



Social Policy and  
Development Centre

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# Has civil society failed in Pakistan?

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**Nikhat Sattar**

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## **ACRONYMS**

9/11	The September 11, 2001 attacks were a series of attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York City and the Washington D.C area.
AJK	Azad Jammu and Kashmir
CBO	Community-based Organisation
FATA	Federally Administered Tribal Areas
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
KP	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
MRD	Movement for Restoration of Democracy
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NGOs	Non-governmental Organisation
TTP	Tehreek-eTaliban Pakistan

## Has civil society failed in Pakistan?

### Introduction

Social sciences and disciplines such as political philosophy now abound with research and analytic work on the role of civil society in national, regional and global development. Much work has been carried out to explore how civil society started social movements and has been the driving force behind social and political changes. The most recent have been the uprisings in several Middle Eastern countries, led by civilians who have been forced to live in increasing poverty and deprivation under repressive and despotic rule. Closer to home is the social movements in Nepal that resulted in the replacement of a rule based on religion and monarchy by an all-inclusive democratic republic.. Here again, Nepalese civil society rebelled against a regime which continued to benefit the twin rogue groups of a self-serving monarchy and elite politicians while the population remained mired in poverty. Another important example is of India, where a strong and vibrant civil society is perceived to be taking sides with the rebel Maoists in central and eastern India in what they say is a fight for the rights of the poor and landless. Even in Kashmir, where the Indian military has subjected the people to kidnappings, killings and torture, it is the civil society in India that has maintained constant pressure to check government excesses. While analysts and researchers have attempted to define and explain some of the vastly complex dynamics shaping civil society actions in these and other countries, very little has been written on the subject in Pakistan.

This article is an attempt to analyse the role that civil society has, or has not played, in preventing or mitigating the spread of terrorism in Pakistan. It poses the hypothesis that civil society has failed so far in playing an effective and proactive role, even in voicing protest, and goes on to state the reasons on which the hypothesis is based, supported by a comparison with the roles of civil society in neighbouring countries. It is, however, not premised on pessimism or despair. The article provides suggestions for a turn around and explains why hope is still a very viable option for the future of Pakistan.

It is appropriate to establish some definitions of the main concepts under discussion: civil society, terrorism, violence, conflict, peace, extremism, radicalisation, intolerance are defined here for contextualization of ideas.

**Terms defined**

**Civil society** is “an umbrella term for a range of non-state and non-market citizen organisations and initiatives, networks and alliances operating in a broad spectrum of social, economic, and cultural fields. These include formal institutions, non-governmental organisations, trade unions, professional associations, philanthropies, academia, independent pressure groups, think tanks, and traditional informal formations, such as faith-based organisations, shrines, seminaries, and neighbourhood associations.” There are some schools of thought that would classify civil society only as groups of individuals that are both voluntary and formal, but there are many other groups which are comprised of formal and informal, and voluntary and obligatory membership. According to conventional notions in social sciences, civil society refers to that space which (1) exists between the family, on the one hand, and the state, on the other, (2) makes interconnections between individuals or families possible, and (3) is independent of the state. Some definitions also include political parties within civil society if this group is outside of the state. However, for the purposes of this article, political parties have not been considered to be a part of civil society, as this inclusion would be controversial, given the mercurial nature of politicians who may or may not be in or outside the government depending on immediate political expediencies.

**Terrorism** is variously defined as "an anxiety-inspiring method of repeated violent action, employed by (semi-) clandestine individual, group or state actors, for idiosyncratic, criminal or political reasons, whereby - in contrast to assassination - the direct targets of violence are not the main targets" (Varshney, 2001). The British Government definition of 1974 is "...the use of violence for political ends, and includes any use of violence for the purpose of putting the public, or any section of the public, in fear." Simply put, terrorism is the use of “violence or threats, to intimidate or coerce, especially for political purposes”.

**Violence** is the use of physical force to cause injury, abuse or death. It is used as a tool for manipulation, and covers a broad spectrum, from violent acts by one person on another, to collective violence which may cause millions to be hurt or killed.

**Conflict** is defined as a disagreement through which the parties involved perceive a threat to their needs, interests or concerns. Conflicts will exist anywhere where humans reside and need not be violent conflicts, especially in societies that are plural and allow free expression of political, social and cultural needs and views.

**Peace** is traditionally defined as an absence of violence. An interesting take on peace is the differentiation between positive and negative peace, the latter including addressing social grievances and developing harmony, compassion and pluralism. While negative peace or the absence of violence can be attained by groups living in semi-isolation of each other, positive peace would require active interaction, inter- and intra- group, and work towards a collective good.

**Extremism** is any ideology or political act far outside the perceived political centre of a society; or otherwise claimed to violate common moral standards. It is very close to the terms ***fundamentalism***, or ***fanaticism***. In the global discourse today, the three terms are often used interchangeably in relation to religious ideologies. The term is almost invariably used in a negative sense, in contrast to ***moderation***. Scholars of social and political science argue that the labeling of individuals or ideologies as extremist depends on who is making the labeling as the terms are politically charged. Some groups may view certain acts as extremist, and others may justify these on moral, ideological or other grounds. Also, acts which are claimed to be thus often depend on our own view of existing conditions. Importantly, power differences also matter when defining extremism. Extreme acts are more likely to be employed by marginalised people and groups for whom other forms of conflict management are barred or perceived to be useless. However, dominant groups also commonly employ extreme activities. Extremism often manifests itself in violent acts. Again, “low power groups are more likely to employ direct, episodic forms of violence (such as suicide bombings), whereas dominant groups tend to be associated with more structural or institutionalised forms (like the covert use of torture or the informal sanctioning of brutality and violence within government)”. The core problem of extremism, however, is not so much the direct consequences, as the closed, fixed, and intolerant nature of extremist attitudes, and their subsequent imperviousness to change.

**Radicalisation** is the process of developing extremist attitudes and views, the difference being that the term extremist is applied to individuals by others, and the extremists refer to themselves as radicals. “The term extremist is often used with reference to those who use or advocate violence against the will of society at large, but it is also used by some to describe those who advocate or use violence to enforce the will of the social body, such as a government or majority constituency. Those described as extremist would in general not accept that what they practice or advocate constitutes violence and would instead speak in terms of acts of resistance or militant action or the use of force. The act of labeling a person, group or action as extremist is sometimes claimed to be a technique to further a political goal — especially by governments seeking to defend the status quo, or political



centrists. In any event, the term extremist — like the word violence— cannot be regarded as value-neutral.”

**Intolerance** is unwillingness or refusal to respect or tolerate beliefs and opinions which may be different and even contrary to one’s own, or persons from different backgrounds and origins. Intolerance, if strong and practiced collectively, often results in extremist attitudes and the unwillingness to respect differences could result in violence of various degrees.

### **Civil Society as a Vehicle of Change**

While civil society movement in South Asia has been vibrant, active and very vocal, it has been stifled in Pakistan under various military regimes that have ruled the country for more than 30 years, almost half of the country’s age. It was in the 80s, during Zia-ul-Haq’s tenure that the NGO movement took on fervour and protests began in major cities against some of the laws that were deemed contrary to human rights. The 90s saw a rapid growth of NGOs involved in the development sector, the expansion of community-based organisations (CBOs) and the emergence of various issue-based platforms and coalitions.

Within the broader definition of civil society, other groups such as trader, teacher and student unions, suffered through politicisation and the “hijacking” of such groups by religio-political and ethnic groups who believed in and practiced violence as their main tool to gain visibility and short term gains. Indeed, youth factions of religio-political parties had been active since the martial law of the 60s. Even during short spells of supposedly democratic governments, first in the 70s and then in the 90s, excessive use of force, state repression of freedom of speech and curtailment of cultural and social activities were common. The 1980s brought a strong coalition between the military regime and far right parties, resulting in legislation that was neither debated either within parliament, nor subjected to scrutiny for context and relevance to a population that had been promised a free, secure and open society. Several rights activists, writers and intellectuals were jailed, some chose self exile. Writings were banned and a system of moral policing was initiated through an uneducated, brutal and corrupt police force.

While civil society represents, by and large, the power of the people, it has faced continued opposition from state actors, mainly military governments. Even during the short phases of elected governments, the freedom of NGOs and the media has been curbed through restrictions on their freedom. Several efforts were made to control the actions of NGOs, and the much-contested NGO

Bill, seen as an attempt by the government to bring the non-profit sector directly under its control and regulation (Pasha, Pasha and Iqbal, 2002) has lain with parliament since 1996.

A study carried out by Social Policy and Development Centre (SPDC) in 2002 describes the attitude of the government towards NGOs as ambivalent and inconsistent, supportive at times, and repressive and resentful at others. According to the study, while the government was supportive at the policy level, it was obstructionist at the operational level, as government agencies saw NGOs as a major competitive force, having increasing influence, and “cutting into the functions and responsibility” of the line departments. The government was seen to be generally supportive of the welfare and service providing role of the NGOs; it was openly hostile to their activities in social and political advocacy. Successive governments were “increasingly threatened by the role played by nonprofit organizations in mobilizing support of civil society at large on issues like violence against women, honor killings, blasphemy law, freedom of the press, accountability and corruption, etc. The resulting hostility has been reflected in attempts at penetration of various nonprofit organizations and, in extreme cases, at attempts even for closure through deregistration.”

Although many well-known civil society workers were inducted into the Musharraf cabinet, this dichotomy continued well beyond into the mid-2000s. More NGOs started work in Pakistan, others slowly expanded their charity work to take on a development approach. Provincial governments provided endowments to NGOs for programmes such as the rural support programmes, structured on lines similar to the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme in the northern areas. With the continued failure of the state to deliver education and health services to the rural population, service delivery was increasingly taken up by both NGOs and the private sector. The government was happy to let them take over this role despite the fact that by the very nature of their form, neither NGOs nor the private sector have been able to upscale the good models of rural development that have been tried.

In their paper on Civil Society and Social Change in Pakistan, Ayesha Khan and Rabia Khan state “Whereas traditional social movements in this country have been built upon local issues and remained at that level, despite evidence of public support, they have been unable to broaden their base and challenge the powers that be to great effect. We suggest that movements for social change are now nascent but nonetheless built upon a newer model of coalition building that may have potential in future to grow in size.” This paper was written in 2004 and focused on NGOs. While

some coalitions mentioned by the authors have been developed, NGOs remain project- or activity-specific and have yielded little in terms of social mobilisation for change.

Religious groups and NGOs continue to be antagonistic towards each other. The former take a diametrically opposite view to the more liberal and often secular views of NGOs who support women's rights and the abolishment of laws such as the blasphemy law and the Hudood Ordinance. They argue "that NGOs pursue a Western alien agenda aimed at transforming Pakistan from an Islamic state to a secular state on the basis of patronage from international umbrella civil society groups and sizeable external funding. Underlying all this opposition by religious parties, there is the lurking suspicion that the real threat faced by them is the competition for funds and influence". The NGOs, on the other hand, see religious groups as one of the main causes of the rapid increase in the *madrassah*<sup>1</sup> teachings promoting jihad. They have also voiced concern about the apparent hesitation from religious elements to condemn terrorist attacks and crimes against women.

According to a study conducted by the SPDC, the number of *madrassahs* had risen from 700 in 1980 to close to 16,000 in 2005 and some sources claim that there are as many as 27,000 in 2010. These institutions have come under much scrutiny, and suspicion, particularly from both the international donors and the Pakistan government, and to some extent from certain sections of civil society. They are alleged to be teaching hate and intolerance to young minds on the one hand, churning out suicide bombers and terrorists, and on the other, producing graduates who are ill equipped to find gainful employment or to serve as responsible citizens. Traditional sectarian based religious teachings continue in the majority of such institutions especially those in KP, FATA and the Punjab, and in the absence of any alternate educational mechanism and perpetual poverty, people have little option but to send their children to the *madrassahs*.

According to the study, the highest percentage of NGOs were active in service delivery in education and health, and those providing religious education formed the largest group. In fact, many of the religious groups operating *madrassahs* also run large welfare and charity organisations, often engaged in relief and rehabilitation programmes after disasters and taking care of the poor, the needy and the sick in a country where state social services is almost nonexistent and the majority cannot afford private-sector services. There are many studies which show that *madrassah* students

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<sup>1</sup> *Madrassah* literally means "a place where learning/studying is done". In the Arabic language, the word (*madrassah*) simply means the same as *school* does in the English language, whether that is private, public or parochial school, as well as for any primary or secondary school whether Muslim, non-Muslim, or secular. or learning, but has acquired mystical and religious connotations.

are not usually the master minds behind terrorist attacks. Equally correct is the view that madrassahs create a very narrow world view and that the students are more likely to be isolated, intolerant of other views and ready to be mentally and emotionally convinced of the validity and religious sanction of violent acts such as suicide bombings.

If the same study was to be undertaken today, similar results, although with much larger numbers are likely. In terms of sources of revenue, fees and user charges contributed to 34%, while indigenous philanthropy provided 37 percent of the total cash revenue. The share of foreign funding was estimated as 6 percent and the public sector contributed 6 percent. Contrary to common perception, funds from foreign donors were a small share and the bulk of the financial support to NGOs was derived from national philanthropists and fees.

No data is available on the composition of financial support to NGOs today, but it will not be erroneous to estimate that the foreign funding contribution has gone up, stimulated mainly by demonstration of the work civil society carried out after the earthquake, and rising concerns over the lack of accountability and transparency in use of funds by government agencies. The general opinion about NGOs however, remains negative, perhaps because of how they have allowed themselves to be projectised, aid dependant and donor driven. Organised civil society in Pakistan has often been used against the state and against groups having different views, and has come to be viewed with suspicion and is often considered irrelevant. Indeed, civil society has become divided along ethnic and religious lines and has thus shown little capacity for collective action, social mobilisation and mass emancipation.

According to Khalid Nadvi and Mark Robinson, in Pakistan “Societal agencies capable of promoting economic, social and political change are weak and relatively ineffective. Organisations of the poor are well established in many local communities but have not proved capable of articulating voice or providing a basis for collective action on a large scale. Civil society organisations have registered some success in protecting and upholding human rights, especially women’s rights, but have had little influence on larger political and economic issues that have a critical impact on poverty. There are some important exceptions, such as the efforts of some of the non-governmental rural and urban support programmes, but the ability of such initiatives to expand coverage is often limited, their overall impact on poverty levels unclear, and their links with the state delivery mechanisms often inadequate.”

## **Terrorism in Pakistan**

Terrorism has caused widespread psychological damage and social and economic chaos, and has been gradually increasing in Pakistan since the 1980s. It has taken on a new, more intense and visible face since 9/11 2001. Terrorism and terrorists have become a “mixed bag”- of ideologically driven fanaticism, extreme intolerance, sectarian violence, ethnic and political wars. Since the late 80s, terrorism has taken on an ethnic face in the commercial capital of Karachi. Both sectarian and political violence have increased in several parts of the country. Balochistan has been troubled for long, and while earlier the situation was a mixture of ethnic and political issues, it is evident that this is fertile ground for terrorists to find supporters and collaborators.

Terrorists groups are largely made up of a diverse group of men, with some female supporters. These include militant organisations, religious groups aided by political and sectarian forces, ethnic groups who have fanned ethnic violence and gangs of criminals, and land and drug mafias. Many of these have active and flourishing centres in South Punjab, KP, Karachi, Lahore, Islamabad and Quetta. They continue to be well funded, often supported by some political parties and politicians and clearly still considered as “strategic assets” by some of the establishment agencies.

## **Ethnic Violence**

Ethnic violence, too, has been on the rise since the 1980s and peaked in the 90s. Since as early as 1947, some ethnic groups, who have all been lumped into the term “Punjabis”, have enjoyed real or perceived power. The declaration of Urdu as the national language in 1948 caused a language divide that was exacerbated by the perceived dominance of Punjabis on elitist and powerful posts in the army, police and commercial enterprises.

Even more worrying, especially after the mass migration of non-Bengalis from East Pakistan, was the emergence of an ethnic group called the “Mohajirs” -- the people who had migrated in 1947 to Pakistan and considered themselves to be hard done by local inhabitants -- particularly in Sindh and Punjab. The ethnic divide took on a new and horrifying face. Over the past three decades, most people now identify themselves and their neighbours by ethnic origin and provincial affiliation rather than as Pakistanis. Politicians use provincial and ethnic “cards” to incite anger and angst between rivals. Ethnic conflict has been fostered and manipulated to create ethnic violence, particularly in Karachi, where there is a daily score of “target killings”, from one rival group or the other. Areas and neighbourhoods are termed as being of a particular ethnicity, and other ethnic groups are either not allowed, or refrain from visiting due to fear, let alone reside in such areas. The term “Punjabi” is sure

to cause security issues in Balochistan, an eerie recall of the situation in the erstwhile East Pakistan, and as was the case there, is used to refer to anyone who speaks Urdu or Punjabi and may have lived in the major urban cities.

It would be appropriate here to explain “ethnicity”, “ethnic conflict” and “ethnic violence”, and attempt to establish a link between civil society interactions and ethnic violence. In his article on civil society and ethnic conflict in India, Ashutosh Varshney argues that the structure of civil networks in a multiethnic society determines the extent and nature of ethnic violence. Ethnicity is simply the set to which religion, race, language, and sects belong, and ethnic conflict is the tension which is created by having differences of opinions and views by different ethnic groups, on account of their different ethnic backgrounds. This is very different from class-based conflict, although some ethnic groups could have been forced into the economically deprived class through the dominance of others.

“In any ethnically plural society that allows free expression of political demands, some ethnic conflict is more or less inevitable, but it may not necessarily lead to violence. When there are different ethnic groups that are free to organize, there are likely to be conflicts over resources, identity, patronage, and policies. The real issue is whether ethnic conflict is violent or waged via the polity’s institutionalized channels. If ethnic protest takes an institutionalized form—in parliaments, in assemblies, in bureaucratic corridors, and as nonviolent mobilization on the streets—it is conflict but not violence. Such institutionalized conflict must be distinguished from a situation in which protest takes violent forms, rioting breaks out on the streets, and in its most extreme form civil war ensues or pogroms are initiated against some ethnic groups with the complicity of state authorities. Ethnic peace should, for all practical purposes, be conceptualized as an institutionalized channeling and resolution of ethnic demands and conflicts: *as an absence of violence, not as an absence of conflict.*”

In defining civic or ethnic engagement, Varshney differentiates between engagement amongst associations or formal groups and everyday engagement as in social engagements in neighbourhoods, playing together, having cultural festivities jointly, making social calls, etc. “Everyday forms of engagement consist of simple, routine interactions of life, such as whether families from different communities visit each other, eat together regularly, jointly participate in festivals, and allow their children to play together in the neighborhood. Both forms of engagement, if robust, promote peace: contrariwise, their absence or weakness opens up space for ethnic violence. Of the two, however, the associational forms turn out to be sturdier than everyday engagement, especially when confronted with attempts by politicians to polarize people along

ethnic lines. Vigorous associational life, if interethnic, acts as a serious constraint on politicians, even when ethnic polarization is in their political interest. The more the associational networks cut across ethnic boundaries, the harder it is for politicians to polarize communities.”

Through his comprehensive research in 28 cities in India, Varshney shows that ethnic violence was minimal in those cities where ethnic groups interacted with each other informally as well as through formal associations. The difference between peace and violence was determined by the existence of preexisting local networks of civic engagement between Hindus and Muslims. Where such networks of engagement exist, tensions and conflicts are regulated and managed; where they are missing, communal identities lead to endemic and ghastly violence. Both formal and informal types of engagement, if inter-ethnic, promote peace, but the capacity of the formal types to remain resilient in the face of consistent and strong instigation is greater.

Even though civil society in Pakistan exists and has developed over the years, it has been muzzled, exploited, beaten and worse, has allowed itself to become entangled into self-serving vested interest groups, projectised by external donor funding and prey to whims and fads of development aid. The vastly diverse ethnic mosaic in Pakistan has been used to create several factions and pieces, with little informal or formal associations. The already existing tribal and *biradari* (clan) system that has caused much of the long-lasting feuds and rivalries in rural areas have been strengthened by religious, sectarian, linguistic and “place of birth” groupings.

Political affiliations, student and trade groups, and organisations are formed on the basis of ethnicity, and differences between “us” and “them” have been identified and magnified to the extent of intolerance of each other and each other’s way of living. What starts off, perhaps, as a search for individual identity and space, is transformed very quickly into groups resorting to fighting and violence. Far from raising their voice against the extreme polarisation of society, civil groups have actually become a part of this splintering. Indeed, civil society has played a key role in fostering and promoting ethnic violence by strengthening ethnic differences; keeping social interactions limited to people of their own groups; choosing to keep quiet when rumours and accusations flare up and by actively taking part in the violence that erupts.

In recent years, the single “civic action” taken by one group, lawyers, that later included the media and NGOs, was the lawyer’s movement to restore the forcibly removed Chief Justice of Pakistan. The movement, culminating in success despite political maneuvering at the highest level seemed to be

the silver lining. It gave much hope for the coming of age of civil society in Pakistan. This hope is now beginning to dwindle. Terrible deeds have been committed in the name of honour and religion: people have been lynched by mobs, women have been tortured, raped and murdered, simple and illiterate people have been incarcerated for committing perceived blasphemy and those daring to speak out have been murdered and their murderers lauded, feudal lords have kept poor men, women and children imprisoned for bonded labour. But there are very few who take up these issues.

Despite decades of exploitation of millions of the landless and poor by a few hundreds of landlords, rising poverty and inequity, lack of basic education, health and social services, and heavy and distorted taxation of the already burdened salaried class; no social movement has started in any meaningful manner. Isolated peaceful protests have been launched by groups of activists but most protests have been in the form of arson, loot and shootings.

Even more alarming is the lack of any collective and vociferous civic action against the violence and brutality which occurs across all provinces and urban and rural areas. Sporadic and isolated voices are heard denouncing violence but the country has yet to witness an outpouring of the depths of pain and despair that individually some citizens express in private. There are some calls for peace and an end to violence, but these are often subdued by the louder and more bizarre manifestations of support for intolerant and extremist actions.

While Nadvi and Robinson saw the media as an emerging source of hope, they also highlighted its immaturity. "The independent print and electronic media is also emerging as an important and powerful voice in promoting debate, advancing accountability and enhancing norms of democratic governance. The media is also exposing Pakistani society and culture to a wide range of global values. Nevertheless, the media has yet to become a key actor in promoting and disseminating an agenda on pro-poor developmental goals." Sensational journalism, weak ethics and lack of trained reporters has added to competition between TV channels over the "breaking news" syndrome. This prevents most TV channels from playing an effective role in the objective analysis of issues, spreading tolerance and anti-violence sentiments, and promoting peaceful resolution of perceived conflicts. In several cases, the media has incited the public and often uses controversial and biased individuals to air their own views. Equally culpable is the print media. In a country where only a very small percentage of the population reads and writes English; the only media groups that do demonstrate some level of restraint and ethics mainly are the English ones.



## **Causes of Terrorism**

The role played by the military, security agencies and militant religious organisations in fostering and supporting “non-state actors” extremists, jihadis, Taliban and militants cannot be underestimated. The Taliban, who successfully put up a long-term resistance and guerilla war against the Soviets in Afghanistan, were a diverse but ideologically inspired group from Afghanistan, various central Asian republics especially Chechnya, Arabs and Pakistan. Additionally, there were the militants who were provided support for the ongoing resistance in Kashmir. Alongside were criminals, warlords, thieves and smugglers, sectarian groups that had arisen and were indoctrinated in beliefs of violence, intolerance and distortions of religious teachings. Increasingly, among these groups are disgruntled and unhappy ethnic groups who believe they have been deprived of rights and resources for too long by successive governments, as in Balochistan. In general, while Swat had homegrown Taliban, FATA and Balochistan have a majority of foreigners. Those in the Punjab are more sectarian and Karachi has both ethnic and politically motivated groups.

The nexus between the military and these non-state actors, fueled by each other’s expediencies, had not changed until the army started the operations in Swat. And many reports claim that the nexus exists to date although to a lesser extent. Questions have been raised continuously, about government efforts to wipe out the networks of militant organisations in Pakistan, particularly those in KP, FATA, Balochistan and the Punjab. There are signs that many of these have supporters within the government, coalition partners, the establishment, and religious organisations.

Since 2001, there have been many accounts of the actions taken to clamp down on terrorists organisations, centres, camps and militant groups. Pakistani society, led by political and religious parties and groups, remains divided over the justification of an army operation against Pakistanis, and supported by the highly controversial “drone attacks”. This is the point of view held by those who believe that using armed force was the only way out for the government to rein in elements such as the followers of Sufi Mohammad and Maulana Fazlullah, for example. They had started the drive to install their version of Sharia law in Swat, started negotiations with the government and then violated the terms of the agreement. Those who hold this point of view also say that the war is no longer the war of the US, but is a war for the survival of Pakistan. Unfortunately, it is a civil war and is being fought against groups who are still, by and large, Pakistanis. Popular sentiment, fueled also by the media is rising against the pro-US stance of the government, in the wake of the Raymond Davis affair in Lahore and the killing of Osama Bin Laden in Abbotabad.

The other perspective is that the Taliban are a group of righteous, god-fearing people aiming to enforce the laws of Islam, and that the government is following the dictates of the West. It is doing this by killing and maiming its own people and allowing drones to kill civilians. Even groups who are not directly supportive of the tactics used by the Taliban believe that stories of these tactics have been distorted and misrepresented, or that it is not the Taliban who have perpetrated the reported crimes, but elements claiming to belong to Taliban groups.

Terrorist groups create chaos, fear and insecurity in society. These groups differ in their origin, motivation and ideologies. They include the remnants of the Afghan “*mujahideen*” who were created, nurtured and supported jointly by the US and Pakistan to fight the Soviets in Afghanistan; religious extremists and fanatics who believe all those who differ from them should be killed; sectarian groups with hatred for those not belonging to their sect; ethnic groups avenging perceived and real oppression and raging rivalries; political groups; land, drug mafias and criminals. Many of them are Afghans, recruits from Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and some of the Central Asian states.

When the Soviet war ended, thousands of these well-trained and highly motivated individuals who had been inspired spiritually by the idea of creating an Islamic brotherhood were left without an alternative to channel their guerilla war skills. Their energies and focus was strengthened by large numbers of young recruits from the thousands of madrassahs flourished in the 80s and 90s, who were motivated to fight the Indian army in Kashmir. Thus, the number of leftover mujahideen expanded to include younger, more ideologically driven and well-trained individuals from several provinces, especially the Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The rise in terrorism owes much to the Afghan invasion by the Soviets in the 70s, and the subsequent strategy used by both the US and Pakistan, albeit for very different reasons. The US wanted to prevent the Soviets from gaining ground and thereby geo-political advantage including access to Central Asia and the Pakistani government. It also wanted to retain a strong future role in Afghanistan. Pakistan was dependant on aid from the US. This supported the then Zia regime in its efforts to “Islamise” Pakistan. The two countries collaborated in recruiting, training and equipping millions of fighters, mainly able-bodied men, from Afghanistan and Pakistan. The guerilla tactics involved and the dedication demonstrated by these fighters, to be called Afghan “*mujahideen*”, and then the Taliban, caused the Russians to withdraw after more than five years of war. The Taliban came to power in 1996 and remained so until 2001, when they were overthrown by a US- and NATO-led offensive after 9/11.

The reign of the Taliban, according to several reports and personal records, is marked by their attitudes towards women and adherence to their forms of adherence to ethics and religious beliefs. Their supporters claim that during this reign, the crime rate had gone down. Their critics decry their intolerance, terror and general sense of fear they managed to instill.

The Taliban have regrouped since 2004 and revived as a strong insurgency movement governing local Pashtun areas and are fighting a guerrilla war against the governments of Afghanistan, Pakistan, and the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). They have set up their Pakistan chapter, the Tehreek-eTaliban Pakistan (TTP), said to have a stronghold on South Waziristan and perceived to be spread out in Balochistan and the Punjab. It is believed that a large number of the Taliban are now made of students from madrassahs run by major religious political parties and sectarian (mainly Sunni) groups within Pakistan.

Due to the Afghan war in the 80s, Pakistan also bore the brunt of millions of Afghans escaping the hardships, among them Taliban supporters along with arms and ammunition. Within a decade, Pakistan had become an armed society with cheap, but sophisticated, weapons easily available. In a country torn by self-serving politicians, poverty and little economic or social development, weapons found their way to men who could now redress their real or perceived wrongs through armed violence.

Had the country been governed by effective democratic institutions and had the state fulfilled its responsibilities in ensuring protection of life and property and catering to people's needs rather than to external perceived security threats, as evidenced by an India-centered foreign policy, Pakistan would not be crippled by the internal terrorism and conflicts it faces now. Three years into a faltering democracy, both politicians and parliament have yet to demonstrate sensitivity to what the people need in the country. People need access to low cost and quality education at all levels, equal opportunities to raise incomes, large-scale investments, easily available and low-cost health services, and an equitable distribution of national resources. Low spending in the development sector continues. Terrorism, in the country, has added to the negligence in dealing with the factors that have bred an atmosphere conducive to violence and terrorism.

Terrorism is not confined to FATA and KP, and is not practiced only by the group termed as the Taliban. It is a far more pervasive phenomenon, and exists in major urban areas of Sindh, the Punjab and Balochistan. It has also spilled into AJK and the Gilgit Baltistan province. The Taliban are no

longer the militants who had gathered and regrouped after the defeat of the Soviets in Afghanistan. They are now almost indistinguishable from the criminals, land grabbers, drug mafias, sectarian and ethnic groups, tribal clans, political and ideologically based parties, disaffected youth and individuals with vested interests. The TTP has been bolstered by these diverse groups. Added to this is the resentment against the policies and actions of western governments towards Muslims in general, and Palestine, Iraq and Kashmir in particular.

Many blame rampant poverty, far above the percentages quoted in official documents, to be the main underlying cause of the disaffection amongst terrorists, luring the young to promises of a better future, whether in terms of riches in this world, or paradise in the hereafter. Others cite the spread of rigid and misunderstood religious doctrines to be the main cause. Both are valid, but the reasons for widespread poverty and religiosity, the nature of it, and any cures for the same requires further analysis and understanding if terrorism is to be effectively countered.

Poverty in Pakistan is multifaceted and is the direct result of the lack of interest and willingness to develop the country as an agrarian economy, supported by industrialisation and investment in human resource development. Agriculture has been dominated by feudal landlords who keep the majority of the rural population as free labour, providing meagre in kind (food, clothing and shelter) in return for working the lands. Feudal lords do not pay any taxes, have discouraged people from sending their children to school and have not invested the vast income from their farms in the development of the villages their labour comes from. Much of the income is either deposited in foreign accounts, or in setting up lucrative businesses away from rural areas. Many feudals have landed up in parliament and assemblies and dominate among the upper echelons of politicians and the group termed the “elite” of Pakistani society. Unlike what happened in India soon after partition, Pakistan continues with a feudal society, the third pillar along with the army and religious groups who has managed to keep the country hostage to turbulence, social instability and internal strife.

Organised resistance to the feudal system in Sindh has been active since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Kisan Rally organised by the Hari Committee in Hyderabad in 1943 resulted in the official acceptance of the peasants’ grievances vis-a-vis the feudal system. However, the preoccupation of the government with the war and later the deliberations on the transfer of power in India, precluded any progress in this matter. Nevertheless, the Committee gained strength with increasing membership in rural Sind and the support of the All India Kisan Sabha. On the eve of elections in

1946, the Muslim League realised the importance of the *hari* vote and promised to support their cause after the elections. Unfortunately, these promises were broken and feudalism survived.

Over 60 per cent of Pakistan's 170 million population depend on agriculture for their livelihoods that accounts for over 21 per cent of its \$17 billion gross domestic product (GDP). Just 37 per cent of Pakistan's rural households own the land they farm, mostly in small plots that make up 15 per cent of Pakistan's total land area. The rest of the landless tenants are under small debts that grow over time and they are forced to give over two thirds of their crop to landowners just to pay the interest. They are vulnerable and subjected to torture, forced to accept unilateral decisions and often kept in bonded labour, with generation after generation employed on the land in an effort to pay off their debts.

Feudalism not only has survived, but has become stronger, giving rise to increased inequity, preventing access of opportunities to the poor, and maintaining status quo on the availability of quality of education to a privileged few. The control over Pakistan's resources in a few families, and continued deprivation of the majority has played a large part in deepening the poverty and inequity levels, and in providing fertile ground for terrorist ideologies to take root. This has been supported by high illiteracy, poor quality of education and the almost complete disillusion amongst the population about the public sector educational system. Indeed, government schools and colleges are unable to prepare young people for a useful role in society and economic development. They also encourage and foment intolerance, hatred and violence through distorted versions of history, religious bigotry and the use of unethical and illegal means to obtain admissions and pass examinations.

Not only are poverty and illiteracy at alarmingly high levels, a very large number of people are out of jobs. Many are unemployable, lacking basic skills, whether technical, business or service-oriented. Others cannot find opportunities, except if they move to large cities where civic systems are already overburdened by increasing populations. High rates of unemployment, coupled with lack of opportunities to improve their lot has provided the young, and especially the rural young to lose hope and look for a meaning to their lives by whichever means they can find. They are recruited by militants, criminals, drug traffickers and dope peddlers, and resort to violence and acts of aggression against both state and society.

Consistently repressive policies, state control over social and cultural activities and lack of encouragement to sharing of information and debates have contributed to rigidity and intolerance to any views other than one's own. Provision of justice and the strict implementation of laws has not been a priority. Many alliances have developed between criminals, the police, powerful politicians, bureaucrats and businessmen, resulting in frauds, crimes against humanity, and social evils.

As a nation, Pakistan has a short memory. Not many people remember the lessons from the breakup of the country in 1971. Even if they did, the day-to-day issues of survival, exacerbated by heavy inflation, keep the "ordinary" man too tired, too busy and too depressed to care. Separatist views have gained momentum in Balochistan and Sind is not far behind. The failure to bring Baloch nationals to the table is already proving costly, and is likely to foment unrest and continued turmoil, with increasing terrorist attacks. Analysis of the figures on the number of terror incidents shows that Balochistan ranks among the three most volatile areas, along with KP and FATA.

The interior of Sindh is considered relatively free of terror attacks but it has been a haven for dacoits and other criminals. It is fraught with issues of violence against women and *haris*. Violence against women is common in other provinces too, and in many such cases, the powerful feudals who also occupy key positions within the government use their clout to protect those who have committed such crimes. South Punjab is considered to be one of the most violent areas socially, with incidents of excessive brutality perpetrated by both the police and ordinary citizens, with no one yet brought to justice.

Major cities, places of worship and gatherings of minorities have been targets for ethnic and sectarian groups. In Karachi alone, a mix of ethnic clashes and sectarian killings cause hundreds of deaths and injuries every year. Sufi shrines, Shia and Sunni mosques, churches, places of worship of Ahmadis and Hindu temples have been targeted frequently. Political rival groups have mixed with ethnically motivated individuals to carry out the much-feared "target killings" that are now frequent in Karachi, and to which there seems to be no pragmatic solution to as yet.

With such a corrosive mix of social, economic and political issues, and the apparent lack of ability, willingness and commitment from successive governments, what has civil society been doing? One may argue that civil society has been restricted, controlled and prevented from developing a coherent and collective deterrent, and from doing more to, at least reduce, if not prevent the spread of violence and terrorism. Yet, civil society itself is partly responsible. It has been too absorbed in

individually driven agendas, competing for funds rather than investing in coalitions and networks for better advocacy, giving up on difficult issues in the face of resistance, and has retained an elitist mode of operations. Civil society has not been able to bring groups with differing opinions to the same table, and has continued to act in isolation of each other, either duplicating efforts, or neglecting major issues altogether for want of funding or will. An example is the lack of a major movement against feudalism, although some grass root NGOs have continued their lonely battle in Sindh and the Punjab.

### **The Spread of Terrorism**

Since 2001, the country has seen a consistent rise in the number, intensity and severity of damage to and destruction of human life and property related to terrorist incidents. These reached their peak in 2007 after the Lal Masjid operation. Suicide bombings have increased consistently in all major cities. The incidents during the nine months of 2010 show no decrease.

Table 1 below gives a summary of incidents and casualties across Pakistan over 2008-2010 as a result of terror attacks. The table indicates how the intensity and scale of violence has increased over the years and spread geographically. The number of casualties has increased, indicating the change of tactics, in terms of targeting “soft targets” aimed to inflict most damage, and spread maximum fear among society.

Since the security forces have launched operations in KP and FATA, the number of terror incidents and the ensuing casualties have increased. For a more comprehensive picture of the various conflicts Pakistan is facing, all related incidents, including sectarian and ethnic clashes, political violence, border clashes and drone attacks are taken into consideration. Table 1 shows countrywide data on the number of incidents, and fatalities and injuries due to various types of clashes over the past three years, including the nine months of 2010. It can be seen that terrorist attacks were the highest in 2009, at 2508, and until September 2010 numbered 1,662 in total. Incidents related to drone attacks, border clashes, and ethnic and political violence have increased steadily over the last three years. Further analysis shows that in 2008 and 2009, the worst affected areas were KP and FATA, followed by Balochistan and the Punjab. In 2010, the number of incidents in Balochistan over six months (February, March, May, June, August and September) has been the highest. Figures for Sindh exclude Karachi, where the incidents and deaths are dependent on the power dynamics between the main political parties, motley mafia groups and land grabbers.

A discussion on terrorism-related incidents is incomplete without looking at the impact of drone attacks and incursions of the so-called allied forces into Pakistani territory. Drone attacks, targeted bombings by remote-controlled “drones” have killed a very large number of civilians. While the US continues to downplay these fatalities by claiming that these are an essential part of an approved strategy by the government of Pakistan, the Pakistani government continues to condemn the attacks, without any apparent action to prevent or reduce their frequency.

**Table 1**

	<b>Incidents</b>	<b>Killed</b>	<b>Injured</b>
<b>KP / FATA</b>			
2007	895	2759	3615
2008	1394	1601	2627
2009	1696	2083	4662
<b>BALUCHISTAN</b>			
2007	536	224	564
2008	692	296	807
2009	792	386	1070
<b>SINDH</b>			
2007	10	05	04
2008	04	03	19
2009	06	03	07
<b>PUNJAB</b>			
2007	29	113	276
2008	35	219	621
2009	46	420	1342
<b>NAs</b>			
2007	02	01	09
2008	-	-	-
2009	05	13	19
<b>AJK</b>			
2007	04	01	07
2008	04	03	10
2009	05	17	93
<b>KARACHI</b>			
2007	17	205	540
2008	19	19	119
2009	24	65	155
<b>ISLAMABAD</b>			
2007	10	140	338
2008	09	119	319
2009	10	30	72



Categories	2008			2009			2010		
	Attacks	Killed	Injured	Attacks	Killed	Injured	Attacks	Killed	Injured
Terrorist attacks	2,148	2,267	4,558	2,586	3,021	7,334	1,602	2,228	4,607
Clashes between security forces & militants	95	655	557	209	1,163	780	264	1,614	735
Operational attacks by security forces	-	3,182	2,267	596	6,329	3,181	203	2,326	1,262
Drone attacks	32	300	-	51	667	310	83	643	260
Border clashes	5.5	395	207	78	700	363	62	64	45
Political/ ethnic clashes	88	162	419	130	210	370	174	483	795
Inter-tribal clashes	191	1336	1,662	217	1,209	787	148	679	600
<b>Total</b>									

### **The Power of Civil Society- the Case of Nepal**

The historic transformation of one of the poorest countries from a Hindu monarchy to a people's democratic republic in April 2006 was led and made possible by a mass social movement.

Consistent repression of people, excessive poverty, unemployment, lack of freedom of expression, blatant violations of human rights and the concentration of power and wealth in the hands of a few are among the main ingredients for creating major social movements. Movements that have taken a particular issue, such as labour and women's movements have also been effective, as have been land and tenure rights in several parts of the world.

Nepal has had a history of revolutions, governed as it has been by autocratic monarchs and self-serving politicians, each feeding into the other's quest for power and riches. After the failed revolution in the 1990s, an armed movement led by the communists -- the Maoists started and for over 15 years, violence raged throughout the country. The Maoists movement was rooted in the most poor and deprived areas -- among the rural population and found much acceptance and legitimacy there, although the increasingly violent tactics used by the Maoists also lost them their popularity. Politicians became more and more splintered and many sided with the king, while the elite groups in Kathmandu remained distant. It was after the massacre of the royal family, followed by major mistakes made by King Gyendra that the movement which drew strength from the countryside population, brought in supporters from political parties and the Kathmandu elite. The latter were diametrically opposed to the Maoists but they had to choose either democracy, or irrelevance and sidelining by the monarchy. They chose the former and the entire country was mobilised on one platform: the move for democracy.

There was an organic upsurge of the people, with women and youth playing major roles. Compared to the armed violence of the Maoists, the movement itself was non-violent. Such a movement was characterised by a singleness of purpose shared by all civil society players; involvement of all age, gender and ethnic groups; a largely non-violent population; possessions of arms only by the police and agreement of the Maoists not to use violent means, and a strong, binding sense of Nepali nationalism. National and international media supported fully. Tools used to mass mobilise included text messages when telephone lines were cut by the army of the palace.

The people's movement succeeded in overthrowing the monarchy, and forcing an all party alliance to create a democratic framework, one that promised inclusiveness and rights for all groups of people. Political tussles and agitations have continued but these are to be expected as the path to a free democracy is difficult.

### **Civil Society Failure in Pakistan**

It has been argued above that civil society in Pakistan is extremely weak, disjointed, catering to its own interests, political and ethnic views. It is afraid of a backlash and repercussions, not only from the government, but from other groups. It has little capacity to come together for collective action, and its different groups have been publicising different ideologies such that the gaps among them have become too wide, and they face a lack of trust and legitimacy. There is no single or set of issues which can act as a binding force, and motivate them to demonstrate "national behavior". Most importantly, their will and capacity to reduce violence and seek dialogue and compromise is severely limited.

Historically, Pakistan has had a few movements, most of which were led by politicians who were able to mobilise civil society. During the various martial law regimes, small movements have been started, led mainly by leftist elements, progressive writers and intellectuals. These were quickly and violently curbed, by imprisonment, exile, torture and even killings by state forces.

The language movement in East Pakistan and the forced curbing by the state was instrumental in increasing the general distrust of West Pakistanis. This culminated in civil war and the 1971 War with India followed by the secession of East Pakistan. This was a form of resistance, "based on explicitly political ideologies, expressed in underground movements and violent resistance", leading to open rebellion. There was no criticism from any civil society group in West Pakistan, perhaps, because the real situation was being kept deliberately fuzzy and shrouded in lies. Or maybe there really was little

understanding of the causes for the mass rebellion. Post 1971, the country was in chaos, driven into a major battle between religious and so-called secular forces, and was finally brought to be governed by alternate military and feudal regimes, with strong religious undertones. Intolerance and extreme views gained prominence, and civil liberties were severely curtailed. An already “anti-woman” society was further pushed into deliberate suppression of voices from the minorities and women.

In the 1980s, a women’s movement did take root, and several organisations and female activists led strikes and rallies against what they perceived as discrimination but this did not catch popular attention. Lack of attention to social issues was further exacerbated by the role played by Pakistan in the Afghan war, the ease with which arms and ammunition found way into everyday life, the disappearance of cultural and social activities, loss of civil platforms for debate, and insinuation of religious bigotry in every walk of life and in every action. Benazir Bhutto, who had just returned, did start the Movement for Restoration of Democracy (MRD) but the unnatural political alliances and subsequent civilian governments were short lived. The ethnic divide along with violence, intimidation of civilians and use of state mechanism for civilian torture continued unabated and was fostered and funded by powerful groups of politicians, feudal lords, military and so called religious elements.

Public protests are used to demonstrate civil unrest with specific policies or actions and are limited to strikes called and/or enforced by political and ethnic parties. More often than not, these are accompanied by acts of violence both by the strikers and “law enforcement agencies”. Small, localised agitations are organised against the frequent power breakdowns, or individual demos and suicide threats take place when police, or feudal brutality forces an issue out into the open. Organised groups are entrenched into their power and personality focused politics, and the use of violence based intimidation, to force into acceptance, remain quiet or to maintain an all pervasive sense of fear is rampant.

While the entire country is ruled by fear and violence, an East Pakistan-like situation simmers in Balochistan. No efforts to bring the dissatisfied and unhappy Baloch nationalists to the discussion table are obvious, and people continue to be picked up and added to the list of missing persons. Karachi, once the city of lights and the commercial heart of the country erupts in arson and killings at the slightest of clashes between rival groups; women are raped, bartered or given in marriage to settle tribal feuds and the system of justice would rather punish the women than the criminals. Each day, many more join the ranks of the uneducated and illiterate and rates of unemployment increase;

cities overflow with garbage and sewer fluids and the poor continue to face illness and death as health services either decline or become too expensive; any person can be accused and killed by a self proclaimed vigilante and trustee of religious doctrine and no one is allowed to speak out.

Following the successful lawyer's movement in 2007, and the surge of a free media, there was much hope for civil society to reform itself and begin to play a more significant role in stimulating dialogue, communicating issues and curbing violence and extremist ideologies. The same was expected of non government organisations and other groups including teaching institutions. Unfortunately, each of these three main civic actors have failed the people. Non government organisations are busy in welfare or service provision, and have yet to perform a transformatory role for society. They are also bound by donor agendas, lack of funds and suspicions. Even if and when they do manage to organise a small demonstration or advocacy event, they are unable to carry it through to any substantive size for impact. Teaching institutions are mired in political affiliations, campus violence and are struggling with lack of capacity and resources. The media have not demonstrated the objectivity, maturity and collective codes of honor and ethics. Indeed, many television channels have been active in spreading rumours, inflaming sentiments and giving space to intolerant and violence sparking speakers.

The differences between civil society in Nepal, India, Bangladesh and Pakistan are many, and run deep into the structure and value systems which have developed or eroded over time. Nepal and India are far more women-friendly countries than either Pakistan or Bangladesh. Despite the gender and caste disparity in both the former countries, women are both visible and active, and their participation in social and economic activities is considered necessary. This is not the case in Pakistan, especially in rural areas where feudalism and tribal systems prevail.

In Nepal, India and even in Bangladesh, the rural population has often taken the lead or has been a pro active player in civic action. Rural society in Pakistan is so deeply subjugated by poverty and deprived of any power that it is only occupied with day to day survival, or short term interests through affiliation with the politician or landlord. Unlike other South Asian countries, hardly any group from the deprived rural areas has become socially active and is visible and legitimate enough to represent the real needs and wishes of the larger population.

Civil society in India has been part of the independence movement, and traditional forms of governance including civil systems have evolved. High levels of literacy, and strongly secular and/or leftist governments have tended to support freedom of speech and action. In Pakistan, extreme right

groups, feudal lords, the military and corrupt politicians have kept a tight hold on power. Civil society has barely been allowed to breathe, let alone become vibrant and self sustaining. People in Pakistan have been faced with huge deficits of welfare and basic social services. According to Dev Raj Dehal, “passive, apathetic, alienated, radicalized citizens trample the very basic structure of the democratic system”. The primary goals of social movements are to liberate, to share social opportunities and power, and to develop and carve out shared identity, and this requires citizens and civil groups to be free of fear, to have their basic needs met and to have in place a basic civic structure of democracy. None of this has been possible in Pakistan.

### **Hope or Despair- the Way Forward**

Could there be a revival and reawakening of civil society in Pakistan? What would be the necessary conditions and how could they be created? Where would the leaders come from and what shape would the movement, if it can be called that, take? What are the few issues which could unite the country into one and could roll out a set of collective actions? How long could such a process take and what could be the pitfalls and dangers?

Nadvi and Robinson spell out six models for positive change which could work in Pakistan. These include “1) market driven growth without government interference; 2) increased pace of social development through increase in social sector spending; 3) measures to erode the political and economic dominance of vested elites; 4) political stability as a pre-requisite for private investment and progress towards pro-poor change; (5) the emergence of new classes and interest groups; (6) cultural changes that promote modernisation, openness and equality”.

But the past three years of democracy have further lowered the level of optimism towards realisation of the above six elements. Government interference, highlighted through increased nepotism, and political and economic favours continues unabated; social sector spending has become even less than it was three years ago; the pace of social development has slowed down; the power of a few individuals and groups (feudal lords, military, so-called religious (mostly sectarian) and politicians) has increased especially as the decentralisation process has been stalled. While there was a resurgence of the middle class, it seems to have been rendered ineffective and almost impotent as inflation and taxes on the salaried reaches new heights; a pervasive sense of fear of repercussions has restricted cultural activities and free expression of ideas.

These could only be activated and kept resilient through certain social conditions. These “opportunities for change” as defined by Nadvi and Robinson in 2004 were “decentralisation, new political forces, the media, the rise of the middle class, and international factors”.

These and many other questions crowd in as issues multiply and threats of increased violence and insecurity in the backdrop of Osama’s killing on Pakistani land hover on our heads. If civil society groups can overcome their particular affiliations and interests, take firm stands without being dogmatic and show solidarity against injustice, violence, intolerance, religious bigotry and ethnic manipulation, they could well be on their way to proving that they are a democratic force and can take charge of their own destiny.

To do any of this,

- The media will have to air well-considered debates on violence without sensationalism and fanning of biases and prejudices. They will need to develop maturity and give evidence-based information, rather than rumours, and pay attention to the people rather than the rhetoric and antics of largely irrelevant politicians and feudal personalities.
- Non government organisations will have to move out of their comfort zones of donor-funded projects and the self-imposed constraints of having to “work” with powerful individuals. They will need to form strong coalitions which would be issue-based rather than project-based, and would need to mount strong advocacy and pressure-building campaigns. They will need to mobilise other civil society members and engage with the business groups, media and the wider population.
- Business groups, traders and associations will need to become an integral part of the debate, and demonstrate their commitment to both economic and social development
- Teachers, professors, lecturers will need to create a strong barricade to political interference, deal strictly with campus violence and set up networks with other teaching centres and support groups to discourage rumours, promote diversity and inter-ethnic interactions
- The judiciary will need to do a cleanup operation from within its cadres, to sideline those with obscure and bigoted views, will need to set up a form of quick justice and increase the pace of *suo moto* notices on social and economic issues

And people will need to find and use opportunities to read, reflect, discuss, debate and say no to any form of violence, at home, on the street or in far flung places. They will need to learn to think for

themselves and refrain from following interpretations of religion from others and to set up inter ethnic and inter sectarian committees from different walks of life. They will need to say no to bribery and corruption and agitate peacefully but strongly.

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