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### **Politicisation of Religion in Pakistan: A Case Study on Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA)**

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#### **Abstract**

Pakistan was created in the name of religion (Islam) as an independent country in 1947 on the basis of Two Nation Theory wherein the Muslims of Indian subcontinent could live, preach and profess their religion freely from the dominance of Hindus. After independence the state elites did not make any tangible programmes which could establish the country as an Islamic state. However, the state elites established religious ministry after 27 years of the establishment of Pakistan. The ministry was not established to implement or enforce religious programmes for Pakistan. Contrary it was established to control religious elites and their institutions which could be used for political gain. This paper is designed to illustrate the historical aspect of role of religion in Pakistan. The paper further will analyse how state elites used religion for political gains by politicising religion in Pakistan.

**Keywords:** Religion, Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA), Politicisation, Governments of Pakistan.

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## Introduction

Religion play an important and influential role in society throughout the world. However, it occupies special status in the Muslim majority states (MMS). In MMS, religious elites (clerics) influence communities or society as a whole by projecting their religious ideology. Political elites try to influence and control masses through religious institutions. In order to control the religious elites and their institutions therefore, government representatives (state elites) have established institutions in the name of religion such as the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA). In Pakistan, such religious ministry i.e., the MORA was first established under the auspicious of the civil government of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto in 1974.

State elites establish institutions dealing with religious matters in the name of Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) to give importance to one or more religions. In Pakistan, thus a separate MORA, was founded to regulate, control, and provide preference to one religion. The presence of MORA means the importance of religion to state elites as well as the state control religious institutions so on so forth. When state elites see their power and position are threatened due to the presence of a particular religion (its importance and dominance), they create religious ministry (such as MORA) to limit the role of religious elites and to control religious institutions. Through this, the state manages the full-fledged ministry which eases religious groups in the country. The presence of the full ministry of Religious Affairs in Pakistan, therefore, is chosen as one of the main factors that state elites (or governments) in Pakistan politicise for political gain.

The functions of the MORA vary from country to country, but mainly it is used to control, support, and execute particular religious policies. For instance, in Israel the MORA supports Jews, in Iran, it supports Shia,<sup>4</sup> and in China, it controls policies which discriminate against all religions. In Malaysia, it is presented under the same name as of Pakistan; while in Turkey, it is not presented in ministry level but still it has a similar function. As a constitutional institution, the Presidency of Religious Affairs of Turkey aims to control the religion in accordance with the principles of secularism (Yilmaz 2013: 140). In order to explain the establishment of the MORA, it is pertinent to analyse the historical growth throughout the Muslim's governments in India, the British government periods, and the post-partition developments between 1947 and 2008 (From Jinnah to General Pervez Musharraf's period).

## Historical Background Before Partition

The establishment of an institution dealing with religious affairs in the name of MORA did not exist in Pakistan when it got independence in 1947<sup>5</sup>. However, the idea of dealing with the religious matters was present in the Indian subcontinent before independence under British and Mughal governments.

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<sup>4</sup> is one of the main sects of Islam mainly found in Iran.

<sup>5</sup> The first cabinet of Pakistan took oath on 15th August 1947 under the leadership of M. A. Jinnah. The first cabinet consisted of seven ministries later in December two more were added. The portfolios were as under:

1. Liaquat Ali Khan Prime Minister, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Defence
2. I. I. Chundrigar, Minister for Commerce, Industries and Works
3. Sardar Abdur Rab Nishtar, Minister for Communications
4. Raja Ghazanfar Ali, Minister for Food, Agriculture and Health (In December 1947, he was given Ministry of Evacuee and Refugee Rehabilitation).
5. Jogendra Nath Mandal, Minister for Labour and Law
6. Ghulam Muhammad, Minister for Finance
7. Fazlur Rahman, Minister for Interior, Information and Education
8. Muhammad Zafarullah Khan, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Commonwealth relations (in December 1947)
9. Abdus Sattar Pirzada, Food, Agriculture and Health (in December).

Muslims had ruled the Indian subcontinent for thousand years. Their dynasty started with the advent of Islam in the Indian subcontinent, when Muhammad bin Qasim, invaded Sindh in 712 AD (Choudhary 1967). The influence of Muslims continued with the arrival of Mughals in the subcontinent and founded their dynasties in the name of Mughal Empire (Sultanate)<sup>6</sup> (Lal 1984). It is believed that during the reign of Syed Qutub-u-din Aibak, Muslim state was established.

After Aibak's death in 1210 AD, another Mughal emperor Iltutmish restructured the Muslim empire and appointed a religious cleric concerning the religious matters under the name of *Sheikh-ul-Islam*<sup>7</sup> (Jha 2018). Later the title was changed to *Sadar-us-Sudr* and *Qazi-ul-Quzat*. The religious head was given superior authority in state matters (after the emperor). The state-religion nexus became more pervasive during the reign of Akbar (1556-1605) and his grandson Aurangzeb (1658-1707) (Syed 2011). Although Akbar tried to amalgamate all religions to one which will bring harmony and peace in the society which he called as *Din-i ilahi*, a kind of tactic to control and expand the Mughal Empire. After his death, the Mughal power dwindled because his son Sheikhu (Salim) also known as Jehangir could not run the affairs of state. He was fond of drinking and did not heed towards the religion and empire (Balabanlilar 2009).

After the death of Jehangir in 1627, his son Shah Jahan succeeded him. He remained in power till 1658 and expanded the Mughal Empire. The famous building Taj Mahal was constructed during his reign. Following his death Aurangzeb succeeded as the new Mughal emperor of India. He was more rigid in approach and adopted strict religious (Sunni sect with Hanafi jurisprudence) measure to control the Mughal Empire. When British came to Indian subcontinent through the East India Company (EIC), they did not interfere in the religious practices of the local communities. The colonial government adopted the same approach in Malaysia during their government (Raj) in Asia.

#### **After the Partition (1947 – 1970)**

After the partition of the Indian subcontinent in 1947, where India and Pakistan appeared as the two separate independent countries. Political elites of Pakistan did not established what type of the country Pakistan would be "either Islamic or a secular"? (Binder, 1961: 6). Politicians had their views to form a *weltanschauung* outlook, the system which should bridge between traditional and westernised outlooks in Pakistan (Binder, 1961: 7). Religious parties particularly the Jamaat-I Islami (JI), and its influential leader Maulana Maudoodi envisaged for the Islamic state. Initially, Maulana Maudoodi had criticised the idea of Muslims separate independent state on the grounds that the division (partition) will divide Muslims from one state (India) into the other state (Pakistan). The separation of Muslim community in two parts (India and Pakistan) will divide Muslim community and Muslims will be weakened due to such division, therefore, such division will not be suitable in the interest of Muslims (as a whole).

Once Pakistan became reality on 14 August 1947, Maulana Mauoodi migrated from India with the mission to Islamise the new state of Pakistan. He along with his party the JI, proposed many ideas for establishing the Islamic state of Pakistan. Their aim was to advise government elites (politicians in power) to act in accordance with the mission that the country was created in the name of religion

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<sup>6</sup> Zahir-ud-din Babur is believed to be the first Mughal emperor of India ruled from 1526-1530. Followed by Humayun who ruled from 1530-1556. After the death of Humayun reins of government was given to Akbar (commonly known as the Great, who founded the new religion, an amalgamation of all religions inhibited in India in the name of Din-i ilahi) from 1556-1605. After his death Jahangir became the new ruler from 1605-1627. It was followed by Shah Jahan 1627-1658. Lastly, the Aurangzeb continued the Mughal Empire from 1658 to 1707 AD. He was considered as a religious man.

<sup>7</sup> is an Arabic term used for outstanding scholar of Islam. First used in Khurasan for the religious clerics. The title person has the highest esteem in the religious circle and his fatwas (judgments) are considered high importance and influential in the Muslim society.

(Islam). Therefore, governments must take such steps through which it can be considered as an Islamic state. The religious elites influence was huge and have tremendous public support through agitations and processions throughout during the formative years of Pakistan. In order to appease religious elites, the state elites envisioned the formation of the religious ministry which could formulate the laws and processes according to Islam. The JI demanded the formation of the *Sheikh-ul-Islam* which should be made above the *Qazis* (religious judges locally) in the country.

Ulema was gathered in the summer of 1948 at the house of Maulana Shabir Ahmed Usmani to form a semi-independent MORA. The reports of the meeting never made public. It is believed that the committee suggested the formation of the MORA which should be under the auspicious of the Head of State. The ministry would not only supervise religious institutions in a country such as madrassahs, mosques, and Qazi courts but will serve as the censor for all governmental activities (Binder, 1961:33).

Such religious demands have a tremendous impact over the political elites in Pakistan during the formative years. The demand for formation of the MORA which would control all religious institutions and governmental activities and government servants was of significant concern for the state elites. Most of them having modern western views through their education and working experience under the British government and hence were less religious. It is possible that initially, they kept aloof from implementing such religious measures which might undermine their influence and power in a new state of Pakistan. This can be assumed as an accurate picture because none of the efforts was taken initially to form such religious ministry which would implement the system of *Shariah* in Pakistan since 1947.

For nearly two decades no such effort was taken with regards to the establishment of a religious ministry in the country. In 1950s, Muslims' performance of religious pilgrimage was established under the Hajj Directorate (HD) (Haq & Jackson 2009). The function of the HD was to organise and regulate the Muslims activities to perform pilgrimage efficiently and safely to the holy places in Mecca and Medina in Saudi Arabia. The collection of Zakat was also maintained by the Ministry of Finance; however, none of the collection was made by the governments during that period. In order to establish religious laws in Pakistan, the first constitution (1956) calls for constituting the commission to bring all existing laws to Islamic teachings (Rahman 1973); but, the commission was never formed.

According to the second constitution (1962) under the auspicious of the military government of General Ayoob Khan, an effort was made to establish an Advisory Council of Islamic Ideology (ACII) (Sharan 1968). The basic aim of the ACII was to make all laws in conjunction with "religion (Islam)". However, the 1956 constitution calls for all laws made in accordance with the "Holy Quran and Sunnah" (Hasan et al. 1962). This change in word choice from "Quran and Sunnah" (according to the 1956 Constitution) to "Islam" (according to the 1962 Constitution) shows General Ayoob's less religious inclination. Though General Ayoob launched the Muslim Family Laws (MFL) in 1961 in which the words were chosen carefully and made as the functions of the state by Quran and Sunnah was avoided (Kennedy 1992). The state and religion during this period were not cordial. Instead, it could be said it was more like of a politicisation (using) of religion for the political purpose.

### **The MORA under Civil and Military Governments (1970 – 1999)**

The period of the 1970s is significant in analysing the state-religion nexus not only in Pakistan but throughout the world. There has been a tremendous increase in the role of religion at the state level throughout the world. This can be gauged from the number of events during that period. The notable among those are the Soviet invasion of Afghan in 1979, the US and Arab countries' support for religious institutions of Pakistan and Afghanistan in fighting the holy war with Soviets (Nasr 2000), the rise of Islamist governments in Sudan, Turkey, Indonesia, and Malaysia. The Arab-Israel conflict after

1967 war in the Middle East. Due to such political and religious developments, the world was changing and experiencing the dominant role of religion during that period.

Pakistan had towering leadership of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto during that period. Under his premiership, the formation of full-fledged religious ministry was established. Ironically, Mr. Bhutto had a moderate lifestyle regarding life and religion. Born on 5 January 1928 at village Naudero district Larkana to a landlord Sir Shahnawaz Bhutto from upper Sindh province of Pakistan. He got his early education at the village and then at Larkana. His father has served under the British government and was admired by the English traditions. He sent his son to Berkley and Oxford from where he got graduations in Law. He served under various ministries during the 1950s under Iskander Mirza and later became influential during General Ayoob's government in 1960s where he served as the Minister for Foreign Affairs (Bhurgrri 2002).

After contradicting General Ayoob over the Tashkent Declaration<sup>8</sup> in 1966, he formed his political party in the name of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) in November 1967 and appeared as a shining star in the politics of Pakistan (Wolpert 2018). His 1970s election campaign can be regarded as one of the best election campaigns in the country because it was the first time country was going through the first free and fair elections since independence. His speeches became very famous because he talks about the equality of human beings through his famous slogan of *Roti, Kapara Aur Makan* (Bread, Clothes and Houses) and the concept of Islamic Socialism.

He formed his government in 1972 at a time of very difficult period because one part of Pakistan i.e., Eastern<sup>9</sup> part became independent (i.e., Bangladesh) on 16 December 1971. The separation however caused huge tension and division in both wings of Pakistan. The West Pakistan's (the remaining Pakistan) concern was mainly as India supported the Bangladesh cause and supported the Mukhti Bahmimi. As a result, fighting in the Eastern wing started in 1971, and the Indian army captured 96,000 Pakistani soldiers and also occupied 5000 sq. miles area of run of Kuch in Sindh. Mr. Bhutto with his diplomatic skills convinced Indian premier Indra Gandhi and brought all POWs and the captured land to Pakistan (Shah 1996). To his great achievements, he was hailed as the great leader of Pakistan i.e., *Quaid-e-Awaam* (leader of the people) similar to the Quaid-e-Azam (the great leader) (Bhurgrri 2002).

Mr. Bhutto's chief opponent during the 1970-1971 elections was Maulana Maudoodi of the JI, who vehemently rejected his socialist ideology<sup>10</sup> for Pakistan. Bhutto believed to "establish a society

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<sup>8</sup> After the 1965 war with India, the UN intervened and with the support of the USSR a meeting of leaders of Pakistan and India met to declare a ceasefire between two countries at Tashkent. From Pakistani side Z. A. Bhutto represented as the Foreign Minister (General Ayoob as the President) and from Indian side Lal Bahadur Shastri (Indian PM). When agreement was made and ready for signed Mr. Bhutto withdraw from signing the treaty which he said it is not in the interests of Pakistan and it looks like a complete surrender under India. This made furious General Ayoob and he was forced to resign. The treaty was signed later but marked the beginning of Mr. Bhutto's political influence. He became in opposition to General Ayoob and formed his own political party in the name of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) in November 1967.

<sup>9</sup> In 1947, when Pakistan became independent country, it was divided in two parts i.e., East and West. In the Eastern Part, there was mainly Bangali community however in the Western part there were different communities and their territories such as Sindhi, in Sindh province, Baluchi in Balochistan province, Punjabi in Punjab province, Pakhtoons (Pathans) in North West Frontier Province (NWFP) now Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province, and Kashmiri in Azad Kashmir area. In the 1970-71 general election, Sheikh Mujeeb-u-Rehman from the East Pakistan won with majority and demanded of more rights for his community and later with the support of India became separated from West Pakistan and became independent country in the name of Bangladesh on 16 December 1971.

<sup>10</sup> Mr. Bhutto initiated his programme of bring Islamic socialism for Pakistan. The economic system based on Ijtihad. His famous slogan during the general elections was Islam is our Religion, Democracy is our Polity, and Socialism is our Economy.

based on the religious faith, economic justice, and popular rights" (Yousif 1999: 104). He believed that his new programme of socio-economic reforms as mentioned in the policy was based on Islam, Socialism, and Democracy. These together would make a new developed, progressive, and prosperous Pakistan. There is no doubt that his ideas were new as has never been heard before in the country. His socialism (or Islamic socialism) programme became the cause of disagreement between him and the *Ulema* because they considered socialism as an anti-thesis of Islam.

The general election of 1970-71, brought tremendous change in Pakistan. Mr. Bhutto defeated the religious parties and got majority in the Western wing, however, in the Eastern wing the Awami League (AL) got majority. Technically the AL, leadership (Sheikh Mujeeb-ur- Rehman) was to form the government but unforeseen circumstances led to the political turmoil in the region and a war broke out. The Eastern wing of Pakistan separated and became Bangladesh on 16 December 1971 (Matinuddin 1994).

After the independence of Bangladesh, Mr. Bhutto was invited to form the government in remaining Pakistan (West Pakistan) in 1972. As already noted, he was a great orator with charismatic leadership. He viewed the religious forces as the threat to his government because of his past opposition and now the separation of East Pakistan was viewed by the Islamists as the punishment by Almighty Allah by not following the footprints of Islam. Mr. Bhutto, in order to appease the religious forces in the country, announced the establishment of a religious constitution to be framed.

The new constitution was framed and implemented on 14 August 1973, according to which Pakistan was declared as an "Islamic Republic". For the first time, a definition of a Muslim was provided according to the constitution, in order to separate Qadiani (Ahmadi sect) from the fold of Islam (Maluka 1995).

Such steps, however, were meaningful in the politico-religious environment of Pakistan. Later in 1974, he established the ministry to deal the religious matters under the name of the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA). The same year, the government organised the World Islamic Summit at Lahore to prove Pakistan as a leading powerful Muslim nation and to get Arab (financial) support. His government launched a series of religious measures in the country such as creating a religious constitution, making Ahmadis out of the fold of Islam by providing the definition of a Muslim and declaring them as non-Muslims, establishing free error printing of the Holy Quran, ensuring the managing of the Zakat, establishing the *Ruat-e-Hilal* committee for citation of moon and celebrations of the religious events in the country, setting up the *Auqaf* Ministry, making religious education compulsory, etc. All such religious steps were placed under the Ministry of Religious Affairs to look after the religious measure to be adopted in the country according to the Islamic principles (Raza 1997). The functions of the MORA were to look after the religious measures for Pakistan. Initially, the ministry works with minority and overseas Pakistanis minorities and was called as the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Ministry of Minority Affairs and Overseas Pakistanis (Government of Pakistan) in 1976.

There was no doubt that Mr. Bhutto was a modernist in his inner and outer look. However, the establishment of the full-fledged ministry of religious affairs under his instructions means he was using religion for political power. Maulana Kausar Niazi, a former JI member was made the Minister of the Religious Affairs. The Ulema criticised the establishment of the MORA by the government. They argued that Muslims govern their lives according to the teachings of Islam; therefore, there was no need for a separate ministry which should tell them how to live their life. Further, they believed that by establishing the MORA, government is trying to control religious institutions (madrassahs) and their leaders. However, Mr. Bhutto's government assured religious clerks that government has no intension to take control of the madrassahs (Shah 1996).

The MORA continued to perform its religious activities throughout the country. It organised the birthday celebrations of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in the name of *Seerat* conferences throughout country and arrangements for performing the Hajj (pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina). The *Auqaf* department which was established during his government was also placed under this ministry. Number of religious programmes were launched by his government to show that he and his government was more sincere with the religious cause. Famous among them were:

- Establishing religious constitution (1973). To which a definition of Muslim was provided and Ahmadis (Qadianis) were declared as non-Muslims. Prohibiting alcohol and gambling.
- Establishing Auqaf Departments (1976).
- Establishing the Ministry of Religious Affairs.
- Hosting second Islamic conference in 1974 (OIC).
- Placing copies of Holy Quran in all five-star hotels throughout the country (1976).
- Inviting Imams of Qaba and Masjid-e-Nabawi (1976).

Such religious measures adopted by the government led to think of more religious demands by the clerics who then demanded for Shariah to be implemented in the country. The religious elites believed that if Mr. Bhutto is sincere in establishing religious measures in the country then why Shariah is not being declared in the country. They blamed the government that all such religious measures implemented by the government were because of the religious elites' protests. Such Islamic measure by government came very late. It was just the politicisation of Islam, not sincere efforts for implementing Islamic principles in Pakistan. This also can be understood from the fact that when the Pakistan National Alliance (PNA) started a movement against Bhutto in the 1977 general election, he tried to use his appointed religious people under the *Auqaf* department against his opponents (other religious parties). Mr. Bhutto wrote to Maulana Kauser Niazi that "the pulpit is playing important role in the PNA agitation. It is time that a counterforce of the maulvis is mobilised in favour of the government starting with weaning away from the PNA of the maulvis employed by the Auqaf Department" (Shah 1996).

Mr. Bhutto's religious programme, however, brought some political gains for short term but in long term it completely shattered his government (Jones 2003: 18) due to overemphasising the role of religion in the country and many promises to implement Islamic measures. Therefore, the religious elites became critical of his government which ultimately led to his dismissal in 1977 and led the martial law and brought military in power under General Zia-ul-Haq.

Under, General Zia, the MORA flourished to a greater level. The religious elites welcomed the military government in 1977 because they viewed General Zia as the sincere man and a saver of Islam who will create an Islamic state. In his first broadcast to the people of Pakistan, he made it clear that the country was created in the name of religion and "can only survive if it sticks to Islam" (DAWN 1977). The MORA organised a convention of religious elites to which General Zia stated that his military government would develop the status of the religious clerics so that they should have the dignity in society. In doing so, they were included in the *Majlis-e-Shura* (an advisory body like the parliament). In order to achieve his aim of making Pakistan an Islamic state, he launched the Islamisation programme for Pakistan. Number of religious measures were adopted by the military government under General Zia, as this paper is limited to explain MORA, therefore his military government's efforts with regards to the MORA will be analysed.

General Zia's government made three fundamental changes into the religious ministry (MORA). First, the ministry's function of dealing the overseas Pakistanis was separated and placed under the Ministry of Manpower. The MORA purely was confined to deal with the religious matters (including

minority). Secondly, the CII was instructed to create a draft for achieving the Islamisation programme for Pakistan. Finally, the management of Zakat was incorporated in the MORA.

According to the Article 230 of the 1973 Constitution, the CII existed (National Assembly of Pakistan, 2010) but due to the lack of Mr. Bhutto's government towards religion, it remained in papers only. Its main function according to the 1973 Constitution enshrined in the Article 230 was to

"make recommendations to the *Majlis-e-Shura* (Parliament) and the provincial assemblies the ways and means of enabling and encouraging the Muslims of Pakistan to order their lives individually and collectively in all respects in accordance with the principles and concepts of Islam as enunciated in the Holy Quran and Sunnah. To advise a House, a provincial assembly, the president or governor on any question referred to the Council as to whether a proposed law is or is not repugnant to the injunctions of Islam. To bring all existing laws into the Injunctions of Islam" (National Assembly of Pakistan 2010: 139).

The role of CII was included in the MORA by Bhutto's government in 1976; however, such Islamic recommendations came very late as the agitations against his government already started. When General Zia assumed power of the government, he extended powers of the MORA, and the implementation programme of the CII (recommendations regarding implementing Islam in Pakistan). The CII was expanded with the inclusion of more religious scholars to give it a conservative outlook. The CII was assigned the tasks to frame the draft initiatives for the Islamisation programme of Pakistan in June 1981. The measures included electoral system of the country, collecting and distribution of Zakat, Islamisation of penal laws, and Islamisation of electoral system.

The CII, submitted its report to General Zia, and advised federal form of government closer to Islam, but the president should act in accordance with the decisions of the *Majlis-e-Shura* (Federal Council-FC) (Shah 1996: 221). With regards to the elections, the CII members stated that in the light of Quran and Sunnah election should be based on non-party basis and Shariah should be implemented gradually (according to the concept of Maulana Maudoodi). Considering the recommendations of the CII, and the FC General Zia believed that both reports did not suit his political position because he will be at mercy of the religious elites, therefore, he side-lined any further recommendations. However, he formulated another commission to formulate a practical religious solution for Pakistan. The construction of Ansari Commission can be attributed with this task.

The Ansari Report (also known as Ansari Commission which was named after his chairman Maulana Zafar Ansari) also stated the similar suggestions. He stated that the role of the head of state is pivotal in establishing the Islamic state but he neither can suspend the constitution nor dissolve the *Majlis-e-Shura* at any time. The report further declared that the head of state (*Ameer*) has not any powers to declare any legal administrative order which is against the teachings of Islam. Further, the Ansari Commission stated that the *Ameer* is duty-bound to follow the instructions of the *Majlis-e-Shura*, in his disagreement he has to give reasons. Again, if the *Majlis-e-Shura* declares any issue with the two-third majority then the *Ameer* is duty-bound to act accordingly or resign. An *Ameer* shall be a Muslim (male) (Chapter 2, Clause 5). The commission considered the women participation in election with the minimum age of 50 years and had written permission of her husband (if alive). The report was criticised by the women activists throughout the country such as APWA and WAF. However, the gradual Islamic measures were adopted according to the CII in the name of Hudood laws, law of evidence, Blasphemy laws, Zakat, etc.

The CII was reconstituted in 1977 and instructed with extended tasks with regards to religion. The CII was given the task to frame mechanism for the system of Zakat. The CII submitted its report in April 1978, and the government decided to deduct Zakat from the savings accounts. This government's

implementation of deducting Zakat amount from the savings accounts was criticised by the CII, because through this system the elites were exempted because they maintain the current accounts. The MORA has a key role to play in maintaining the Zakat system in the country. The Central Zakat Committee (CZC) was the apex body which controls the Zakat system in the country which makes policies regarding collecting, maintain, and distribution of the Zakat money and had 19 members. The MORA arranges meetings of the Central Zakat Committee and monitors its policies.

The CII presented religious penal laws in the name of Hudood laws promulgated in 1979 (Cheema & Mustafa 2008). Under such laws, the enforcement of *Had* crime, *Zina*, and *Tanzir* was maintained in the president order No 4, 7, and 8. The religious recommendations by the CII and related laws can be considered as the part of the Islamisation programme of General Zia (Imran 2005). Though the penal laws were in force in the country, General Zia gave them religious colour to legitimise his military government. The implementation of such laws was welcomed by the religious elites but was heavily criticised by the human rights activists in the country, particularly by the women wings. Although General Zia implemented Haudood laws, no penalties were charged under such laws (Burki et al. 1991).

Hence, the implementation of the Haudood laws was welcomed by the religious elites but no one was charged under such laws and it is believed that General Zia used religious rhetoric for his personal political gain but not for the religion itself. Dr. Israr Ahmed (his interviews are available online), who was one of the great scholars of religion and an outspoken about the implementation of religious laws, expressed the same opinion about General Zia's reluctance for implementing Islamic laws.

However, the impact of such religious policies continued as the MORA continued to work on implementation of religious laws in the country. The period of 1990s can be considered as the testimony to this because, in 1991, the civil government tried to bring the *Shariah Bill*, but it did not become a reality. Though various efforts were made later by the Benazir Bhutto government and it supported the Taliban government in 1996 of Afghanistan (Hamid Mir Interview to morning show-available online). In 1997, Nawaz Sharif was believed to be supported by the Taliban government and particularly the Osama bin Laden to bring Islamic government in Pakistan. Considering such environment, the MORA, as limited and no any further role was made by the ministry because of the changing political structure in the country. The ministry was limited to the Zakat funds, Hajj and Umrah policies.

#### **The MORA during General Pervez Musharraf Governance (1999-2008)**

The period of the 1990s witnessed the limited role of the MORA. Though there were tremendous developments of creating an IJI (1989-90), recognising Taliban governments (1996) of Afghanistan, and introducing the *Shariah Bill* (1991) in parliament, the MORA could not act independently on religious issues. Its role was limited to the programmes of pilgrimage, the Hajj policy. Although the performing of the Hajj is indeed vital and one of the pillars of Islam, the further role of this ministry was side-lined during the General Pervez Musharraf government.

In March 1999, the Supreme Court of Pakistan allowed anyone can exempt himself from deducting the official Zakat funds by the banks. Initially, this was limited to the Shia sect only. Through this, the less amount of money was coming to Zakat fund. The state control of the Zakat money now shifted and control of the ulema reduced. It must be noted that an increase in Zakat incomes during the 1980s and 1990s was also due to the increased prices of the gold. But since then, there has been a dramatic decrease in Zakat ravenous. This change has negatively impacted control mechanisms of the Ministry of Religious Affairs.

**Table 1. The Budget of MORA (1999 – 2007)**

Year	Amount in Pakistan currency (Rs)
1999-2000	249,941
2000-1	169,701
2003-4	192,499
2004-5	201,664
2005-6	223,081
2006-7	254,376

Source: Government of Pakistan Budget Documents

### **Conclusion**

The formation of a religious ministry in Pakistan, which was founded in the name of Islam in the holy month of Ramadan (27 Ramadan 1366 AH / 14 August 1947), was vital for the political elites to influence masses and control religious elites and their institutions. Initially, the first two decades, the governments of Pakistan had not established the MORA due to the various political reasons.

The MORA was established under the first civil democratic government (of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto) in 1974 to appease masses by creating a full-fledged ministry which would look after the religious matters. The same government also established an Auqaf department for collecting religious taxes (Zakat and Ushr) and appointed religious clerics in governmental jobs. These two institutions also have helped for protecting the position of madrassahs. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto vehemently used a religious rhetoric throughout his public speeches. On the other hand, the state has wanted to control and manage the religious forces in Pakistan that meaning the religion was just politicised for gaining political power. By making Islam as a state power, Islam was used for gaining political power (i.e., Islamisation as the state power). This became clear during the 1977 general elections when the religio-political parties under the PNA opposed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's government. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto wrote to Maulana Kauser Niazi (his appointed MORA minister) to organise a religious force to counter the PNA agitations.

During the government of General Zia-ul-Haq, these religious measures were strengthened, the MORA was entrusted with significant tasks. The military government gave full authority of collecting Zakat funds which could be utilised in religious institutions. The CII gave tremendous religious support to the military government in formulating the religious policies of Pakistan. Zakat was made compulsory and it was automatically deducted from the Muslims bank accounts. Through this, the military government influenced society by making mandatory Islamiyat and Pakistan studies subjects to create religious generations (Mukherjee 2010). General Zia-ul-Haq had remarkable support from the religious elites because of his showering of enormous funds to the clerics and their religious institutions. It can be said that with the governmental support, the MORA further strengthened during General Zia-ul-Haq period. Its functions and authority were decreased in the later decades particularly during Benazir Bhutto (two) governments. It can be speculated that Benazir Bhutto did not support General Zia-ul-Haq's religious policies to not jeopardise her civil government in society. However, during the same decade (the 1990s) Nawaz Sharif did try to implement more religious policies and tried the Shariah Bill to be passed from the parliament but failed to accomplish it. The aftermath of 1990 marked the decline in the role of the MORA.

The powers of the MORA under the government of General Pervez Musharraf from 1999 to 2008 were completely limited to the organisation of Muslims pilgrimage namely Hajj. There could be other political developments internationally that had directly affected Pakistan governments' religious

policies. The incident of 9/11 can be considered as the most international political incident that affected the religious policies throughout the world. Further, the role of the MORA was reduced by the announcement of the supreme court's decision that any Muslim can withhold himself from his/her deduction of Zakat (previously it was limited to Shia sect).<sup>11</sup> Previously the MORA was responsible for collecting Zakat and organising Hajj. With the development of the Supreme Court's decision, the Zakat was withheld from the fold of the MORA which affected its role. This means that the MORA's role was decreased so as the Islamisation of the state.

Currently, the aim of MORA is limited to the religious (Islamic) activities beyond Pakistan such as performing Hajj and Umrah, Ziarat to India, arranging Islamic conferences, trainings educating Ulema and Khatibs, and the exchange of visits of scholars of Islam with foreign and international institutions. Such curtailment in the policies of the MORA by the Pakistan government can be viewed as the government elites thinking of politicising the religion for their so-called political purposes. This can be understood from the fact that the country which was created as a result of religious struggle had no MORA initially for nearly 27 years since 1947.

The establishment of the ministry in the name of religion to look after for the religious matters in the country in 1974 shows vividly the political elites' mindset of politicising religion. If the political elites of the country during the 1970s, 80s and 90s were sincere with the religious tasks why they did not accept the CII demands of the MORA objectives of the implementation of the Shariah and why government elites first incite the religious fervour in the country but keep them aloof from indulging in such matter. Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto did try to engage with them, General Zia-ul-Haq went far ahead and Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif did little during their respective governments periods. General Pervez Musharraf changed the course completely by side-lining the religious role in the country possibly due to the changing in world political environment towards political Islam after the 9/11 incident and his continuity to remain in power.

It is interesting to note that the existence of the MORA, in a state like Pakistan whose origin lies with the concept of Two-Nation Theory, was purely a political decision by the state elites. It can be considered as one of the indicators for making Political Islam in Pakistan. Though the state elites were not fully implementing the religious laws in the country but as a contributor to the cause of religion. Another aspect of establishing the MORA was to control the religious organisations and their institutions through state apparatus. It was one of the reasons that the religious organisations opposed the formation of the MORA in Pakistan because they believed through its formation, the state might get direct control of the religious affairs.

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<sup>11</sup> On March 9, 1999 Supreme Court of Pakistan upheld the judgement of the Sindh High Court that members of all Fiqahs entitled to exempt from Zakat deduction from their bank accounts and the same was notified to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). Available online at: <http://eus.thedeviser.com/eus/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/Zakat-SC-Judgement.pdf>

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