

**Tehreek-E-Labbaik Pakistan**

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Abstract

The rise of digitalisation that led to the rapid increase in the usage of social media platforms has unfortunately strengthened religious extremism in an already polarised society of Pakistan. This study aims to determine the extent to which a far-right religio-political party Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) has propagated religious hatred content against both Muslim and non-Muslim communities on social media. Moreover, this study also explores the manner through which TLP has spread content based on religious bigotry on digital space. Framing theory was applied while analysing the speeches of TLP leaders'. The research methodology employed to test the hypothesis and address the research questions was quantitative questionnaire-based survey. The collected data was presented using the tools of graphical representation to make it easy for the readers to easily interpret the factual information. The findings of the online questionnaire and analysis of TLP leaders' speeches addressed the three research questions of the study. The results show that TLP has used digital media as a tool to spread religious hatred on cyber space, since it has promoted sectarianism against Muslim communities and exploited sensitive religious issues – blasphemy and finality of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) – against non-Muslim communities through their speeches there were later uploaded on digital media. The researcher has recommended the government authorities to initiate legal action against the leaders of TLP for instigating religious hatred under Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act, 2016.

Keywords: *Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP), Religious Hatred, Social Media, Sectarianism, Blasphemy, Finality of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).*

Introduction

Pakistan – the land of pure has seen yet another victim of religious hatred. Tahir Ahmad Nasim, reportedly a mentally-challenged person who was accused of committing blasphemy, was shot dead in a courtroom in Peshawar by a 19-year-old madrassa-going student named Khalid Khan on August 26, 2020. The incident took place days after the video of late Nasim went viral on social media, wherein he had falsely proclaimed himself a prophet. The video was shared as a tool to spread religious hatred, labelling Nasim an Ahmadi, however, after his murder, it was confirmed that Nasim had left the Ahmadiyya community long ago (Khan, 2020). This isn't the first time that a person is killed due to the propagation of religious extremist content on social media.

Religious hatred – enmity against an individual or a group of people based on their religious beliefs or lack of religious beliefs – is a longstanding menace that has been thrashing the social fabric of Pakistan for decades. The basis for the independence of Pakistan wasn't religious hatred for Hindus and other minorities, it was anti-majoritarianism. The founder of the country, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, had all his life struggled to make Muslims believe that the religious majoritarianism of Indian National Congress (INC) would never allow them to flourish in the United India. Thus, it can be concluded that Jinnah was never of the view to enforce the same ideology on Hindus and other religious minorities by pronouncing the country as an Islamic empire. Wasim (2020) argues that Jinnah's reluctance to not exclude the religious minorities from the state affairs is an evidence that anti-majoritarianism – not hatred against Hindus and other communities – was the foundation of Two-Nation Theory, or at least it shaped a very substantial portion of it. All these values and principles of Jinnah were not only forgotten, but intentionally expunged from national memory after his early demise, subsequently religious hardliners started manipulating the Two Nation Theory to meet their own political ends.

In the light of Jinnah's 11 August speech that he gave in the country's first constituent assembly meeting, it can be rightly said that Pakistan was created on the principles of equal citizenship for all, and the religious minorities were supposed to enjoy equal and full constitutional rights. However, three severe wars with India – a Hindu-majority country; becoming an ally of US and supporting militants against the soviet forces in Afghanistan; and the state's policy of appeasement while dealing with the extremist and sectarian elements, among other issues and events, have religiously polarised the society of Pakistan that often leads to the spread of religious hatred against non-Muslim communities living across the country.

History and Making of TLP

Before commenting on the history and making of TLP as an organized political force in the country, it is pertinent to mention the series of events that turned the religious movement Tehreek-e-Labbaik Ya Rasool Allah (TLYRA) into a registered political party TLP in 2017.

In late 2010, Salman Taseer, then Punjab governor, decided to defend Asia Bibi, a Christian woman who spent nine years on death row after she was falsely accused of blasphemy and acquitted by the Supreme Court in 2018. The late governor also expressed his displeasure with Pakistan's blasphemy law, specifically Article 295-C, while expressing his support for Asia. There have been numerous instances of it being abused to settle personal scores, and he believes it's time to revisit this man-made rule. Despite his opposition to the law and support for his friend Asia, Taseer was fatally shot by his own security guard on August 4, 2011, as a result of Pakistan's controversial blasphemy law. Qadri was praised by Pakistani religious groups after the death of Taseer. Protests against Qadri's arrest and trial, which they saw as unjust and in violation of Islamic teachings, were held in the country's major cities by a variety of Sunni-Barelvi religious groups.

It was formed in 2015 by Sunni Tehreek, the Fidayan of Khatm, Aalimi Tanzem, and Pakistan Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat, with the fiery cleric Khadim Rizvi as its leader. TLYRA serves as a nexus for the aforementioned four religious' communities. When TLYRA was founded, it had four main objectives: preserving the current blasphemy law, mobilizing people to create an effective lobby for the quick and safe acquittal of Mumtaz Qadri, defending the finality of Mohammed and launching a crackdown on the Ahmadiyya community in Pakistan.

Pakistan's Supreme Court upheld the ATC's decision to sentence Mumtaz Qadri to death after President Mamnoon Hussain rejected his plea for clemency in October 2015. (Masood, 2016). Clerics and religious hardliners marched in protest of the government's decision to execute their hero, an unrepentant murderer, on February 29, 2016. In a country where 96% of the population were Muslims, TLYRA gained public respect as the sole defender of the Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) integrity and honor.

Later, the TLYRA used Qadri's religious rite, known as the chehlum, to rally their supporters to protest the hanging of Qadri in the Parliamentary chambers of Pakistan. The TLYRA's top officials spoke at the event, praising the criminal and the crime he committed in the name of their faith (Haider, 2018). Rizvi, the leader of TLYRA, began discussing other socio-religious issues in order to gain more followers. While preaching, he would openly criticize the government and religious minorities for taking progressive actions.

Tehreek-Labbaik Pakistan, or TLP, was formed in 2017 by the extremist religious party, TLYRA, to run for office in Pakistan (TLP). Thus, TLP has exploited Islam, spread religious hatred and used delicate socio-religious issues like the blasphemy law and the finality question to its advantage since.

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) for their political gains. Their religious-hatred campaigns on social media against Muslim and non-Muslim religious communities are examined in the study using quantitative questionnaire-based survey analysis as the research methodology.

TLP and Spread of Religious Hatred on Social Media in Pakistan

It wasn't long after announcing their intention to enter politics that the far-right TLP, led by fiery cleric Khadim Hussain Rizvi, began spreading anti-religious bigotry on social media. On religious grounds, the TLP attacked Nawaz Sharif, its political rival in Lahore's NA-120 by-election campaign in 2017. Every time a TLP member spoke about Mumtaz Qadri during that election campaign, the party vowed to exact vengeance on the PML-N, which was then in power. After Khadim Rizvi called Nawaz Sharif a blasphemer for speaking out against forced conversions at Holi in 2017, the government did nothing to stop the TLP's hate campaign (Hussain, 2017).

In November of 2017, the TLP blocked the main highway between Rawalpindi and Islamabad in protest of parliamentarians and voters taking a new oath. Election Bill 2017's oath on the finality of prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was changed from "I solemnly swear" to "I declare". The TLP stoked religious animosity against the Ahmadiyya community in Pakistan by alleging that the PML-N lobbied to change the language of the oath in the Election Act of 2017. TLP's Faizabad Dharna in 2017 was largely ignored by the media, but the party was able to mobilize its supporters across Pakistan via social media, according to Basit (2020).

The Ahmadiyya community and TLP leaders like Khadim Rizvi were the targets of religious intolerance during the 21-day Faizabad Dharna in 2009, when speeches by TLP leaders like Rizvi were delivered against PML-N leaders like Zahid Hamid, then federal law minister. All of those speeches went viral on social media thanks to the combined efforts of the TLP digital media team. With social media, TLP has honed its ability to communicate effectively, according to Basit (2020). Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube were shut down by Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) because they were used by TLP to incite religious hatred following Faizabad operation reported by English language daily Pakistan Today.

Asia Bibi's case was about to be decided by the Supreme Court of Pakistan a year later when the TLP launched a full-scale religious hatred campaign against her, naming institutions and government officials in their speeches that were later posted on social media. In 2020, (Ahmed).

Asia Bibi was acquitted by the Supreme Court of a false blasphemy case due to the lack of evidence and clear contradictions in witness statements, prompting TLP to announce nationwide protests in October 2018. In spite of a directive from TLP's leadership

instructing the mainstream media not to cover TLP protests in major cities, the organization's top leadership was unfazed.

Pakistani army generals and top brass were urged to revolt against COAS General Qamar Javaid Bajwa by TLP leader Pir Afzal Qadri, who issued religious decrees calling for the assassination of Supreme Court Justice Asif Saeed Khosa and urging Pakistani army generals and top brass to declare revolt against him. Pakistan was on the verge of civil war when thousands of TLP workers went berserk after hearing the TLP leaders' speeches on digital media. It was pointless to try to control the Internet again after the government's previous attempts to do so had already damaged social media platforms. When it comes to 2018 (Farooq, 2018). Digital media tools were used to mobilize a lunatic segment of Pakistani society that disrupted civic life during the TLP protest, according to the study's author.

Ten days after the PTI government signed an agreement with Pakistan's military, law enforcement agencies were ordered to target the TLP's most senior leaders. Sedition charges were filed against TLP leaders like Khadim Hussain Rizvi and Pir Afzal Qadri. For inciting religious hatred against the Lahore High Court (LHC) judges who made the decision regarding Khadim Rizvi, two TLP activists were arrested in 2019 by the FIA's cybercrime wing.

Rationale for the Study

For an inclusive and progressive Pakistan, there must be a recognition and appreciation of Pakistan's diversity of ethnic and religious backgrounds. There are two major threats to Pakistan's pluralistic culture and society today: religious extremism and sectarianism. The safety of the country's religious minorities is no longer guaranteed.

Even death threats and religious decrees of apostasy have been issued to those who have spoken out against certain practises and laws on social media. Social media preachers portraying an increasingly intolerant and violent culture, says the researcher, could have disastrous consequences and cause widespread unrest in society. To combat religious hatred on social media, Pakistani policymakers and law enforcement agencies may find this study useful.

Militant organisations in Pakistan are predominately affiliated with the Sunni-Deobandi and Ahl-e-Hadith schools of Islamic thought. These groups include Lashkar e Jhangvi (LeJ), Harkat ul Mujahedeen (HuM), the Jaish e Mohammad (JeM) group, and the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). Al Qaeda, ISIS, Hizb ut Tahrir (HuT), and Lashkar-e-Taiba are among the banned Hadith's organisations (LeT). TLP, on the other hand, is the only Sunni-Barelvi sect of Islam that has ever been involved in violence (Zahid, 2018).

There has never been an outbreak of violent Barelvi adherents in the country before, and the researcher is concerned. A peaceful and moderate interpretation of Islam has always been more aligned with the Sunni-Barelvi sect's mystical Islamic practices, which serve as an urgent threat to terrorists who kill innocent people in the name of religion. This is no surprise. Because of this, the nation's unity and safety are jeopardized by their shifting ideology and attitude. Hardline Islamist groups have adopted the same tactics of violence as the TLP since its rise. Barelvi Islamists have followed suit." Those who follow the Barelvi school of thought and those who follow other schools of thought seem to be coming together more and more.

TLP's stance on blasphemy law is so dangerous that it's hard to comprehend. Thousands of TLP supporters have access to Khadim Rizvi's lectures and speeches on their social media accounts. Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter have all been used by the extremist religious political party to gain new members and disseminate anti-religious propaganda.

Considering the aforementioned facts in mind, the researcher believes that it has become a more and academic duty to thoroughly examine the TLP movement, its religio-political outlook, and specifically its use of digital media as a tool to spread religious hatred in Pakistan. All the above-mentioned publications and data-based reports have thoroughly analysed the menace of religious hatred in Pakistan, its history, rise, and aftermaths; the way its propagation of content in the cyber space multiplied with the increasing usage of digital media platforms in Pakistan was also comprehensively studied. However, as far as TLP and its use of social media platforms for spread of religious hatred content is concerned, the researcher believes that many different dimensions and concepts are left to be scrutinised to know more about the working mechanism of TLP.

Despite the gaps and limitations of the above-mentioned publications and data-based reports, they were very helpful in providing a clear guideline to the researcher, through which he will be able to highlight all the missing aspects in this study to make it more inclusive. To be very specific, the study will closely evaluate the frames and approaches used by TLP leaders in their speeches and statements given to spread religious hatred against both Muslim and non-Muslim communities.

Objectives of the Study

To analyse how TLP has spread religious hatred in an already polarised society of Pakistan.

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To analyse the speeches and sermons of prominent TLP leaders through which they have spread religious hatred.

To determine the policy-based actions or strategies for government authorities to counter religious hatred speech of TLP on digital space.

Research Questions

R1: To what extent TLP has used social media platforms as a new medium to spread religious hatred in Pakistan?

R2: To what extent TLP has ventilated sectarianism while spreading religious hatred against Muslim religious communities on social media?

R3: What are the significant sensitive religious issues exploited by the leadership of TLP in the process of spreading religious hatred, especially against non-Muslim religious communities, on social media.

Methods

In this study, an extremist religio-political outfit Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) is taken as a case study to discuss its role in the rise of the propagation of religiously-motivated hatred content and campaigns on social media in Pakistan in the recent years through using quantitative questionnaire-based survey analysis as the research methodology. Taking the research questions of this study into account, close-ended questions have been asked in this research. Since the population of Pakistan is comprising 60% of youth, so in this study, all the students who are currently studying in the private and public universities of Pakistan are considered as the population. The researcher of this study has used convenience sampling as a technique to select the sample for data collection. In this study, the students of seven prominent universities representing all the provinces and regions of Pakistan are selected as a sample to get diverse opinions for data analysis.

Applying convenience sampling, the students of following universities were selected with a sample size of 85:

Students of University of the Punjab represented Punjab

Students of University of Karachi represented Sindh

Students of University of Peshawar represented Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

Students of Balochistan University of Information Technology, Engineering and Management Sciences represented Balochistan

Students of National University of Sciences & Technology represented

Islamabad

Students of Karakoram International University represented Gilgit-Baltistan

Students of University of Azad Jammu & Kashmir represented Kashmir

Results

Since the sample size is small, so the researcher hasn't used any data analysis tool or software to calculate the data, the Google Forms graph provided enough data to conclude the results. The findings of the questionnaire-based survey research have proven the fact that the usage of social media platforms, especially Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, has been increased and still growing with passage of time. The alarming reality is that with the increase in the usage of digital platforms, the spread of religious hatred has also been increasing exponentially, as observed by the respondents of the questionnaire. The results show that apart from TLP, other religio-political parties also frequently propagate religious hate content on digital media for political gains. As far as the TLP is concerned, the findings of the survey very clearly indicate that TLP not only spread religious hatred, but also promote sectarianism and exploit sensitive religious issues to target non-Muslim religious communities on social media.

Before answering the research questions, it is pertinent to mention that 97.6% of the questionnaire respondents know about TLP and its chief Khadim Hussain Rizvi, moreover, 85.9% of the respondents know that TLP actively uses digital media, and most importantly, majority of the respondents are aware of the postings and activities of TLP on social media. These statistics are mentioned just to make sure that the results of this survey hold significant worth since the respondents are well-aware individuals with respect to the research topic in question in this study.

The first research question (R1) deals with the extent to which TLP has used social media platforms as a new medium – since TLP doesn't get much coverage from the mainstream media – to spread religious hatred in Pakistan. The results of statement 1 evidently answered this question, making it very clear that TLP has used social media as a tool and a new medium in spreading religious hatred to a great extent, as 74% of the respondents supported this opinion in the survey.

Moreover, the results prove the fact that the leaders of TLP often promote sectarianism and exploit sensitive religious issues such as blasphemy and finality of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in their speeches and statements that are later posted on social media. The results of statement 2 undeniably confirms the fact that TLP has been using digital space to promote sectarianism against Muslim communities in Pakistan. The detailed analysis about TLP's promotion of sectarianism is discussed in the part of answering next research question.

misinterpreting certain Islamic principles, core beliefs, and laws related to Islamic jurisprudence in their sermons that were later posted on social media. At least 85% of the respondents have expressed their agreement with the aforementioned statement.

The findings of survey approves the opinion that TLP has significantly exploited two sensitive religious issues, blasphemy and finality of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), to primarily attack and spread religious hatred against non-Muslim religious communities that are residing in Pakistan. In total, seven statement were drafted in the questionnaire regarding TLP's hostile attitude towards non-Muslim communities; the results of these statements are comprehensively analysed in the part of answering the last research question. Since, promotion of sectarianism and exploitation of sensitive religious issues were also taken as indicators to measure religious hatred, thus it can be comfortably said that TLP has spread religious hatred to an enormous extent.

The second research question (R2) deals with the extent to which the leaders of TLP has ventilated the flames of sectarianism while spreading religious hatred against Muslim religious communities on social media. This research question has been extensively answered by the findings of survey as four statements namely 2, 3, 4, and 5 were drafted while taking this research question into account. The response of statement 2 undeniably answers the research question as 80.2% of the respondents are of the view that TLP has been using digital space to promote sectarianism against Muslim communities. The researcher has specifically analysed TLP's aggressive behaviour towards three mainstream Muslim communities; Shia, Deobandi, and Wahabi.

The results of statement 3 verify that the leaders of TLP often promote sectarian religious hatred against Shia community in their sermons that are then uploaded on social media platforms, nearly 78% of the respondents share this opinion. The responses of statement 4 point out that religious hatred against Deobandi community has also been spread by TLP on social media through igniting the flames of sectarianism. Furthermore, the results of statement 5 accomplish the fact that Wahabi community is also among the victims of TLP's sectarian religious hatred speeches that are later posted on social media; nearly 78% of the respondents share this opinion.

The third and last research question (R3) deals with the significant sensitive religious issues that were and still are being exploited by the leadership of TLP in the process of spreading religious hatred, especially against non-Muslim religious communities, on digital media. To answer this question, three statements namely 12, 13, and 14 were drafted. The results of statement 12 confirm that TLP abuses sensitive religious issue while spreading religious hatred against non-Muslim communities in their statements and speeches that are then posted on social media platforms. The statement, however, didn't address the exact sensitive religious issues which have been exploited.

The results of statement 13 reveal that blasphemy is one of the significant sensitive issues that has been frequently exploited by the leaders of TLP while spreading religious hatred mainly against non-Muslim communities; out of total 85 respondents, 75 unequivocally expressed this opinion. Moreover, the findings of statement 14 disclose that the issue of finality of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is

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another significant sensitive issue that has been misused by TLP as a tool to attack and spread religious hatred against non-Muslim communities, primarily the Ahmadiyya community, in their speeches that are later posted on digital media.

Analysis of TLP Leaders' Speeches

The researcher has also analysed a number of speeches and sermons given by the TLP leaders, especially its chief Khadim Hussain Rizvi that were still posted on various YouTube channels. Initially these speeches and sermons were uploaded on the official YouTube channels – namely Allama Khadim Hussain Rizvi Official, Rizvi Media, TLP, and Labbaik TV, being run by the social media team of TLP. Later they were also uploaded and shared by other YouTube channels as well. The social media team of TLP has a very integrated network through which they have been running a number of official and unofficial YouTube channels to spread religious hatred against both Muslim and non-Muslim communities on digital space for political benefits.

In one of his speeches, former patron-in-chief of TLP Pir Afzal Qadri had been openly inciting hatred against Muslim and non-Muslim communities. "When someone asked me to not criticise Jews, Christians, Hindus, Deobandis, and Wahabis, Ahmadis and all the other religions and schools of thought of Islam, I questioned him, 'Shall I become a non-Muslim'," the TLP leader said in a public gathering (Islamic Videos, 2017). TLP chief Khadim Hussain Rizvi in one of his sermons said, "I am speaking against Deobandi community, if [government] wants to stop me, first they need to stop those who don't believe in the honour of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)," (Barvi Media 92 & Movies Production, 2017). Rizvi in his another sermon while replying to a speech of Deobandi scholar termed the latter a 'dog' and said, "Even the dogs don't pee on your graves," (TLP Media Rawalpindi, 2020).

Even the renowned Islamic scholars and most powerful and influential personalities aren't safe from the badmouthing of TLP leaders, mainly Khadim Rizvi. The TLP chief heatedly abused Dr Tahir-ul-Qadri for condemning the killing of late Salman Taseer and terming Mumtaz Qadri a murderer (Hafiz Hamza, 2016). In another occasion, Rizvi abused and criticised Tariq Jameel for preaching Islam to actor Veena Malik and not honouring Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in a proper manner in his speeches (Latest News, 2017). When Mumtaz Qadri was hanged in 2016, the TLP chief vehemently vilified former premier Nawaz Sharif and chief of army staff (R) General Raheel Sharif – both were the most powerful men in the country at that time (Nouman Yousaf, n.d.) . Moreover in 2018, when Asia Bibi – a woman falsely accused of blasphemy – was acquitted by the Supreme Court, Pir Afzal Qadri openly incited

violence by saying, "These three judges who have acquitted Asia Bibi should be murdered according to the teachings of Islam. If their subordinates can't have access to them, then their drivers or security officers should kill them. General Bajwa isn't acceptable to us in anyway. The Muslim generals should rebel against him. Imran Khan has proved that he is a Jewish child," (Dajjal - The AntiChrist, 2018).

TLP chief Khadim Rizvi while spreading religious hatred against the Ahmadiyya community in one his speeches at a public gathering rigorously abused the religious icon of Ahmadiyya community and said, "Even the urine of dog and pig is better than
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Mirza Ghulam Ahmad and his teachings," (Rizvi Media, 2017). Recently, when the issue of Minority Rights Commission was raised, Khadim Rizvi had outrageously criticised the PTI government for talking about the 'rights of Ahmadis'. He also spread religious hatred against the Ahmadiyya community and accused them of 'lobbying' to get into the commission (Allama Khadim Hussain Rizvi Official, 2020).

In one his speeches, the TLP chief openly insulted the Hindu community while calling them the 'drinkers of cow urine' (Allama Khadim Hussain Rizvi Official, 2017). In another occasion, Rizvi said: "Hindus are the most discriminatory community in the world. Only the swords and horses of Mehmood Ghaznavi could deal with them," while addressing a political gathering in Kashmir (Rizvi Media, 2018). When the PTI government decided to construct Hindu temple in Islamabad, Khadim Rizvi not only strongly opposed the move but also propagated religious hatred against the Hindus saying, "Islam had come to demolish the Hindu sculptures, not to design new ones," (Allama Khadim Hussain Rizvi Official, 2020).

While addressing his followers at a gathering in mosques, the TLP chief glorified those who killed Hindus and Sikhs in Kashmir and said, "Those who conquered Kashmir, killing Hindus and Sikhs, they are praised in both worlds," (Understanding Sikhi, 2020). When the PTI government had announced to construct Kartarpur Corridor and Gurdwara Darabar Sahib Kartarpur at Punjab's Narowal district, Khadim Rizvi denounced the government and propagated religious hatred against Sikhs. "Pakistan wasn't made to facilitate Sikhs, it wasn't made to construct their religious worship places, and it wasn't made to equate Sikh's waste [while referring to Kartarpur Corridor] with the State of Medina. Those who love Sikhs shall migrate to Amritsar," the TLP chief had said (InKhabar, 2019).

Conclusion

After scrutinising the research topic and conducting an in-depth quantitative questionnaire-based survey research, the findings of the study decisively answered the key research question that deals with the extent to which TLP has spread religious hatred on social media. The results clearly indicate that the leaders of TLP have propagated religious hatred content against both Muslim and non-Muslim communities through their statements and speeches that had been shared on digital media. The frames and dangerous approaches used by the TLP leaders such as

promotion of sectarianism and exploiting sensitive religious issue have been comprehensively examined.

In the introduction chapter, the main ideas and broader themes of the study are discussed, especially the history and making of TLP as an extremist religio-political party, to better understand its foundations, way of functioning, and political interests. While studying the existing literature on the research topic, some gaps were observed since apart from a handful of newspaper reports, no comprehensive research has been conducted specifically on TLP and its use of digital media to spread religious hatred. Thus, the research through its findings shed some light on the unexplored areas regarding the research topic. To analyse the frames and approaches used to TLP while

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spreading religious hatred on social media, framing theory was applied to get desired results.

Then quantitative questionnaire-based survey was used a research methodology and university-going students were selected as the population of the study. After applying convenience sampling, the students of seven prominent universities representing all the provinces and regions of Pakistan were selected as the sample of the study. In the discussion and analysis chapter, all the research questions were answered and all the hypothesis were addressed with the support of results of the study, and in the end an analysis of TLP leaders' speeches was presented to further prove the key findings of the study.

Key Findings of the Study

After conducting survey research, it has been found that TLP spread religious hatred against both Muslim and non-Muslim religious communities on social media.

The findings of the research indicate that the leaders of TLP spread religious hatred through promoting sectarianism against Muslim communities on social media.

TLP spread religious hatred through exploiting sensitive religious issues – blasphemy and finality of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) – against non-Muslim communities on social media.

TLP has adversely affected the social fabric of Pakistan by spreading religious hatred on social media.

Limitations of the Study

Due to certain time and resources constraints, only 85 respondents were taken as the sample of population. So, the researcher didn't get the chance to record some opinions and information that could have further enhanced the results of the study. Although the universities from all the provinces and regions of Pakistan were selected, but many few students from Balochistan and Azad Jammu & Kashmir filled the questionnaire, most probably due to internet connectivity issues. Due to lack of

resources, the researcher couldn't explore more data collection methods, especially interviews and focus group discussion. The results of the study could have been more accurate if a variety of data collection methods were used.

Recommendations for Government Authorities

Taking the alarming findings of the study into consideration, it is strongly recommended to immediately approach the management of Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube – through writing an official letter since these social platform don't have their offices in Pakistan – to request them to permanently suspend the official handles of TLP as the religious hatred content being shared from their accounts has been affecting the Pakistani society at-large and it could create serious security issues across the country. Meanwhile, the government authorities must initiate legal action against

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the top brass of TLP for continuously instigating violence and spreading religious hatred under the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act, 2016.

The government must also coordinate with social media corporations to combat the propagation of internet content that incites violence. Moreover, Facebook, Twitter, and Google have already publicised about promising platforms like the “Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism” that was launched to assist researchers in this regard. Implementing finest practices will diminish vicious rhetoric while ensuring easy access to social media in Pakistan. Another line-of-action authorities should consider is keenly countering religious extremism through propagating more moderate teaching of religion. Through NACTA, in collaboration with civil society, speeches and sermons by moderate Islamic scholars such as Javed Ghamidi should be promoted at mass levels to counter extremism on social media.

The state of Pakistan seriously needs to consider the aforementioned recommendations since it a need of the hour to draw a line between freedom of expression/speech and hate speech. If the state continues to tolerate the hostile attitude of TLP towards both Muslim and non-Muslim communities, then the other extremist groups would start doing the same for various purposes, and eventually the general public of the country would suffer. The government of Pakistan needs to force the writ of state against the extremist religious groups like TLP to counter the narrative that state-impunity is being given to such radical elements.

Future Research

The researcher of this study strongly believes that further research is needed to closely analyse the words, themes, concepts and ideologies used by the leaders of TLP in their speeches while spreading religious hatred. In future studies, the researcher could explore and use critical discourse analysis as a research methodology to better understand the communication mechanism of TLP with respect to power. Moreover, future researches may be conducted with an aim to

design an effective strategy or policy to counter religious hate speech on digital space while not curbing freedom of speech.

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