

Evolution and Impact of ‘Deobandi’ Islam in the Punjab

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Abstract

This paper seeks to delineate the process that culminated into the proliferation of Deobandi version of Islam in the Punjab that eventually led to the formulation of terrorist outfits by the closing years of twentieth century. Gradual creeping of Deobandi influence was not in consonance with the composite cultural ethos that was very intrinsic to the Punjab. In the colonial Punjab and even before that, saints and shrines signified ‘symbolic cultural outposts’. In that social and political setting the tribal and kinship identities assumed centrality, thus, complementing the power and influence of the saints. In that context with all its peculiarities, the emergence of the Deobandi exegetes in the Punjab with the sharia oriented interpretation of Islam needs a fresh enquiry. However, before mapping the Deobandi influence on the Punjab through the agency of the ulema and madaris one must take into account the significance of the saint or sajjada nishin as intercessor between them (people) and God. Besides, ‘spiritual excellence’ their political role within the British imperial system would also be examined whereby structures of political power and religious organization forged a close relationship. Thereafter, the main theme of the paper would be addressed--evolution and impact of Deobandi Islam in the Punjab. However, a brief reference to the historical and political antecedents of the Deobandi puritanism would form the part of the narrative. Contrary to the local Islam, centring on the saint or sajjada nishin and shrine or dargah, the Deobandi Islam was disseminated through ulema and madaris. The shift from sajjada nishin and dargah to ulema and madaris brought with it a profound change in the religious outlook at the popular level, culminating in the Lal Masjid like incidents.

Deobandis in the contemporary Pakistan constitute the most important Muslim segment which exercises enormous control over the religious seminaries (*madaris*). Around 65 percent of the *madaris* belong to this school of thought and “are the most militant in their demands for the Pakistani state to become truly Islamic--as they would define it”.¹

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Deobandi faction had been in the vanguard of the movement against Ahmediyya community that eventually was declared non-Muslim in the 1970s and also have orchestrated anti-Shia sectarian violence in the 1980s and 1990s. Jamiat-ul-Ulema-e-Islam (JUI) is the largest Deobandi political outfit which gave rise to the terrorist organizations like Harkat-ul-Mujahideen (HM), Jaish-i-Muhammad (JM), Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP) and Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LJ). Not only these organisations have been active in Kashmir and other parts of India but subsequently they also challenged the writ of Pakistani state. In July 2007, Deobandi clerics' stiff armed resistance to the state agencies from *Lal Masjid*, located in the very heart of Pakistani capital, Islamabad, demonstrates their potential to pose a challenge to the state. Ironically, all the above mentioned organizations had a very strong link with the Punjab. It, therefore, becomes imperative to contextualize the emergence of Deobandi organizations and assess their impact on the area.

The protagonists of the Deobandi thought owe a good deal to Majlis-i-Ahrar that acted as an instrument of political articulation for them in the Punjab. Ulema like Maulana Ahmed Ali Lahori, Maulana Qazi Ehsan Ahmed Shujabadi and Ataullah Shah Bokhari demonstrated their anti-British political activism through Majlis-i-Ahrar during 1930s. Therefore, Ahrar also finds a *niche* in the paper for better understanding of the evolution of Deobandi influence on the province's politics. Deobandi creed proliferated after the Partition of India as is evident from the study of Deobandi literature with respect to its evolution in the Punjab. The major emphases of the paper would be devoted to the important Deobandi ulema from the Punjab, who set up their *madaris*, and the impact they engendered on the political and social formation of the province.

So far no study on the Punjab has brought the subject of Deobandi permeation into focus. David Gilmartin and Ian Talbot, however, have reflected on the issue in their respective works on the colonial Punjab but tangentially. Similarly, Tariq Rahman, Ali Riaz, Qasim Zaman and Mumtaz Ahmed have carried out studies of considerable worth and merit but their focus had been circumscribed to the evolution and functioning of the *madaris* only. Besides, they have not examined Deobandis and particularly their creeping influence in the Punjab in an exclusive manner. Hence, in contemporary era when religious extremism is attracting the attention of scholars from far and wide, the above mentioned subject merits thorough investigation from academic stand point. This provides a *raison detre* for the paper at hand. In order to locate Deobandi discourse in the perspective of the Punjab, it seems apposite to make a reference to the religious and political specificity of the region which may also serve as an appropriate entry point into the deliberation to follow here under.

Pir-Murid relationship in the Colonial Punjab

The most outstanding feature of 'popular Islam'² in the Punjab has been all permeating influence that the *Sufi* saints wielded for centuries. *Pir-Murid* relationship acquires particular salience in the socio-political setting of the rural Punjab. Although mosques and *maulvis* abound in the villages, they could hardly have substituted "a pervasive ideal

of religious authority” that a *pir* embodies and the shrines as “sites of special access to religious power”³ or *barakat*. The *barakat* or spiritual charisma is transmitted from one generation of the *pir*’s living descendants to another from the eleventh century onwards. *Barakat* “perhaps best understood as an almost blood-like substance that flows through the veins of a *pir* and endows him with what Max Weber called ‘charismatic authority’”⁴. *Pir*’s shrine also epitomises sanctity that it derives by virtue of the *barakat* it inherits from the *pir* itself. The *pir*, ‘the spiritually saturated holy man’, creates a bond with the *murid* through *bait*, a pact of spiritual allegiance, thus the former formalises his role vis-à-vis the latter. *Pir* performs dual function: he not only fulfils the ‘mundane desires’ of the *murid* but also acts as a mediator between him and Allah.

The *sufi* saints of the Punjab, without any exception, belonged to one of the main four Sufi orders. Chishti order casts the greatest influence on the rural Punjabi folks cutting across the boundaries of faith and kinship. The most important shrine of any Chishti saint is of Baba Farid Ganj Shakar at Pakpattan. The sufis of Chishti order represent syncretic cultural ethos that has considerable accommodation for the followers of other faiths. Qadiriya order at Lahore and Multan as its centres has a tangible impact in the urban Punjab. Ali Usman Hijveri or *Data Ganj Baksh*’s shrine in Lahore is the prime site of homage for the devotees of that order (*silsilah*). The Naqshbandi order whose “influence radiated outwards from the home of its leading saint in Sirhind”⁵, *Sheikh Ahmed Sirhindi*. That order holds extraordinary importance with respect to the present paper as the large majority of Deobandi exponents drew inspiration from him. Multan is the centre of Suhrawardy order as its leading *sufi* saint Bahaud-Din Zakariya has his eternal abode there.

Apart from exercising spiritual influence, the *Pirs* of the Punjab possessed large landholdings which “ideally placed (them) to play a leading role in rural politics”⁶. Over the period of time, the important shrines acquired enormous property through *inam* grants from the state and considerable *waqf* endowments donated by the devotees. From eleventh century onwards, most of the rulers granted the shrines large chunks of land as a matter of policy called *madad-i-muash*,⁷ meant to secure the *sajjada nishin*’s loyalty. Ian Talbot provides archival information about the landed property of the different *pir* families during the colonial era, which made them a serious contender for political power in the Punjab:

The descendants of Baba Farid possessed, by the twentieth century, a tenth of all the land in the Pakpattan *tehsil* in which the shrine is situated, some 43,000 acres in all. Part of this came to them as State gifts during Sikh rule. The Shia Shah Jiwana Pir family in Jhang owned nearly 10,000 acres of land, whilst the Pirs of Jahanian Shah owned 7,000 acres. Five thousand acres were attached to the leading Suhrawardy shrine of Baba Bahaud-Din Zakariya in Multan.⁸

Such large landholdings became instruments not only of economic viability but also political authority for the *sajjada nishins* who sustained as British collaborators. The government from the second half of the 19th century weaned itself away from the official patronage previously extended to the mosques, temples or shrines. The Act XX of 1863 laid down legal procedures for managing local religious institutions and barred the

government from direct financial support for or control over them. However, in order to establish a link with the 'rural hierarchies of mediation' a structure was evolved by the British government whereby the local authorities and cultures could be incorporated into the empire. Therefore, British imperial ideology warranted an alliance with many of the rural shrines despite the official policy stating otherwise. The events of 1857 forced the British to take cognizance of the political influence of the *sajjada nishins* on the Punjabi populace. Gilmartin quotes one British official stating about Mukhdoom Shah Mehmood, the *sajjada nishin* of Bahawal Haq's shrine, that his mere "presence in our Court convinced the people that the most influential man of their own faith was on the side of order".⁹ As the local political influence, the *sajjada nishins* wielded "obvious interest" as enunciated by the Lieutenant Governor. He justifiably regarded the *sajjada nishin* as "an individual of territorial influence between the government officials and a population almost exclusively pastoral and agricultural, and as shown by recent experience very liable to be moved to insurrection by sudden and inadequate causes".¹⁰ Consequently, many *sajjada nishins* rendered services for the British in the rural administration in the capacities of *zaildars*, honorary magistrates and district board members. Dispute over the income from the lands and succession forced the British to intervene, hence, drawing them even closer to the *sajjada nishins*. That was the political importance of the *sajjada nishins* and the shrines of their estates were taken over by the Court of Wards, a measure meant to protect the *jagirs* of big landlord families caught up in the quagmire of indebtedness or succession crisis. All said and done the *sajjada nishins* were not only ensconced in the position of 'spiritual excellence' and the representatives of 'local Islam' but also exercised enormous political influence and authority as big *zimindars* and the collaborators of the state.

Darul Ulum Deoband: Establishment

Sufi shrines and the countless variations in celebrating the local saints "lend a truly Indian colour to the Muslim practices in the sub-continent. Sufi Islam is usually eclectic and tolerant towards other faiths".¹¹ However, the orthodox Sunni Islam has a strong tendency to build up an "ideological edifice" on the foundation of puritanical and literalist Islam which "imposes a uniformity of belief and practice through the extensive network of traditional schools and colleges".¹² In the case of Punjab, the overriding influence of the *pirs* and *sajjada nishins* did not go unchallenged despite their firmly entrenched position particularly after the Deobandi version gained currency during closing years of the nineteenth century. The traditional religious forms with *sajjada nishins* and shrines as the mediatory agency was trenchantly denounced by the ulema from Deoband but denunciation came more forcefully from Ahl-i-Hadith¹³ section of Islamic scholars. However, Ahl-i-Hadith brand of puritanical Islam and its impact does not fall within the purview of this paper. The sole focus of the paper would, heretofore, be on the steady permeation of Deobandi influence in the Punjab. Thus, a reference to the establishment of Darul Ulum¹⁴ in 1867 by Hafiz Syed Abid Hussain at Deoband in the United Provinces and the social and historical context making its existence and subsequently sustenance a possibility seems pertinent here.

Throughout the Muslim rule in northern India, “ulema, as teachers, interpreters of religious law, and theologians, were closely linked to political power”.¹⁵ Their economic as well as political fortunes “waxed and waned with the rise and fall of Islamic (Muslim) Empires.”¹⁶ The decline of the Mughals and the onset of the British rule threatened their status as state functionaries. The reaction of the ulema to the Mughal downfall and the advent of the British rule were markedly different from those of the *sajjada nishins* of the Punjab. In that era of socio-political transition, the influence of many *sajjada nishins* remained intact in their respective localities but it was no less than a catastrophe for the ulema of Delhi. For them “it signalled the disappearance of the cultural axis around which the entire Indian Islamic system was developed”.¹⁷ With the crumbling of the Muslim authority, “the ulema thus faced a new dilemma in defining the practical meaning of Islamic community in India”.¹⁸ Not only the meanings of the Islamic system underwent a tectonic shift as Smith argues, but the responsibility for its maintenance was assumed by the ulema class. Hence, “a serious reorientation among many of the Delhi’s leading ulema”¹⁹ ensued, beginning with Shah Waliullah in the eighteenth century.

During the second half of the nineteenth century, the movements of Islamic revivalism led to the realignment of “ulema class interests with the fortunes of Islamic community rather than the state”.²⁰ Darul Ulum, which Meston mentioned in 1915 as “a most impressive place, very like what one imagines some of the great universities of the middle ages to have been”,²¹ had Qasim Nanutwi (1833-77) and Rashid Ahmed Gangohi (1829-1905) as its early patrons. Its establishment was a departure from the earlier patterns of education, hence, it caused “a sense of discomfort” to Barbara Metcalf when depicted as ‘traditional’. “Much of the organizational form was adopted from British institutions and then modified to fit the needs of Deoband”.²² Set up in an old mosque, the Chatta Masjid, under a shadowy pomegranate tree it was markedly distinct from earlier *madaris*. The people independent from kin ties and getting donations from the general public were the two primary traits, ascribing that institution the modernist peculiarities conspicuously absent in other religious seminaries of the subcontinent. As an independent institution in its own right, Darul Ulum had an independent infrastructure of its own. It was run by a professional staff and its students were admitted to study a defined curriculum and supposed to take examination for which they were awarded degrees at the convocation every year. It had its classrooms and a central library. In due course of time, it had many affiliated colleges, overseen by Darul Ulum’s own graduates. The examining body too was consisted of Deobandi ulama.

The staff of Darul Ulum had specific assignments, which comprised teachers, administrators and councillors. Erudition in Arabic was a fundamental criterion for the selection of the teachers. However, Persian teachers too were recruited but the faculty of Arabic held precedence over them “in pay and prestige”.²³ Initially, the number of teaching staff did not exceed twelve. The institution’s administration consisted of the *Sarparast* or rector who acted as a patron, the *muhtamim* or chancellor, who was in charge of day to day administration of the institution and *sadr mudarris* or principal who was to oversee the system of instruction. The further addition in the numerical strength of the administrators took effect when the official, *mufti*, was added in 1892. He was entrusted with the task “to supervise the dispensation of judicial opinions on behalf of the school”.²⁴ Darul Ulum had the Consultative Council that included the administrators and

seven additional members. Gradually the council became more important *vis-a-vis* staff and administration. By 1887, the consultative council was vested with all the powers to make decisions.

The curriculum introduced at Darul Ulum was quite similar to what was being taught at other *madaris* in Muslim South Asia, known as *Dars-i-Nizami*. That curriculum was first introduced by Mullah Nizamuddin Siharvi (d.1747), who was a scholar of some repute in Islamic jurisprudence and philosophy in Lucknow.²⁵ All *madaris* adhering to Sunni *fiqh*, whether they are of Brelvi, Deobandi or Ahl-i-Hadith persuasion follow *Dars-i-Nizami* and Darul Ulum. The Nizami course “consists of about twenty subjects broadly divided into two categories: *al ulum an-naqliya* (the transmitted sciences), and *al-ulum al-aqliya* (the rational sciences). The subject areas include grammar, rhetoric, prosody, logic, philosophy, Arabic literature, dialectical theology, life of the Prophet, medicine, mathematics, polemics, Islamic law, Jurisprudence, Hadith, and Tafsir (exegesis of the Quran)”.²⁶ Interestingly, only eight out of twenty subjects of the curriculum can be termed as purely religious. The rest of the subjects were meant (i) to enable the students for civil service jobs and (ii) to help them to have better understanding of the religious scriptures. Darul Ulum attracted mostly the poor students as opposed to the *Ashraf* (elites) who preferred Muhammadan Anglo Oriental College, Aligarh (which was elevated to the status of a University in 1920).

Darul Ulum was financed by the Muslim princes of Hyderabad, Bhopal and Rampur to quote a few who patronised learning and “extend their bounty across the border to their fellows in British India”.²⁷ Similarly, big landlords from United Provinces also dispensed some of their wealth for the altruistic causes by lending monetary support to Darul Ulum Deoband. These grants, however, had no element of certainty. Ulama were not willing “to accept British grant-in-aid, for such help was precarious and carried the taint of its non-Muslim source”.²⁸ Therefore, a network of donors was created with extreme care “who formed a base not only for financial support but for dissemination of their teachings”.²⁹ Many supporters pledged annually the contributions which formed the major part of Darul Ulum’s income. Neither was the amount of contribution fixed nor the specificity of religious and sectarian persuasion considered important.³⁰

Deobandi influence percolating in Punjab

When Haji Muhammad Abid started the fund raising for Darul Ulum, 12 percent of the total funds came from the Punjab during the first twenty years of its existence.³¹ According to Gilmartin, financial support came mostly from the urban centres, where the influence of saint and shrine was somewhat marginal.³² Similarly, Punjab is reported to be quite significant in the recruitment of the students for Darul Ulum in its initial years. However, the concrete information about the number of students from the Punjab remains doubtful as even Barbara Metcalf has hardly anything worthwhile to impart, in this particular regard. She alludes with the aid of the map to the spread of the *madaris* in the Punjab, affiliated to Darul Ulum Deoband in the closing years of the nineteenth century. Lahore, Gujranwala and Peshawar were the centres,

mentioned in the map where such *madaris* were set up.³³ No further detail is furnished as to their founders nor are the names of those institutions recorded. Saleem Mansur Khalid, however, reveals that Madrasa-i-Rashidia at Jullundur was founded in 1897 and another *madrasa*, Madrasa-i-Naumania, was established in 1907.³⁴ As regards the ulema, it appears that Hussain Ali of Wan Bhachran (1866-1943) of Mianwali district is the earliest recorded scholar, going to Darul Ulum Deoband.³⁵ He became Maulana Rashid Ahmed Gangohi's student in 1895 and got instruction in Hadith. He was also instructed in the exegesis of Quran by Maulana Mazhar Nanutwi, and Logic and Philosophy by Maulana Ahmed Hassan Kanpuri. In 1915, he returned to his village, Wan Bhachran, and began professing the Deobandi brand of Islam.³⁶ For the locals, he zealously emphasised upon unequivocal faith in *Tauhid* (monism) and Quran as the fundamental source to ascertain the truth. Besides preaching, he also wrote quite extensively but due to extremist views, his writings remain unnoticed or mentioned briefly even in the narratives of Deobandi scholars. Nevertheless, Ghulamullah Khan (1909-1980), a scholar of great erudition and founder of *Taleem ul Quran*, a renowned *madrasa* in the northern Punjab, chose to be his disciple. Similarly, Maulana Abdul Haleem Qasimi (1920-1983) came to learn Quranic translation from Hussain Ali.

In the early twentieth century, Abdul Rahim Raipuri (1853-1919), a Naqshbandi *pir* and Maulana Ashraf Thanvi wielded considerable influence in the Punjab. Abdul Rahim Raipuri was born in Tigri, a town in Ambala district. He, therefore, may be considered as the earliest Deobandi *alim* with Punjabi background. However, he spent most of his life in Ganga-Yumna valley, working on different positions in various *madaris* like Mazahir ul Ulum Sahranpur and Delhi. Many of his successors like Shah Abdul Qadir Raipuri, Shah Abdul Aziz Raipuri and Saeed Ahmed Raipuri set up *madaris* in Lahore and Sargodha by the name of *Idara Rahimia Ulum-i-Qurania*.³⁷ The network of *Nizam ul Madaris ur Rahimia* is very extensive; innumerable *madaris* affiliated with it through out Pakistan.³⁸ Unlike other Deobandi groups, its denomination disproves violence and organizes peaceful protest movements.

Ubaidullah Sindhi (1872-1944)³⁹ may be deemed as the harbinger of Deobandi activism in the Punjab and Sind. Born to a Sikh parentage from Sialkot, Ubaidullah Sindhi embraced Islam at the tender age of 15 in Muzaffargarh on 29 August 1887. In September 1888, he went to Deoband and came under the tutelage of Maulana Mehmud ul Hassan (1851-1922) who was instrumental in stirring Deobandi movement to political activism. Ubaidullah proved himself worthy of Mehmud ul Hassan's attention, when he successfully formed Jamiat ul Ansar, a student body at Deoband in 1909. It was meant to organize Deobandi scholars both in the country and outside as well. Besides setting up a *madrasa*, Dar ul Irshad (established in 1901) in Goth Pir Jhanda, Nawab Shah district in Sind and Nazarath ul Maarif (established in 1912) in Delhi, he also played a pivotal role in *Tehrik i Reshami Roomal*, a silk letter conspiracy in 1915. This movement merits a mention here because of two reasons; one, the area of its operation was mostly the Punjab, and second, it provides us a first testimony of Deobandi activism in the region. Through a collaborative effort with Amir Amanullah Khan, the ruler of Afghanistan, the plan was hatched to oust the British from India with the help of Turkey. Ubaidullah Sindhi was overseeing the operational side of that movement. Unfortunate for Deobandi activists, the whole plan was leaked out and most of those involved were arrested.

Although it may not be altogether correct but one may assert that despite the failure of the Tehrik i Reshami Roomal, Punjab had a taste of anti-colonial misadventure which was a Deobandi undertaking.⁴⁰

In 1919, Deobandi ulema formalised themselves into a political group immediately after the Khilafat Movement (1919-1924) that aimed at preventing British to abolish *Khilafat* in Turkey after the First World War. As a consequence, Jamiat-i-Ulema-Hind (JUH) came into existence; Mehmud ul Hassan and Abul Kalam Azad were its central figures. Khilafat Movement synchronised with Non-Cooperation Movement re-configured all India politics in two ways; First, it brought the politics down to the masses, and second, it enabled ulema to secure significant position in public arena. The movement had its extraordinary resonance in north India and to a less extent influenced the urban Punjab. Lahore, Sialkot and Gujranwala were tangibly stirred by the anti-British sentiments during the early 1920s on the issue of Khilafat. During the same period, Deobandi stalwarts in the Punjab like Ubaidullah Sindhi, Ata Ullah Shah Bokhari, Habib ur Rehman Ludhianvi and Ahmed Ali Lahori began their political careers. They assumed centrality by inculcating exclusionary version of Islam in the politics; particularly their major rallying cry was *Khatam-i-Nabuvat* (finality of prophethood) deployed profusely in the condemnation of Ahmedhis *ab initio*. The concept gained foremost significance ever since the Ahmedya⁴¹ sect emerged in the late 1890s. The Ahmadis allegedly refuted the very idea of the last prophethood, considered one of the fundamentals of Islam.

Majlis-i-Ahrar: Instrument of Deobandi activism

Comprising Punjabi dissidents of the Khilafat Committee Punjab, Majlis-i-Ahrar-i-Islam⁴² emerged in 1929 and later on, it followed the puritanical and agitation style of politics in the 1930s. Maulana Zafar Ali Khan, Maulana Daud Ghaznavi, Syed Ataullah Shah Bokhari, Chaudhri Afzal Haq, Maulana Mazhar Ali Azhar, Khawja Abdul Rehman Ghazi, Sheikh Hassam-ud-din and Maulana Habib-ur-Rehman Ludhianvi constituted the core leadership of the Ahrar. Most of them were orators of extraordinary calibre who could spellbound the audience for hours. Although it was a composite organization representing all Muslim segments, yet the core ideology and principal leaders, like Ataullah Shah Bukhari and Habib-ur-Rehman Ludhianvi, adhered to Deobandi Islam. It had entrenched following among the lower middle income echelon of urban Muslim populace and particularly among the artisans of Lahore, Amritsar and Sialkot districts of the Punjab.

The Ahrar's agitations for the rights of the Muslims of Kashmir, who were suffering under the oppressive rule of Maharajah, are not fully acknowledged in the contemporary Pakistani historiography. The 1931 agitation raised the Ahrar party's popularity in urban Punjab to unprecedented level.⁴³ This was because of the presence of large Kashmiri Muslim communities in such cities as Amritsar, Lahore and Sialkot, where Ahrar had a substantial following. It was followed by another movement for the rights of the poor Muslims in Kapurthala State, which further raised its profile and popularity. It lasted till Masjid Shahid Ganj issue at Lahore that irreparably undermined Ahrar's political

standing in the province. Post Shahid Ganj era was quite chequered for Ahrar as its electoral strength plummeted, nevertheless, the impact that some of its leaders, particularly Bokhari engendered had a lasting resonance. *Madeh-i-Sahaba* (in 1937-39) Movement in UP widened chasm between Sunnis and Shias. Large number of Ahraris from Punjab travelled to Awadh especially to court arrest. In the 1940s, sectarian animosity was papered over as Pakistan Movement had gained momentum, thus mitigating the sectarian sentiments. However, sectarian differences could not be ironed out permanently as they kept recurring, finally culminating into the establishment of SSP on 8th September, 1985. Indeed, sectarian militants such as Haq Nawaz Jhangvi (1952-1990), founder-leader of SSP have acknowledged the legacy of Attaullah Shah Bukhari and his colleagues in Majlis-e-Ahrar.

After the Partition of India, Ahrar's appeal to the masses continued unabated as Khatum-i-Nabuvat Movement in 1953⁴⁴ explicitly demonstrated. Persons like Haq Nawaz Jhangvi, the founder of SSP and many of his close companions like Zia-ur-Rehman Faruqi took a leaf out of Ahrar's book. Although Ahrar's visibility in the political sphere remained peripheral, its influence was, however, markedly tangible on Doebandi ulema. Anti-Qadiani campaign in mid 1970s revealed the overriding impact of Ahrar on the ulema who were in the vanguard of that movement. Bokhari in particular was the major source of inspiration for many of them particularly in the Punjab.

Some earlier ulema and *madaris* with lasting impact

Maulana Ahmed Ali Lahori (1886-1962),⁴⁵ one of the renowned Deobandi *Alim*, rose to the revered status of *Sheikh ul Tafsir* because his exegesis of Quran is being regarded as the most authentic, lucid and comprehensive by the followers of Deobandi segment. Not only was he held in high esteem because of his contribution as the founder of such institutions like *Anjuman-i-Khudam ud Din* and *Qasim ul Ulum* but his scholarly works, particularly in the realm of *tafsir*, had also significance of their own. Ahmed Ali was instructed by renowned scholars and Sufis like Maulana Abdul Haque, Maulana Ubaidullah Sindhi and Maulana Ghulam Muhammad Deenpuri. He was initiated into Qaderia order and came under the spiritual tutelage of Maulana Deenpuri through *bait* in 1895.⁴⁶ Ubaidullah Sindhi, however, was his guardian and spiritual guide. Therefore, he zestfully took part in the anti-colonial struggle and in the process went to Kabul in 1921 but soon returned. He went to jail seven times for his denunciation of the British.

Ahmed Ali completed his education at *Madrisa-i-Dar ul Irshad* in Sind and started teaching there immediately afterwards. Later on, he was summoned to Delhi by Maulana Sindhi where he was made Naib Nazim (Deputy Administrator) of *Madrisa-i-Nazarat ul Maarif*, Delhi. In 1917, he came to Lahore and started imparting Quranic lessons to the general public in a mosque opposite to Sheranwala School. However, important phase in his career as an *Alim-i-Din* (religious scholar) began when he founded *Anjuman-i-Khudam ud Din*. Promotion and dissemination of Quran and *Sunna* (the tradition of Prophet) were enunciated as fundamental aims of the *Anjuman*.⁴⁷ Hence, the precedence of scriptural Islam was underscored, and the popular Islam epitomised

through the primacy of Saint and Shrine was termed as *bidat* in Ahmed Ali's teachings. Sticking to the fundamentals of Islam was exhorted upon Muslims. Maulana Fazal-i-Haq, a student of Maulana Nazir Ahmed Dehlvi, and Maulana Abu Muhammad Ahmed, a student of Maulana Rashid Ahmed Gangohi, were made *Anjuman's* members and Ahmed Ali became its *Amir* (Head). Madrisa-i-Qasim ul Ulum was founded under the auspices of *Anjuman-i-Khudam ud Din* in 1924. Its grandiose building was constructed in Line Subhan Khan, Sheranwala Gate, Lahore, which was completed in 1934. A *madrisa* for girls was also built in 1945 at the same location.⁴⁸ Madrisa Qasim ul Ulum, known for learning in *Tafsir ul Quran* (exegesis of Quran), have instructed approximately 80,000 scholars of Islam.

Maulana Ahmed Ali remained politically active as he developed close affinity with Ahrar when it launched Kashmir Movement in 1931. He ardently espoused agitation against the high handedness of the Maharaja against the Kashmiri Muslims. After Pakistan's creation, he was instrumental in collecting funds (to the tune of thousands of rupees) for *Jihad* in Kashmir, and went to Muzaffarabad to deliver the funds with his son Ubaidullah Anwar.⁴⁹ Hence, Deobandi penchant for Jihad in Kashmir has a historical context. He was also in the forefront of the agitation launched against the British Principal of Maclagan Engineering College, Lahore, who desecrated Prophet of Islam. Although he was arrested on the charges of inciting the unrest, however, the British Government had to give in and all rusticated students were restored.⁵⁰ Ahmed Ali was elected Amir of *Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam* (JUI), West Pakistan on 8th and 9th October 1956. In June 1957, Tarjman ul Quran, 'the Jamiat's organ', was launched by Ahmed Ali in Lahore.⁵¹ Anjuman Khudam ud Din and Qasim ul Ulum continued their founder's legacy even after his demise in 1962. It sustained its reputation as the prime institution in the learning of Quran and its *tafsir* (exegesis). His son Ubaidullah Anwar (1926-1985), a ingenuous exegete in his own right stepped into the big boots of Maulana Ahmed Ali. Like his father, Ubaidullah Anwar was associated with JUI all his life. At the time of his death, he was its *naib amir*. Presently, both the institutions are "in the capable hands of Maulana Ajmal Qadri under whose vigilant oversight *Anjuman* and *Madrassa* are moving from strength to strength".⁵² Quran and the tradition of the Prophet were the fundamental postulates that *Anjuman* has always emphasised without meaning any insolence to *sufi* tradition. Hence, practice of religious rituals was circumscribed strictly to the confines of Islamic scriptures. All said and done, not only religious instruction but also playing a proactive role in politics was the legacy of JUH which was kept alive by Ahmed Ali and his successors. Therefore, *Anjuman Khudam ud Din* and *Madrassa Qasim ul Ulum* significantly contributed to advance the cause of political (radical) Islam. Maulana Ahmed Ali and Ubaidullah Anwar's preoccupation with JUI alludes to the implicit, if not explicit, support for *jihad* in Afghanistan and Kashmir.

Apart from Lahore, Ludhiana and Jullundur were the two districts where Deobandi Islam found conducive environ. Ulema from Ludhiana, particularly Maulana Muhammad and Maulana Muhammad Abdullah⁵³ came to the spotlight when they took the lead in denouncing Mirza Ghulam Ahmed, the founder of *Qadiani* sect, as *Kafir*.⁵⁴ After graduating from Deoband, Maulana Muhammad Abdullah came to Ludhiana and started teaching at famous *Madrassa Azizia*. Later on, he shifted to *Madrassa Allah Walla* along with his son Mufti Naeem Ludhianvi (1890-1970), and remained engaged in

teaching *hadith*. However, Abdullah's lasting contribution was the establishment of *Madrassa Darul Ulum Naumania*. Habib ur Rehman Ludhianvi was the most renowned of all Deobandi *Ulma* from Ludhiana. He was Deoband graduate and favourite student of Habib ur Rehman Usmani and Anwar Shah Kashmiri. In 1919, he entered in politics and began addressing public meetings along with Shabbir Ahmed Usmani (1885-1949) when Khilafat Movement had just commenced. He remained very active in the politics through out his life. He also was one of the chief protagonists of Majlis-i-Ahrar. In the annals of Ahrar movement, he is remembered as *Rais ul Ahrar* (Leader of Ahrar). Astoundingly, Habib ur Rehman stayed back in Ludhiana instead of migrating to Pakistan. His sons still live in East Punjab and are engaged in *Tabligh* (preaching). Maulana Muhammad Abdullah (*sajjada nishin*, Khanqah Sirajia Kundian District Mianwali),⁵⁵ Maulana Muhammad Ibrahim (Mian Channu) and Master Taj ud Din Ansari were the prominent figures who migrated from Ludhiana.⁵⁶ Maulana Rashid Ahmed Ludhianvi (b.1922) rose to prominence as an *Alim* and jurist.

Maulana Faqirullah Raipuri Jullunduri (1878-1963) and Maulana Khair Muhammad Jullunduri (1891-1970) both were Deoband graduates and celebrated scholars. Both ulema also shared the kinship bond. They belonged to *Arain biradri*. It signifies an important fact that initially Deobandi brand of Islam attracted the lower and lower middle echelon of the Muslim urban Punjabi populace.

Faqirullah received his early education from *Jamia Rashidia*, Raipur, which was modelled after Darul Ulum Deoband and Mazahir ul Ulum Saharanpur and was founded by Maulana Muhammad Saleh. Later on, he went to *Darul Ulum Naumania*, Lahore, and then to Deoband for higher learning. In 1908, he came back to Jullundur and started teaching at his *alma mater*, *Jamia Rashidia*. There he was entrusted with the task of shaping the future of such youngsters who attained prominence in the days to come, like Rashid Ahmed Salfi, Habib ur Rehman Ludhianvi, Muhammad Ali Jullunduri, Abdul Jabbar Hissarvi and Maulana Khair Muhammad Jullunduri.⁵⁷ At the time of Partition, Faqirullah migrated to Pakistan and settled in Sahiwal (Montgomery) District where he revived *Jamia Rashidia* which, in a few years time, became one of the prime institutions of Deobandi learning. Besides *Khair ul Madaris*, it is the only prominent *madrassa* which was set up in Jullundur and revived in the west Punjab after the Partition. Faqirullah was succeeded by his sons Abdullah, Qari Lutfullah and Fazal Habibullah. Abdullah shot to fame as a scholar in *hadith* and after his death, some dispute over the *Jamia's* succession led the authorities to close it down. After 9/11, it is continuously subjected to the raids of the law enforcement agencies.⁵⁸

Khair Muhammad Jullunduri was born in Nicodar tehsil, and started his education at seven which continued till he was twenty in 1911. During the years of his education, he travelled extensively in the Punjab, and North India. Eventually, he settled down at *Madrassa-i-Faiz Muhammadi*, Jullundur. He came under the spiritual shadow of Ashraf Ali Thanwi through *bait*. On persuasion of his *murshid*, Maulana Khair Muhammad established *Madrassa-i-Khair ul Madaris* in Alamgiri Mosque, Attari Bazaar, Jullundur, which was inaugurated on 9th March 1931.⁵⁹ Till his death in 1943, it continued functioning under the patronage of Ashraf Ali Thanvi.⁶⁰ After partition, Maulana Khair Muhammad moved to Pakistan and settled in Multan. With the ardent support of his

student and *naib*, Maulana Muhammad Ali Jullunduri, *Khair ul Madaris* was revived on 18 October 1947 in Multan. Here, Maulana Shabbir Ahmed Usmani was its patron but only for a brief period as he died in 1949.⁶¹ It flourished leaps and bounds and eventually came to be known as “the national centre of Deobandi educational activity”.⁶² Khair Muhammad was a keen theologian with a passion for Islamic learning and was devoid of any political ambition. However, he was one of few Deobandi ulema who espoused Pakistan Movement. After the creation of Pakistan, when JUI was re-organised with Shabbir Ahmed Usmani as its patron, he had been elected as its president. But, after a short while, he resigned as he did not find politics to his taste. However, he participated in putting together 22 points in the meeting of ulema at Karachi, which were presumed to be the basis for the Islamic constitution. Moreover, he also took part in “*Tehrik-i-Khatum-Nabuvat* and strived for the promulgation of Islamic system in the country”.⁶³

Khair ul Madaris was on firm footing when Maulana Khair Muhammad died on 22 October 1970. Currently, it is being managed by Khair Muhammad’s grand son Maulana Qari Hanif Jullunduri who matches his predecessors neither in scholarship nor in spiritual excellence and charisma.⁶⁴ The gory incident of Lal Masjid in July 2007, has substantially undermined his reputation and also integrity among Deobandi folks. Khairul Madaris, nevertheless, is regarded as a prototype for other seats of Islamic learning within the country to emulate. The role of Khairul Madaris in exacerbating the sectarian cleavage in Pakistan would be brought up later in this paper.

Partition and mushrooming of *madaris*

The political scenario in the 1940s had an unsettling affect on the Deobandi movement. Muslim League’s call for a separate Muslim state drove the wedge in Deobandi top ranks. Hussain Ahmed Madni, Abul Kalam Azad and Habib ur Rehman Ludhianvi stuck to the nationalist position of the Indian National Congress and JUH. However, a few ulema diverged from the avowed stand point of the nationalists. To them, Muslim separatism was a preferred course to safeguard their interests. Consequently, parting of the ways took effect in 1945 when Shabbir Ahmed Usmani, Ehtasham ul Hassan Thanvi, Zafar Ahmed Usmani and Mufti Muhammad Shafi conglomerated and founded JUI which espoused the cause of Muslim League.

The partition accrued benefit to Deobandis as JUI remained a political force to be reckoned with.⁶⁵ Since 1947, mushrooming of the *madaris* illustrated Deobandi ascendancy, which bolstered the political profile of JUI. All of its leadership emerged from *madaris*, therefore, they shared the commonality of class along with creed, particularly till the late 1970s. Similarly, the student body at the *madaris* belonged to the lower middle and lower strata. Hence, *madaris* were no less than a lifeline for JUI. From partition onwards till 2003, 120 religious schools had been coming up every year. In 1947, Pakistan had 245 religious schools, whereas, in 2000, they had notched up the figure of 6,761, and increased to 6,870 by September 11, 2001.⁶⁶ Vali Nasr contends that the proliferation of Deobandi, Brelwi and Ahl-i-Hadith *madaris* began in 1970s and in the Punjab rise in the number of seminaries “has been most notable”. They multiplied “three and a half times between 1975 and 1996, from over 700 to 2,463”. Of these *madaris*, 750 were “classed as aggressively sectarian”.⁶⁷

Table: 01 *Madaris of Various Sects (1988)*

Province/Region	Deobandi	Beralvi	Ahl-e-Hadith	Shia	Others	Total
Punjab	590	548	118	21	43	1320
NWFP	631	32	05	02	08	678
Sindh	208	61	06	10	06	291
Balochistan	278	34	03	01	31	347
Azad Kashmir	51	20	02	---	03	76
Islamabad	22	20	---	02	03	47
Northern Areas	60	02	27	11	02	102
Total	1840	717	161	47	96	2861

Source: Ministry of Education, Islamabad, 1988. Quoted in Saleem Mansur Khalid, *Deni madaris main ta'leem: ka'fiyat, mas'il, imkanat* (Islamabad: Institute of Policy Studies, Idara-e-Fiqr-e-Islami, 2004), p. 150.

The principal reasons for the phenomenal growth of the *madaris* (particularly Deobandi) are (i) funnelling of the funds from Persian Gulf monarchies and particularly from Saudi Arabia. They viewed “the turn of Pakistan’s politics towards the Left in the late 1960s and the early 1970s with alarm, and supported all kinds of Islamic activities with the aim of strengthening Islamic institutions and ideology as a bulwark against the Left”.⁶⁸ The doubts of the rulers of Arab states were dispelled by taking concrete measures, nevertheless, the support for “Islamic activism” continued. In the due course of time “the linkages between Islamic organizations and groups in the Persian Gulf monarchies and those in Pakistan had become entrenched, and operated independently of government control”.⁶⁹ The Pakistani ulema and *madaris* were the biggest beneficiaries from these “religious and intellectual bonds that became embedded in institutional contacts and networks of patronage”.⁷⁰ Barbara Metcalf argues that the *madaris* “were not only a resource in domestic politics but at times found themselves engaged in a kind of surrogate competition between Saudis and Iranians as each patronised religious institutions likely to support their side”.⁷¹ (ii) Afghan Jihad contributed very significantly in the mushroom growth of the *madaris*. Militarization of *madaris* in the 1980s at the behest of America and Saudi Arabia,⁷² later on, proved to be Frankenstein for Pakistani state and the entire western World.

(iii) Ziaul Haq (1922-88) himself a Deobandi and son of a cleric from Jullundur quite zestfully pursued the policy of Islamization and in a process strengthened *madrassa* networks and the ulema by doling out huge funds to them. After 1980, *madaris* also received *zakat*.⁷³ Besides, *madrassa* graduates were accommodated in the public services as their degrees were accorded equivalent status with the degrees of the secular institutions. It resulted in substantial increase in the number of *madrassa* students.

Table: 02 Evolution Of Madaris in Pakistan

Province/Region	1947	1960	1980	1988	2000
Punjab	121	195	1012	1320	3153
NWFP	59	87	426	678	1281
Sindh	21	87	380	291	905
Balochistan	28	70	135	347	692
Azad Kashmir	04	08	29	76	151
Islamabad	-	01	27	47	94
Northern Areas	12	16	47	102	185
FATA	-	-	-	-	300
Total	245	464	2056	2861	6761

Source: Ministry of Religious Affairs, Islamabad, 1988, 2000. Quoted in Saleem Mansur Khalid, *Deni madaris main ta'leem: ka'fiyat, mas'il, imkanat* (Islamabad: Institute of Policy Studies, Idara-e-Fiqr-e-Islami, 2004) p. 145. (Figures of 1980 are based on reports of 1979).

However, before explicating further on the rapid growth of *madaris*, it would be appropriate to mention two important seminaries, Jamia Ashrafia and Jamia Madnia, both are located in Lahore.

Jamia Ashrafia was set up by Maulana Mufti Muhammad Hassan⁷⁴ who was apostle (Khalifa-e-Arshad) of Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi, after whom the *madrassa* was named. It practised a non-Jihadi and immaculately peaceful creed. "However, many teachers of the madrassas not only have connections with Jehadi organizations, they are

actively involved in Jehadi activities”.⁷⁵ This *madrassa* and the adjacent mosque exercises tremendous influence on affluent urban class of Lahore, besides, its administration avoids getting embroiled into any political controversy.

On 14 September 1947, it was founded in an old quadrangular three-storied building in Nila Gunbad Anarkali, at the centre of a thickly populated area of Lahore. The scholars of immense repute namely Maulana Rasool Khan, Maulana Idrees Kandhalvi and Mufti Jamil Ahmed Thanvi taught in Jamia. In 1957, the staff and students were shifted to the new campus on the Ferozepur Road, Lahore. Today, the main campus of Jamia comprises a large mosque, a huge administrative and teaching block, two spacious boarding houses, a hospital and quite a number of residences for the employees. After the demise of Mufti Muhammad Hassan in 1961, his son Mufti Muhammad Obaidullah, a graduate of Darul Ulum Deoband became *Raisul Jamia*. It has affiliation with the *Wafaq ul Madaris ul Arbia* - a Board of Islamic Education for over 7000 *madaris*. With branches and affiliated *madaris* spread all over Pakistan, Jamia Ashrafia has over 1500 male and 500 female scholars on roll at its Lahore branch only.⁷⁶

Jamia Madnia is another Deobandi *madrassa* in Lahore, founded by Maulana Syed Hamid Mian (1926-1988) in the 1950s. Syed Hamid Mian⁷⁷ was son of renowned Deobandi *Alim*, Maulana Syed Muhammad Mian who hailed from Sahranpur (UP). Five years after the Partition, he moved to Pakistan and started teaching in Jamia Ashrafia. However, he decided to establish his own *madrassa* which he eventually managed in the Bhatti Gate, Lahore. It gradually developed into an important institution of learning in *hadith*. Abbass Najmi, a keen student of Deobandis in Pakistan, ranks Jamia Madnia as more influential than any *madrassa* after Khairul Madaris, Multan, as it has churned out numerous scholars of *hadith* and *fiqh*.

Deobandi concentration towards the South

Reverting to the mushroom growth of *madaris*, interestingly they multiplied by 2745 percent during 55 years of Pakistan’s history up to 2003.⁷⁸ In 1988, the number of Deobandi *madaris* in the Punjab was 590 out of total 1320⁷⁹ which rose to 972 with 80,120 students in 1996.⁸⁰ Curiously enough, Deobandi *madaris* expanded in quite a conspicuous number towards south Punjab as out of 972, 595 *madaris* were in three districts Multan, Dera Ghazi Khan and Bahawalpur. Similarly, Wafaq ul Madaris ul Arbia (established in 1959), which is a regulatory body of Deobandi *madaris*, too, is in Multan. This trend was quite discernable even before the Partition, and considerably strengthened with the establishment of Khairul Madaris. Ubiquity of saint and shrine culture, poverty, and very few institutions of secular education were arguably the main reasons for their proliferation in the region. In this connection the website of Khairul Madaris makes an interesting reading:

Geographically, Multan is situated in the heart of Pakistan and possesses a great historical significance. But the people of not only Multan as a seat of learning, but of the whole southern Punjab were in the past decades, a prey to general ignorance and innovatory rituals practiced in the name of Islam. Under these

circumstances, the new Khair-ul-Madaris at Multan proved to be a light house in a stormy night whose light began to spread not only through Punjab but also to the recesses of the whole Islamic world.⁸¹

It is a clear reflection of the ongoing dialectics in which Deobandis were playing anti-thesis to the exponents of local Islam articulated through saint and shrine symbolism. It was quite obvious that not only Multan but most of south Punjab was awash with shrines as the sites of devotional practices which Deobandi puritanism was quite adamant to wipe out. It may be one of the important dynamics for the spread of Deobandi seminaries in overwhelming number towards the south. Jamia Abbasia, Bahawalpur, Qasimul Ulum, Multan, Darul Ulum, Kabirwala, *Madrassa* Qasimul Ulum, Faqirwali, *Madrassa* Ashraful Ulum, Rahimyar Khan, Makhzanul Ulum, Khanpur, were all important seminaries of the southern Punjab which were instrumental in paving the way for Deobandi Islam to displace the syncretic ethos reflected in the local Islam. Besides, they played a vital role in turning this region into the biggest recruiting ground for the *Jihadi lashkers* operating in Afghanistan and Kashmir. As Ayesha Siddiqua Agha is spot on when she says, “Bahawalpur is one of the few districts which have contributed as much to Jihad as some districts in the frontier district.”⁸² Similarly, while identifying the causes of the mushroom growth of the *madaris* in divisions like Multan, DG Khan and Bahawalpur, Jamal Malik contends:

As their infrastructure is poor, there are few important industries and less urbanization; in short, they do not have a high level of development. They are however more integrated in their traditional systems of social order and social security and thus are possibly more cohesive than “modern areas”. These divisions are marked by large landed properties and a high number of small farmers or landless peasants.⁸³

With so little allocation of funds on human resource development along with overlooking the social and economic disparity in the southern areas, the ruling elite helped creating conducive environment for *madaris* to proliferate. The fact that is far more alarming is the growing militancy among the *madara* graduates. SSP, LJ and Harkat ul Ansar (HA) have had their operational bases in the south. Stalwarts like Masaud Azahar and Abdul Rashid Ghazi (*Naib Khateeb* at Lal Masjid who was killed in July, 2007 by law enforcement agencies) hailed from Bahawalpur and Rajanpur respectively.

Deobandi militant outfits

Although many scholars consider Afghan jihad as a catalyst in engendering militancy along with the Islamic Revolution in Iran, but the historical context in which the phenomenon of militancy grew, and later on gathered momentum has not been unravelled. While studying Deobandi militancy, allusion must be made to couple of watershed points that galvanized Deobandi activism in Pakistan. First; the anti-Qadiani

movement was launched in 1953, Ahrar being the vanguard of the whole episode that resulted into the imposition of martial law in Lahore. The protest movement was ruthlessly quelled through a military action under the command of General Azam Khan. Deobandi activism, however, was stemmed for two decades. The Qadiani issue, nevertheless, smouldering beneath the surface and conflagrated again in 1974. The Qadianis were declared non Muslims by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's regime which appeared to work as a shot in arm for Deobandi leadership. The successful finale of the Qadiani movement had a lasting impact on Deobandis who found encouragement and held on to their extremist views and militant agenda with zeal and zest. Later on, the new Deobandi leadership founded organizations, which were avowedly sectarian and militant in nature. Haq Nawaz Jhangvi, Manzoor Ahmed Chinioti⁸⁴ to name a few militant leaders. The role of Afghan jihad in providing necessary wherewithal and motivation to such organizations can also not be refuted.

First of such organizations was SSP, exclusively dedicated to fighting shi'ism,⁸⁵ which it considered non-Muslim. Assassination of its founder, Haq Nawaz Jhangvi⁸⁶ in February 1990 led to a string of murders and random attacks against Shias including many Iranian officials living in Pakistan. Most of the SSP top leadership had been assassinated, i.e., Zia-ur-Rahman Farooqi, Isar-ul-Qasmi and Azam Tariq. The organization also sent armed volunteers to help Taliban in Afghanistan from 1998 onwards.

Jhangvi's Army or LJ⁸⁷ was a splinter group of the SSP comprising more radical Deobandis. Founded in 1994 by Raiz Basra, a veteran of the Afghan war and a close associate of Haq Nawaz Jhangvi, the organization targeted Shia leaders, intellectuals and professionals. Based in Kabul until the fall of city in November 2001, the LJ was accused by the Pakistan government of plotting an attack on the then Prime Minister, Nawaz Sharif, in 1999.

In 1991, Fazal ur Rahman Khalil (a Pushtun) and Masud Azher, a young Pakistani cleric from Bahawalpur, established Harkat-ul-Ansar (HA) by converging Harkat-ul-Mujahadeen and Harkat-ul-Jihad. It was joined by many Pakistani volunteers (especially from Punjab) who went to Afghanistan to support Mujahidin. Later on, its attention was galvanized to Kashmir. A former US intelligence officer, Julie Sirrs, carried out a survey in 2000 which revealed that the "foreigners captured by military commander Masud in north east Afghanistan shows that 39 percent of the 113 prisoners were affiliated with Harkat-ul-Ansar".⁸⁸ In October 1997, the US State Department declared it a terrorist organization, therefore, it changed its name as Harkat-ul-Mujahidin (HM).

Jaish-e-Mohammad (JM) is another Deobandi militant organization which is a brainchild of Maulana Masud Azhar. In 1994, Masud Azhar was jailed for his militant activities in Indian held Kashmir. On 24 December 1999, a plane of Indian airline was hijacked and brought to Qandhar; the hijacker obtained the release of Masud Azhar. He remained under the protection of Taliban for sometime and came back to Pakistan and founded JM in Islamabad (Lal Masjid) in February 2000. Many members of the Harkat-ul-Mujahidin and of the SSP are presumed to have joined JM for ethnic reasons. Punjabis sided with Masud Azhar while Pushtuns stayed with Fazal-ur-Rahman Khalil.⁸⁹ Oliver

Roy attributes the pattern of suicide attacks to the JM. In December 2000, a young Muslim from Birmingham, Muhammad Bilal, committed a suicidal attack on Indian Army in Srinager, indeed the first incident of its kind.

Conclusion

The linear trajectory of this narrative while mapping the growth of Deobandi sect in the Punjab must not obscure the primacy of *Pirs* in the contemporary socio-political setting of the province. Undoubtedly, evolution of *Maulvi* and *madrasa* nexus has expanded exponentially over the years at the expense of saint and shrine, and the spiritual excellence that they epitomised. Nevertheless, saint and shrine have sustained its supremacy at least in the rural areas of the Punjab. Historically, saints of the Punjab fitted well into the client-patron network of the colonial rulers, a tradition that continued undeterred till-to-date. Conversely, Deobandi *maulvis* and *madaris* have been clamouring for the *sharia* to be promulgated from the very outset. The success of anti-Qadiani Movement in the 1970s, Zia's bid to legitimise his military rule, Afghan jihad and Islamic Revolution in Iran (1979) contributed a great deal in Deobandi upsurge. American and Saudi aid changed the class character of Deobandi exponents. It should be reiterated here that Deobandi movement represented the lower middle and lower classes particularly in the Punjab. However, Deobandi outfits became more militant and markedly sectarian, frequently challenging the writ of the state in the 1990s. Recently, Lal Masjid and Jamia Hifza incident in Islamabad and the way Ghazi brothers exhorted the government to implement *sharia*, typifies religious extremism.

Defiance towards the state, spiralling of the sectarian hatred and suicide bombing are the tactics deployed by Deobandi militants have substantially unhinged the state apparatus in Pakistan. One explanation of the proliferation of Deobandis in the south Punjab is its feudal character. Having no alternative ideology like Marxism or liberalism or even the language symbols which may challenge the feudal stranglehold, Deobandi (or sectarian) militancy remains one of the few ways to counter it.⁹⁰ Hence, Deobandi denomination has a roaring success in the districts like Bahawalpur and Rahim Yar Khan. The quantum of autonomy that the *madaris* enjoy for the last twenty-five years makes it increasingly difficult for the Pakistani state to establish its own writ. Even the proposal for the curriculum reforms and registration of the *madaris* are defied vigorously.

ENDNOTES

¹Stephen Philip Cohen, “The Jihadist Threat to Pakistan” in *The Washington Quarterly* (Summer, 2003), p,10.

²Richard M Eaton, “The Profile of Popular Islam in the Pakistani Punjab”, *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. II, No. I, Fall 1978, p.74.

³Ibid,p.76.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ian Talbot, *Punjab and Raj* (Delhi: Manohar,1988), p. 21.

⁶Ibid.

⁷The grant of *madad-i-ma ‘ash* was theoretically an act of charity for “maintenance of the poor and indigent (creatures) of god”. According to Abul Fazl, there were four classes of persons for whom the grants were specially meant: men of learning; religious devotees; destitute persons without the capacity for obtaining livelihood; and persons of noble lineage, who would not, “out of ignorance”, take to any employment. See for details, Irfan Habib, *The Agrarian System of Mughal India: 1556-1707* (Delhi:Oxford University Press, 1999), p.352.

⁸Talbot, *Punjab and Raj* p.24.

⁹Gilmartin, *Empire and Islam*, p.47.

¹⁰Secretary, Board of Administration, Punjab to Secretary, Government of India, Foreign department,13 September 1860 (Board of Revenue, file 131/1575) quoted in Gilmartin, *Empire and Islam*, p.47.

¹¹Mushir ul Hasan, *Legacy of a Divided Nation: India’s Muslims since Independence* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997), p.4.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ahl-i-Hadith exegesis of Islam emphasize on Quran and Hadith (Prophet’s tradition) as a fundamental sources of *Din* rejecting, therefore, the four schools of jurisprudence namely *Hanafi, Shaafi, Maalki and Hunbali*.

¹⁴According to W.C. Smith, Dar ul Ulum was “next to the Azhar of Cairo, the most important and respected theological academy of the Muslim World”. See W.C. Smith, *Modern Islam in India* (London, 1946), p. 320.

¹⁵Kenneth W. Jones, *The Cambridge History of India: Socio-Religious Reform Movements in British India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p.57.

¹⁶Hassan N. Gardezi, “Religion, Ethnicity, and State Power in Pakistan: The Question of Class” in Douglas Allen, ed., *Religion and Political Conflict in South Asia* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2004), p.76.

¹⁷Gilmartin, *Empire and Islam*, p.53.

¹⁸W.C. Smith, “The ‘Ulama’ in Indian Politics”, in C.H. Philips, ed., *Politics and Society in India* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1963), pp.42-3.

¹⁹Gilmartin, *Empire and Islam*, p.53.

²⁰Jones, *The Cambridge History of India*, p.57.

²¹Meston to Hardinge, dated 25 March 1915, Hardinge Papers (89), Cambridge University Library, quoted in Francis Robinson, *Separatism Among Indian Muslims: The Politics of the United Province’s Muslims 1860-1923* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1994), p.266.

²²Jones, *The Cambridge History of India*, p.58.

²³Barbara Daly Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), p.95. For further reference see, Rashid Ahmed Jullundri, *Bartanvi hind mein muslamanon ka nizam-i-taleem* (Lahore: Idara-i-Saqafat-i-Islamia,n.d.), pp.141-184.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Mumtaz Ahmad, *Madrassa Education in Pakistan and Bangladesh*, p.102. website, <http://www.apcss.org/Publications/Edited%20Volumes/ReligiousRadicalism/PagesfromReligiousRadicalismAndSecurityinSouthAsiach5.pdf>, accessed on 27 September 2007.

²⁶Ibid, p.103.

²⁷Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India*, p.96.

²⁸Ibid, p.97.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Syed Mehbub Rizvi, *Tarikh-i-Dar-u-Ulum Deoband: Bar- i- saghir key musalmanon ka sab sey bara karnama* (Lahore: Idara-i-Islamyat, 2005), p.152.

³¹Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India*, p.236.

³²Gilmartin, *Empire and Islam*, p.54.

³³See that map indicating the spread of Deobandi *madaris* in the Punjab_in Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British*, p.134.

³⁴Saleem Masur Khalid, *Deeni madaris mein taaleem:kaifiat, masail, imkanat* (Islamabad: Institute of Policy Studies, 2004), p.101.

³⁵Akhter Rahi, *Tazkirah-i-ulema-i-Punjab*, vol:ii (Lahore: Maktaba-i-Rehmania, 1998), p.159.

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Raipur is a small town near Saharanpur (Uttar Pradesh) where Shah Abdul Rahim Raipur established *Khanqah-i-Aliya Rahimia Raipur* which, later on, became one of the leading centres of Deobandi learning. Shah Saeed Ahmed Raipuri, the fourth Sheikh after Abdul Rahim, replicated it in Lahore by the name of *Idara Rahimia Ulum-i-Qurania* in 2001. See for details Mufti Abdul Khaliq Azad, *Mashaikh-i-Raipur: Khanqah-i-Aliya Rahimia Raipur aur mashaikh Raipur ka taaruf* (Lahore: Dar ul Tehqiq wal Ishaat, 2006), p.199.

³⁸Ibid,p.198.

³⁹For a detailed biographical account of Ubaidullah Sindhi, see Maulana Ubaidullah Sindhi, in Mufti Abdul Khaliq Azad, ed., *Khutbat wa maqalat*, (Lahore: Dar ul Tehqiq wa Ishaat, 2002), pp.19-87.

⁴⁰For detail see I.H. Qureshi, *A Short History of Pakistan* (Karachi: University of Karachi, 1988), pp.839-40.

⁴¹See for details Maulana Muhammad Ali, *The Ahmadiyyah Movement* (Translated and Edited by S. Muhammad Tuffail) (Lahore: Ahmadiyyah Anjuman Ishaat Islam, 1973).

⁴²See Jan Baz Mirza, *Karwan-i-Ahrar*, vol.i (Lahore: Maktaba-i-Tabsara, 1975), pp.81-84.

⁴³For details see Taj ud Din Ludhyanvi, *Ahrar Aur Tehrik-e-Kashmir 1932* (Lahore: Maktaba-i-Majlis-e-Ahrar Islam, Pakistan, 1968).

⁴⁴For details on Khatam-i-Nabuvat see, *Report of The Court of Inquiry constituted under Punjab Act 11 of 1954 to enquire into the Punjab Disturbances of 1953*(Lahore: Superintendent, Government printing press, Punjab, 1954).

⁴⁵Maulana Ahmed Ali Lahori (1886-1962) was born in a small town ‘Jalal’ in Gujranwala District. The town is situated towards east of Gaghaar Railway Station. His father Sheikh Habib Ullah converted to Islam from Sikhism and adhered to Chishtia order. Ahmed Ali had three brothers, Hafiz Muhammad Ali, Maulvi Aziz Ahmed and Hakim Rashid Ahmed. See Hafiz Qari Fayuz ur Rehman, *Sheikh ul Tafsir Hazrat Maulana Ahmed Ali Lahori aur un key khulfa* (Lahore: Pakistan Book Centre Urdu Bazaar, n.d), pp.19-27. Also see Abdullah Malik, *Dastan-i-Khawada-i-Maulana Ahmed Ali Lahori* (Lahore: Urdu Bazaar, 2005).

⁴⁶Ibid, p.23.

⁴⁷See Hafiz Muhammad Akbar Shah Bokhari, *Akabar-i-Ulema-i-Deoband* (Lahore: Idara-i-Islamiyat,1999), p.249.

⁴⁸“Almi anjuman-i-khudam ud din ka seh mahi ijtamah”, *The Daily Ausaf* (April 2007, Lahore).

⁴⁹Abdul Rashid Arshad, *Bees barrey musalman* (Lahore: Maktaba-i-Rashidia, 2006), p.673.

⁵⁰Hafiz Qari Fayuz ur Rehman, *Sheikh ul Tafsir Hazrat Maulana Ahmed Ali Lahori aur un key khulfa*, p.42.

⁵¹Ibid,pp.41-42.

⁵²Interview with Prof. Mazhar Moin, Principal Oriental College, Punjab University, Lahore (August 2007, Lahore).

⁵³Maulana Muhammad and Maulana Muhammad Abdullah both were brothers from Ballia walli, district Ludhiana. Abdullah earned considerable acclaim as a scholar. Sat at the feet of Muhammad Hassan Amritsari, Mehmud ul Hassan and Anwar Shah Kashmiri as student of *hadith*. Akhtar Rahi, *Tazkira-i-ulma-i-Punjab*, pp.346-47.

⁵⁴Mujahid Hussaini states that according to Prophet's one of the traditions "re-incarnation of Messih (Jesus Christ or Hazrat Issah) would come to pass at a place by the name of *Ludh*". Hence, Ghulam Ahmed chose Ludhiana for the final announcement of his prophethood. See *Ulma-i-Deoband: Ahid saz shakhsiat*, p.377.

⁵⁵Khanqah Sirajia is one of only two Deobandi *Khanqahs* in the Punjab other at Sargodha by the name of Khanqah-i-Aliya Raipur.

⁵⁶Maulana Mujahid ul Hussaini, *Ulma-i-Deoband: ahid saz sakhsiat* (Faisalabad: Seerat Markaz, 2004), p.378.

⁵⁷Ibid,p.207.

⁵⁸Interview with Rana Iqtidar Abbas, a local resident of Sahiwal (August 2007, Lahore)

⁵⁹See Website, <http://www.khairulmadaris.com.pk/e-branches.htm>. assessed on 15 September 2007.

⁶⁰Even the name of the *madrissa* "Khairul Madaris" was suggested by Ashraf Ali Thanvi. Hafiz Akbar Shah Bokhari, *Akabar-i-Ulema-i-Deoband*, p.230.

⁶¹Ibid.

⁶²"The State of Sectarianism in Pakistan", *Asia Report*, No.95 (Brussels: International Crisis Group, 18 April 2005), p.15.

⁶³Hafiz Akbar Shah Bokhari, *Akabar-i-Ulema-i-Deoband*, p.231.

⁶⁴Maulana Muhammad Sharif Jullunduri (second son of Khair Muhammad) took over as an administrator of Khair ul Ulum after the Maulana Khair Muhammad's demise in 1970. He died in Mecca on 7 September 1981. It, therefore, fell on the young shoulders of Hanif Jullunduri to manage the affairs of the seminary. Ibid., p.444.

⁶⁵Since independence, the JUI has developed strong roots in Baluchistan and the Frontier. As a result, it has polled more consistently than the other religious parties. It formed coalition governments with the NAP in both provinces, although these were dismissed by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. This experience led the JUI to take its place in the anti-PPP Pakistan National Alliance in 1977. However, the JUI under Maulana Fazlur Rehman's leadership distanced itself from the Zia regime, and took its place in the eleven-party Movement for the Restoration of Democracy (MRD) launched in February 1981. Five years later, Maulana Fazl ur Rehman was appointed its convener. Despite the collapse of the MRD before the 1988 elections, the JUI remained in opposition to the IJI and captured eight seats in the National Assembly. The JUI remains opposed to the Islamist approach of the JI, but its greatest rivalry is with the Barelvi and Shia Islamic groupings. Ian Talbot, *Pakistan: A Modern History* (London: Hurst & Company, 2005) p.451.

⁶⁶From 1988 to 2000 the number of religious schools increased by 236 percent. Majority of these schools belonged to the Sunni-Deobandi denomination. See for details, Tariq Rahman, *Denizens of Alien World: A Study of Education, Inequality and Polarization in Pakistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 77-98.

⁶⁷The apprehensions of the Arab rulers were somewhat assuaged when Prime Minister Z.A. Bhutto (1926-1979) purged his party of the leftist elements. S.V.R. Nasr, "The Rise of Sunni Militancy in Pakistan: The Changing Role of Islamism and the Ulema in Society and Politics" in *Modern Asian Studies*, 34(1) (2000):142.

⁶⁸Ibid.

⁶⁹Ibid, p.44.

⁷⁰Ibid.

⁷¹Barbara D Metcalf, *Islamic Contestations: Essays on Muslims in India and Pakistan* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2004), p.276.

⁷²Shahid Javed Burki, *A Revision History of Pakistan* (Lahore: Vanguard Books, 1998), pp.82-83.

⁷³See for details Jamal Malik, *Colonization of Islam: Dissolution of Traditional Institutions in Pakistan* (Lahore, Vanguard Books, 1996), pp. 85-119.

⁷⁴Maulana Mufti Muhammad Hassan was born in Malpur, near Hassan Abdal. He got his early education in his native town and then proceeded to Dar ul Ulum Deoband and became a worthy disciple of Ashraf Ali Thanvi. He learnt hadith from Anwar Shah Kashmiri. Later on, he moved to Amritsari and took up teaching assignment at a well known seminary Jamia Naumania. On partition he migrated to Lahore and founded Jamia Ashrafia which is a prime Deobandi seminary in the Punjab. See for further details *The Daily Jang*, special edition, (27 April 2007, Lahore).

⁷⁵ Muhammad Amir Rana, *A to Z of Jehadi Organizations in Pakistan*, translated by Saba Ansari (Lahore: Mashal, 2004), p.522.

⁷⁶For details see website, <http://ashrafia.org.pk/jamia.htm>, assessed on 21 September 2007.

⁷⁷Hamid Mian got religious instruction from scholars like Abdus Sami Deobandi, Abdul Khaliq Madni, Mufti Muhammad Shafi and Hussain Ahmed Madni. See Hafiz Muhammad Akbar Shah Bokhari, *Akabar-i-Ulam-i-Deoband*, p.457.

⁷⁸According to a report compiled by the Interior Ministry, the number of students in those seminaries were around 1,500,000 by 2003.

⁷⁹Saleem Mansur Khalid, *Deeni madaris mein taaleem*, p.150.

⁸⁰See *Herald* (October 1996, Karachi), p.56.

⁸¹See website, <http://www.khairulmadaris.com.pk/e-branches.htm>, assessed on 17 September 2007.

⁸²Ayesha Siddiqua Agha, "Bahawalpur's Two Ends", website, <http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp>, assessed on 17 August 2007.

⁸³Malik, *Colonization of Islam*, p.185.

⁸⁴For Chinioti's life sketch see Khaled Ahmed, "Maulana Chinioti the Great Apostatiser (1931-2004)", *Friday Times* (13-19 August 2004 Lahore)

⁸⁵For detailed reference see Tahir Kamran "Contextualizing Sectarianism in Pakistan: A Case Study of Jhang District" Unpublished paper, presented at History Department, University of Southampton on 26th November, 2006. Also see Azmat Abbas, *Sectarianism: The Players and the Game* (Lahore: South Asia Partnership-Pakistan, 2002).

⁸⁶Haq Nawaz belonged to Mauza Chela Thana Massan tehsil and district Jhang. He was born in 1952 and hailed from Sipra clan with a very small land holding. His father Wali Muhammad was a known *khojji* of the area. Haq Nawaz could not go beyond fourth grade in school. He was then sent to Hafiz Jan Muhammad to learn Quran by heart which he did in two years. Hafiz Jan Muhammad persuaded him to go to Masjid Shiekhan Wali in Abdul Hakim (presently in district Khanewal). There, he learnt the art of recitation from Qari Taj Muhammad and also acquired knowledge of grammar. Then, he spent five years at Dar ul Ulum, Kabirwalla, and was greatly influenced by Maulana Manzur Ahmed who was a famous Deobandi scholar of the area. Lastly, he went to Khair ul Madariss, Multan to learn hadith. He remained there for seven years. Then, he had a brief stint as Imam at Toba Tek Singh. He came to Jhang in 1973 as a Khateeb of Masid Mohalla Piplianwalla. Interview from Haq Nawaz's elder brother Mehr Sher Muhammad and his cousin Hafiz Muhammad Nawaz, Mauza Chela, Jhang August 2006 quoted in Ibid.

⁸⁷For detailed account see Ibid.

⁸⁸Julie Sirrs, *The Taliban Foreign Fighters: A Report Prepared for the Committee for a free Afghanistan* (Washington: Committee for a Free Afghanistan, 21 January 2001).

⁸⁹Olivier Roy, “Islamic Radicalism in Afghanistan and Pakistan” see website, [\\H:\sectarianism\The Islamic threat.htm](http://H:\sectarianism/The Islamic threat.htm), assessed on 20 September 2007.

⁹⁰This point has been deduced from Barbara Metcalf’s paper “Islamic Arguments in Contemporary Pakistan” which forms the part of her book *Islamic Contestations: Essays on Muslims in India and Pakistan*, pp.236-264.