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**RESEARCH PAPER**

**The Impact of Historical and Cultural Legacies on Political Intolerance in Pakistan: A Critical Analysis**

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**ABSTRACT**

This study intends to evaluate the historical context of political intolerance in Pakistan and its dimensions, realizing the fact that historical, cultural, social, religious, and institutional elements have strong impact on political intolerance in Pakistan. In Pakistan political intolerance is a confounding idiosyncrasy impacted by differing rudiments, together with certifiable events, financial conditions, and institutional elements. This study is Qualitative in nature. Moreover, the result indicate that historical and cultural roots of intolerance have negatively shaped Pakistani society into extremism, violence, aggression, divergence which is very harmful for Pakistan's peaceful political discourse and instability. These finding strongly sported the claim that political intolerance throughout the history damage whole nation. Finally these finding also have some important policy implementation, suggestions and recommendations that with the passage of time open mindfulness crusades that bring out the worth of flexibility and deem in lawmaking issue can add to shifting cultural values and assumptions. Accomplishment of policy against scorn discussion, violence, and frightening can leave regard as a barrier and estimate people accountable for intolerant behaviour. Political intolerance may demonstrate diversely in diverse social and political condition, therefore it is very important to point out these things. Open mindfulness crusades that bring out the worth of flexibility and deem in lawmaking issue can add to shifting cultural values and assumptions. Accomplishment of policy against scorn discussion, violence, and frightening can leave regard as a barrier and estimate people accountable for intolerant behaviour. Political intolerance may demonstrate diversely in diverse social and political condition, therefore it is very important to point out these things.

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**KEYWORDS** Political Intolerance, Historically, Deviation, Polarization, Populism

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**Introduction**

Political intolerance is the refusal or unwillingness to accept and coexist with diverse political views or ideologies. It often arises from a combination of factors, including fear, threat, anger and hatred perception, limited exposure to differing perspectives, and the influence of social identity and group dynamics. This intolerance can manifest in various ways, ranging from verbal abuse and social exclusion to more extreme cases involving violence or discrimination. Fear and Threat Perception individuals may feel threatened by ideas that challenge their own, leading to a defensive and intolerant stance. Limited exposure to diverse perspectives and experiences can contribute to narrow-mindedness and intolerance. People may align

their political beliefs with their social identity, leading to a "we versus them" mentality and intolerance towards those outside their group. Insults, derogatory language, and name-calling are frequent ways political intolerance is expressed. Individuals with differing political views may be excluded from social circles, workplaces, or communities. In extreme cases, political intolerance can escalate to physical violence or discrimination against individuals or groups with opposing political beliefs

Political intolerance alludes to a circumstance where people or gatherings are reluctant to endure or acknowledge contrasting political perspectives, sentiments, or belief systems. It can appear in different ways, like antagonism, segregation, or even savagery coordinated towards those with restricting political convictions. Understanding political intolerance includes perceiving its causes, signs, and consequence, and effectively advancing a 'culture of liberality, discourse, and regard for different political viewpoints (Verkuyten & Kollar, 2021).

Intolerance in various fields of life is an overall peculiarity. In any case, causes and consequences might change every now and then, region to region, and country to country. Pakistan is experiencing intolerance practically in all fields of society particularly political intolerance is on first spot on the list of these emergencies. Indeed, even it is affecting the climate of homes, and the connection between relatives (Suleman, 2018). Tolerance for difference and diversity is fundamental for a thriving democracy, yet it is notably lacking in Pakistan. Without tolerance, the space for the emancipation and expression of religious, political, and ethnic diversity diminishes. This leads to increased social exclusion based on an individual's or group's origin, experience, circumstances, and beliefs. Consequently, excluded groups become vulnerable, with their mobility and expression being restricted.

### **Literature Review**

The political culture of Pakistan is molded by a mix of verifiable, social, religious, and institutional elements. The political culture of Pakistan is complex, with impacts from its Islamic character, military history, ethnic variety, and progressing battles to keep a stable Democratic rule framework. It represents the country's assorted inhabitants, multifaceted history, and furthermore the transaction of diverse political ideologies the inimitable exchange of these variables keeps on form the nation's political condition. In Pakistan political intolerance is a confounding idiosyncrasy impacted by differing rudiments, together with certifiable events, financial conditions, and institutional elements. It has deep valid roots, throughout the history of the country's establishment. Pakistan got independence in 1947 after the division of English India, and its formation rested on granting another nation to Muslims. The political landscape was initially depicted by another sample of political ideologies, but over time, an instance of political intolerance began to emerge. Below are some views that contribute to the political culture of intolerance in Pakistan. One of the most important factors contributing to political intolerance was the tension between different ethnic and semantic groups within Pakistan. The country is inhabited by different networks, such as Punjabis, Sindhis, Pashtuns, Balochis, and Muhajirs, among others.

Pakistan's set of experiences has been set apart by times of military rule, political precariousness, and successive changes in government. This verifiable inheritance has made a culture where political rivals are frequently seen with doubt, and changes of force are once in a while joined by pressure and struggle. The military has generally assumed a critical part in Pakistani governmental issues through direct

overthrows or circuitous impact. Times of military rule, for example, those drove by Ayub Khan, Zia-ul-Haq, and Pervez Musharraf, have molded the political scene. In any event, during regular citizen rule, the military frequently holds an impressive impact in security and international strategy matters. The principal military overthrow in Pakistan happened in 1958 when General Ayub Khan held onto power, referring to the need to reestablish the rule of law. This undeniable the start of a time of military decides that went on for a critical part of Pakistan's initial history. While Ayub Khan's system started financial changes, it likewise smothered political resistance, prompting a decrease in political opportunities and expanded political polarization (Khalid & Yaseen 2015)

The 1971 Bangladesh Freedom War and the resulting production of Bangladesh further developed political separation points in Pakistan. The country's political scene kept on being portrayed by times of regular citizen rule blended with military intercessions. The tactical systems, under pioneers like General Zia-ul-Haq in the last part of the 1970s and General Pervez Musharraf in the mid2000s, were set apart by constraint of political difference and decrease of common freedoms. The connection between the regular citizen government and the military has been a repetitive subject in Pakistani legislative issues. Regular citizen state run administrations have frequently attempted to declare their power, and military mediations have disturbed popularity based processes. Accomplishing a steady harmony among regular citizen and military organizations stays a test for the country. Military overthrows and mediations have been a common component in Pakistan's political history. The military's immediate association in governmental issues has added to a climate where contradiction is once in a while smothered, and political rivals face limitations (Yaseen, Chemma, & Hussain, 2018).

Pakistan has encountered pressures between religious and sectarian gatherings. Ideological groups frequently exploit strict opinions for discretionary additions, prompting divisions and intolerance. Moreover, partisan viciousness has designated minority gatherings, further adding to a culture of intolerance. Religious differences have further fueled political intolerance in Pakistan. The country was established as an Islamic state, yet characterizing the job of Islam in administration has been a wellspring of conflict. The impact of sever strikes and actions has continually bigger split and prejudice. Discord between divers' radical and religious clusters has frequently shifted into political quarrel. Complicated viewpoints has generated an climate where political prejudice remain be concerned. Differences between Pakistan's societies are the major factors of heated discussion and intolerance. Ethnic and local pressures in Pakistan have now and then converted into political intolerance. Aberrations in asset dissemination and issues connected with common independence have powered disdain, prompting clashes and intolerance (Shah, 2020).

Opportunity of the press has confronted difficulties in Pakistan, with cases of oversight and limitations on news sources. Writers and media associations here and there face terrorizing, restricting their capacity to report openly and add to a sound political talk. Political polarization and an absence of agreement on main points of contention add to a culture of intolerance. Disruptive way of talking and a fierce methodology among ideological groups obstruct helpful exchange and split the difference. Regardless of times of popularity based rule, Pakistan's vote based organizations have frequently been debilitated by defilement, shortcoming, and an absence of responsibility. Feeble foundations can add to an environment where narrow mindedness flourishes.

From the hour of freedom, Pakistan confronted precariousness and intolerance in governmental issues straightforwardly impacted the working of different foundations. The justification behind that insecurity and intolerance isn't the appropriate utilization of the majority rule organization to introduce the requests and embrace the method of fomentation. A slight political culture and the inadequacy of heads of ideological groups cause political instability and a narrow minded / intolerant climate in the public eye.

Currently, Pakistan is experiencing a touch of fiction. The constitution of Pakistan mandates a democratic government, but democracy seems to be at risk, overshadowed by populism, which promises instant solutions without sacrifices. The promises made by PTI's Imran Khan before the 2018 elections, and those made by the incumbent PML-N-led ruling alliance before ousting him through a no-confidence motion, have not materialized. The anticipated good times have yet to arrive. Instead, people frequently hear about the country being on the brink of default. Among other challenges, Pakistan is facing skyrocketing inflation, record-high petroleum prices, and a depreciating rupee, while the leadership continues to raise hopes with populist slogans and narratives. Populist leaders and movements often present instant solutions to complex problems, which people, especially those in crisis and seeking a savior, readily accept. PTI's Imran Khan a quintessential right-wing nationalist-populist. He rose to power in 2018 by leveraging the discourse of change and an aggressive anti-corruption crusade. PTI's three years in power display a consistent pattern of populist rule lacking substantial performance. The Curious Case of Imran Khan's Populism In Pakistan," explains that Khan's early politics fit the populist profile, with a relentless focus on an anti-corruption narrative aimed at challenging the dominance of Pakistan's two leading parties, PML-N and PPP.

## **Populism**

Populism is characterized by two main assertions: the idea that a nation's "true people" are in conflict with outsiders, including establishment elites, and the belief that nothing should limit the will of the true people. Although these core claims are consistent across different forms of populism, populism can manifest in diverse ways depending on the context. Their report identifies three types of populism based on how leaders define the conflict between the "true people" and outsiders:

- **Cultural Populism:** This form asserts that the true people are the native inhabitants of the nation-state and often emphasizes religious traditionalism and sovereignty.
- **Socio-Economic Populism:** This type portrays the true people as hardworking members of the working class, with outsiders including big business and capital owners who are seen as supporting an international capitalist system.
- **Anti-Establishment Populism:** Here, the true people are depicted as hardworking victims of a state controlled by special interests, with political elites being the primary antagonists. Unlike the other forms, anti-establishment populism focuses more on political elites as the main enemy and does not create as many internal societal divisions (Kyle & Gultchin, 2018).

Populism convinces people that their inability to prosper is due to exploitation by others. He notes that populism can present itself as either left-wing or right-wing

and that it sacrifices long-term societal well-being for immediate, but often illusory, gains. Llosa also believes that nationalism, a reactionary movement promising a return to a mythical perfect past, is a key element of populism, and he suggests that no country is immune to this kind of delusion (Llosa, 2010). Llosa's son, Alvaro Vargas Llosa, points out that populism thrives on myth and utopia. He argues that myths invent the past and utopias invent the future, making them difficult to counter since neither can be proven or disproven. He warns that when offered a faster route to utopia compared to the challenging and rational path, populism gains an advantage.

Polarization stems from intolerance and a deeply divided polity rather than just populism. Looking back into Pakistan's history, he recalls that political schisms, whether in Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's time or during the 1990s, were not brought about by populism alone. Sayed states that political tribalism is even more common amongst the Punjabi elite than others like Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, where politics is less about personalities (Batoool, 2023). Because of political intolerance and lack of individual form of government he condemns high profile people, who amplified hatred and accord and personal benefits are main concern over rebel. He challenge the metaphor that democratic form of governments are more liberal and representative in character as compare to martial law form of governments. He provides instances from his own life during General Pervez Musharraf's regime to show that political opposition and demands for democratic changes existed even within the military-supported government. He also points out the irony that the electronic media revolution, which is often credited to civilian rule, originated during Musharraf's era.

### **Growing Political Intolerance in Pakistan: An Outline from 1947-2024**

Political intolerance in Pakistan has been a determined and complex issue since its commencement in 1947, with occasional episodes of tyrant rule, military upsets, and limitations on just cycles. The country's political scene has been damaged by a past filled with epic showdowns, discretionary inconsistencies, and an absence of tranquil changes of force. From the early long stretches of its presence, Pakistan has encountered military takeovers, military regulation, and political deaths. The death of Benazir Bhutto in 2007 and the expelling of State head Nawaz Sharif in 2017 represent the proceeded with difficulties to popularity based administration (Afzal, 2018). Obscenity regulations and limitations on free discourse have likewise added to a climate of political intolerance, with contradict frequently stifled. Regardless of times of relative political receptiveness, Pakistan's political scene has stayed set apart by a perplexing interchange of military, religious, and regular citizen powers, thwarting the union of a steady and getting through equitable framework (Ahmad Khan, 2016). Instances of intolerant incorporate an absence of resistance, an inability to acknowledge or regard other people who hold varying sentiments or convictions, as well as people from various racial or ethnic foundations. Intolerant individuals are frequently ready to force their perspectives on political conflicts, the right to speak freely of discourse, religion, and culture.

That's what of PTI (MNA) said; I have seen for a long time that the political gap is expanding exceptionally quickly. Some time ago political specialists and allies had a reluctant outlook on leaving the party and changing their political connection. However, these days because of the vulnerability and flimsiness of the world of politics, political gap is normal. He said the plan of degenerate ideological groups like PMLN and PPP and so on is consistently about partitioning the country whether it's for the sake of political exercises, political contrasts, or in view of contrasts in language,

culture, and so on. While, (MNA) of PPP expressed that in previous times there was an exceptionally minor idea of the political gap and it depended on reasons and belief systems. Yet, presently this time there is a political separation in view of the desire for power and position. Political specialists and applicants left their gatherings with no clarification or justification behind it. It turned into a game for political workers or competitors, to leave a party and join different gatherings for individual interests in the event that the party doesn't give what he/she needs. They leave this party as well and join the other one. In short political specialists or competitors became an entrepreneur, which isn't supportive of the soundness of the political framework. Also, (MNA) of PMLN said, that the political separation has been important for Pakistani governmental issues since its foundation. However, I'm not for the political gap and never support it. If any political worker has any desire to be isolated from any ideological group, it ought to be founded on the thinking. He said "Lota cracy" is the evil of the political framework, and PTI established this malicious in Pakistani legislative issues in any case it was uncommon in our legislative issues. Finishing up he said I'm by and by against this movement and I figure it ought to be proclaimed unlawful through a strategy or revision in the constitution.

Individuals in the public eye are losing their capacity to show restraint in various circumstances. Nobody in the public eye will comprehend the perspective of the other and all are attempting to force their perspectives on others. Intolerance implies the absence of lenience, reluctance or refusal to endure or regard opposite assessments or convictions, people of various races or foundations, and so on. (MNA) of PMLN said intolerance, unsteadiness, viciousness, and animosity are at their top in Pakistan these days. He said Imran Khan's governmental issues of desire for power are the principal purpose for this expansion in intolerance in Pakistan. He said Imran Khan's principal plan is tied in with overseeing the state, for which he is utilizing his allies who trust him aimlessly, (MNA) of PPP answered that intolerance, flimsiness, and joblessness everything is expanding in our nation quickly. While discussing intolerance he said that narrow mindedness in Pakistan expanded after 2013's decisions with the Dharana of PTI. The PTI pioneer Imran Khan Incited the political adversaries on a super level and presently it tends to be seen that everybody answers to one another cruelly and couldn't care less about the tone of language and importance and effect of their words. He said in the current circumstance political intolerance is expanding to an ever increasing extent and two individuals are genuinely liable for it in the world of politics, The first is Imran Khan and the second is Mariam Nawaz (Younas, Iftikhar, Azhar, & Sciences, 2024).

Resulting to the evacuation of previous Top state leader Imran Khan, Pakistan has encountered a perceptible heightening in political Intolerance. Political leaders show a reluctance to participate even on issues concerning public security. Offering viewpoints that counter one's political rivals remains described by a serious tone, impenetrable to the impact of genuine proof. Simultaneously, a flood in an oppressive culture inside society is enhancing this intolerance. It frequently begins with fiery talks from party leaders, who utilize forceful language while tending to their enemies. The advanced circle, as well, adds to political narrow mindedness in Pakistan. Here, ideological groups lay out devoted bunches pointed toward utilizing online entertainment to focus on their adversaries. This has empowered allies of specific political groups to subject anybody holding onto disparate perspectives to manhandle. Thus, this unfriendly climate has seriously confined the degree for discussion and agreement working among both ideological groups and the overall population the same.

Amidst the caretaker setup rule, PTI led many protests in 2023 against the cases developed in opposition to Imran Khan. When Imran Khan was detained his party went afire. The political extremism and intolerance reached its top. Consequently the top PTI lineup along with many workers was detained due to the incident of 9<sup>th</sup> May. Pakistan army interfered and Imran Khan was disqualified to take part in general elections held in February 2024. Although all these episodes the mass famous leader, I k's political party win the bulk of seats in voting process. PTI workers including women are still facing harassment and threats. PTI Leader is still in jail and the allies are ruling together. They blame him for introducing aggressiveness, intolerance and polarization in Pakistani politics and say that Imran Khan is cutting what he sowed in past. Due to this hatred and heated environment, the situation might get more tensed when he is released. Pakistan is currently experiencing a surge in political intolerance following a deepening political crisis that threatens both its democratic process and economy. Civilized societies distinguish themselves by their tolerance towards opposing viewpoints. Unfortunately, the lack of tolerance has historically been exploited by political leaders with disastrous outcomes. History has shown that absolute leaders often ascend to power with the backing of frustrated masses who feel they have nothing left to lose due to dire circumstances. This has led to some of humanity's darkest periods. While the notion of history repeating itself in this manner is plausible, the vision of a tolerant society remains elusive, particularly in the context of Pakistan's compounded economic and political challenges.

Regrettably, the root of societal intolerance in Pakistan lies within the state itself. The Pakistani state frequently demonstrates its intolerance, which trickles down to society, gradually and systematically reducing the space for free expression and speech. Actions taken against a television channel a few years ago and, more recently, against a political party leader, reflect the state's viciousness when confronted with unfavorable expressions. In both instances, justice seemed to favor the state rather than uphold the cause of true justice.

The point is not to vindicate anyone's actions but to highlight the role of the state, which should prioritize listening to and addressing dissent rather than suppressing it. This can only be achieved if the state acts as a neutral arbiter, as any pluralist state should. Such a state allows societal groups to debate and contest issues, intervening only when laws are violated. Unfortunately, the Pakistani state often becomes a participant in political, ideological, and religious conflicts, thus compromising its neutrality. Even when laws are violated, the judiciary should act and make decisions based on the merits of the case. The repressive arm of the state should be used sparingly, unlike in Pakistan where it is often the first resort. An intolerant state influences societal groups that thrive on its support, giving them the freedom to impose their particular brand of religion or political ideology.

A responsible state invests in the social inclusion of its diverse population and safeguards their lawful actions and expressions. It fosters debate, discourse, and dialogue among social and political groups on a broad range of issues to build a larger consensus, rather than silencing dissenting voices. A country may comprise people of various religions and sects, races and ethnicities, colours and creeds, opinions, and orientations, who should not be expected to agree with every stance of the state and its allies. There must be room for difference and diversity, which is essential for democracy to thrive. Tolerance enhances the quality of democracy (Ahmed, 2011).

## **Conclusion**

To conclude that Countering political intolerance and extremism is fundamental for cultivating a solid popularity based society. Here are a few techniques to address and moderate these issues:

By Empowering open and deferential discourse cultivates understanding between people with various political viewpoints. Connecting with networks in productive discourse and advancing a feeling of shared character and reason can assist with decreasing the impression of "us against them" elements that frequently add to intolerance. Empowering municipality assurance and collaboration in true way can strengthen the sentiment of public legal responsibility and reduce political intolerance. Generous coaching on critical logics, media training, and sincerity to varied perspective can support with skirmishing narrow mildness or political bigotry. At the present time, the need of the hour is that members of political parties may have adequate political education or knowledge about democracy. Benevolent political training of mass can help widening their ideologies and build up a greater conception of democracy principles and cycle. Open mindfulness crusades that bring out the worth of flexibility and deem in lawmaking issue can add to shifting cultural values and assumptions. Accomplishment of policy against scorn discussion, violence, and frightening can leave regard as a barrier and estimate people accountable for intolerant behaviour. Political intolerance may demonstrate diversely in diverse social and political condition, therefore it is very important to point out these things. Inspect the genuine sites of a milieu or country can give experiment into the core practicalities of political intolerance. To continue future civic education that underscores the worth of democratic system, pluralism and mindful political talk.

Train decisive reasoning abilities to assist people with assessing data and contentions all the more successfully, lessening vulnerability to falsehood and misleading publicity. Make places of refuge for discourse where individuals with contrasting perspectives can connect consciously and pay attention to one another. Sort out banter gatherings or conversation bunches that emphasis on understanding different viewpoints instead of winning contentions. Teach the general population on the most proficient method to basically evaluate news sources, perceive inclinations, and check realities. Empower consuming a great many media sources to acquire a more adjusted comprehension of issues. Political and local area pioneers ought to show resistance and aware talk, setting a model for others to follow. Backing bipartisan or non-sectarian drives that work towards shared objectives, exhibiting collaboration across political partitions. Advance worker open doors that unite individuals across political lines, cultivating a feeling of mutual perspective and local area. Backing nearby drives that address local area issues, empowering individuals to cooperate no matter what their political convictions. Execute self programs in schools and working environments to upgrade compassion, close to home guideline, and relational abilities, which are urgent for conscious political commitment. Give preparing in compromise and successful correspondence strategies.

Reinforce and implement hostile to segregation regulations to shield people from provocation and savagery in light of political convictions. Advance straightforwardness and responsibility in political cycles to construct trust and lessen negativity. Use workmanship, music, and writing to advance getting it and sympathy across political partitions. Offer accounts of people who have beaten political prejudice and settled on something worth agreeing on, featuring the human side of policy



centered issues. Backing research on the causes and results of political bigotry, as well as powerful intercessions. Create and advocate for arrangements that address primary variables adding to political polarization and intolerance. Urge people to think about their own inclinations and be available to changing their perspectives in view of new data and points of view. Advance the guideline of connecting consciously with the people who have different political points of view, perceiving their mankind and right to their perspectives. One of the most effectual methods to cultivate political teaching which emphasized respect for multiplicity. Eliminate corrupt element from executive and government sectors, and raise opportunities for general public. Furthermore, promoting wide-ranging leadership inside parties, where diverse ethnic, sectarian, and ideological cluster feel represented, can decrease the sentiment of marginalization that regularly fuel intolerance. Another important step is the creation of internal party mechanisms to address conflicts and hold intolerant actions to account, preventing violence or hate speech. Encouraging dialogue forums that bring people together from diverse backgrounds can help create mutual understanding and facilitate stereotype-breaking. Civil society and media have an important role to play as well by making good examples of tolerance visible and denouncing intolerance publicly. Finally, challenging political intolerance involves a concerted effort to transform political culture from zero-sum rivalry to cooperative democracy, in which the voices of diversity are heard. By adopting these measures collective instructions are accomplished for betterment to reduce political intolerance and useful an supplementary extensive political culture. This hard work is very essential for the safety of grassroots activism as a key stone for democracy. Moreover by uphold all these covert elements and increasing a tendency of respect, openness and democracy, it is very achievable to decrease intolerance in Pakistan.

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