



## Journal of Religious and Social Studies

<http://ejrss.com/index.php/jrss>

ISSN (Print): 2789-0317  
ISSN (online): 2789-0325  
School of Religious and Social Studies,  
Faisalabad (38000), Pakistan.

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### To cite this article:

Hayat, Amir, and Muhammad Tariq Ramzan. "An Appraisal of Curriculum of Islamic Learning in Higher Education in the Perspective of Paigham-e-Pakistan" *Journal of Religious and Social Studies* 2, no. 2 (2022): 15-34.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.53583/jrss03.01.2021>



Published online: 30 December 2022



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## **AN APPRAISAL ON CURRICULUM OF ISLAMIC LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION WITH THE PERSPECTIVE OF PAIGHAM-E-PAKISTAN**

Amir Hayat<sup>1</sup>, and Muhammad Tariq Ramzan<sup>2</sup>

**Abstract:** Pakistan has been facing challenges of extremism and terrorism for the last two decades. It is important to find roots of extremism and violence in society to formulate policies to combat the situation. Studies have shown that peace education plays a vital role in bringing peace and harmony to society. For this purpose, it is important to review the existing curriculum in higher education institutions and to assess the need for the addition of peace education in the curriculum. It is worth noting to study the curriculum of MS/M. Phil. Islamic studies to assess its effectiveness to promote tolerance, peace, and harmony in the society which is the core theme of Paigham-e-Pakistan, the national narrative of the government of Pakistan. The originality and value of this study are obvious to suggest the peace education in higher studies curriculum to promote peace, harmony, and tolerance in the society.

**Keywords:** *Islam, curriculum, Paigham-e-Pakistan, peace, harmony.*

### **PRELUDE**

Pakistan has been facing terrorism for the last four centuries. After 9/11 America initiated war against terrorism in Afghanistan. Being a close neighbour of Afghanistan, Pakistan has adversely been affected by the consequences of the war. It has resulted in increased militancy and terrorism in the country. Thousands of army personnel and civilians from all areas of society have sacrificed their lives in this wave of terrorist activities. It has also resulted in financial losses, instability, and other losses to the country. To face this challenge Pak Army is doing its best to secure the outside and inside

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borders of the country. Studies have shown that radical thought is provoked through social and political ideologies. Although economic poverty does play important role in the provision of the workforce to execute terrorist activities, however, the role of education in changing mindset cannot be denied.<sup>3</sup> With the help of strategic education policy attitudes of learners can be refined. It is a well-recognized role of education to sustain tolerance, harmony, and peace in society.<sup>4</sup>

In Pakistan, while soldiers tried their best to secure the physical borders of the country, the intellectuals and educationists do not leave them behind. To secure the academic boundaries of the country a debate was initiated in the academic circles about the authenticity of terrorist narrative in the perspective of Islamic teachings. It resulted in the formulation of a national narrative namely "*Paigham-e-Pakistan*".<sup>5</sup> The Paigham-e-Pakistan narrative recommended various policy suggestions to bring change in the vision of society. An important postulate of the said document states the importance of educational institutions in overcoming extremism in society. For this, reason there is a need to review the existing curriculum of educational institutions of Pakistan to foster the peace process in the country.

Although the need for peaceful education is felt at all levels in Pakistan, there exist some constraints. For example, in Pakistan, there are three parallel education systems. Firstly, there are government education institutions, Secondly, private education institutions, and thirdly Islamic Madrassas. All three educational institutions vary in their goals, follow their syllabus that is different from one another, and even use different pedagogies. The teachers of these institutions also come from these different streams. It is also evident that these institutions rarely interact with each other. The highest degree in Madrassa education is system is equivalent to sixteen years of the formal education system. After completing their education in Madrassas, the students use to get enrolled in eighteen years of education that is named as "MS/M.Phil. in Islamic Studies. It is an important degree program as the students from three parallel

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<sup>3</sup> Abdul Basit and Zahid Shahab Ahmed. "The persistence of terrorism in Pakistan: An analysis of domestic and regional factors." In *Terrorism, Security and Development in South Asia*, (New York: Routledge, 2021), 157-174.

<sup>4</sup> Tony Jenkins, *Community-based institutes on peace education (CIPE). Organizer's manual* (New York, NY: IIPE, 2007), 112.

<sup>5</sup> International Research Institute, *Paigham-e-Pakistan*, (Islamabad: Islamic Research Institute, International Islamic University, 2018), 10.

systems are combined in the classroom. Therefore, this is the most important degree program that can play its role in peacebuilding.

There are various studies available on the importance of peace education in transforming societies.<sup>6</sup> In the next section, a review of relevant literature has been presented to examine this multifaceted concept and to point out the research gap present in the field of study.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

There is substantial literature available on the development of the subject of peace and conflict studies.<sup>7</sup> The field of study of peace and conflict studies has traditionally been marked by the diffusion of a variety of concepts and themes. One of the oldest degree programs in peace and conflict studies was initiated in 1974 in “The Center for Applied Conflict Management” at Kent State University, USA. Initially, it did not get popular. The contents of the program were limited and also were unable to have any reasonable impact on the student body.<sup>8</sup> It has been evolving with time and changing contents. The scope of peace and conflict studies is much wider, however, it essentially incorporates a set of topics that have come to define the field.<sup>9</sup> The main three facets of the subject area are: firstly, to elaborate the causes and consequences of violence and destructive conflicts in the realm of the individual, social and international levels; secondly, it describes the initiatives to resolve, transform or manage the conflicts on the all three levels; and thirdly, to develop such practices, norms, and institutions that promote peace at each of the three levels.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Patrick G. Coy, Landon E. Hancock and Anuj Gurung, “Peace studies and conflict resolution.” In *Routledge Companion to Peace and Conflict Studies* (New York: Routledge, 2019), 68-78.

<sup>7</sup> Ian M. Harris and Mary Lee Morrison, *Peace Education* (North Carolina: Jefferson, McFarland and Company, Inc., Publishers 2003), 53.

<sup>8</sup> Patrick G. Coy and Landon E. Hancock. “Mainstreaming peace and conflict studies: designing introductory courses to fit liberal arts education requirements.” *Journal of Peace Education* 7, no. 2 (2010): 205-219.

<sup>9</sup> Barbara Welling Hall, Joseph Liechty and Julie Garber, *Peace, justice, and security studies: A curriculum guide*. Edited by Timothy A. (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2009), 190.

<sup>10</sup> George A. Lopez, “Dynamics affecting conflict, justice, and peace.” *Peace, justice, and security studies: A curriculum guide* (2009): 91-104.

The importance of peace education has been felt all around the world, especially after the 9/11 phenomenon in America and the war against terrorism in Afghanistan and its aftershocks. The educationists all around the world have been in pursuit of curriculum and policies to revise the curricula to ensure peace in society. For this reason, now peace education is seen as a valuable field that nurtures the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviours in learners to establish a culture of peace. The increasing literature on peace education shows the importance of the field of study in contemporary circumstances.<sup>11</sup>

Adding to the contents of the peace education course, Reardon explains the curriculum of peace education shall be able to reduce the frictions among individual and institutional rifts and transform them into an environment of non-violence. To Reardon, the honour of Human Rights should be the main mission of peace education.<sup>12</sup> Conflict is a natural phenomenon, as different people have different points of view. Different situations result in non-agreement that leads to conflicting situations. And the conflict causes serious violence that ultimately leads to destruction and devastation. Education helps in minimizing conflicts by stimulating the learner's vision and refining its thoughts and behaviours. In this manner, conflicts are managed and resolved without the use of aggression and violence.<sup>13</sup> Peace education motivates people to acknowledge their rights and duties. This acknowledgment improves the social welfare of the people and promotes an all-inclusive environment of living.<sup>14</sup>

Earlier it is well understood that peace education has four facets. These four types or classes are important in understanding different approaches to peace education. The first type of peace education focuses on international ideas of conflict situations and providing solutions. The second type is related to knowledge of peace and providing necessary information about the nature of conflicts and related issues. The third approach focuses on the ideological side of the nature of conflicts. The last and fourth type is the political side of the nature of conflicts. It emphasizes efforts to minimize

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<sup>11</sup> Ian M. Harris, Peace education, 112.

<sup>12</sup> Betty A. Reardon, *Education for a Culture of Peace in a Gender Perspective* (Paris: UNESCO, 2001), 28.

<sup>13</sup> Amna Yousaf, Irfan Bashir and Faisal Anis. "Transformative role of Islam for Peace Education and Research." *Hamdard Islamicus* 43, no. 2 (2020): 1614-1621.

<sup>14</sup> N. Chinyere Alimba, "Peace Education: A Panacea for Quality Assurance in Higher Education in Africa." *International Journal of Peace and Conflict Studies* 3, no. 1 (2016): 19-31.

conflicts through social change. The study of all these approaches helps in emphasizing the importance of peace among the students and thus, promotes peace in society.<sup>15</sup>

Keeping in view the importance of peace education in educational institutions, one of the most influential works on peace education appeared in 2012 by a famous author, Nel Nodding.<sup>16</sup> The book entitled: "Peace Education: How we come to love and hate war", is a notable book on the Western approach to war. The author of the book focuses on the impact of structural factors such as religion, gender, etc., in education and their implications on society. The book concludes with the notion that the subject of peace education must be added as a typical curriculum, rather than "marginalizing it as a course".<sup>17</sup>

From the previous discussion, it is evident that peace education is a dynamic participatory process that brings behavioural change in the learners and helps in promoting the environment of peace in society. The curriculum consisting of gender studies, human rights, the importance of dialogue, and non-violence transform the psychological and behavioural patterns of students. Although Pakistan is a country that often faces waves of terrorism and violence, it shows little concern to change its curriculum in educational institutions. Basharat<sup>18</sup> explains the necessity of peace education is felt among the tutors, however, there is no serious attempt made so far to make it part of the regular curriculum at different levels of education. He recommends that peace education be included and taught at the graduate level.

The current study will look into the curriculum of MS/MPhil in Islamic learning curriculum and assessment of the viability of peace education in it.

### **1.1 Problem Statement**

The research paper is designed to investigate the need assessment of the curriculum of Islamic learning in higher education from the perspective of Paigham-e-Pakistan. The

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<sup>15</sup> Hossain B. Danesh, "Towards an integrative theory of peace education." *Journal of peace education* 3, no. 1 (2006): 55-78.

<sup>16</sup> Nel Noddings, "The caring relation in teaching." *Oxford review of education* 38, no. 6 (2012): 771-781.

<sup>17</sup> Nel Noddings and Laurie Brooks, *Teaching controversial issues: The case for critical thinking and moral commitment in the classroom* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2017), 210.

<sup>18</sup> Basharat Ali Khan, "Need Assessment of Peace Education as a Subject Inclusion in Distance Education Curriculum at Graduate Level in Pakistan." *International Journal of Distance Education and E-Learning* 3, no. 1 (2017): 20-23.

study focuses on the importance of the Paigham-e-Pakistan narrative in the current situation of Pakistan and the curriculum offered in higher education institutions. It also examines the scope of the curriculum of Islamic studies concerning the promotion of peace and harmony in society.

### **1.2 Purpose of the Study**

Following are the purposes of the study:

1. To examine and review the existing curriculum of MS/M.Phil. Islamic studies to find out its relevance to the goals and recommendations of Paigham-e-Pakistan.
2. To assess the need for peace education from the perspective of the Paigham-e-Pakistan narrative.
3. And to suggest a road map to include peace education subjects in the MS/M.Phil. Islamic studies.

### **1.3 Limitation of the Study**

Due to time and length of paper constraints, the curriculum of few reputable Universities would be analysed in the paper. The scope of the paper is limited to the 'master of philosophy in Islamic learning program'.

### **1.4 Importance of Study**

As described earlier the main objective of this study is to analyse the curriculum of M. Phil in Islamic learning to achieve the goal of peace in our society, in the country, and the world as a whole. The study shall focus on the intellectual development of future leadership which shall pay back in the form of a more secure world than the world we are living in today. The study endeavours to bring peace in the world through mental uplift and transformation of scholars of master of philosophy in Islamic learning.

## **METHODOLOGY**

A qualitative approach has been used in this paper. An extensive review of relevant literature on peace education is carried out. Furthermore, analysis of the Paigham-e-Pakistan document published by the government of Pakistan and curricula of different universities has been carried out to evaluate their compatibility in fulfilling the objectives of the said document.

### **2.1 Population of the study**

The higher education system in Pakistan is governed by the Higher Education



Commission (HEC). The commission has recognized 174 public and private sector universities and oversees their teaching quality, research outputs, and funding issues. These 174 universities vary in their scope, ranging from conventional education to military or vocation areas of study. Out of these recognized universities, 72 universities offer MS/M.Phil. Islamic studies degree program. The population of the study consist of all the 72 universities offering eighteen years of education in Islamic learning.

### **2.2 Sample of the study**

The sample of the study was selected through a random sampling technique. The sample was taken from 25 universities. 15 universities belong to the public sector and 10 universities belong to private sector universities offering MS/M.Phil. Islamic learning program.

### **2.3 Data Collection**

Data was collected from the HEC approved curriculum of the universities taken as a sample. The course offered by these universities consists of 4 semesters. In the first two semesters, a total of 8 courses are offered. The last two semesters consist of research work to be carried out to fulfil the requirements of the degree of M.Phil./MS Islamic studies. The curriculum of 40 public sector and private sector universities were examined. The assessment was carried out about the first two semesters. A thorough examination was carried out to find the nature of courses offered and the inclusion of peace education in the curriculum.

### **2.4 Organization of the paper**

The paper is categorized into five sections. In the first section introduction of the topic is provided which includes literature review, problem statement, and purpose of study, limitations, and importance of the study. In the second section, the nature and scope of Paigham-e-Pakistan are explained from the perspective of the hostile condition of Pakistan. In the third section, the value of peace education concerning Paigham-e-Pakistan is described. In the fourth section critical analysis of the need assessment of peace education and curriculum of various universities in Pakistan offering eighteen years of education in Islamic studies is presented. In the last section, a conclusion is drawn and some recommendations are presented to the policymakers.



## NATURE AND SCOPE OF PAIGHAM-E-PAKISTAN NARRATIVE

In the phenomena of increasing extremism and violence in the world, Pakistan has no exception. Extremism and terrorism have been a great threat to the peace and harmony in Pakistan.<sup>19</sup> Pakistan has taken all the possible steps to overcome terrorism, extremism, and violence in society. Paigham-e-Pakistan is part of such efforts to minimize violence in the country. Paigham-e-Pakistan is a religious opinion (*fatwā*) prepared by the research scholars of the Islamic Research Institute of International Islamic University, Islamabad. The original draft was presented at the national seminar held at the International Islamic University, on 26<sup>th</sup> May 2017 with the title “Reconstruction of Pakistani Society in the light of *Mithāq-e-Madinah*”. In that seminar, a “Joint Declaration” and a unanimous fatwa (legal standing) were also presented. Later on, that joint declaration and unanimous fatwa were merged and an improved draft was prepared with the consultation of eminent scholars of the higher education institutions and religious scholars from all sects and *wafāq* of Pakistan. The following non-governmental educational institutions cooperated and approved the draft:

1. *Wafāq-al-Madāris al-Arabiyyah*
2. *Tanzīm-al-Madaris Ahl e Sunnat*
3. *Wafāq-al-Madāris al-Salafiyyah*
4. *Wafāq-al-Madāris al-Shi'ah*
5. *Rābitah-al-Madāris, Pakistan*

With their cooperation and assistance, this draft was converted into a unanimous religious opinion (*Fatwā*) endorsed by more than 1800 Muslim scholars of the country. The final version of the unanimous *fatwā* was prepared in the light of teachings of the Quran and traditions of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) and under the Constitution of Pakistan. This document entitled “Paigham-e-Pakistan” (Message of Pakistan) was published with the approval of the State of Pakistan and was considered as a basic code of conduct and national narrative on peace and harmony in the society.<sup>20</sup>

The important postulates of Paigham-e-Pakistan are as under:

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<sup>19</sup> Abida Begum, “The concept and perception of peace education in Gilgit Baltistan Pakistan: A comparative case study.” *The Peace and Conflict Review* 7, no. 1 (2012): 25.

<sup>20</sup> IRI, Paigham-e-Pakistan, 40.

1. The Islamic scholars rejected extremism in all its forms and suggested dealing with it as a religious obligation through all possible means.
2. The spreading of sectarian hatred and violence in the society was considered un-Islamic according to the teachings of the Quran and traditions of the Holy Prophet (PBUH).
3. To implement Shariah laws in Islam with the help of force was declared as forbidden and an act of rebellion against the state.
4. The declaration states all the suicide attacks on the name of Islam as forbidden "Haram", in the light of the Quran and traditions of the Holy Prophet (PBUH).

The declaration of *Jihād* was considered a purely State Prerogative.

The declaration supported the military operations to secure and strengthen the country.<sup>21</sup>

This unanimous religious opinion of Muslim scholars accompanied by a joint declaration asserted the need for the construction of a society based upon the values such as tolerance, brotherhood, mutual respect, and a comprehensive system of justice.<sup>22</sup> Paigham-e-Pakistan is seen to be a positive initiative to make Pakistan a peaceful and safe country. The importance of Paigham-e-Pakistan lies in the fact that it is a vigorous narrative of Pakistan against increasingly extremism and terrorism in the country. Paigham-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 in the name of Allah are against the true teachings of Islam. It is the message from the learned community to transform the minds of the people of Pakistan to stop uprising weapons against the state.

Paigham-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 overlooked by people to gain materialistic intentions. The propagation of the narrative of peace and harmony is important to minimize extremism, sectarianism, prejudices, and violence in society. The essence of the narrative of peace is to make people convinced to reject the misinterpretation of radical religious groups in society. In the declaration of Paigham-e-Pakistan, the necessity of transformation of

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<sup>21</sup> IRI, Paigham-e-Pakistan, 45.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 50

Pakistani society is 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 to secure peace in the world.

In this national narrative, the role of educational institutions to promote the message of peace was also highlighted. The declaration emphasized the role of education to transform society into a peaceful coexistence. The declaration showed an optimistic approach towards educational institutions to eradicate violence, extremism, and militancy. In the following section role of education in the successful implementation of the Pigham-e-Pakistan narrative is discussed.

### **IMPORTANCE OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN PERSPECTIVE OF PAIGHAM-E-PAKISTAN**

Conflict and peace are often closely related to each other. To convert the situation of violence into peace following approaches could be used. The first approach towards peace is to use force to end violence. Peace through the use of force involves the use of physical involvement for achieving peace. Physical strength or use of force requires the use of arms to minimize extremism and aggression. The second approach is to minimize conflict by use of the political process. Through politics, peace is achieved by ensuring rule of law and provision of justice to the community. And the third approach consists of the transformation process. It is concerned with the use of justice and transformation. It is a tool to bring peace and harmony to society. It is concerned with fulfilling human rights and needs and the transformation of behaviors and benefits.

From the transformation approach, conflict always is not a bad thing. This is the phenomenon that brings life a meaningful activity and enables persons to be able to understand the different viewpoints.<sup>23</sup> Healthy conflicts help in discussions of problems and finding their solutions. However, discussion on different viewpoints requires

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<sup>23</sup> Kenedy Onyango Asembo and Mutendwahothe Walter Lumadi, "Curriculum Design of Higher Education in Peace and Security Studies: Student's Perceptions of Quality." *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences* 5, no. 20 (2014): 2896.

openness in thought. The openness in thought comes with education.<sup>24</sup> Education also helps in conflict resolution and transformation of mindset. The transformation of minds is just like a vehicle with slow speed. It could not bring results immediately. The peace program through education is a long enduring process. The crops of such programs are cultivated slowly and are far-reaching. Its benefits are not shown in resolving current violent situations but also to prevent serious conflicts which may arise in the future. It is not possible to eliminate conflicts in lives and the world. The more appropriate way to respond to conflicts is to try to minimize them. Conflicts may be minimized by mutual respect, honour, care, and responsibility towards self and others. To achieve this goal education can play a vital role.<sup>25</sup>

Through the process of education knowledge, skills and values are embodied in students to maintain a healthy and respectful social environment.<sup>26</sup> Education helps in minimizing conflicts through non-violence and maintaining a pleasant relationship that is beneficial to all members of society. Education transforms individuals by utilizing stimulating information, developing capacities and capabilities, refining attitudes to encourage peace within communities. It brings about slow and lasting changes in the behaviours of people to love peace and hate war and violence. Through the participatory education process, there is a need to change the thinking of people and stimulate them to observe peace practices rather than incline towards conflicts and violence. To secure peace through education is the most important strategy and pays back in the long run.<sup>27</sup>

The objective of the Paigham-e-Pakistan narrative is to bring peace, harmony, and mutually respectful coexistence within the society. Educating students for peace relates to the empowerment of people with the capacities, capabilities, and attitudes to create an environment where everyone feels safe and secure. The students must be taught non-violence, love, compassion for the whole of life. Education helps in creating values,

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<sup>24</sup> HEC, *Contemporary Issues and Trends in Education* (Islamabad: Higher Education Commission, Pakistan, 2012), 75.

<sup>25</sup> Abida Ellahi and Bilal Zaka. "Analysis of higher education policy frameworks for open and distance education in Pakistan." *Evaluation review* 39, no. 2 (2015): 255-277.

<sup>26</sup> Stephen Thompson, *Links between education and peace* (GSDRC Helpdesk Research Report, 2015), 23-28.

<sup>27</sup> Basharat, *Need Assessment of peace education as a subject inclusion in distance education curriculum at graduate level in Pakistan*, 18-33.

knowledge, and skills in students aiming at the preparation of a learned community to change the world positively through socio-cultural levels.<sup>28</sup>

The higher education institutions can play a vital role in promoting the objective of Paigham-e-Pakistan. It is the responsibility of the universities of Pakistan to increase awareness, knowledge, and values needed to promote peace in society. The universities have the responsibility on their shoulders to prepare scholars who develop, manage and further teach students with an especial focus on peace education. One of the degrees awarded in universities is 'Master of Philosophy' equivalent to eighteen years of education which is significant in achieving the goals of Paigham-e-Pakistan for various reasons. Its importance in the perspective of Paigham-e-Pakistan is discussed in the next topic.

### **ANALYSIS OF M.S/M.PHIL ISLAMIC LEARNING CURRICULUM IN PERSPECTIVE OF “PAIGHAM-E-PAKISTAN**

The higher education system in Pakistan is governed by the Higher Education Commission (HEC). In Pakistan, 72 HEC recognized universities offer MS/M.Phil., Islamic studies degree program. Master of Philosophy in Islamic learning is a two-year education program introduced to provide scholars in religious studies to fulfil the academic needs of society. The scholars participating in 'Master of Science (MS)/ Master of Philosophy (M.Phil.) in Islamic learning' come from different educational systems. Some students come from formal educational institutions such as universities after completing 'Master of Arts', and some students join this program after sixteen years of education in 'Madrassah education system. The curriculum of both mainstream educational institutions varies to a great extent. The curriculum of Madaris includes a more conservative approach than the universities. The madaris are also maligned to increase sectarianism and extremism in the society. The students from different educational backgrounds are merged in the eighteen years of education entitled MS/M.Phil. Islamic learning.

Moreover, after sixteen years of education, students become mature enough to become productive members of the society. Most of the scholars at the M.Phil. level are

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<sup>28</sup> Harvey N. Oueijan, "Educating for peace in higher education." *Universal Journal of Educational Research* 6, no. 9 (2018): 1916-1920.

used to be in-service teachers or prospect teachers. The educators are the professionals who play the most vital role in the development of future generations. Therefore, it is necessary to transform the mindset of the scholars of M.Phil. degree to be able to understand their intellectual responsibilities to spread the message of peace in society. This is a research-oriented program aimed at solving the living problems of the community with the help of Islamic teachings.

To eradicate extremism in educational institutions the curriculum plays a decisive role. In this perspective, it is necessary to view the existing curriculum of universities to make the world more peaceful and safe for living through positive morals and enlightenment in thinking. Courses offered to scholars of 'Master of Philosophy in Islamic Learning' generally include general subjects disregarding the field of specialization of scholars. The purpose of such courses is to provide basic knowledge of Islamic subjects in several areas. The MS/M.Phil. program is divided into two parts; one part comprises of course work and the other part consists of scholarly thesis writing. The course work in the M.Phil. program enhances intellectual abilities in scholars of M. Phil. It is aimed at strengthening their critical analysis skills and enabling them to be the opinion-makers of society. Due to this important role M.Phil. degree plays in society, there is needed to review its curricula under the needs of the country to promote Paigham-e-Pakistan.

It is highlighted in the declaration of Paigham-e-Pakistan that the most important objective of all educational institutions in Pakistan is to provide knowledge and character building of students keeping in view the Islamic principles of moderation and tolerance. There has been evidence of the promotion of extremism in educational institutions in the past. It is now responsibility upon the shoulders of the educational institutions (from primary schools to higher educational institutions) to revise their curriculum to eradicate negative tendencies in the syllabus. It has been unanimously declared that educational institutions must not promote violence and hatred in their curricula nor should they provide physical military training or education. Is the curriculum of higher education institutions under the objectives of Paigham-e-Pakistan? Let have a look at the curriculum of 'Master of Philosophy in Islamic Learning' in various universities of Pakistan.

**Table 1.** *The curriculum of MS/M.Phil. Islamic studies in various universities*

Compulsory Courses Offered		Offered	Not Offered	Percentage
<b>Semester: 1</b>	Quranic Sciences, Research Methodology, Arabic Language and Literature, Critical Study of Selected English Text/Orientalism	40	0	100%
<b>Semester: 2</b>	Quranic Exegesis/Study of Seerah, Hadith Sciences, Islam and Contemporary Thought, Fiqh Sciences	40	0	100%
<b>In any Semester</b>	Peace Education	0	40	0%

*Note: Semesters 3&4 consist of Thesis Writing in all universities.*

The close study of the curriculum of ‘Master of Philosophy in Islamic Learning’ reveals the fact that with minor differences over the course work offered in the majority of the universities is similar to one another. All the universities offer courses on basic subjects such as *Qur’anic* sciences, *hadīth* sciences, Research methodology, Islamic Jurisprudence, Arabic Language and Literature, Functional English and Study of selected English texts, Study of *Sīrah*, Islam, and Modern Contemporary Issues and Research work/ Thesis writing. It is obvious that none of these subjects solely fulfill the needs of the Paigham-e-Pakistan narrative. Islam and modern contemporary issues are included in the curriculum of some universities, but this course is not aimed at specifically peace education. It is evident that due to its importance, peace education must be an essential part of the curricula of M.Phil. Islamic learning. This signifies the need for a new course to be introduced in the curricula of Islamic learning that may be named ‘Islam and Peace’.

## **RATIONALE FOR “PEACE EDUCATION COURSE” IN MS/M.PHIL ISLAMIC LEARNING**

The need for a course on the topic of world peace and Islam in M. Phil Islamic learning is justified for the following reasons:



1. The addition of a course in the curriculum of “Master of Philosophy Islamic Learning” is necessary to meet the objectives of the Paigham-e-Pakistan narrative.
2. The main focus of this course must be to provide faculty and scholars of M. Phil an insight into the need for peace and harmony in society.
3. Moreover, this course shall provide knowledge about the issues particularly faced by Pakistan and the whole world in general.
4. There are many misconceptions about the topics such as *jihād* in the contemporary circumstances, nature of relations between Muslims and non-Muslims, Conflict resolution in Islam, Islam and sectarianism, world peace and security, etc. The proposed course shall enable the scholars to critically analyze these misconceptions and search for ways to confront them.

The peace education course must fulfill the following objectives:

1. To develop knowledge and skills in M.Phil. Islamic learning to live in harmony and peace with others.
2. The course shall be aimed at refining attitudes and behaviors of scholars to other members of society.
3. To remove biases and minimize conflicts with other members of society.
4. It is not possible to eliminate conflict; however, education must seek not to convert conflict into violence.
5. To promote values such as tolerance, equality, justice, and affection.

To achieve requisite goals the proposed course shall consist necessarily of those topics which are under the objectives of the Paigham-e-Pakistan narrative.

## **PROPOSED CONTENTS OF THE COURSE “PEACE EDUCATION IN ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE”**

The main concern of Paigham-e-Pakistan is to give peace a chance in this country. The proposed contents of the course offered for achieving peace in the society are as under:

*The dignity of Man:* Islamic concept of dignity of man and sanctity of human life

**Human Rights Education:** the rights of 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 the Islamic community, rights of various members of the society

**Ethical Values of Islam:** Basic Islamic moral values such as empathy, cooperation, justice, respect for others.

**Peace within personality:** looking within, forgiveness and honesty, safeguarding the tongue.

**Diversity and multiculturalism:** knowing diversity, differences, and similarities between different religious groups

**Rule of law:** democratic behaviour, social peace, economic justice, and obeying the law.

**Love for peace:** violence is not the solution to any problem, peaceful means of conflict resolution.

**Conflict Resolution:** nature of social divides the ways to minimize conflicts and principles of conflict management in Islam,

**Culture of Peace:** the basic values of Islamic social systems such as democratic behaviour (*Shurā*), tolerance, cooperation, justice, and equality and their importance in the current circumstances

**Direct Violence:** the nature of physical violence and its kinds; allowed and forbidden use of physical force in Islam.

**Terrorism and its various forms:** the nature, form, and types of terrorism in the world and ways to minimize it.

**Jihād in Contemporary world:** the concept of *jihād* and its implementation in the contemporary circumstances, rectification of misunderstanding regarding *jihād*

**Peace Education:** the positive role of peace. The results of the war.

**Environmental Education:** to protect the natural environment of the world.

These contents shall be helpful to achieve the required objectives of the Paigham-e-Pakistan narrative. This is an initial draft of the course. The intellectuals and academia

surely shall refine and make it more comprehensive to fulfil the need of achieving peace and security in the society.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following suitable measures are recommended:

- The recommendations of Paigham-e-Pakistan must be implemented in letter and spirit, especially those related to education. Education plays a vital role in enlightening the minds of youth, therefore, it should be used as a means to eradicate extremist tendencies in society.
- The existing curriculum of Master of Philosophy in Islamic learning lacks courses especially focused on peace education. The existing curriculum is not able to achieve the goals of Paigham-e-Pakistan. The curriculum of M. Phil Islamic learning needs to be revised and revisited according to the needs of the country.
- HEC must initiate and play its role in the revision of the curriculum. Most importantly, a new course is must be included in the curriculum of master of philosophy in Islamic learning to promote awareness about human rights, interfaith dialogue, peaceful co-existence in the multicultural and multi-religious world.
- To achieve the goals of Paigham-e-Pakistan the contents of the course shall cover all the topics related to peacekeeping in society. The contents of the proposed course must include the topics such as rights and obligations at the individual level to the collective level, means, and methods of interfaith dialogue, the inclusion of basic values such as love, affection, harmony, mutual respect, etc.
- Teachers and professors at the university level should give more focus on highlighting the message of peace and harmony, similarities between religions rather than highlighting differences and prejudices while teaching the general Islamic subjects. For this University teachers and professors should be provided basic training workshops to learn comprehend and implement objectives of peace and harmony in the society.
- For the above-mentioned recommendations, financial, material, and human resources would be required. HEC and Universities should work together to provide all required resources to achieve peace in society.

## **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion benefits of Paigham-e-Pakistan in promoting peace and security in the country are obvious. The role of institutions of higher education in the country is very important in spreading Paigham-e-Pakistan. The review of current curricula of master of philosophy in Islamic learning, reveals the fact that there is a need to introduce a new course in the curriculum of M. Phil Islamic learning comprising the contents in fulfilling the objectives of Paigham-e-Pakistan. The existing syllabus of master of philosophy in Islamic learning bears only traces of courses that may synchronize with the objectives of Paigham-e-Pakistan. The first step is to review and revisit the curricula or syllabi of M. Phil in Islamic learning in public and private universities of the country. For this purpose, financial, material, and human resources are required. The institutions should provide all available resources to accomplish the goals of peace and security in the country. If higher education institutions will take the initiative then the lower level education institutions will also feel their duty to transform their curricula to the needs of the country and world in the larger perspective. All the universities which are educating scholars with Islamic learning should collectively and simultaneously introduce courses to prevail the sense of peace, security, harmony, and equality in the society.

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*Journal of Religious and Social Studies*  
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