

**PIPS REGIONAL
CONSULTATION ON
PROMOTING SOFT
APPROACHES IN
COUNTERING TERRORISM
& EXTREMISM IN
PAKISTAN**

Pak Institute for Peace Studies organised a two day regional consultation in Islamabad on November 18-19, 2021, on “promoting soft approaches in countering terrorism & extremism in Pakistan”. The participants included current and former lawmakers, members of the federal cabinet, former senior military officials, religious scholars, representatives of civil society organizations, noted academics, economists, a former ambassador and senior journalists.

Various panelists throughout the two days were unanimous in advocating that for comprehensive peace in Pakistan the state must have the sole monopoly over use of force. They also urged the inclusion of soft or non-violent approaches in Pakistan’s counter-terrorism and counter-violent extremism policy frameworks.

In the final session of the consultation’s opening day, the Charter of Peace campaign was formally launched. The campaign is part of PIPS’ focus on building sustainable solutions towards peace.

The consultation included participants from Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab, Sindh, the federal capital, Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan.

SUMMARY OF VARIOUS SESSIONS

DAY 1

Pak Institute of Peace Studies Director Muhammad Amir Rana welcomed the participants and detailed the objectives of the consultation and the overall project. He stated that in Pakistan's efforts against terrorism and extremism, kinetic measures, and reactive and piecemeal actions alone may offer some band-aid but were not addressing the root causes. He expressed the hope that the participants' expertise and input would help put together a charter for holistic and well thought-out measures to pursue peace by tackling and preventing violent extremism. He said the focus on the discussion would not be on the future rather than the past. The speakers were requested to share solutions rather than reidentifying the problems known to most participants.

A presentation by Najam U Din, project manager for PIPS, highlighted various dimensions of soft approaches in Pakistan's policy framework, underlining also the extent of their footprint and impact.

The focus of discussion in Session 1 was religious thoughts, social structures & dialogue among communities



Maulana Attaullah Shahab, former advisor to the Prime Minister on Gilgit-Baltistan Affairs, said that the Pakistani society was called a religious society but it was unfortunate that it usually adopted a very narrow-minded approach regarding the attributes of religion where it encouraged dialogue and co-existence with other beliefs and thoughts. He said that over the last few years, inter-faith differences had led to serious violence, including in the region he hailed from. He said that it needed to be constantly emphasized that diversity was not negative, the clashes and violence arising out of differences was negative. The Objectives Resolution in the Constitution of Pakistan recognized the rights of minorities. The problem was implementation of these laws. If some aspects of the religion were the cause of the problem, it should be the religion itself that should be part of the remedy too. He said the first responsibility was on the clergy and religious organizations in addition to the responsibility of the state. He lamented that all efforts for inter-faith harmony were presently being made at the federal level and some set-up at the provincial level was vitally needed. He also spoke of the responsibility is of the society at large and response from civil society.

Dr. Syed Jaffer Ahmed, director Pakistan Study Centre, University of Karachi, said that soft approaches only worked when hard issues had been tackled. He also that the other thing was that some efforts towards soft exercises had already been conducted in the past. It was time to audit the outcome of such exercises. He said that he was no religious scholar, but as a social student who regularly read religious publications, all sectarian publications claimed that Islam was a religion of peace and yet in their efforts to prove their beliefs to be right, they usually overlooked the respect they needed to offer to the others' beliefs. He said how could the notion of dominance over other religions and sects be reconciled with peaceful co-existence. He said that he interpreted dominance mentioned in Quran in the moral sense that Islam's values and ethics were globalized but not in the political and militant sense it was being used in the society. He strongly argued that the state should be kept away from religious affairs, but added that it had a role when religion became a source of disturbing law and order situation in the country. The role of the state was not just to use force against its citizens but also to create a domain for interfaith dialogue where such efforts continued. Religious extremism arose from a person's efforts to prove the intensity of his affiliation with the ideological community. To deal with this issue, the most important role was of teachers and religious scholars. He advocated not to limit teaching to lecture halls but providing students some opportunity to interact with people of other beliefs. Extending bookish teaching to real life experiences would held the youth practically experience harmony rather just hear lectures on it, he concluded.

Maulana Abdul Haq Hashmi, head of Jamaat-e-Islami, Balochistan, said that there is extremist behavior on both sides, on the side of the state and religious scholars. He said that while Islam respected freedom of belief, the world must understand that this freedom should not extend to the degree of hurting a community or disrespecting holy figures. He suggested greater interaction among madrassah



Allama Tahir Ashrafi,
Special Advisor to the PM on
Religious Harmony

students from various sects. He said that when religious scholars sat together, they spoke of peace, but in private sittings many poisoned the minds of their followers against each other. He said this double standard should end.

Allama Tahir Ashrafi, Special Advisor to the PM on Religious Harmony, in terms of tackling extremism, the responsibility did not fall entirely on religious scholars. The society at large needed to change its attitude. He said the religious scholars did not have any legal authority or force to implement measures. All they could do was give a code of conduct, but ensuring its implementation was for the state and society. The news media was far more powerful than religious scholars, the PM's advisor added. He said that the problem was mainly with the state authorities. The state's writ was so weak that it could not take action against religious extremist groups and ended up with compromising and reaching agreements with them. What Pakistan was facing was a social crisis, which could not be resolved through individual

efforts; it requires response at the social level with all stakeholders playing their role, Allama Ashrafi said. He said that it was unfortunate that in dealing with extremism the focus was on religion but the issue was far deeper than merely religious.

Ghazi Salahuddin, rights activist, journalist, social and political analyst, referred to comments by an earlier speaker about extremism being a problem in the European society as well but being criticized only in Pakistan. He said while we criticized the European society, the prime feature of those societies was their open environment, which was protected under the rule of law. In Pakistan, it was extremely difficult to have interfaith dialogue in an open environment. He said that moral deprivation in Pakistan was linked to the issue of religious extremism. “We are the least developed country in South Asia in terms of literacy, employment, etc. In parallel to this growing social deprivation, we are seeing a rise in religious discourse,” he said. “We follow double standards. Most religious leaders judge their own sect based on the ideals but judge others on the basis of their actions.” He said the issue was of intellectual and moral downgrading and despite a rise of the religious discourse and action on the surface, the moral values of the religion had not really penetrated the society. Rational debate became difficult when preference was given to religious beliefs over intellect, the noted journalist concluded.

Allama Akbar Zahidi, representative Wafaqul Madaaris Shia, Quetta, stated that the challenge of extremism had started from the very beginning of the country as the citizenry was unclear about the objective of the creation of Pakistan. The supremacy that Islam speaks of is in the moral sense. “We claim that Islam gives a complete code of life with solutions to all problems of humankind but how can we convince anyone of Islam’s supremacy given that we cannot even find a solution to our sectarian clashes.” A joint curriculum should be developed under Wafaqul Madaris with teachings of all sects, he added. There was a social divide between the youth in religious and secular sections of society. Arranging student tours between university students and madrassah students could help bridge that gap.



Maulana Raghieb Naemi, head of Jamia Naeemia, Lahore, said that the rise of extremism in the Barelvi sect should be viewed in the context of a decline in their socio-political power in Pakistan. Following the Afghan Jihad, in the last few decades there had been a rise of Deobandi extremism and the main target of that extremism was the Barelvi sect. Jamiat Ulema Pakistan was once a very active political party that gradually lost its political power. The Barelvi leadership had lost its representation in parliament. Khadim Rizvi of the TLP filled that gap by establishing a new party. He started with issues on which majority of Barelvis agreed like blasphemy and sanctity of the Prophet’s name.

The rise of Barelvi extremism was a response to the lack of attention by state to the sect and its pref-

erence towards the Deobandi sect. There was also a socioeconomic angle to this problem in addition to the question of political power; the Brelvi sect had also lost control over economic resources. The decline in leadership was evident from the nature of sectarian clashes. Most sectarian debates were led by second-string leaders with limited credentials. They must be having inside support of top-tier leaders. “Before suggesting new programs, we need to look at the ones that were initiated earlier. Paigham-e-Pakistan initiative has almost lost significance,” he added. The most important element is to establish an environment of dialogue and questions. In Pakistani society, fear had ended the space for asking questions, he concluded.

Syed Ahmed Banori, Principal Darulaloom Banori Town, Karachi, stated that never in history had an ideology manifested itself without support and logistics behind it. The focus needed to be shifted from the ideology to where the logistic support was coming from. The nation state system had challenged the religious political thought and religious quarters were currently struggling to revive their lost status. “Extremism should not be always tied with religion. It is a human behavior. Extremism is when you try to impose your ideology on others, whether it was religious ideology or any other, he added.

Session 2 focused on the Constitution, citizenship, governance & regional perspectives

Aziz Ali Dad, social scientist and journalist from Gilgit said that in order to understand the situation in Gilgit Baltistan (GB), one needed to analyze an anomaly in the constitutional structure of Pakistan regarding the legal status of GB. Since GB was out of the social contract with the state, its residents did not enjoy the political rights available to other citizens of Pakistan. Despite a high literacy rate, the discontent in the GB is leading to a rise in extremist ideologies that were anti-state and anti-peace.



He said the curriculum celebrated outsiders and did not include local history and culture. Social segregation in the GB society was of such level that neighborhoods were allocated to Sunni, Shia or Ismaili communities, with no one allowed to visit other neighborhoods. “Multiple human identities have been reduced to a singular sectarian identity,” Aziz Ali Dad said.

“Religion has become a dividing force while culture is the main glue that tie the society together.”

He said that first of all a clear legal status should be given to GB, by either making it a province or making it autonomous. Secondly, Islamization was damaging the local religious culture. A distorted religious discourse that excluded people had taken hold there. It could only be countered through celebrating the cultural values that tied all community through common values and customs. Thirdly, Islam should be individualized and should not be linked with the state and social affairs. Finally, regarding soft approaches towards extremism, the role of women was integral. Gender mainstreaming of religious discourse was, hence, required.

Rafi Ullah Kakar, Director, Strategic Planning and Reforms Cell / public policy & development specialist from Balochistan, said that it was crucial that discussion and debate should be normalized in all spaces, as the citizens did not have the freedom to have a critical dialogue on religion. He said the conflict in Balochistan had different dimensions, including state-led, sectarian, Baloch insurgency, etc.

He added that there was then a wider problem of military-led authoritarianism in the province. Since the creation of Pakistan, the demand for local control over resources in Balochistan had been silenced through the use of force. In Balochistan, the military had dominated even during democratic periods, resulting in issues such as missing person, proxy clashes and other authoritarian measures that damaged the harmony of society.

For the British colonial power, the policy towards Balochistan was dictated by the British relations with Russia. It suffered from the clash of empires. In the post-colonial Pakistan, the Balochistan policy was still overshadowed by Islamabad's foreign policy objectives towards India, Afghanistan and Iran, Kakar said.

The state had been constantly making mistakes by believing that it could weaken the insurgency through the use of force and stop real representation through political engineering. "But the state cannot establish social peace and harmony through these measures as even the presence of a small insurgent groups can destabilize the society."

Our current federal system is majoritarian. It is a systematic fault that all federal governments ignore Baloch rights because only 17 seats do not matter to any political party. The current political system provides no incentive for caring for Baluchistan so it must be revised, stated Kakar.

Dr Syed Jaffar Ahmed said that in view of the theme of the consultation, his focus was on one question: What was the attitude of the religious community towards constitution? He said that unless a society accepted the supremacy of the constitution, it could not establish the rule of law. "But to be supreme, the constitution must reflect the contract between state and citizen or among citizen or between federal units and the center." In Pakistan, the religious community had not paid respect to the sanctity of the constitution. Most religious scholars wanted to add more and more religious clauses in the constitution. The 1973 constitution had so many unnecessary clauses which the Bhutto government only added to prove its ability to develop a constitution with consensus of all parties. "There are anomalies like two third majority is needed to pass a law but only 40 percent assembly members can send a law to the CCI for review. Such clauses were added just to please religious scholars." It was important that the religious and political parties gave respect to the parliament and respect the rule of law; protests and blocking roads by such entities violates the constitution of Pakistan.

Session 3 focused on Countering terrorism practices in Pakistan: successes & gaps

Zafarullah Khan, Convener Parliamentary Research Group, said that in Pakistan the Constitution had been treated just as a user manual of statecraft and not in the sense of a social contract. He said that if Ali Wazir could be behind bar for one belief and another group given freedom to do whatever they wanted based on their ability to disrupt society, there clearly was no respect for the rule of law in the country. Quoting Muhammad Asar, he said that if the state would not take charge, everybody would be implementing his or her own version of Islam in every street of Pakistan. Zafarullah Khan said that constitutional literacy was important as most citizens could not understand these issues. Then there were issues concerning the implementation of law. Article 256 of the constitution prohibited private militancy, but the state had switched from implementing the law to making compromises with such groups in Pakistan. "Unless we ensure an economy of peace with some type of accountability for allocation of resources, we cannot establish peace in society," he concluded.

Senior journalist **Wusat Ullah Khan** said that the problem of extremism was rooted in power distribution and

resource allocation. He said that elections were just on paper. After a few years, “the authorities we all know float tender with a list of responsibilities and job requirements and choose the ones that fulfill the required criteria.” What appeared to be an elected position in Pakistan was just a managerial position given on merit. Balochistan was just a small community and if the state had failed in keeping them happy, what else could be expected from it about all other communities in the country.



Muhammad Ali Babakhel, Director General (Research) NACTA, said that post-1979, Pakistan had seen a rise in sectarian and ethnic violence. Initially, police in KP and Balochistan had no training or legal inspiration to counter extremism, violence, or terrorism. The constitution does not address these problems and the Police Order 2002 has just one mention of terrorism, despite its promulgation after 9/11. Babakhel said. KP Police Law 2020 was the only police law that addressed this problem probably because of the growing gravity of the situation in KP. Before 9/11, in KP, military and police were at different strategy levels. But with the passage of time their synchronization had increased.

Senior journalist **Zia Ur Rehman** emphasized that Pakistan needed to reconstruct its entire policy after the recent developments in Afghanistan. “Currently, we are seeing the growing threat of TTP. At least four small militant groups had joined TTP in last a few days. The government policy of appeasement can have a high cost.”

He said that the conflict was not just on the ground. The role of the media, particularly social media, was important. ISIS was exploiting the local insurgencies in Pakistan. It needed to be seen to which degree Pakistan could compromise with the TTP. He asked if Pakistan could accept the TTP demand of implementing Shariah in the FATA region or freeing their hard-core militant prisoners from custody.

Zubair Habib, Chairman Citizens-Police Liaison Committee, Karachi, said that instead of punishing Pakistan, the world should praise Pakistan’s significant counterterrorism efforts. An institutionalized mechanism was outlined in Police Order in the early 2000s, and Police Order 2002 was a well-documented order. He said that the problem was that every government tried to use police to further its political agenda. There were issues not with the law but with its implementation. The Police Order needed to be implemented if anyone wanted to have an active police system. In terms of solutions, police should be the first line of defense and should have financial autonomy and stability. The police force had to adopt innovation and technology and investigative mechanism needed to be improved, Zubair Habib added. No attention was being paid to the issue of de-weaponization, he stated.

Former National Security Advisor **Lt Gen. (r) Nasir Janjua** began by expressing satisfaction that the ability to conquer the militancy in FATA through hard measures had finally brought things to a stage where soft approaches could be talked about. He said that while the military was busy in FATA, the extremism problem had started in Balochistan and Karachi. That indicates that someone was trying to divide and drain Pakistan's resources. He said that while most would disagree but there was an "original conflict", a global effort to curb Islam. Then, there was a secondary conflict within Islam, "where we fight among ourselves on petty issues." The concept of Jihad was misused by others in the Soviet-Afghan War and unfortunately Pakistan was part of that misuse. The phenomena like TTP have been defeated and can be dealt with easily, he said, adding that the situation in Afghanistan would end the use of religious card to sell political and individual agenda. He said Pakistan must take concrete decisions; schools should be used as industry to produce enlightened minds; the government should focus on people-centric approaches; and madrassah reforms should be taken seriously.



Renowned economist **Dr. Kaiser Bengali**, who joined the consultation online from Karachi began by stating that before any talk of economy of peace, there should be some equality at the social level. When there was strong class division in the society, there would either be people whose feeling of grievance would end in suicide or people who would initiate violence to punish others for their deprivation, Dr Bengali said.

With this sense of deprivation and identity crisis in society, it became easier for religious militant organization to recruit individuals. "Poverty and class division does not bring peace. For that, we must stop following the neoliberal model of economy and move to democratic socialist model where private property is not supreme but ought to be used for the welfare of the society."

In the subsequent discussion, the participants made a number of suggestions, including a minority veto in the Senate, democratic reforms to ensure representation of GB and other unrepresented classes and protection of the right to information.

Session 4 focused on the CVE policy frameworks and implementation mechanisms in Pakistan.

Dr. Qibla Ayaz, Chairman Council of Islamic Ideology, argued that much conflict in Pakistan was linked to absence of the democratic essence in the society. He lamented the lack of critical thinking at schools and restriction on the civil society which eventually, restricted intellectual progress. He said that absence of the same affected the quality of the CT and CVE discourse and also the ownership of related frameworks.

Dr. Khalid Masud, educationist and ex-chairman Council of Islamic Ideology, added that two movements of Islamic modernization and Islamization of knowledge countered the secularization theory in South Asia. He blamed the politicization of religion for rising extremism in the society.

Adding to this, senior journalist **Arifa Noor** argued that at this point, NAP represented a wish list rather than an actual practical guide – but this had to change if sustainable peace was the goal. She also argued that no proper mechanisms existed to implement the policy of counter-extremism in the country.

Session 5 was the formal launch of the Charter of Peace campaign

The Charter of Peace initiative launched in the final session of the day where PIPS Director **Muhammad Amir Rana** welcomed the participants. He said that the Charter of Peace campaign was part of PIPS' focus on building sustainable solutions towards peace. Beside benefitting from the two-day consultation, the charter would have input from the results a survey.

A number of notable dignitaries spoke at the event. Federal Information Minister **Fawad Chaudhry** said that the government needed to ensure its writ and rule of law in order to end extremism in the country. "We are facing a danger from within [due to extremism]... this threat is bigger than the ones we face from outside," the minister said, adding that Pakistan was facing no potential threat from India because of its nuclear weapons capability and the sixth largest army in the world. He said the state had to retreat while dealing with the violent protests of Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP), as the former was not sufficiently ready to take on the menace of extremism. He further said that religious seminaries were not the breeding grounds of extremism, rather the country's schools and colleges were the cause of creating this problem due to the recruitments of teachers having a certain mindset during the 1980s.



Fawad Chaudhry,

Federal Information Minister

Speaking at the session earlier, Advisor to Prime Minister on Accountability and Interior **Barrister Shahzad Akbar** said the problem of Afghanistan needed to be seen in a holistic perspective, as it was not a matter of defeat of one party and victory of another. He said it was imperative to address the root causes of extremism. The prime minister's advisor further said the government should open negotiations with only those militant groups who accepted the Constitution and the law but this "process should be inclusive."



Barrister Shahzad Akbar,
Advisor to Prime Minister on
Accountability and Interior

In his remarks, Chairman Council of Islamic Ideology **Dr. Qibla Ayaz** said that a lack of democratic behaviors in society was a hurdle in tackling extremism. "There is very strong space present for non-democratic and extremist ideas in the country," he said. The CII chairman urged the need to ensure that any use of force should be the sole prerogative of the state. He also asked for civil society's role to end extremism in society.



Dr. Qibla Ayaz,
Chairman Council of Islamic
Ideology

Country Head United States Institute of Peace (USIP) **Adnan Rafiq** stressed the need to develop conceptual frameworks to explain the soft approaches to counter terrorism and violent extremism in the country. He underlined that although only the state should have monopoly over the use of force but it should also be ensured that this force is used within the ambit of law. "Economic strife also pushes people towards extremism," the USIP country head said. He asked for adopting the approach of three Ds—diversity, democracy and dignity— to lead the country towards a harmonious society to end extremism.

The charter of peace campaign launch shield was unveiled towards the end of the event which marked the beginning of the campaign and also the end of the consultation on day one.

DAY 2

The second day of the consultation opened with a welcome note and introduction of aims of the consultation and the projects by PIPS Director Muhammad Amir Rana. Najam U Din, Project Manager for PIPS, briefly summarizing the discussion from day one. In a presentation, he highlighted various dimensions of soft approaches in Pakistan's policy framework, underlining at the same time that their footprint had been exceptionally small and impact very low and Pakistan's CT efforts had a heavy reliance on a kinetic approach.

Session 6 (youth, madrassah, school, and narratives in Pakistan) focused on the exposure to and vulnerability of youth to extremist narratives.

Hamayoun Khan, Program Manager, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES), stated that with nearly 65% of Pakistan's total population younger than 30 years of age the country could not afford to ignore then either with respect to the impact of extremist narratives or counter-extremism endeavors. He argued that the prime factor behind rising extremism was the non-implementation of the state-citizen contract. He stressed that there were two main schools of thoughts on the causes of extremism in Pakistan: one pinned the responsibility on madrassahs and the other blamed the modern education.

Madrassahs and conventional schools, were both problematic in their own ways, argued **Maulana Ziaul Haq Naqshbandi**, columnist and coordinator of the Punjab government's Muttahida Ulema Board. He said that Islam promoted soft approaches in entirety and that some solutions could be found in the teachings of the Sufi saints.

Sahibzada Amanat Rasool, from Idara Fikre Jadeed, told the audience that poverty and lack of support by the State had contributed to youngsters agreeing to become suicide bombers for paltry sums of money. He argued that when the State failed to fulfil its responsibilities, the non-state actors gained more power. Youth who were emotionally charged, disillusioned and bereft of opportunities became highly susceptible to extremist ideologies. Echoing this, **Ahmed Ali**, Project Manager, Shoor Foundation for Education and Awareness, suggested the solution in the form of a consolidated narrative of "aik milaat, aik manzar (one nation, one vision)." He argued that by working on inter-sectarian harmony and engagement of scholars from various sects, offered hope to build some semblance of peace in the country.

Pointing towards the underlying causes of extremism, **Khushal Khattak**, from Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, said the State's negligence towards ethnic and religious minorities had exacerbated the issue. He said where citizens from Balochistan or Khyber Pakhtunkhwa looked at the things the state did not seem weak, as it used all authority and coercive power at its disposal to achieve what it wanted. The political parties had a huge responsibility to play when it came to building a national narrative – something that they were failing to do. Similarly, banning student unions, etc., also limited the youth's ability to contribute towards any meaningful change. Senior journalist **Azaz Syed** pointed towards the widespread extremism in the society by quoting how positively Tehreek-e-Labaik Pakistan TLP had been portrayed on the social media. He also pointed out that the news media had also not played its due role in highlighting lack of avenues for engaging the youth, without which these challenges could not be tackled.

Session 7 (political & strategic landscape of South Asia and its impact on Pakistan's CT and CVE approaches)

Dr. Zafar Jaspal, geo-political analyst and a professor at School of Politics and International

Relations, Quaid-e-Azam University, argued that external dynamics were likely to influence the internal security situation in Pakistan. To the east, there had been a rise of Hindutva nationalism in India, in the northwest there was the East Turkestan Islamic Movement and to Pakistan's west is Afghanistan where the Taliban were in

power. He said there were three key types of conflicts in Pakistan: sectarian (Shia-Sunni friction and clashes); rise of Barelvi militancy in the form of TLP; and anti-state insurgencies. Hence, the responses of the government were also tiered: hard militant approach (army); (b) somewhat less hard militant approach (police); and at the lowest level there were some soft approaches. However, he was of the opinion that once a person had taken up violence, it was exceptionally difficult to deradicalize him or her.

Echoing this sentiment, rights activist and noted journalist **Wajahat Masood** argued that in its effort to build ideological solutions to the problem of diversity, Pakistan had created more problems than solutions and that the country's national ideology was a negation of diversity. He said that Pakistan could not find solutions to its key problems so long as its women, which form nearly 52% of the national population were not empowered socially, politically and economically. He said empowering women would also spur huge economic change, which would contribute handily to countering extremism and intolerance.

Security analyst and Center for Research & Security Studies executive director **Imtiaz Gul** argued that the difference among extremism, terrorism and increased religiosity had blurred out. He also expressed his apprehensions for using a term like "CVE" which is highly adopted from the West. Talking about solutions, he argued that Pakistan's internal faultiness also needed to be looked at and internal governance improved.

Rooting Pakistan's current challenges in history, former ambassador **Humayun Khan** insisted that the rise of religious extremism had been a fallout of the Afghanistan conflict.

General (r) Masood Aslam, former DG Military Operations for Pakistan Army, argued that the changing situation in Afghanistan was going to have a direct impact on Pakistan. He said the State first needed to establish its writ through hard power and then follow it up with softer approaches.

Session 8 focused on the militants, deradicalization and reintegration in society.

Abdullah Khan, managing director of Pakistan Institute of Conflict and Security Studies, said that there were a number of successful examples of deradicalization in the world such as IRA, Tamil Tigers, etc. Pakistan needed to come up with an effective national counter-radicalization policy which was reflective of the local problems.

Syed Arfeen, senior journalist from Karachi, commented on the localized dynamics of extremism and how Karachi had been an hub of such activities in Pakistan. Through examples he highlighted how very difficult deradicalization had been in the context of Karachi and often the individuals who were the focus of prolonged deradicalization efforts went back to their old affiliations and activities. Therefore, he argued, it was most crucial that individuals should be prevented from falling prey to radicalization and extremism in the first place.

Zarina Anjum, deputy superintendent of police at Punjab Counter Terrorism Department headquarters, argued that the approach to deal with the problem of radicalization was three-tiered. Before deradicalization, there were two key steps of anti-radicalization and counter-radicalization. She listed a number of deradicalization programs which had run in Pakistan, such as Sabaon and Rastoon for juveniles, Mishal for adults in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Nawai Sehar for adults in FATA, etc. The three-tiered methodology applied at these centers comprised of psychological, religious, and vocational counselling.

Shafqat Rasheed, another DSP at Punjab Counter Terrorism Department headquarters, echoed these opinions and highlighted how he had seen that families, childhood friends and could have a crucial role in deradicalization efforts. He thought it tracking down and making use of one-time militants or radicalized individuals who had now renounced their ways could be a persuasive way to help make deradicalization gains.

Shahzada Zulfiqar, President Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists, argued that there was an absence of state ownership for Balochistan and the curriculum in Punjab induced anti-Baloch sentiments. Such approaches laid the ground for marginalization of a segment of population and exposed them to extremist ideologies.

Senior journalist **Rifatullah Orakzai** added that similar marginalization had also been experienced in the case of the erstwhile FATA region.

Khursheed Ahmed Nadeem, Chairman, Organization of Research and Education argued that the State should always have sole monopoly over violence and peace would be elusive whenever that was not the case. He said

the two main problems Pakistan was facing included the Taliban government in Afghanistan and the TLP rise in Pakistan.

Session 9 focused on marginalized communities and the social contract

Pointing towards the root causes of marginalization, noted rights activist **Dr Farzana Bari** argued that the origin of the concept of the state was based on property and class structure that intrinsically gave no space to marginalized communities. She argued that the western society had removed gender discrimination at least in letter while it remained in practice, but in Pakistani society, gender discrimination existed not only in practice but also in letter, even in the citizens' social contract with the state.

Human rights lawyer **Dileep Doshi** pointed out that Pakistan did not pay respect to its historical heroes and had adopted a "narrative of exclusion," which further fueled alienation and exclusion.

Former federal parliamentarian and Chairperson Pakistan Christian Forum **Asiya Nasir** highlighted instances of discriminatory and insensitive attitude even from her fellow parliamentarians towards lawmakers from religious minority communities. She argued that it was imperative to move towards inclusionary policies and narratives to move towards real peace and deal a blow to extremism. While talking about exclusion, she said that the treatment of Pakistan's transgender community also must not be ignored.

Romana Bashir, executive director, Peace and Development Foundation, said that references to an inclusive approach did not translate into a real difference because policymaking bodies did not have representation from minorities. She suggested that for promotion of peace it was imperative that representation of minorities was restored in the policy discourse and government at both the provincial and national levels.