sectarian violence in Pakistan, Nov 2024). This clearly reflects the impact of extremism.

iv. Weakening of State's Authority

Suicide bombing in Balochistan on Feb 7, 2024 before elections; and suicide bombing in Peshawar Police line in Jan 2023 reflect weakening of state authority caused by rising terrorism.

primarily caused by rising extremism in Pakistan (The Economic Times, Weakening of state Authority due to rising extremism in Pakistan, Feb 2024)

v. Erosion of State's Reputation at International Level

In Global Terrorism Index of 2025, Pakistan ranked ~~first~~ second which has eroded state's reputation at international and diplomatic levels (The New York Times, Terrorism and State's ^{eroding} reputation of Pakistan, May 2025).

Concluding Thoughts

Pakistan is facing religious, ethno-political and anti-state extremism. This extremism is primarily caused by ideological clash within society, historical economic disparities and hate speech fueled by the misuse of social media. This extremism is causing security issues, economic losses, weakening of state authority and erosion of state reputation at international level.