

Religious Authority and Its Role in Peacemaking: An Appraisal in Perspective of National Narrative for Peace

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ABSTRACT

There exists an important affiliation between religion and mediation. Pakistan has been fronting challenges of extremism and violence since decades. To find out roots of radicalism and violence in the society, government of Pakistan proclaimed a national narrative for promotion of peace in the society. The national narrative for peace recommended various policy steps to engage religious leaders for promotion of peace in the society. The present study is a consideration of novel responsiveness to the protagonist nature of religious authority (Ulamā) to build an inclusive and peaceful society. The research paper mainly highlights the importance and significance of Muslim religious leaders and Ulamā in Pakistani society, factors promoting extremism and violence in society. Secondly it tries to shed light on the role of Muslim authority to promote Islamic ethics of disagreement and to counter violence in society. The originality and value of this study is obvious in the current situation of Pakistan. It suggests various recommendations make Muslim religious authority an active member of securing peace in Pakistan.

Keywords: *Pakistan, Paighām-e-Pakistan, Peacemaking, Religious Authority, Ulamā.*

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1. Introduction

Pakistan has been facing terrorism, violence, and intolerance from the last few decades. After terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre America on September 11, 2001, and American war against terrorism in Afghanistan, the intensity of violence in Pakistan has also increased. Thousands of civilians and security personnel from all areas of society have sacrificed their lives in this wave of terrorist activities. It has also resulted in the financial losses, instability, and other losses to the country. In order to face this challenge security and law enforcement departments are doing their best to secure the outside and inside borders of the country. To secure the intellectual boundaries of the country and transformation of society scholars are not left behind.

To change the mindset of people and ensuring peace through transformation research scholars of a leading university prepared a draft to clarify religious standing on terrorist activities in Pakistan. Later on this draft was converted into a unanimous religious opinion (Fatwa) endorsed by more than 1800 Muslim scholars declaring all militant activities by some religious groups as forbidden in the eyes of shariah. This draft was declared as a national narrative on terrorism by the government of Pakistan. This document was named as “Paighām-e-Pakistan” the national narrative for peacemaking in the society. The Paighām-e-Pakistan narrative also issued a declaration and recommended some policies to overcome extremism in the society. One of the objectives of Paighām-e-Pakistan is to engage religious authority (Ulamā)¹ to bring peace and harmony in the society. In Pakistan religious leaders have at times involved in inciting people and supporting sectarian violence. This shows their influence upon people. This influence could be used to bring peace in the society and create cohesive environment in the country. The study is thus, aimed at answering the following questions:

1. What is the status of religious authority in Pakistan?
2. Do they impact on public opinion?
3. How they view ‘national narrative of peace and how they can participate in its successful execution?
4. What initiatives can be made to engage religious authority in peace making process?

¹ The term ‘Ulema’ refers to the persons formally trained in Islamic religious disciplines such as Qur’ān, Hadith, law (fiqh), theology, exegesis, traditions of the Prophet and other associated sub disciplines. The Ulema in Pakistani society are believed to be the holders of higher degree of competence to deal with religious matters.

The answers to these questions will be helpful for policy makers and academia to engage religious authorities in peace process, so that the fruits of peace and harmony be cultivated in the society.

Literature Review

There are various studies available on the role of Muslim scholars in peace building in various contexts. For instance Muhammad Sirajulislam *at el.*, pointed out honesty as mediator among Muslim scholars to secure peace in society.¹ After the issuance of the national narrative for peace various academic writings appeared in national and international research journals. For example in 2018, Aayesha Rafiq explored the roots of radicalization in Pakistan. She also examined the possible impact of the national narrative for peace to eradicate radical elements from the society.² Furthermore, Amir Hayat and Muhammad Tariq Ramzan examined the role of Higher education in promotion of peacemaking in Pakistan in perspective of the national narrative for peace.³ The recent study by Farhat Aziza and Musfirrah Mahfooz highlighted the role of peace in stability of society.⁴ However, review of literature shows the need of examination of role of religious authority in perspective of national peace narrative. To translate the theory of the national narrative of peace into practice various steps are taken to engage Muslim authority in peacemaking in Pakistan. There is need to assess the said efforts and to suggest further policy steps to make this process more meaningful and expressive. As described earlier, the main objective of this study is to analyze the role of religious scholars and religious leaders to bring peace in the society. Its importance could be seen to achieve the goal of peace in our country. The study focuses on the intellectual development of religious leadership which shall pay back in the form of more secure world than the world we are living today. The endeavor of the study is to bring peace in world through mental uplift and transformation of religious scholars.

1 Islam, Md Sirajul, and Sofiah Samsudin. "Interpretations of Al-amanah Among Muslim Scholars and Its Role in Establishing Peace in Society." *Social Change* 48, no. 3 (2018): 437-450.

2 Aayesha Rafiq, "National Narrative for Peaceful and Moderate Pakistani Society Based on Islamic Principles." *Research Journal Al-Basirāh*, 7, no. 2, (2021): 25-46.

3 Amir Hayat, and Muhammad Tariq Ramzan. "An Appraisal on Curriculum of Islamic Learning in Higher Education with the Perspective of Paigham-e-Pakistan." *Journal of Religious and Social Studies* 1, no. 01 (2021): 31-46.

4 Farhat Aziz and Musfirrah Mahfooz, The Role of Peace in Stability of the Society An Analysis in Islamic Perspective, *Research Journal Al-Basirāh*, 10, no. 1, (2021): 25-46.

Research Methodology

Qualitative research method has been used in this research article. Moreover, analytical and narrative approach has been used to compile results. Review of literature on peace, harmony and their essential constituents have been carried out to answer the research questions. Extensive review of relevant literature on peace education is carried out. Furthermore, analysis of Paighām-e-Pakistan document published by the government of Pakistan has been made to evaluate its compatibility in fulfilling the objectives. The article is divided into seven parts. At first the background and short introduction of national narrative for peace in Pakistan is presented followed by role of religious authority in its execution. In the next section positive attributes of religious authority in Pakistan are highlighted to examine their impact on common man beliefs and outlook. In the fifth section some ways are suggested to engage religious authority in peace process. After that results of the study are drawn and some policy steps are recommended. In the end conclusion of the study is provided.

2. A Brief Study of “National Narrative For Peace”

The devaluation of human life could be witnessed in the human history. The blood of humans has become cheap as a result of international political movements, socio-economic crisis and terrorism.¹ The instinct of human beings to dominate other has been a source of violence and conflicts. Conflict arises as result of disagreement about thought or action between two or more people or groups. It is sometime used as a situation referring to expressing strong feelings or disagreement. In extreme conditions, this conflict is often converted into fight or violence. In the phenomena of increasing extremism and violence in the world, Pakistan is no exception. In fact, extremism and terrorism has been a great threat to the peace and harmony in Pakistan.

To end violence and secure peace in the society it is worthy to know about the true nature of conflict and find ways and means to manage it. Conflict and peace are closely related to each other. To convert situation of violence into peace following methodology could be used:

1. **Peace through force:** Peace through use of force involves the use of physical involvement for achieving peace. Physical strength or use of force requires use of arms to minimize extremism and aggression.
2. **Political Process:** Through politics, peace is achieved by ensuring rule of law and provision of justice to the community.

1Oueijan, Harvey N. "Educating for peace in higher education." *Universal Journal of Educational Research* 6, no. 9 (2018): 1916-1920.

3. **Transformation:** The third way of securing peace in the society is use of justice and transformation. It is the tool to bring peace and harmony in the society. It is concerned with fulfilling human rights and needs and transformation of behaviors and benefits.¹

Pakistan has taken all the possible steps to overcome terrorism, extremism and violence in the society. Pakistan is fighting against terrorism with its armed forces, thousands of armed and civilians have lost their lives in this noble cause. Secondly, there is a political consensus upon eliminating extremism and violence from the country. The third step; transformation society to end violence is long process and need continuous attention. Paighām-e-Pakistan is part of such transformation efforts to end violence in the country. Paighām-e-Pakistan is a religious opinion (fatwa) prepared by the research scholars of Islamic Research Institute of International Islamic University, Islamabad and endorsed by various state institutions, Wafaqs of different Madaris, and by more than 1800 Pakistani Muslim scholars denouncing terrorist activities in Pakistan. Religious scholars condemned suicide attacks, raising arms against the state, and involving in terrorist activities.² This unanimous religious opinion of Muslim scholars accompanied by a joint declaration, asserted the need of construction of society based upon the values such as tolerance, brotherhood, mutual respect, and comprehensive system of justice.³

The government of Pakistan announced this religious opinion as a national narrative to overcome terrorism and violence in the society. Paighām-e-Pakistan is seen to be a positive initiative to make Pakistan a peaceful and safe country. The importance of Paighām-e-Pakistan lies in the fact that it is a vigorous narrative of Pakistan against increasingly extremism and terrorism in the country. Paighām-e-Pakistan is considered to be the message conveyed by the religious scholars from all areas of the country that Islam is against violence and all the activities of violence on the name of Allāh are against the true teachings of Islam. It is the message from the learned community to transform the minds of people of Pakistan to stop uprising weapons against state.

Paighām-e-Pakistan is the narrative to promote Islamic values such as brotherhood, patience and forgiveness to bring peace to the country. These values are important for peaceful co-existence but over looked by people

1 Suprpto, S. Religious Leaders And Peace Building: The Role of Tuan Guru and Pedanda in Conflict Resolution in Lombok–Indonesia, *Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 53, no. 1 (2015): 225-250.

2 “Paighām-e-Pakistan”, Islamic Research Institute, (International Islamic University, Islamabad, 2018), 1-68.

3 Paighām-e-Pakistan, 50.

to gain materialistic intentions. The propagation of the narrative of peace and harmony is important to minimize extremism, sectarianism, prejudices and violence in the society. The essence of narrative of peace is to make people convinced to reject the misinterpretation of radical religious groups in the society. In the declaration of Paighām-e-Pakistan the necessity of transformation of Pakistani society was seen as a crucial process for achieving peace in the country. The inculcation of values such as justice, liberty, equality, tolerance, mutual respect and harmony in the people is of immense importance to achieve the goal of peaceful coexistence. All these circumstances need a transformation in the mindset at all levels. The mentality of peace has to prevail in order to secure peace in the world.

For the important role Paighām-e-Pakistan narrative can play in peace keeping in the society, all recommendations of this declaration must be implemented immediately and with letter and spirit. In the unified declaration, the role of Ulamā and religious leaders to promote message of peace also came under consideration. The declaration emphasized the role of religious leaders and scholars to transform society into a peaceful coexistence. The declaration showed optimistic approach towards religious educational institutions to eradicate violence, extremism and militancy. In the next section brief description of role of Muslim authority in implementation of narrative for peace is provided.

3. Role of Religious Authority (Ulamā) in Execution of Narrative for Peace

Conflict always is not a bad thing. This is the phenomena that brings life a meaningful activity and enable a person to understand the different viewpoints. In fact, healthy conflicts help in discussions of a problem and finding their solutions. However, more often religion can be used as weapon by religious leaders to incite religious violence.¹ The studies showed that around fifty percent of violent conflicts have their roots in religious conflicts. It is also observed that some of the religious leaders use the tool of violence and extremism to preserve their influence among their followers.² For this purpose they start, incite and support violence in the society. In turn religious leaders can be used to bring harmony and

1 Rukuni, Tinashe, Zadzisai Machingambi, Maxwell CC Musingafi, and Kwaedza E. Kaseke, The role of traditional leadership in conflict resolution and peace building in Zimbabwean rural communities: The case of Bikita District, *Public Policy And Administration Research* 5, no. 3 (2015): 77.

2 Rasul, Amina. "The role of religion in peace making." (Presented at the CSID 10th Annual Conference. 2009), 21.

peace in the society.¹ The positive role of religious leaders can play important role in creating peaceful relationship between different segments of the society. It is also observed in international studies that in the conflicts which are not based upon religious grounds; religious leaders can play an important role in creating cohesion in the society.²

Religious leadership in Pakistan could be divided into two broad categories. Those leaders that are called 'Ulamā' represent grass-root religious scholars, and those represent political discourse are called religious political leaders. Religious-political parties are putting their efforts to achieve their agenda since the creation of Pakistan. The main agenda of political parties in Pakistan has been the Islamization of the state and society. In 1947, only six religious organizations were operating in Pakistan that grew rapidly and now there are hundreds of registered religious organizations working in Pakistani society. In 2002 there were approximately 239 religious organizations working in Pakistan. There are several commonalities between all these parties such as Islamization of state, however, some differences also exist.

These Political organizations could be used to spread the message of Islam because of their strong networks in the society. Pakistani society is divided on sectarian basis. The political parties also represent their sects. There are total 45 religious parties belonging to Deobandi school of thought, 43 belong to Brelvi sect, 20 religious political parties are associated with Ahl-e-Hadith school of thought, 23 parties are of Shia origin. 17 parties are related to Jama'at-e-Islami and its fractions. 91 parties consist of other religious belongings. Total of 239 religious political parties represent sectarian divide in the society and different discourse related to Islamization of society.³ These figures also represent the political religious importance of these parties. These parties produce religious leadership that could influence the behavior and opinion of general public. These religious leaders can play significant role in shaping the beliefs and behaviors of people in specific direction.⁴

1 Haider, Huma, Religious leaders and the prevention of electoral violence. GSDRC Helpdesk Research Report 1366. Birmingham, (UK: GSDRC, University of Birmingham, 2016), 6.

2 Khadiagala, Gilbert M., The role of the Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative (ARLPI) In Peace Building In Northern Uganda, (USAID, March 2001), 23.

3 Rana, Muhammad Amir, Agenda of Religious-Political Organizations, *Conflict and Peace Studies*, 4, no. 1, (2011): 2.

4 Byrne, Sean. The role of peace leadership, politics, and culture in protracted ethnopolitical conflicts, *In Peace Leadership*, (Routledge, 2017), 122-140.

On the other hand, religious leaders other than political origin and motive are also significant part of Pakistani society. A study was carried out involving Ulamā for health care interventions in 2008.¹ The findings of the study were related to the involvement of Ulamā for health communication interventions; however, the results could be beneficial in involving Ulamā for building peace and harmony in the society. The role of mosques in shaping the beliefs of general public was observed. The study signified the need of finding common grounds to frame public opinion. It was felt crucial to study the prevailing perceptions of religious leaders on development issues are carefully studied. For this purpose the 'Friday Sermons' as a medium for communication were observed. It was studied that:

- There is a greater participation rate in Friday prayers in mosques. Muslims generally attend Friday prayer six to eight times higher than five compulsory daily prayers.
- The Friday sermons range between one and half an hour. There normally two parts of the Friday sermon. First part is delivered in local language and the second part is delivered in Arabic language.
- It is interesting to note that most of the people do not understand Arabic language as it is not the native language of people of Pakistan. National language of Pakistan is Urdu while number of other local languages are spoken in various parts of the country, such as Punjabi, Sindhi, Balochi, Pashtu, Brahvi, Saraiki and many more.
- More than two thirds of the attendees of the Friday prayer come in the mosques by the second part of Friday sermon that is delivered in Arabic language.
- Approximately, three fourth of the attendees of the Friday prayer listen to either complete or part of the Friday sermon.
- Topics of the Friday sermons are mostly associated with the purely religious subjects.²

Besides Friday Sermons, Ulamā have the direct approach towards their respective communities to communicate their message. There are certain characteristics of Ulamā and religious leaders that signify their role as peace makers.³

4. Positive Attributes of Religious Authority in Pakistan

Pakistan is Muslim majority country and Ulamā play their active and significant role in the guidance about religious issues. Religion of Islam

1 Butt, Atif Ikram, et al., *Ulama Agents of Social Change*, (Islamabad: Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, 1st published, 2010), 14.

2 Butt, Atif Ikram, *Ulama Agents of Social Change*, 15.

3 Butt, Tahir Mehmood, Social and political role of madrassa: Perspectives of religious leaders in Pakistan, *South Asian Studies* 27, no. 2 (2020), 225.

covers all the aspects of human life. It is concerned with the public as well as private life. There is no division of secular and religious affairs in Islam. Worldly affairs are part and parcel of religion of Islam. For this, people seek guidance from Ulamā not only about religious issues but also related to the lifestyle, health and wellbeing¹. The influence of Ulamā is substantial in the rural areas with low literacy rate. Access of electronic and social media is limited in these areas, therefore, inhabitants of such areas perceive Ulamā as reliable channels of communication.

Ulamā have always played a vital role in the shaping of Islamic societies. Historically religious leaders have played various roles in the Islamic societies. Before the pre-modern era, the religious leaders had served as custodians of law as scholars, jurists and judges. As administrators, they have also served as administrative of almsgiving. They have served as educationists and developed Islamic education system. In short, Ulamā played a significant role in every aspect of life.² In the modern times role of Ulamā have been significantly minimized in state institutions. However, Ulamā, still in most of the Muslim countries, continue to be seen as custodians and interpretations of Islamic teachings and traditions.³

There are number of characteristics of religious leaders in Pakistan that make them enable to mobilize various segments of the society to counter violence and terrorism.

4.1 Trustworthiness: In Pakistan religious leaders have played active role as interpreters of Islamic teachings as well as political leaders. Besides political leaders their main function has been considered by Muslim population to be imparting religious education of Qur'ān and traditions of the Prophet Muhammad (عليه السلام). Being interpreter of the religious texts they are considered to be the trustworthy, honest and dependable personalities. These statuses enable them to act as influential character in their communities.

4.2 Respect and Honour: The role of Ulamā as guide and interpreters of Qur'ān and Sunnah is widely appreciated and respected by the majority of

1 Nasir, Jamal Abdul, and Andrew Hinde, Factors associated with contraceptive approval among religious leaders in Pakistan, *Journal of biosocial science* 43, no. 5 (2011): 587-596.

2 Saeed, A., The Official Ulema and Religious Legitimacy of the Modern Nation States, in Shahram Akbarzadeh and Abdullah Saeed, eds., *Islam and Political Legitimacy* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), 21.

3 Zaman, Muhammad Qasim. "The 'ulama of contemporary Islam and their conceptions of the common good." *Public Islam and the common good* (2004): 129-55.

the people. Religious leaders (Ulamā) enjoy credible status in the society. They are considered to be the trustworthy and respected role in the community. They have moral authority in the society. They play influential role in the approval of governments initiatives and social norms.

4.3 Understanding of Local Norms and Customs: Being part of communalities of lower level the grass-root religious leaders and Ulamā fully comprehend and understand the local norms and customs and manipulate the circumstances for influencing people.

4.4 Strong Network: For Muslim majority population there is a wide range of mosques and religious teaching institutions (madaris). In every colony (Mohalla) in cities and in each village there is strong network of mosques. These mosques and madaris provide a strong network to spread the message of Islam. The Ulamā use this platform to teach the basic instructions of Islam to the ordinary population. The mosques and madaris are also used to promote positive behaviors in the society and eliminate the wrong doings. The religious leaders, therefore, play an important role in shaping the beliefs and behaviors of target community. There is a need to use this effective network to promote positive behaviors in the society and eliminate extremist and violent attitudes. The religious leaders that have presence in the areas with deep religious emotions, beliefs, and activities and strong network of religious leaders and believers are more effective to involve in peace building efforts.¹ The Ulamā enlarge their audiences, to interpret the meanings and place of Islam. For this reason, the religious leaders (Ulamā) can play their active role in social mobilization.²

5. Proposed Initiatives To Engage Ulamā For Peacemaking

The study conducted in late 2008 to engage Ulamā to communicate health awareness among congregates proved that Ulamā could be used as an effective instrument for behaviour change. In that study, 35 Imāms (Ulamā) were contacted to deliver their Friday sermons on the requested issue.³ The study highlighted the following facts:

- Among the Ulamā there is strong realization to play their role in addressing societal issues.

1 Haider, Religious leaders and the prevention of electoral violence, 2.

2 Jinkins, Michael, Religious leadership, (Wiley-Blackwell companion to practical theology 2012), 310.

3 Butt, Ulama Agents of Social Change, 15.

- The in-depth interviews and focus group discussions reveal the fact that there is general understanding that any issue which is promoted in the perspective of Islam gain attention of the Ulamā and general public. Neither Ulamā nor the community can have objection to such a cause.
- Ulamā feel it cautious of extending their support to governmental initiatives for promoting peace fearing that they might be promoting vested agenda of the West or secular segments of the society.
- There is general agreement among the Ulamā that Friday prayer is an ideal means of communicating message.

Beside these evidences there are number of initiatives proposed to execute effectively the role of religious leaders in bringing peace and harmony in the society:

5.1 Conflict Analysis: It is important to investigate the causes and motives of extremism and violence in the society and then engage religious leaders properly.¹

5.2 Flexibility: It is important to adopt flexible approach in identifying the religious leaders that can play important role in peace building in the society. It is important to engage top ranking religious leaders firstly for their influence on lower level religious leadership and on common people.² The engagement of top leadership is important as at local level they have significant control over the behaviors of their followers. It is important to engage all significant sects (masaliks) of Islam in Pakistan, for example, Deobandi, Brailvi, Ahl-e-Hadith, Shia, etc. moreover preference shall be given to the religious leaders who believe in intra-faith dialogue and partnerships. This requires the engagement of moderate religious leaders of every sect and religion in the society.

5.3 Focus on Second and Third Line Ulamā and Even the Grassroots: Besides engagement of religious leaders the engagement of local and grass-root religious leaders and common people is also very important. The message delivery through top and second level religious leadership may not be able to convey the message of peace at the lower level. To overcome this deficiency; there must be an alternate methodology to pass the message of peace directly to the lower level. Approximately, the fifty percent of Pakistani population consist of women. However, there percentage is not reflected in the religious leadership. Women can play very important role as teacher of the nations to come to be reached to

1 Haider, Religious leaders and the prevention of electoral violence, 3.

2 Brown, Barrett Chapman. "Conscious Leadership for Sustainability: A study of how leaders and change agents with postconventional consciousness design and engage in complex change initiatives." Retrieved from Santa Barbara, Fielding Graduate University: www.worldwewant2015.org (2011).

cultivate the fruits of peace. Mere focus on the top religious leadership may ignore the important role of women can play in bringing peace and harmony in the society. Therefore, it is important to reach indigenous communities to foster the process of peace in the society.¹ Ulamā directly or indirectly can exert their influence to support the peace process. The involvement of the grass-root level Ulamā is needed to support and gain society's trust in national peace process. Ulamā cannot make political decisions; however, they can support peace efforts to bring harmony in the society.

5.4 Build Trust: The history of Pakistan is full of examples of mistrust between religious scholars and secular leadership and between establishments. Most of the time religious leaders feel every initiative from government to bring peace in society as attack on the solidarity and liberty on religious institutions. Religious leaders are often skeptical towards every peace building program by the government. It is the responsibility of the government to establish a relationship with religious leaders based on trust and confidence. The partnership developed between religious leaders and government machinery shall provide a framework to execute the policies of peace effectively.

5.4 Capacity Building: It is important to manage workshops of religious leaders to take their role effectively in peace building in society. The proposed contents of the refresher courses offered to religious leaders and actors may include:

- Islamic concept of dignity of man, honor and sanctity of human life, the rights of the humanity as a whole, the Islamic concept of discharging obligations and getting rights, introduction to the basic human rights in Islam, Rights and obligation of non-Muslims in Islamic community, rights of various members of the society.
- Basic Islamic moral and ethical values, such as empathy, mutual cooperation, justice, respect for others, looking within, forgiveness and honesty, safeguarding the tongue.
- The knowledge of diversity, differences and similarities between different religious groups, Islamic manners of conflict resolution, nature of social divides the ways to minimize conflicts and principles of conflict management in Islam.
- The importance of obeying the rule of law.
- Love for peace and hatred to violence, the nature of physical violence and its kinds; allowed and forbidden use of physical force in Islam.

1 Haider, Religious leaders and the prevention of electoral violence, 3.

- The nature, form and types of terrorism in the world and ways to minimize it, concept of jihad and its implementation in the contemporary circumstances, rectification of misunderstanding regarding jihad.

These contents shall be helpful to achieve the requisite objectives of Paighām-e-Pakistan narrative.

5.6 Intra-Faith Dialogue: Pakistan is highly divided society in religious sects. Before starting the process of interfaith dialogue with other religions in the country there is need to develop intra-faith dialogue to minimize sectarian violence in the society. The moderate religious leaders of every sect must prepare their followers to be ambassadors of peace.¹

5.7 Inter-Religious Peace Building Efforts: To avoid inter-religious violence and hatred in the society, religious leaders from all religions must be engaged to play their role in bringing peace in the society.² The main concern of Paighām-e-Pakistan is to give peace a chance in this country.

6. Results and Recommendations

The following results could be drawn from the study and suitable measures are recommended to rectify the problem:

1. Paighām-e-Pakistan is important to make Pakistan a secure and peaceful place to live.
2. The recommendations of Paighām-e-Pakistan must be implemented in letter and spirit, especially those of related to engagement of religious scholars to promote peace and harmony in the society.
3. Top level and grass-root religious scholars should be more focused on highlighting the message of peace and harmony, similarities between religions rather than highlighting differences and prejudices while addressing the general audience.
4. For this purpose religious leaders should be provided basic training workshops to learn comprehend and implement objectives of peace and harmony in the society.
5. For these activities financial, material and human resources are required. Government of Pakistan through its relevant ministries must provide all requisite resources to achieve peace goals.
6. Harmonious peace promotion efforts must be conducted between the government and the religious leaders. Religious leaders should advise the government and the government on its part should act upon such advices.
7. Religious leaders should spread the message of tolerance, mutual respect and harmony in their preaching.

1 Haider, H., Religious leaders and the prevention of electoral violence, 5.

2 Barrett, Catherine, and Robert Breyer. "The influence of effective leadership on teaching and learning." *Journal of Research Initiatives* 1, no. 2 (2014): 3.

8. Religious leaders should not use religion to gain political advantages. Politicians on the other hand should not use religious sentiments to gain political benefits.
9. To counter violence rule of law is essential. Religious leaders must ensure to abide by the rules and regulations to sustain peace in the country.

7. Conclusion

In conclusion, benefits of Paighām-e-Pakistan in promoting peace and security in the country are obvious. The role of Ulamā and religious-political leaders is very important in spreading the national narrative for peace. As interpreters of Islamic texts; Qur'ān and Sayings of the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), Ulamā enjoy trustworthy and respected status in the community. Moreover, they are well informed of the local norms, customs and behavior of people. Due to their influential role, they can be very handy for cultivating peace in the society. To initiate the process of engagement of Ulamā in peace process, some of the key factors must be kept in focus such as, conflict analysis, flexibility, focusing on lower level leadership and religious scholars even to the grass-roots, Building trust, capacity building, intra-faith dialogue and interfaith peace building efforts. At the end, it is recommended to engage Ulamā at levels to spread the Paighām-e-Pakistan in communities through religious leadership and Ulamā. Moreover, some policy implications are suggested to enhance the role of Ulamā as ambassadors of peace into the society.