

**Is religious fundamentalism  
staggering South Asia  
towards an uncertain future?**

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## Overview

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Religious fundamentalisms are gaining strength within the world's major and minor religions, and across all the world's regions. These movements have intensified over the last ten years, and have grown more visible, strategic and aggressive. Religious fundamentalisms are a global phenomenon that responds to shifting global forces and developments.

In the context of neoliberal globalization, the "War on Terror" and the rise of identity politics, these movements are gaining ground not only in "weak" or "non-secular" states, but also within ostensibly "secular" systems and democracies.

In practice, religious fundamentalist movements are parasitic upon the economic and social stresses of communities, and thrive on the lack of economic opportunities for youth, especially young men.

A significant factor in the current rise of religious fundamentalisms is the backlash against women's improved status or increased autonomy, and against the recognition of new frameworks for human rights. Religious fundamentalisms are active at grassroots, national and regional levels, and within international arenas, they are becoming increasingly influential — stalling efforts on rights treaties, diluting progressive discourse and creating alliances to immobilize the international human rights system.

As these movements continue to evolve — forging international links, co-opting the language of rights and gender justice, employing sophisticated media and technology, and appealing to individuals in subjective and material ways — progressive movements must also continue to evolve effective strategies to resist and challenge religious fundamentalisms, and to reclaim critical discourses, spaces and constituents.

Fundamentalisms or fundamentalist views exist in all societies, as part of the spectrum of opinions held or voiced. However, not always do such views find popular support or gain political power. The war of liberation in Bangladesh was an assertion of a secular nationalism over a religious one; in India the Hindu Right has existed for years without political support; in Aceh, considered more religious than other regions of the country, political Islam did not always exist.

It is a conjunction of events and factors that in the history of each of the countries set the conditions for cultural identity politics to gain ground. The factors that combine to make the last decade more fertile for cultural identity projects to gain ground are a combination of the internal realities with external influences.

Globalization, its economic fall out and the polarization of communities post-September 11 and the 'War on Terror' have spawned similar patterns of fundamentalisms and linkages between different forms that serve to mutually strengthen each rather than undermine each other.

### **Defining religious fundamentalism?**

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The term "fundamentalism" originated at the turn of the 20th century when a group of militant North American Christian Evangelicals positioned themselves as fighting for the "fundamentals of faith" in the context of the modernization of most other religious sectors. Since its Christian origins, fundamentalism has referred to a wide variety of groups and actors across religious traditions and regions, and applied to other ideologies that may have nothing to do with religion.

Due to the diversity of ways that it is presently applied, the first challenge of defining religious fundamentalisms is the difficulty — and for some the impossibility — of referring to it as a singular phenomenon. To resolve this, some have proposed ways to classify the many manifestations of fundamentalisms into certain types in order to avoid vague and broad definitions, while still referring to the same political phenomenon. Others consciously use the term in the plural for the same reason.

Here it may be helpful to consider "family resemblances" or similar characteristics between different manifestations of religious fundamentalisms. Instead of a broader definition seeking to capture religious fundamentalisms as a worldwide phenomenon, the concept of family resemblances contemplates the common features and overlapping characteristics, which may then form a similar phenomenon. The challenge, then, is to identify what these common characteristics are in the experiences of women's rights activists.

**Words often used to describe religious fundamentalisms:** regressive, archaic, angry, oppressive, miscommunication, mental illness, strong position, fear, conservatism, imposition, selfishness, manipulation, dogma, unorthodox, fanatic, ultraconservative, monopoly, anarchism, absolutism, obsolete, hate, blind, injustice, power, coercion, intolerance and anachronistic.

The following quotes characterize religious fundamentalisms as narrow and dogmatic ways of interpreting truth, religious texts and the world:

"A collection of religious positions involving interpreting sacred texts as literally as possible, and assuming that doing that gives higher "truth and holiness" to religious claims based on the interpretations, and higher moral status to the makers of those."

Dogmatic interpretation of the Bible/Quran or other religious publications, which does not attempt to connect achievement of spiritual well being with social realities that may include manifestations of injustice and inequality. This results in beliefs and practices that tend to violate the rights and dignity of persons in the name of religious piety."

Distinguishing religious fundamentalisms from religious conservatism is not straightforward. For some women rights activists, there is no clear distinction between these two phenomena; in some contexts, "conservatism" is even used in place of "fundamentalisms" or the two terms are used interchangeably.

However, for many women's rights activists who do differentiate between the two, they regard the characteristic "absolutist and intolerant" as being crucial. Interviewees recognize that both seek to reinforce patriarchy and are very much opposed to the expansion of women's rights.

Yet, there are some distinctions between the two phenomena: dialogue, alliances, debate and negotiation are difficult, if not impossible, with religious fundamentalists, which is not the case with religious conservatives.

Conservatives think for themselves; religious fundamentalists want everyone to think their way. I can debate with people that disagree with me but not with people who think they have a direct line to God.

Conservatives maybe don't want to rock the boat; if you change things, you're going away from what things should be. But religious fundamentalists

are people who think this is it; this is God-given and written and it can't be changed.

There are negative effects that religious fundamentalisms have on democratic politics and rights: the effects that religious fundamentalisms have on the legal and political arenas, stressing how they negatively influence human rights, women's rights, and/or sexual and reproductive rights. The negative consequences that religious fundamentalisms have on core democratic values such as diversity, tolerance, equality, freedom and autonomy. It locates religious fundamentalisms in clear opposition to a democratic political community.

Religious fundamentalists are those who obstruct (or even control) freethinking and democratic functions of civil society by curbing them in the name of religion.

A religious attitude in which the religious rules supersede human rights and national legal standards in the opinion and practice of the followers. Religious perspectives that work against women's autonomy, don't recognize their moral authority and ethical capacity to make decisions about all aspects of their lives, and fight against women's sexual rights and reproductive rights.

Being characterized as a fundamentalist actor goes beyond the religious/secular dichotomy. Although most women's rights activists identify actors that are overtly "religious" (such as the hierarchy of a church, a religious political party or a religious organization), an important number of respondents include "secular" actors as part of religious fundamentalist movements, particularly "secular" NGOs or "secular" political parties and leaders. For many women's rights activists, there are politicians and sectors of civil society that form part of the phenomenon of religious fundamentalisms, without necessarily being visibly identifiable as "religious".

The content of an actor's agenda is, for some women's rights activists, more important in defining an institution or an individual as "fundamentalist" than the specific label of "religious". In this sense, civic or political leaders can be considered part of the phenomenon of religious fundamentalisms if they defend a fundamentalist agenda.

## **The South Asian Perspective**

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In recent years, South Asia has, seen some positive development as well as some dangerous trends. Political struggles that brought back democracy to Pakistan and Bangladesh; the overthrow of the monarchy in Nepal and the democratically elected Constituent Assembly in Nepal; all signified the growing strength and success of people's socio-political movements.

However, the growth of corporate power in the region; the further marginalization of minorities and the continuous attacks on them; the growing economic disparities as a consequence of neo-Continuation of fundamentalism in different forms and manifestations, making democratic values and norms difficult to implement, hence limiting the democratic exercise.

By the onset of the 21st century, it became evident that religion was not the only site of hegemonic politics. The national security, terrorism and neo liberalism, more visibly in the post-September 11 era, have shaped fundamentalisms in the civil, political and the economic spheres — premised on a 'single truth' approach that is intolerant of diversity, difference and dissent.

The national fundamentalisms in the region began to mirror international politics, creating identity based divisions of 'us and them' from the community to the transnational levels.

The hardest fallout of these developments has been in the sphere of human rights compliance, which in relation to women's rights is particularly complicated. Women's rights have always been undermined in laws regulating sexuality and the family, but the post-September 11 has witnessed an escalation in the legal and extra legal violations of women's rights by non-state actors. Non state actors ranging from transnational economic actors to cultural/ religious identity based formations have trampled upon hard won gains in women's rights — in relation to fulfillment of basic needs, labor and employment securities, as well as fundamental freedoms and rights in the public and private spheres.

In other contexts, religious fundamentalists campaign against provisions that might reduce violence against women. For example, in 1995, the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress successfully campaigned against the application of a



minimum age of marriage to the Muslim community. One of the first acts of the post-Revolution regime in Iran was to reverse gains for women's rights in family laws.

In Pakistan, religious fundamentalists have repeatedly tried to overturn women's legal right to choose a spouse, which has encouraged forced marriages and so-called honor-killings. In contexts as diverse as Bahrain, Mali and South Africa, pressure from religious fundamentalists is delaying progress in family laws, while in both Nepal and Maldives, women's rights activists report that Muslim fundamentalisms have led to an increase in polygamy.

## **Country Overviews: Mapping Trends in South Asia**

### **Afghanistan**

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Afghanistan was the greatest victim of the rise and growth of Islamic fundamentalism in Pakistan. Islamic fundamentalism in Afghanistan originated in the late 1950s.

Cross-currents in Islam in India have influenced Afghan Muslim society, along with their tribal traditions. The Islamic fundamentalist movement in Afghanistan is of recent origin and owed much more to Ikhwanul Muslimeen (Muslim Brotherhood) of Egypt rather than the Jamaat-i-Islami of Pakistan. There were surprising similarities between Maulana Abul Ala Maududi's writings and the ideology of the Ikhwan. Maulana Maududi had contributed to the strengthening of relations with Afghan Islamists during the 1970s.

Qazi Husain Ahmed of Jamaat-i-Islami was a frequent visitor to Afghanistan. In fact, since the early 1970s, most of the Saudi aid to Afghan refugees and terrorists in Afghanistan has been channelled through the Jamaat-i-Islami and the Muslim World League.

Pakistan's Afghan policy after the withdrawal of the Soviet Army from Afghanistan was to unite the various Mujahideen groups and to enable them to form a united government. This did not succeed because tribal, ethnic, religious and personality conflicts prevented the Mujahideen from uniting.

The Jamaat-i-Islami was deeply involved in running Pakistan's Afghanistan policy till the emergence of the Taliban. Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, leader of the

Hizb-e-Islami, was the favourite of the Jama'at and also of the ISI. The Taliban did not represent any specific Islamic group or ideology. Their interpretation of Islam, jihad, and social transformation did not tally with any other Islamic trend that had emerged during the anti-Soviet war.

The Darul Uloom Haqqania in Akora Khatak, led by Maulana Samiul Haq, has claimed that thousands of students of their institution joined the Taliban.

The Taliban was recruited from Afghan refugee camps, indoctrinated in Pakistani madrassas, and learnt its fighting skills from Mujahideen groups based in Pakistan. The families of the Taliban men carried Pakistani identity cards. The Taliban revived the concept of jihad in the later half of the twentieth century. Its ideology, like that of all fundamentalist movements, revolved around a central key personality, a leader or a cult figure, the *Ameer al Momeneen*, Mullah Omar.

The political system constructed by the Taliban could be called totalitarian, as under it, pluralism did not have a place. It was backed by the creation of the religious police, a Taliban innovation in the modern period. The Taliban issued decrees on women's conduct and cultural issues. These decrees imposed stiff restrictions on the movements of women, their visits to hospitals, total ban on music, kite flying and on men shaving their beard. They also abolished all pictures and portraits.

Thus, the essence of Taliban ideology was against democracy, secularism and pluralism, and was anti-women. They represented the worst picture of the ideal Islamic life.

While the pro-democracy and anti-fundamentalists groups and individuals of Afghanistan are being marginalized, suppressed and silenced. The crisis in Afghanistan and terrible conditions of its people, raise awareness on what is going on in the devastated country.

Over five years passed since the US-led attack on Afghanistan. Probably many are not well aware of the current conditions of Afghanistan since the US invasion. But Afghanistan is still chained in the fetters of the fundamentalist warlords and is like an unconscious body taking its last breath.

The US government removed the ultra-reactionary regime of Taliban, but instead of relying on Afghan people, it pushed them the frying pan into the fire and selected its friends from among the Northern Alliance, who according to the local sentiment — “are as dark-minded, evil, and cruel as the Taliban.” Many of them are responsible for butchering tens of thousands of innocent people in the past two decades but are in power and hold key positions in the government.

The Western media talks about democracy and the liberation of Afghanistan, but the US and its allies are engaged in the warlordization, criminalization and drug-lordization of the land.

All the major institutions in Afghanistan are occupied by warlords and drug-lords. How can we talk about democracy when our legislative, judicial and executive bodies are infected with the viruses of fundamentalism and drug mafia?

Afghans are fed-up with the current situation and every day that passes they turn against the government, the foreign troops and the warlords. And the Taliban make use of it to increase their influence and acts of terror. Countries like Pakistan, Iran, Russia etc. are also meddling in Afghanistan for their own interests.

The U.S.-based Center for Strategic and International Studies wrote in a recent report: “...Afghans are frustrated with their economic situation... They suffer from unsteady employment and economic insecurity, and are turning to illicit and illegal activity, such as corruption and opium production...the Taliban has become an alternative source of employment, recruiting the jobless as foot soldiers in the insurgency.”

Malalai Joya, the youngest outspoken MP in the Afghan parliament, describes that, “in such a situation when a bunch of killers are in power, life cannot be easy for our unfortunate people.”

Seven hundred children and 50-70 women die on a daily basis because of a lack of health services. Infant and maternal mortality rates are still very high — 1,600 to 1,900 women among each 100,000 die during childbirth. Life expectancy is less than 45 years.

The number of suicide cases by Afghan women was never as high as it is today.

The study by the governmental agency Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission shows a marked increase in reported cases — Two years ago in Farah province, there were 15 cases of women burning themselves reported, but the number jumped to 36 in the first six months of 2006. Kandahar province had 74 cases two years ago and 77 cases in the first six months of the past year. But the real numbers are much higher.

According to a UNIFEM survey, 65% of the 50,000 widows in Kabul see suicide as the only option to get rid of their misery. UNIFEM estimates that at least one out of three Afghan women has been beaten, forced into sex or otherwise abused.

The Taliban continue their fundamentalism in the eastern parts of Afghanistan where the government has no control. They carry out public executions and kidnappings.

A report by Human Rights Watch, 'Justice for war criminals in Afghanistan' has scared many Afghan criminals and now they are trying to block any efforts for their prosecution. But they knew not much damage will be done as a "national reconciliation" bill was passed in the parliament — according to which no one could file a case or prosecute anyone for committing fundamentalist war crimes in the past 25 years.

According to a survey conducted by the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission over 80% of Afghan people want to prosecute those responsible for past crimes and brutalities and see it as the only way to experience a bright future in Afghanistan.

After 5 years you cannot see any serious reconstruction projects. Billions of dollars of aid has been looted by the warlords, corrupt NGOs, the UN and government officials. Afghanistan still stands 155th out of 169 countries in the 2010 UN Human Development Index.

In a nutshell — the United States of America has brought fundamentalism back to Afghanistan — in a harder manner.

## Sri Lanka

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The origins of Islamic fundamentalism in Sri Lanka are recent and can be traced to 1990 when the Sri Lankan ethnic Tamils drove away Muslims from the Eastern region under their control. This forced migration increased Muslim population in the districts to which they had migrated. No effort was made by the government to rehabilitate these uprooted Muslim refugees, who had to live in poverty and misery.

Over time, madrassas came up, funded by munificent Arabs. Frequent Sinhala-Muslim communal clashes began to take place. Shariat courts were set up and strict rules imposed on Muslim women in the Eastern areas. The situation in the Muslim areas deteriorated and Muslim-Buddhist clashes became a regular feature. Militant camps were set up in the Eastern areas where volunteers were given arms and weapons training in the jungles and they called themselves jihadis fighting a holy war for protecting themselves.

Ironically, the government itself had provided arms to the Muslims in the early 1980s to protect themselves against the LTTE. Also, attempts were made on part of the government to use Islamic militancy as a buffer against the LTTE.

The country has been facing the threat of Tamil Eelam. The situation in the Eastern province is a potential bloody cauldron. There have been reports of two Islamic militant bases in Valaichchenai. The formation of an Osama Squad in Batticaloa has also come to notice.

Bartholomeuz and de Silva describe fundamentalism as — dramatization and mythologization of enemies. They have used this definition to describe Sri Lankan Sinhala Buddhist nationalism as fundamentalism.

In Sri Lanka, the issue of whether Buddhism is a fundamentalist religion or not has been hotly debated. It is said that the Buddhists who are resorting to violence, for various reasons, cannot be labelled fundamentalists due to crucial differences between Buddhist teachings and monotheistic teachings.

This difference exists because a person who strictly interprets authentic Buddhist texts, such as the *Tripitaka*, will not find any excuses to resort to violence. The Lord Buddha preached compassion and wisdom and every *sutra*, when interpreted strictly, should lead one to follow the non-violent

noble eightfold path. Since a lay disciple also follows the five precepts, such a person refrains from activities that cause harm to others. Therefore this group believes that Buddhists cannot be labelled fundamentalists (Buddhist Association of Tibet 2006: 14).

However, from a macro level perspective, issues such as racism, some Sri Lankan Sinhala Buddhist leaders justify communalism, sectarianism, exclusionism and struggle for power and they occur in a wider Buddhist context.

The groups who hesitate to characterize Sri Lankan Buddhism as fundamentalism argue that these acts are carried out by people who are not true followers of the Lord Buddha's words. They also emphasize that, regarding social status or race, the Lord Buddha stated 'a person does not become lower by birth but by actions'.

Sri Lanka is politically dominated by a Sinhala Buddhist view. The fact remains, however, that the nation has a religious demography that may be 'as variegated as any in the world'. The Sri Lankan population consists of 73 percent Sinhalese, 13 percent Sri Lankan Tamils, 7 percent Upcountry Tamils and 7 percent Muslims. With regard to religion, the population can be divided into Buddhists (67 percent), Hindus (18 percent), Muslims (7 percent) and Christians (8 percent). Although it has been argued that language, race and ethnicity — rather than religion — are currently the most important 'identity markers' in Sri Lanka, a chauvinistic 'fundamentalist Buddhist' movement emerged in the country under the Buddhist Revivalist Movement in the 1900s.

Reliance on a mythic history is still very strong, providing most Sinhalese with an enduring sense of ethnic boundaries and of who the 'rightful heirs' to Sri Lanka are.

According to Bartholomeuz and Silva (1998: 24), enough of this remains in Sri Lanka to use the term 'fundamentalism' legitimately and productively. However, only a minority of Sinhala Buddhists are nationalists/fundamentalists in a 'dangerous' sense and Sinhala Buddhist chauvinism, linked as it is with 'Sinhala Buddhist nationalism mainly occurred during the British colonial period'.

Although the Sri Lanka Buddhist revivalist movement resembles fundamentalist movements elsewhere in its selective emphasis on the 'essentials' of Buddhist doctrine and practices, it is otherwise fairly dissimilar. Certain features commonly associated with fundamentalism, such as a deep totalistic commitment to a holy scripture and strict adherence to basic religious principles, are absent in Sri Lanka.

Therefore, Sri Lankan Buddhist nationalism, which can be identified as an exclusive nationalism, is different from other fundamentalisms in that there is no insistence on strict behavioural standards and believers do not form a coherent and readily identifiable group. Although there is no 'sacred' Buddhist text or scripture that serves as a blueprint for society, the mythic-historical tract the *Mahavamsa* (a chronicle written about the Sinhala Buddhist nation), has canonical authority.

Sinhala Buddhist nationalism is determined not only by historical tradition and ideology, but also by politics. Sinhala Buddhist nationalism has been used as a platform for politicians and patriots since the late nineteenth century and is directly concerned with power and dominance, especially the dominance of the ethnic majority, the Sinhala Buddhists.

It is true that this became more visible in the mid-1950s, mainly with S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike's encouragement of Sinhala Buddhists to pursue a policy to establish Sinhala as the official language.

Thus, Sinhala Buddhist ethnicity is intimately linked to political ideology. In most cases, Sinhala Buddhist nationalism does not respect the fundamentals of the religion: for example, killing is forbidden in Buddhism, but some Sinhala Buddhist monks publicly support killing Tamil terrorists, who are fighting for a separate Tamil state in northern Sri Lanka.

The Sinhala Buddhist Revivalist Movement and the Hindu Revivalist Movement emerged in Sri Lanka in the early 1900s as nationalist movements against the British colonial rulers. The Buddhist revivalist movement was led by some Buddhist monks and educated lay leaders to restore the Buddhist religion and Sinhala ethnic identity.

## **Bangladesh**

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Bangladesh was founded as a secular democratic country in 1971. In 1988, Islam became the state religion, with freedom for other religions so long as they are practiced in peace and harmony with Islam. The changes that accompanied these constitutional amendments have on the one hand been symbolic, such as commencing state functions with recitations from the Quran.

On the other hand some changes have been highly insidious, involving the marginalization of minorities, alteration of the multi-religious composition of Bangladesh, as well as intimidation and attacks on secular, progressive and dissenting voices. Fatwas, although declared illegal by the judiciary, are now used to attack women on grounds of morality, employment outside the home, development work and education, suppressing their freedoms and leadership in rural areas.

The 1990s saw a rise not just in fatwas to humiliate and punish women but also in the use of penal provisions concerning 'offences against religion' and offences against 'public tranquility', designed to target and censor religious plurality, difference and dissent, particularly within Islam. Legislation declaring Ahmadis non-Muslims and creating the offence of 'insulting the Quran and the Prophet', punishable with life imprisonment or death, were also put forward, aimed at closing the space for religious debate and plurality within Islam.

Notably, both legislative efforts failed due to strong resistance from secular and progressive groups across the country. Nonetheless, law enforcers remain slow to take action against cases of extra-judicial violence and are apathetic to open re-confirmation by the religious right of calls for public execution of individuals.

On the face of an inevitable violent conflict between the two rival political alliances aimed at guaranteeing as many seats as possible in the national election, the ruling caretaker government, backed by the military, imposed emergency rule in January 2007 and a total ban on political activities in March 2007.

Although initially welcomed to combat corruption, the political environment created by the emergency rule has substantiated the position of religion



within the state and thereby resulted in the further shrinking of women's space and cultural identity dialogue.

Law-enforcement agencies and paramilitary groups, such as the Rapid Action Battalion and the Bangladesh Rifles, now use the impunity guaranteed in the emergency ordinance and its suspension of the fundamental guarantees contained in the Constitution as a license to suppress democratic opposition movements, in particular those seeking justice and equality. In this volatile environment the situation for ethnic minorities in the outer regions, particularly in Chittagong Hill Tracts, the subject of illegal plains settlers and repression of the Jumma indigenous population, has worsened.

Since the emergency rule, women belonging to these groups have found themselves more frequently victims of assault and rape at the hands of the military, which is currently viewed as an indispensable means to control ethnic regions and destroy the communal life of these cultures.

The militarization of these outer areas, alongside changing legal and social demands on women's dress, harassment of Hindu, Christian and other minority groups in urban centers signifies a definitive shift from a secular Bengali identity, the original basis of Bengali nationalism, to a one-dimensional Islamic identity.

With the imposition of emergency rule, the risks associated with activism and dialogue concerning women has increased markedly, with woman human rights defenders threatened with attack and targeted for speaking out against government excesses.

As a result human rights defenders, civil society and women's groups have united around the goal of reinstating democratic political processes, seen as a prerequisite for any progress in regards to human rights compliance and women's issues in Bangladesh.

## **India**

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Although the Hindu Right has existed since the independence struggle, it only rose to political power in the 1990s. Its rise to power in a secular, multicultural, multi-religious and multi-linguistic country like India must be understood in the context of the failures of the single major national party,

Congress, since independence.

This environment enabled the dissatisfaction to be directed towards the minority Muslim population while simultaneously mobilizing pride in Hindutva, a nationalist Hindu identity. Its ascendance to power in the 1990s and subsequent electoral victory at the central and the state levels legitimized the anti-minorities public discourse, polarized communities and institutionalized communal ideology in state structures.

Most notably, attacks on Christians to achieve short- and long-term political goals have regularly taken place since the electoral victory in March 1998 of the Hindu nationalists, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) as well as the carnage targeting Muslims in Gujarat in 2002. The official response of the BJP to the targeting of Christians and Dalits has been to open the validity of religious conversions to debate rather than condemnation of the perpetrators.

Women and sexuality have also taken center stage in the Hindutva discourse. The 1990s witnessed the emergence and rise of vigilante attacks, vandalism and moral policing in urban towns by Hindu right-wing groups to impose compliance with a Hindu nationalist construction of culture, particularly in relation to sexuality.

There have thus been increased attacks on choice/inter-community marriages, often with state inaction/support, attacks on persons and commercial property to protest Valentine's Day celebrations, the targeting and persecution of lesbian and gay persons and attacks on debate and information concerning sexuality.

While controlling the sexuality of the 'Hindu Indian Woman' has been one agenda of the Hindu Right, the other has been to 'liberate' the 'Muslim Woman' from the clutches of discriminatory Muslim family law. Although three provisions of Muslim law are routinely targeted – the exemption to Muslim men from the duty of maintaining a divorced wife, triple talaq and polygamy — the solution proposed is not to work with reform processes within the community but to develop instead a uniform civil code on family.

This call is based on the need for uniformity rather than gender justice, a means of subsuming the Muslim community to a code that resembles Hindu personal law. As a result, the uniform civil code has been rejected by the women's movement that prefers to work towards gender justice within

personal laws.

The false concern of the Hindu Right towards women — or more specifically Muslim women — is evident from the apathy towards women's issues generally and particularly towards disadvantages experienced by Muslim women in areas other than family law.

The lack of concern of the Hindu Right regarding the poverty and marginalization of the Muslim community, the impact of which is disproportionately borne by Muslim women, is a case in point, as is their disregard for the sexual brutalization of Muslim women during the Gujarat carnage in 2002 by the Hindu Right.

The above developments have taken place alongside an unrelenting pursuance of a neo-liberal industrialization agenda by the states of India, despite overwhelming evidence of its massive social costs.

In the states of Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal and Chattisgarh groups who resist compulsory land acquisition and the creation of Special Economic Zones (SEZs) are frequently described as members of the violent Naxalite political movement and thereby subject to harassment, intimidation and violence through repressive state laws by both paramilitary and state military forces who side with the developers.

## **Maldives**

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In recent years, Maldives, a traditionally Sunni and a moderate society, has increasingly radicalized. The culture of Maldives is being Arab-ized as the traditional bright colored women's clothes are being replaced by headscarves and black robes. Men have started to grow beards and new mosques are springing up, allegedly with the help of foreign funds. Preachers have been advocating a more radical version of Islam on the poorer islands, which are cut off from the media. This rise in Islamic militancy poses an unprecedented threat to Maldives's image as South Asia's most popular holiday destination.

In December 1999, Islamists launched attacks against the regime arguing that the millennium celebrations were part of a plot to spread Christianity. Concern over the growth of Islamic extremism in Maldives began in 2002 when a 28-year-old Maldivian named Ibrahim Fauzee was arrested in Karachi for having links with Al-Qaeda and taken to Guantanamo Bay by the US.

In 2003, some posters praising Osama bin Laden appeared on the walls of a school in Edhyafushi Island. Similarly, a shop in Male was attacked in 2005 for displaying Santa Clause. In 2006, the Maldivian Foreign Minister, Dr. Ahmad Shaheed, admitted that the Maldivian government is concerned over Islamic fundamentalism spreading throughout the country and reiterated the government's commitment to taking appropriate actions to "extinguish any radical developments."

By mid-2006, Islamists succeeded in establishing a base in the island of Himandhoo and a new mosque, propagating neo-conservative Islam, was established in defiance of laws that mandate that religious institutions must be licensed. Sharia was also imposed on the residents. After a stiff resistance, the Himandhoo mosque was shut down in October 2006, but it soon revived.

In January 2007, it was reported in the local media that a religious faction in Himandhoo, Alif Alif Atoll, has been issuing death threats to locals who do not collaborate with them causing fear in the island.

Similarly, in February 2007, the media reported that religious conservatives in Himandhoo have banned their children from attending local school because of the impure influences of "foreign" teachers, the English language and non-Islamic subjects. According to the media reports, an extremist faction declared that Islam prohibits their children from attending school. The religious conservatives have set up their own school on the island dedicated solely to teaching children the Quran and the Hadith. Although full veil is technically illegal in the Maldives, many women in Himandhoo Island have started to wear full veil and therefore, were unable to vote as they could not prove their identity or reveal a patch of skin to receive an indelible pen mark used to identify voters.

Different factors are responsible for this growing Islamic fundamentalism in Maldives. President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, a graduate from the Al-Azhar University and a fluent speaker of Arabic language, is widely criticised for promoting Islamic extremism in Maldives. After completing his degree from Al-Azhar University in Egypt, he was strongly influenced by both the teachings of Syed Kutb and the Baathist Philosophy.

Gayoom first taught Islamic Studies in Nigeria before he came back to Maldives in 1971 and worked as a teacher in one of the schools in Male. He was inducted as a special Under Secretary to Nasir and soon held the post of Maldives's Deputy Ambassador at Colombo followed by the position of Under Secretary and Deputy Foreign Minister. He became the first Permanent Representative of Maldives to the UN during 1976-77 and was the Minister of Transport before he became the President.

The locals saw him as a very pious man and he came to prominence after leading a protest against former President Nasir's recognition of the state of Israel. It is generally believed that the day he came to power, was the turning point in the country's slide towards extremism. He promoted himself as the guardian of Islam and under Article 38 of the Constitution, he is also the supreme propagator of Islam.

Discussion of religious freedom is denied and according to the UN Special Rapporteur Asma Jahangir, those who raise their voice are threatened and imprisoned. In early 1979, he campaigned against the system of religious education in the country and the textbooks, written by a revered scholar Muhammad Jameel Didi, were changed. Soon after becoming President, he opened the first Islamic schools, Mauhad and Arabiyya. A branch of Rabitat al-Alam al-Islami an organisation based in Saudi Arabia that coordinated the efforts of Islamic preachers the world over, was set up in Maldives.

His government retains considerable control over imams and preachers in the country through the Supreme Council of Islamic Affairs. Often characterizing his critics as apostates or Christians, he used religion to marginalise his political opponents thus giving a free space to extremists to cash in on the situation. Denial of basic human rights and freedom of expression are considered to be the hallmark of Gayoom's regime. With the absence of democracy, religious fundamentalism emerged as the principal language of dissent.

Thus, the Islamization process progressed at a remarkable rate. Gayoom was quite critical of Nasir saying that according to Islamic Sharia, one who sells alcohol is committing just as grave a sin as drinking it which is forbidden in Islam. But after coming to power, he could not put an end to the selling and distribution of alcohol, thereby presenting the image of a hypocrite.

President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom is criticised for using Islam for both his personal authority and as a useful tool of social control. His portrayal of himself as a "protector of Islam" has created a paranoid atmosphere in which radical ideas have spread. Founder of the Maldivian Democratic Party (MPD), Mohamed Latheef, puts the blame solely on President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom. He is the person who brought Islamic fundamentalism into the country. Before he came into power, there weren't all these madrassas espousing extremist form of Islam at all. Now he has been using Islam as a tool of governance."

Socio-economic factor is also believed to have created this disturbance in the society. Luxurious resorts, where foreign tourist pay a handsome amount to stay a night in beach villas with their own private pools and butlers and where all sorts of fruits, vegetables, wine and water are provided in abundance, whereas any Maldivian citizen caught drinking alcohol faces the penalty of hundred lashes.

One quarter of children under the age of five are said to be suffering from underdeveloped growth. Women whose husbands work away from their homes in hotels and resorts are asked by the Islamic preachers to

send their children to mosques to be taught by Islamic preachers. These preachers go to the women in villages and tell them that your men are working at those hotels surrounded by westerners and alcohol and if you want to save your soul, you must be virtuous. You should cover up and stay inside. It is also believed that Arab donors are exporting ideas and cash in an attempt to undermine the Maldives's traditionally tolerant and inclusive Sunni Islam.

The 2005 tsunami worsened the economic situation and took the country back by about 20 years in terms of socio-economic development. Out of the archipelago's 199 islands, 20 were totally devastated and another 53 were severely damaged. Schools, clinics and pharmacies were destroyed in 50 islands and worst, the seawater contaminated the ground water and reservoirs that supplied drinking water. The government of Gayoom is blamed for failing to share the income generated through the tourism industry with the majority of the population while he and his close allies became rich thus encouraging the people to turn to violence.

## **Pakistan**

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Pakistan was founded on the need for a separate identity on the basis of religion. Although Islam was constitutive of nationhood, its role was not self evident in successive constitutions but evolved as a result of political expediency of its military and civilian regimes. It was only in 1973 in the third Constitution that Islam was explicitly declared the state religion, a concession to Islamic leaders by President Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in exchange for their support for his socialist development project.

The chief of the army, General Zia- ul-Haq in 1977, used later Islamization to legitimize the usurpation of power. This tactic was supported by the US, which embraced General Zia as an indispensable ally in their proxy war against the Soviet Government via the mujahideen insurgents in Afghanistan.

As a consequence of this political environment, the Hudood Laws, the Qisas and Diyat Law and the Law of Evidence were passed — regressive laws that were extremely discriminatory to women as well as minorities. This period also saw the introduction of a parallel judicial system, the Shariah Courts. These changes reflected the state's construction of a homogenous "Muslim" identity, an imperative unifying force to avoid the conflict resulting from feudalism and provincialism — and the structural inequalities within and between the culturally and linguistically diverse provinces.

The 'Islamization' package introduced by General Zia centered on women's bodies, rights and freedoms. It gave legal sanction to crude forms of sexual discrimination, in addition to reinforcing and exacerbating the existing feudal and customary controls over women's sexuality, roles and lives. The overlapping of feudalism with Islamization has made the exercise of choice and freedoms by women not only a wrong against the family but also against her tribe or ethnic group.

Defiance of feudal and patriarchal controls by women and girls typically results in the family using the state machinery and legal system to enforce compliance with familial norms. The high number of complaints of the offence of zina (unlawful sexual intercourse) registered by parents against daughters who married of their freewill is an example of this trend.

The Laws of Evidence also denied to women the fundamental right of equality guaranteed by Article 25 of the Constitution by eliminating the difference between rape, consensual sex and adultery and thereby imposing punishment on a woman in all cases.

Meanwhile the stranglehold of customary values and feudal systems over women remained unchallenged by the state. Old customs, such as marriage with Qur'an, *karo kari* and crimes in the name of honor continue to be practiced. Throughout the process of Islamization, women and minorities have suffered the most, with their human rights constantly abrogated.

The subsequent democratically elected civilian governments — that of Benazir Bhutto and of Nawaz Sharif could not reverse these discriminatory legislations for women.

In 2006, President Musharraf proposed the reform of the Hudood Ordinance and on November 15 2006, the Women's Protection Bill was passed in Pakistan's National Assembly, allowing rape to be prosecutable under civil law. Although the new law is a commendable development, but due to the lack of political will to deal with the root causes of violence against women has ensured that implementation of the new law has been lackluster and that the changes for women in practice have been minimal.

However, the attempts by Musharraf were half-hearted as he had to buttress the ISI formed alliance of MMA. A fragile alliance of all opposing and ideologically different religio-political entities. Out of which the weakest, Qazi

Hussain and his party Jamaat-e-Islami, kept up the opposition to Musharraf because Qazi was not given all he wanted. Fazal ur Rahman on the other hand has been a manipulator proven by time and a survivor. And one of the largest propagators of Madrassas in Pakistan. Primarily because he gets to be the recipient of lion's share of foreign "aid" that comes to Madrassas. At a public level, the Molana from DI Khan presents an ideology of Wahabbiism and gets patronage from the oil rich Gulf.

No leader from MMA has todate spoken against the Taliban or condemned suicide attacks or spoken in favour of the Army operation which was so badly needed. This is despite the fact that they have full support at all levels of the military! And had unprecedented support from Musharraf who went to the extent of giving military land to Fazal ur Rahman.

Such is the penetration of the mullahs at all levels that when the Army was fighting the bigots from Madrassas, Musharraf government gave charter to them and allowed them to issue a degree, parallel to a university which HEC accredited. During the halfhearted operation in Swat, the Musharraf government got into an agreement, which practically handed over the control of Swat and some nearby areas to Fazalullah. The story given to the whole country was that his FM radio could not be tracked. Which to the uneducated people of the country did believe. But then comes the question of the ability of our armed forces. Does the Army not possess the capacity to locate and shut down one FM station?

The list of all that went wrong is long. Too long. More than 35,000 people had to pay with their lives for ensuring political survival of some. More than 5,000 soldiers gave their lives trying to figure out why they could not fight a war they were employed to?

Hardly anyone in the military security establishment... read ISI and MI understands that the Bear they could not kill even with the 1000 fables cuts, has returned and is hungry for revenge. Russians cannot fight a war with Pakistan to avenge what we did to them. But this is one way they are getting even. Look at all the Indian arms, Russian ammunition and Vodka and other military gear our forces have found in the caves up North.

What beats the mind is the rationale behind why we are so silent about all this? What else will make our security establishment to part ways with the religio-political forces and concentrate on other available means of



countering the Indian-Afghan threat? How are we supposed to fight an external war with one going on right inside our own country?

Which brings us to an understanding that there is no law to deal with what is being dealt with as a law and order situation. This is war. A full-scale war. Someone somewhere needs to wake up and smell the coffee. The criminals caught should be tried in military courts and punished swiftly. Instead, we have caught all masterminds and perpetrators and not been able to punish one! Not a single person caught for bomb blasts that have taken more than 35,000 lives across the country has been punished! What justice system are we talking about? Where is the polity that is entrusted to lead the country? This is certainly no way of leading the country.

The military, polity, judiciary, need to sit down and chalk out a strategy but at a very quick pace. The media also needs to be reigned in. Instead of acting as responsible voice of the country, our media seems to be cashing in on every opportunity. Imagine the audacity of the TV channels that in the midst of the PNS Mehran crisis, had anchors saying this is our "exclusive" footage! They were bothered about their ratings even then. But none has the courage of going after the Madarassas. None has the tenacity of exposing the mullah and informing the people on how they have been manipulating the public for their own agendas.

### **Pakistan's need of the hour**

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The need of the hour is to get back to the very basics. We need to fight this war more with mind than with weapons. The miscreants who have hijacked the religion and the whole country need to be isolated. Actual religious values need to be inculcated. We will need to start from the curriculum. Pakistan was supposed to be a secular country. That is the model we started on. Indians later on followed suit and look at where they are today. Quaid-e-Azam was very clear in saying that "religion will not be the business of the state". That is the true core. That is what needs to be followed in letter and spirit.

We need to inculcate the change starting with the education system and fast. Pakistan can no longer afford to let the young and innocent minds fall prey to the religious manipulation. Monitor closely and persecute the madarassas that go against the policy of the government. Deal decisively with all the lashkars and armies fighting their own ideology. Even if this means to stop

the proxy war between Saudia and Iran.

Ensure the loud speakers are used only for Azaan and prayers and nothing else. Like Saudia and other responsible countries, lock up the mosques and stop the tableegh. Someone has to question the need of Tableegh in a country where 95% population is Muslim. The forces have to curtail and monitor the activities of the penetration of religious ideologies. We pay heavily for the security apparatus. It has to start functioning now.

Enough of being available to the highest bidder. National interest has to lead the way.

At an international level, we need to stop the drone strikes. They have not helped us in anyway. The drones have taken more than 22,000 lives out of which the "targets" the US needed were only a few. The rest comprise mostly of tribesmen and leaders loyal to Pakistan. This was an opposition to the US interest. Enough now!

Influential leaders like Imran Khan, who by way has always supported the Taliban stance, need to be cognizant of the damage they are causing to the country. High time we stopped pampering the Molanas. Take them to task. India monitors the money trail of all NGOs. What is stopping us from doing that? Why are we allowing Raymonds and Blackwaters to roam around freely and meet with parties banned by the government? Why is there a lack of both internal and external PR? Why no rule of law?

Keeping the population uneducated ensures enslavement. Having them worry about making ends meet ensures that the rich and powerful remain in their positions. One wonders about the oath the guardians of this country take twice a year in four academies, to safeguard the country from every external and internal threat.

Create strategic venues for dialogue and facilitate shared understanding among women's rights movements and organizations about how fundamentalisms work, grow and undermine women's rights. Develop joint strategies and advocacy efforts across regions and religions to confront religious fundamentalisms.

The tragedy of South Asia is the assertion of a violent majoritarianism often on the basis of religious identity. This phenomenon is not limited to Pakistan

and India. Tamil Hindus had been discriminated against by the Sinhala Buddhist majority and Sri Lankan authorities for a long time and the president who crushed their rebellion is a hero. The founder of Bangladesh, Sheikh Mujibur Rehman was murdered and the country witnessed persecution of its Hindu minority; the most vociferous opponent of this persecution, the novelist Taslima Nasreen, was hounded out of her country. She found a temporary shelter in India but even the Left Front Government of West Bengal found it difficult to offer her security.

The causes underlying the rise and popularity of religious fundamentalism in South Asia are complex. Currently, in Pakistan, it has acquired its more virulent form, which threatens the very survival of the country as a modern state. Although religious minorities are sometimes the target, as the case of Aasia Bibi the Christian woman accused of violating the anti-blasphemy law attests, it is sectarian clashes between different Islamic groups, each asserting itself as representing true Islam, that are a greater danger to Pakistan.

In the ultimate analysis, the prosperity, indeed the very survival, of South Asian countries requires a combined effort of all democratic forces of the region to confront fundamentalism as the principal menace facing not only Pakistan but South Asia as a whole.

### **How to counter fundamentalism**

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Renowned writer Farooq Tariq, in an article on Religious Fundamentalism talks about the military solution — that has been presented as an immediate step to the ultimate solution to fight against fundamentalism. It is like the old Stalinist theory of minimum and maximum goals. “Demand minimum to get the maximum” was the philosophy. It was known as minimum and maximum stage of revolution. In social circles, this has been presented as short-term and long-term strategies. For them, military solution is a short-term strategy while the long-term strategy requires reforms and more development. But this is all false; it will not solve anything. This is just an excuse to please American imperialism.

There is no in between the short-term and long-term strategies. If the fight against religious fanatics has to go forward, it must begin with a revolutionary program. It had to start with the political will to separate religion from the state. It has to deal with the question of the nature of

Pakistani state. Religion cannot become the basis of a nation. Pakistan's two nation theories were torn apart by the events of the 1960s and 1970s when Bangladesh came into existence. Now a more severe crisis is erupting in Balochistan over similar lines. There is strong movement developing that calls for the independence of Balochistan.

There has to be a concrete program to fight religious fundamentalism. It has to combine an immediate dealing with the suicidal attacks and curbing the activities of the fascist forces from their strongholds along with an overall plan of action in economic, political and social fields. This should include the nationalization of religious madrasas and retraining of teachers. It should include an immediate increase in workers' wages in both the private and public sector to at least Rs 2,000 a month.

All discriminatory laws must go and all citizens of Pakistan should enjoy equal constitutional status. At present there are several laws that make religious minorities second-rate citizens. The government should be committed to fully back local resistance to the religious fanatic. Civil society organizations in the stronghold of the religious fundamentalists should be given full backing by the state so that they can function. The state must help to strengthen and sustain the local defense committees to fight the religious fanatics.

All trade union rights must be restored in all the public and private sector with full freedom of speech and gatherings. The present civilian seeks military solutions. Most of the discriminatory laws are still intact, including the blasphemy laws. The government has no plan to do away with these discriminatory laws promulgated under military dictatorships so the organizations of civil society must demand governmental action to restore rights.

The forces of religious fundamentalism organize on an international basis. A fight against them has to be organized at that same level. The Americans' "war on terror" is fueling more religious fundamentalism. It is seen as a war on Muslims. The occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan by the imperialist forces is providing the religious fanatics a political justification for their terrorist activities. Clearly occupation must end.

The campaign to end the occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan and no support to the fanatics can be the basis for a united action of progressive forces

internationally. The campaign against religious fundamentalism must be part and parcel of an anti-globalization campaign by all progressive forces.

We must oppose both occupation and religious fundamentalism. No support to one against the other. The fight between the religious fundamentalism and the imperialists is a fight between bulls. There is not much to gain in siding with one against the other, but to end the fight and open the space to create an alternative way of living.

While democracy remains a contentious and much debated term, in the context of electoral endorsement to fundamentalists it remains one of the main pillars of resistance. In Bangladesh, India, Burma, and Pakistan, democracy continues to be the ethical and legal basis of the progressive movements despite the occasional setbacks.

The constitutional principles of democracy and secularism have been the basis for evolving multiculturalism in these jurisdictions and served to resist identity politics rhetoric and regressive legislative developments. Law and the superior judiciary have been important sites of contestation — for both the fundamentalists and the progressive movements.

Given that many of the progressive and the women's movements in South Asia have their roots in the independence struggle and its principles of dignity, equality and freedom, they continue to use these as their inspirational and ethical principles for mobilization even today. The Women's League of Burma, for example, continues to advocate non-violence, accountability and democracy in its resistance to fundamentalisms.

The women's movement in Pakistan saw inequality as the first signs of erosion of democracy and have mobilized strongly for women's rights as well as democracy, with one leading proponent noting that 'it is unreasonable to expect that a regime that suppresses the rights of the bulk of the population will grant them to women'.

They therefore paved the way towards non-sectarianism and showed that despite Zia's repressive environment, mass organizing is not only possible, but necessary. According to Hina Jilani, a women rights activist in Pakistan over the years, women have been engaged in the debate on regional insecurity and instability and its links to critical domestic issues like poverty, economic and social disparities, discrimination, and development.

The need for peace was never a mere slogan for women and other peace activists, but one rooted in the impact on women of militarization of Pakistan by the US to serve its ends in Afghanistan and the increasing violence unleashed by the ultra right in the name of Islam.

Assertion of rule of law and rights for many activists has been firmly rooted in secularism. Hina Jilani explains in relation to Pakistan that this approach has nothing to do with the potential of Islam to offer equality or gender justice, rather it stems from the conviction that laws have to be clear and unambiguous.

The administration of justice can be severely hampered if laws emerge from different understandings or perceptions of religion, making their application uneven and contingent upon the religious, moral and social beliefs of those administering the laws. Islam, like many other religions, has sectarian and denominational differences. If a national polity is founded on religion, these differences will be manifested in political tensions as well as oppressive restraints on dissent.

Those able to gain power enforce their brand of Islam, whether liberal or orthodox, which is not conducive to creating a stable foundation for the promotion and protection of human rights or of democratic norms in the Pakistani context.

Interfaith dialogue is one approach that can be used as an effective tool to counter fundamentalism. Dialogue across faith, religion and cultures to agree upon commonalities in traditions, principles and values have been a powerful way of challenging divisions and separations of cultural identity projects. Examples of this are common across nations, such as in India or Indonesia.

In Indonesia notably, such dialogue has been initiated by women's groups, to challenge the notions of cultural separateness projected by fundamentalist assertions of monolithic cultures existing in opposition and hostility to each other. It also serves to develop truly universal values shared across religions and cultures, particularly those of dignity, tolerance, coexistence and non-violence, thereby developing support and consensus for human rights.

Cultural exchange between theatre groups or festivals such as Rafi Peer

Theatre Workshop and its bringing in troupes from the entire South Asia. Progressive artists, cultural groups and women's groups have focused on recovering and celebrating shared faith, practices to call attention to syncretic traditions that have historically existed within societies to counter the forced separation of communities advocated by cultural identity politics. In particular, songs, festivals, shrines and practices from the Sufi and Bhakti traditions that have continued through time and continue to flourish have become valuable spaces for progressive groups to assert the fusion of faiths.

These powerful examples of how boundaries of religion merge to form regionally unique expressions of faith and fused practices are testimonies to the tradition of composite cultures rather than conflicting cultures in our histories. Reviving and celebrating these are seen as an important challenge to the current intolerance, fundamentalist and divisive representations of culture.

### **For Further Reading**

- The Resisting and Challenging Religious Fundamentalisms Strategic Initiative: Feminists on the Frontline:
- Case Studies of Resisting and Challenging Fundamentalisms
- New Insights on Religious Fundamentalisms: Research Highlights
- Regional Implications of the Rise of Islamic Fundamentalism in Pakistan *Kalim Bahadur*
- Religious Fundamentalisms on the Rise: A Case for Action
- Shared Insights: Women's Rights Activists Define Religious Fundamentalisms
- Fundamentalisms In Asia-Pacific: Trends, Impact, Challenges And Strategies Asserting Women's Rights
- The Rise of Right Wing Nationalism in the Era of Globalisation
- 'Islamic fundamentalism in Pakistan' by Farooq Sulehria
- Lecture from MP in the Afghan parliament Malalai Joya at McGill University in September 2006
- Afghanistan: Justice for War Criminals - Human Rights Watch
- 'The Personal is Political: Jewish Fundamentalism and Women's

Empowerment'

- Sinhala Buddhist Nationalism/ 'Fundamentalism' and Its Impact on Gendered Political Participation in Sri Lanka
- Kamala Liyanage
- *Religious Fundamentalisms and the Human Rights of Women Strategic Analysis/Jan-Mar 2006*
- 'Growing Islamic militancy in Maldives' *Mahwish Hafeez*
- Tribe: Women's Struggles and the Construction of Muslimness ', in Courtney W. Howland
- Zainah Anwar, 'Religious Fundamentalism and its Impact on Women's Rights', address at the Gender and Identity.
- 'Unsafe State: State Sanctioned Violence against Chin Women in Burma', The Women's League of Chinland