



**STRATEGIC COUNTER MEASURES TO TERRORISM AND EXTREMISM IN PAKISTAN AND
INSIGHTS FROM HOME LAND SECURITY:**

A Need for the Enactment of Pakistan's National Counter Terrorism Department

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Abstract

This research scrutinizes the challenges faced by Pakistan's law enforcement agencies in effectively countering the escalating threats of terrorism and extremism. It identifies both the manifestations and root causes of these challenges, underscoring the imperative need for a refined legislative framework. This article proposes the enactment of a "National Counter Terrorism Department Act" designed to enhance the nation's control mechanisms, curtail the surge of extremist tendencies, and uphold the rule of law. Drawing from a comparative analysis of various enforcement strategies in Pakistan, this paper suggests that the existing "National Counter Terrorism Authority Act, 2013" requires legislative intervention. While it lays down comprehensive guidelines, its operational efficiency is marred by the absence of a singular unified department, inadequate service structures, and constrained powers. By assimilating insights from the Department of Homeland Security with its mandate vis-à-vis model organizational websites, books, journals, acts of various law enforcement agencies, scholarly articles and newspaper articles, the paper underlines the ineffectiveness of the National Counter Terrorism Authority Act, 2013, in its current form. It has been recommended that the envisioned "National Counter Terrorism Department Act" would not only bolster Pakistan's counterterrorism capabilities but it will also ensure a standardized, cohesive approach nationwide.

Key Words: National Counter Terrorism Authority Act, 2013, National Counter Terrorism Department, Law Enforcement Agencies, Federal Investigation Agency, Counter Terrorism Department, Military, Department of Homeland Security.



1. Introduction

September 11, 2001 marked a pivotal moment for the United States as it faced devastating attacks on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon (Afzal et al., 2012). This event catapulted the issue of terrorism to the forefront of global consciousness, ushering in an era where threats to national security became a pervasive concern, affecting all societal strata (Peptan, 2019). In response, nations worldwide have developed counterterrorism frameworks to address the rising tide of extremism and terrorism (Rosand et al., 2022). Pakistan, too, is grappling with these challenges (Habib, 2018).

In 2013, Pakistan established the National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA) signifying a strategic move to combat the escalating threats of terrorism and extremism (Ahmed, 2020). However, NACTA's limited operational role and lack of adequate authority have hampered its effectiveness (National Counter Terrorism Authority Act, 2013). This situation underscores the need for a comprehensive overhauling of National Counter Terrorism Authority (Ahmed, 2020). There is a dire need to have a unified response against the threat of terrorism, extremism and growing militancy and that can be stopped only through the enactment of a National Counter Terrorism Department Act, a unified organization performing both the task at a time to review the legal framework and to have an operational role to dismantle the terrorist threats and will enhance the agency's capabilities (Babakheil, 2023).

The legal architecture providing vision to combat terrorism and extremism in Pakistan requires a cohesive approach, moving away from the current policies and fragmented laws (Federal Investigation Agency Act, 1974). For example, while the Ministry of Interior has developed policies like the National Internal Security Policy 2014-18 and 2018-23 (Virk, 2022), the National Security Division has introduced the National Security Policy of Pakistan 2022-26 (Shafi & Dinakhel, 2022). Simultaneously, NACTA functions predominantly as a think tank, focusing on the National Action Plan's review, outreach activities, formulation of guidelines on countering terrorism, issuance of Pakistan Journal of Terrorism Research (Ahmed, 2020). This dispersion of efforts and lack of unified direction have implications for the country's counterterrorism efficacy.

Pakistan's legislative landscape concerning terrorism is complex, with multiple laws causing fragmentation and designating investigative responsibilities to various law enforcement agencies to look into terrorism making no singular focal organization to handle the terrorism (Petzschmann, 2010). The Federal Investigation Agency, provincial Counter Terrorism Departments, and local police in Special Areas are all tasked with addressing terrorism-related issues, sometimes necessitating military intervention. These operational forces confront challenges such as overlapping mandates, insufficient authority, and legal complexities in substantive and procedural law (Petzschmann, 2010). This convoluted framework results in difficulties in investigating and prosecuting terrorism cases nationwide (Malik, 2018).

To establish a more effective counterterrorism strategy, Pakistan could draw inspiration from model like the United States' Department of Homeland Security (Kiran, 2011). This agency has demonstrated its effectiveness in safeguarding national security and offers valuable lessons for Pakistan. Establishing a unified and empowered National Counter Terrorism Department could be a significant step toward consolidating Pakistan's response to terrorism, ensuring more robust strategic measures, and facilitating effective legal prosecution of terrorists (Kiran, 2011). Enactment of "National Counter Terrorism Department Act" would not only streamline the country's counterterrorism efforts but also reinforce its sovereignty and security in the face of this global challenge (Babakheil, 2023).



2. Scope of the Study

Since its inception, Pakistan has navigated a labyrinth of internal and external challenges. Engulfed in three wars with India and positioned as a frontline state during the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the country's security landscape has been significantly strained (Khan, 1986). These complex historical events have shaped Pakistan's journey, particularly in its engagement with the global war on terror. Such circumstances underscore the imperative for Pakistan to enhance the organizational structures, capabilities, and capacities of its institutions, particularly in counterterrorism efforts.

It is incumbent upon the State and its representatives to accord top priority to resolving societal issues and to the establishment of robust, long-term public institutions dedicated to mitigating threats to societal well-being. This necessitates a strategic deployment of state resources to develop an organizational framework equipped to anticipate and address unforeseen crises effectively. There is a pressing need for a comprehensive overhaul in counterterrorism strategies and mechanisms, tailored to confront the unique and evolving security challenges facing the nation.

In this endeavour, the goal is not merely to react to immediate threats but to foster a proactive, resilient framework capable of predicting and pre-empting potential crises. The future of Pakistan's security and stability hinges on the state's ability to adapt and respond with agility and foresight, crafting a counterterrorism infrastructure that is not only responsive to current threats but is also anticipatory of future challenges (Babakheil, 2023). This proactive approach is vital for safeguarding the nation's integrity and ensuring a secure, peaceful future for its citizens.

3. Legal Framework to Counter Terrorism and Extremism in Pakistan

The principal law dealing with the terrorism and extremism is the Anti-Terrorism Act, 1997, however, Anti-Money Laundering Act, 2010, Prevention Electronic Crimes Act, 2016, Foreign Exchange Regulation Act, 1947, Banking Companies Ordinance, 1962 and the interplay of other substantive laws in the country cannot be ignored (Imran & Idrees, 2020).

These legislations empowers the Federal Investigation to investigate the terrorism at the national level while Counter Terrorism Departments are responsible for terrorism prosecution in their provinces and in the similar way the military operations have also been launched to dismantle terrorist organization from the country but to the surprise one see that Federal Investigation Agency can register and investigate the terrorism cases across Pakistan and at the same time Counter Terrorism Department also takes cognizes of these offences vis-à-vis the military operations had to take place when these forces have failed to stop the growing terrorism and extremism across the nation (Mahmood, 2020). In addition to this, the Ministry of Interior, National Counter Terrorism Authority and National Security Division have their task to curtail the threat of terrorism and extremism through collaborative efforts and making these law enforcement agencies to cope the situation.

This transpires that there is fragmentation in mechanism provided by polices, laws and all the law enforcement are tackling the issue of terrorism, which needs to be handed over to one unified organization. The mandate and area of operations of these agencies is elucidated hereinafter to reflect their vision and mission to make the country safer (Petzschmann, 2010).

a. Role of Federal Investigation Agency

It was the Pakistan Special Police Establishment which was tasked with matters pertaining to bribery and corruption against central government. A paper titled "Police Reform" which was presented to the government on April 7, 1972, suggested the creation of a Federal Police Organization to handle issues



including monetary offences, drug trafficking, enforcing laws against foreign nationals, and crimes involving passports and smuggling that could have an impact across province lines. As a result, on January 13, 1975, the FIA Act, 1974 (Act VIII-4 of 1975) was enacted, creating the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) (Ahmed, 2012).

The Federal Investigation Agency has been entrusted with border surveillance, federal criminal probe, and counterintelligence with conducting investigations into operations against terrorism, espionage, federal crimes, smuggling, as well as infringement and other specific crimes, under the direction of Pakistan's Interior Division.

The organization has the following wings namely, Anti-Corruption (focuses on investigating and combating corruption within government institutions, businesses, and other sectors), Anti-Human Trafficking and Human Smuggling (works to disrupt and dismantle human trafficking and smuggling networks, protecting vulnerable individuals), Cyber Crime (investigates cyber-related offenses, such as hacking, online fraud, and online distribution of illegal and illicit content), Economic Crime (addresses financial crimes, including fraud, money laundering, and counterfeiting), Immigration (enforces immigration laws, investigates illegal immigration and emigration, and may assist in visa and passport issuance and processing), INTERPOL (represents Pakistan as the National Central Bureau for INTERPOL, facilitating international law enforcement cooperation by extending widest possible police cooperation with INTERPOL member countries. INTERPOL manages law enforcement agencies' access to INTERPOL databases, resources, and services in addition to offering investigative help and secure communications between them and their colleagues in 196 INTERPOL member nations), Integrated Boarder Management System (likely uses technology and surveillance to monitor and secure Pakistan's borders), Intellectual Property Crime (protects patents, trademarks, and copyrights, investigating cases of infringement), and Counter Terrorism (a core focus, investigating and preventing acts of terrorism within Pakistan) (Ahmed, 2012).

These wings look into offences mentioned hereinbefore as well as take cognizance of offences in the Schedule of Federal Investigation Act. The list of substantive offences is very exhaustive and the agency can investigate into any of these offences across the country including terrorism offences. The FIA has broad authority to investigate a comprehensive list of crimes outlined in their FIA Act. The agency can operate across Pakistan, not limited by regional boundaries (The FIA Act, 1974).

b. Role of Counter Terrorism Department

There are four provinces and special government areas where Counter Terrorism Departments are working the terrorism (Ullah et al., 2019). Here, it transpires that federal and provincial law enforcement agencies can look into terrorism which at time causes jurisdictional and legal issues that may hamper the fate of these cases. The Counter Terrorism Department perform their duties under the police department and has to work in line with the preamble of the Anti-Terrorism Act, 1997.

i. Punjab. The Criminal Investigation Department Manual, 1937 is the official operating manual for Investigation that enables the police to register and investigate the criminal cases against criminals. It was established in 1995. It began as a tiny operational unit and has grown into a department with regional offices spread out across Punjab. On July 21, 2010, the Criminal Investigation Department changed its name to the Counter Terrorism Department, which functions under the police department. Counter Terrorism Department has been reorganized in response to the escalating threats posed by terrorism. It has been given other responsibilities in addition to its basic intelligence job since the beginning of 2015. All cases related to



terrorism are now registered and investigated by Counter Terrorism Department at the recently created Counter Terrorism Department Police Stations. The establishment of the Counter Terrorism Force under Counter Terrorism Department is another significant move (Mahmood, 2020).

ii. Sindh. The mounting rise in terrorism lead to the creation of Counter Terrorism Department which has been which is working under the control of Additional Inspector General Police (Mahmood, 2020).

iii. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The Counter Terrorism Department function under the police department. An Additional Inspector General-level police officer leads the Counter Terrorism Department. Its duties include gathering intelligence, keeping an eye on people, conducting monitoring and surveillance, and carrying out operations against criminals engaged in terrorism and anti-state actions. In order to examine terrorism-related cases, the Counter Terrorism Department maintains offices in regions, districts, and subdivisions that are connected to police stations and prison facilities (Ullah et al., 2019).

iv. Baluchistan. The Counter Terrorism Department function under the police department. The Anti-Terrorist Squad Anti-Terrorism Squad was established in 1981 through President of Pakistan Order Number 1/8/81-IM dated 30-04-81 which was later converted into Counter Terrorism Force to conduct Anti-Terrorist operations in Baluchistan (Mahmood, 2020).

v. Islamabad. The Islamabad Capital Territory Police was established through Presidential Order No. 17 & 18, 1980 on January 1st, 1981. The Counter Terrorism Department is being established to ensure that Federal Capital Islamabad's security apparatus is strengthened in accordance with the National Action Plan and to prevent and control terrorist activities (Mahmood, 2020).

vi. Gilgit-Baltistan. There were two different kinds of police stationed in the Northern Areas (now Gilgit-Baltistan) before Pakistan's independence. The first was the state police of Jammu and Kashmir, with its headquarters located in Bunji; the second was the Gilgit Police force, which operated under the political agent Gilgit's command. However, the Jammu & Kashmir State Police Force withdrew after 1935, and as a result, the local police's responsibilities expanded. Later on, Gilgit Scouts and Levies had been looking into the peace and safety of its people too. However, the police force was properly founded in 1972. The Counter Terrorism Department has been enrooted to counter terrorism and extremism in Pakistan (Petzschmann, 2010).

vii. Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJKP). The outdated colonial legal system consisting of the Police Act 1861 and Police Rules 1934 still governs and regulates Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJKP). There were three types of police in Azad Jammu and Kashmir, police system of the erstwhile Dogra State of Jammu & Kashmir, Indian Police Service replaced by Police Service of Pakistan officers after 1947. In addition to this, Azad Jammu and Kashmir Reserves Police raised in 1952 and AJK rangers in 1963. The Anit-Terrorism Department was established in the year 2023 to fight it and bring to an end to the menace of terrorism (Petzschmann, 2010).

c. Role of Military in Certain Situations

The military operations in Pakistan took their roots after 9/11 in order to ensure internal security and stability against insurgency and militancy. The militancy started in 2007 Swat under the banner of Mullah Faza Ullah. The militancy spread into Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Afridi, 2018). The military had no other option to go against them but to dismantle them. The Following operations were undertaken mentioned blow:



- In 2001-2002 Operation Enduring Freedom (Khan, 2011).
- In 2002-2006 Operation Al Mizan (Khan, 2011).
- In 2008 Operation Zalzala (Khan, 2011).
- In 2007-2009 Operation Sher Dil, Rah-e-Haq and Rah-e-Raast (Khan, 2011).
- In 2009-20010 Operation Rah-e- Nijat (Khan, 2011).
- In 2014 Operation Zarb-e-Azab in Dir and Swat reduced Terrorist incidents (Afzal, 2021).

Despite these operations there is still an uncertain situation crippling the security, which still needs preying eye to understand and respond in an appropriate manner.

d. Role of National Counter Terrorism Authority

National Counter Terrorism Authority was established to perform a number of functions pivoting around counter terrorism and extremism on collaboration with all the relevant stakeholders for building the capacity of the officials of law enforcement agencies, judiciary, prosecution, prison etc vis-à-vis to provide input in policy making (Ahmed, 2020).

National Counter Terrorism Authority is reviewing the National Action Plan on bi annual basis to reflect the progress of the counterparts working on ground. The organization has given its recommendations on National Action Plan in the form of compendium, maintaining the list of 4th schedulers, threat assessments and analysis, intelligence coordination conference, counter terrorism helpline 1717 24/7, terrorism data, profiling of terrorism organization, research on counter terrorism (CT) and Common Vulnerabilities and Exposures (CVE), revised National Action Plan (NAP) portal, CFT policy framework, outreach activities, reviewing relevant laws, and liaising with international entities for facilitating cooperation in CT and CVE areas (Khalid & Kamal, 2020).

e. Role of Ministry of Interior

The National Internal Security Policy 2014-18 and 2018-23 are in place that will assist the government in successfully fighting militancy and eliminating extremism, is currently in the final phases of formulation (Ahmed, 2020).

f. Role of National Security Division

The issues faced are outlined in the National Security Policy of Pakistan 2022–26, which is being implemented by the National Security Division. The primary objective of the policy is to safeguard citizens while also leveraging the mutually beneficial relationship between military, economic, and human security. The Policy tackles the problems that foster the climate of extremism and the weaknesses that exist within society. The National Security Policy of Pakistan is under implementation (Hussain, 2021).

4. Issues and Challenges in the way of countering terrorism and extremism in Pakistan

Pakistan is presently fighting against various militant groups and foreign terrorists within the country vis-à-vis facing an unaccomplished performance of law enforcement agencies to hunt down the existential threat of terrorism. The role of law enforcement agencies handling the terrorism and extremism with multifarious issues have been elaborated alongside with the mandate of these establishments.

a. Fragmented Mandates of Law Enforcement Agencies

There is no reason to assign the task to all the law enforcement agencies to counter terrorism and extremism rather there is a dire need to establish another organization which shall take the lead role in bringing down the curse of our society. Presently the activities of all law enforcement agencies do not help



federal and provincial forces to take effective measures to curb the nib in the bud extremism (Petzschmann, 2010).

b. Legislative Hitches

There are occasions when the Federal Investigation and Counter Terrorism Department take cognizance of terrorism incidents but due to acts mentioned hereinabove the tug of war breeds out and in this way the culprits go free because of jurisdictional problems (Petzschmann, 2010). Moreover, different terrorism laws provide separate procedural authenticities which further complicate the conditions and the terrorism legal regime requires legislative intervention for rectification (Jawad, 2022). There is a need of a single legislation which has a singular ownership over the domain of terrorism and extremism or to have the Anti-Terrorism Act, 1997, Anti-Money Laundering Act, 2010, Prevention Electronic Crimes Act, 2016 with no flaws (Sultan et al., 2022).

c. Absence of Federal Unified Service with Operational Role under the National Counter Terrorism Department

There is no one force responsible for countering terrorism and extremism so many forces and organizations to give a road map is the main cause for the failure of these institutions. One federal institution with operational role with a mandate to carry out the intelligence-based operations across the state (Babakheil, 2023).

d. Absence of Coordination among Federal Investigation Agency, Counter Terrorism Department, Prosecution and Prison because of their mandates

Although it seems to be a proper coordination yet it is not possible in absence of one focal institution. If state establishes one institution having its roots across the nation with its tentacles that can only enable the country's worsening situation and stop the spreading terrorism and extremism (USIP.ORG • SPECIAL REPORT 368).

e. Limited Powers and Functions

One organization is required which shall have powers and functions inculcating international best practices with a single institution. These organizations have their own structures and organogram with different task when all these are combined under one roof that will enable it to carry out the vision of the institution (Babakheil, 2023).

5. Comparison of National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA) of Pakistan and Department of Homeland Security (DHS) of the United States

Following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, Pennsylvania Governor Tom Ridge was named as the first director of the Department of Homeland Security in the White House, with the responsibility of monitoring and preventing future terrorist strikes against the United States. In 2002, the Department of Homeland Security was created through the merger of twenty-two federal departments to have an integrated and a unified state response against any kind of threat the nation. The main reason for establishing the Department of Homeland Security was to save the lives of American people from all types of threats of terrorism with the changing modus operandi of terrorist's organizations and to understand the types of attacks for instance it can be a chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, explosive weapons and cyber-attacks from abroad or home based. The DHS instituted seventy-seven fusion centres, undertook nationwide suspicious activity reporting, had come up with information network wherefrom a sunk data can be accessed, see something say something strategy evolved, trusted traveller program, pre departure vetting,



secure flight, preventing terrorist travelling and enhanced screening. It adopted the national advisory system through which it can ensure bulletins and alerts. Likewise, DHS has real identity card, prevention resource finder, controlling system of weapon of mass destruction, net on keeping check on improvised explosive devices, and creation of centre of prevention program and partnership (Khalid & Kamal, 2020).

On the other hand, the objective of creation of National Counter Terrorism Authority was “to unify state response by planning, combining, coordinating and implementing Government’s policy through an exhaustive strategic planning and necessary mechanism is needed” to eliminate the threat of terrorism and extremism from Pakistan (Mahmood, 2020).

The organizational comparison is given to shed the light on the challenges NACTA faces to accomplish its aims and goals.

a. Foundation and Purpose

- **NACTA:** Established in 2013, NACTA’s primary role is to be a principal body in Pakistan for formulating and implementing counter-terrorism and counter-extremism measures. Its focus is mainly on strategic analysis, policy guidance, and coordination among various elements within the national security framework (National Counter Terrorism Authority Act, 2013).
- **DHS:** Formed in response to the 9/11 attacks, the DHS was established in 2002 with a broad mandate to safeguard the United States from various threats, with a particular emphasis on terrorism. Its responsibilities encompass border security, immigration enforcement, cyber security, and disaster prevention and management (Homeland Security Act, 2002).

b. Operational Scope and Responsibilities:

- **NACTA:** NACTA's operations are more focused on intelligence sharing, policy-making, and coordination among various federal and provincial entities involved in counter-terrorism. It also plays a significant role in countering extremist narratives and ideologies (National Counter Terrorism Authority Act, 2013).
- **DHS:** The DHS has a vast operational scope, managing 22 federal departments and agencies. It deals with a wide array of issues from counter-terrorism, border security, immigration, cyber security, to natural disaster response and management (Homeland Security Act, 2002).

c. Organizational Structure:

- **NACTA:** It operates under the Minister in-charge of Interior Division, ensuring high-level oversight and strategic direction. NACTA, being more focused on strategic aspects, lacks direct operational or law enforcement powers (National Counter Terrorism Authority Act, 2013).
- **DHS:** DHS operates under the direct supervision of the President of the United States and has several operational agencies like the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), Customs and Border Protection (CBP), and the Coast Guard, among others. It has significant law enforcement powers and capabilities (Homeland Security Act, 2002).

d. Challenges and Criticism:

- **NACTA:** It has faced challenges related to resource allocation, jurisdictional overlaps with other law enforcement agencies, and implementation of its policies and strategies (National Counter Terrorism Authority Act, 2013).
- **DHS:** DHS has faced criticism over issues such as immigration policies, the effectiveness of TSA procedures, and concerns over personal privacy in the wake of its cyber security measures (Homeland Security Act, 2002).

e. Impact and Effectiveness:

- **NACTA:** Its effectiveness is often measured by the level of inter-agency coordination it achieves



and its role in shaping Pakistan's counter-terrorism policy (National Counter Terrorism Authority Act, 2013).

- **DHS:** The effectiveness of DHS is multifaceted, evaluated based on its ability to prevent terrorist attacks, manage immigration and border security, and respond to natural disasters (Homeland Security Act, 2002).

It is deduced from the comparison that both National Counter Terrorism Authority and Department of Homeland Security share the common goal of protecting their nations from terrorism and other threats, their operational scopes, organizational structures, and challenges differ significantly due to the distinct political, social, and security landscapes in which they operate.

6. Efficacy and Prospects of National Counter Terrorism Department

The present working is not able to properly meet the challenges and this structure may not benefit the state (USIP.ORG • SPECIAL REPORT 368). There is a need to understand concepts of security studies, security challenges, regional security, security governance (Cavelty et al., 2016; Williams, 2021), physical security, cyber security, critical infrastructure, national defense (Masys, 2022), terrorism approaches, its nature, causes, state terrorism, and contemporary responses to terrorism to effectively combat the terrorism and extremism (Jackson, Richard, 2016). In the long run the state would need to formulate its policies in line with the new concepts of security such as civilization security, bio politics of security, identity security, financial security, food security, environmental security, energy security, security technologies, security and ethics (Burgess, 2010; Peoples, & Vaughan-Williams, 2020) vis-à-vis private security (Abrahamsen & Leander, 2015), international security (Hough et al., 2015), military studies (Soeters et al., 2014), international security, religion and security (Seiple et al., 2013), media conflict and security studies (Robinson et al., 2016), like Asian (Carpenter et al., 2005) European Security (Biscop & Richard, 2013), and Middle East demand along with other global security concerns in the changing circumstance (Jägerskog et al., 2019).

There is a need to adopt a new structure that is all encompassing in its form and nature which can go after any challenge such as finding root causes and the institution shall be in a position to come up with a cooperative and collaborative approach (Lodhi, 2002). The creation of National Counter Terrorism Department will ensure that terrorism is a federal subject and that is to be dealt by one intuition (Babakheil, 2023). The restructured National Counter Terrorism Department shall have similar footprints like Department of Homeland Security vis-à-vis is in a position to learn from the Counter Terrorism apparatuses across the globe in wake of rising terrorism and extremism. The National Counter Terrorism Department shall also exercise the functions under section of the National Counter Terrorism Authority Act, 2013 as well as adopt the strategies from the National Counterterrorism Centre of the United States, the International Centre for Counter Terrorism and Royal United Service Institute of the United Kingdom.

The efficacy and prospect of creating a National Counter Terrorism Department will ensure that there is one focal organization which will be dealing with all types of terrorism activities so much so coming up with state narratives and counter narrative, implementations of laws would be its domain with promising the nation to have a safer Pakistan.

7. Research Methodology

This research study aims to understand the rationale behind successful counterterrorism initiatives implemented by the state. The study will specifically focus on how these initiatives addressed the root



causes of terrorism, which previously hampered effective responses. This focus will allow us to learn valuable lessons for future preparedness.

The research will employ a qualitative approach, drawing insights from various sources. These sources will include model organization websites, relevant academic books and journals, news publications, and potentially interviews with key stakeholders involved in these initiatives. By analyzing these diverse materials, the study will gain a comprehensive understanding of the strategic thinking behind effective counterterrorism efforts.

8. Conclusion

To encapsulate the discourse, it is evident that Pakistan is poised at a critical crossroads, and the establishment of the National Counter Terrorism Department Act emerges as an indispensable strategy to confront new and unforeseen challenges. The nation faces a myriad of complexities, including fragmented approaches, a lack of cohesive coordination, and overlapping jurisdictional issues. To effectively manoeuvre through these intricacies, Pakistan requires a robust and supportive legal framework, coupled with proactive policies and an unwavering commitment to innovative principles of organization, accountability, and coordination.

As Pakistan embarks on this journey, a collaborative paradigm is crucial. This involves an integrated effort that bridges government initiatives with strategic stability measures. Embracing digital transformation and consolidating counter-terrorism efforts under a singular, focused institution are pivotal steps towards addressing the multifaceted nature of terrorism and extremism.

The path forward for Pakistan is not merely about responding to immediate threats; it is about establishing a resilient and sustainable framework for the future. This involves adapting to evolving challenges and ensuring that the nation's counter-terrorism and extremism measures are not only robust and comprehensive but also agile and forward-thinking. By doing so, Pakistan can secure a future marked by stability, security, and prosperity for its citizens.

9. Recommendations for the Establishment of the National Counter Terrorism Department

a. Legislative Enactment:

The current National Counter Terrorism Authority Act, 2013 should be superseded by a comprehensive parliamentary legislation, titled the National Counter Terrorism Department Act, to establish a more centralized and effective counter-terrorism framework.

b. Prime Ministerial Oversight:

Position the National Counter Terrorism Department (NCTD) directly under the auspices of the Prime Minister's Office to ensure high-level oversight, streamlined decision-making, and enhanced accountability.

c. National Scope and Jurisdiction:

The National Counter Terrorism Department should operate on a national level, tasked with investigating and prosecuting offenses that jeopardize Pakistan's sovereignty, security, and integrity, including those related to international treaties, UN resolutions, and global conventions.

d. Operational Responsibilities:

Empower the National Counter Terrorism Department with comprehensive operational, investigative, and supervisory responsibilities nationwide, focusing on counter-terrorism and anti-extremism measures.

e. Applicability across Pakistan:



The jurisdiction of the National Counter Terrorism Department Act should extend throughout Pakistan, applying universally to all provinces and territories.

f. Extraterritorial Application:

The Act should also be applicable to Pakistani nationals residing abroad, government employees, and individuals on Pakistani-registered ships and aircraft, regardless of their location.

g. Provincial Integration:

The National Counter Terrorism Department should absorb the Counter Terrorism Departments of all provinces and of special areas governments, with their personnel being integrated into the federal civil service to create a unified national counter-terrorism body.

h. Leadership Structure:

The Department should be led by a National Coordinator, responsible for overseeing its strategic direction and operational effectiveness.

i. Continuation of Precedent Functions:

The National Counter Terrorism Department should retain and expand upon the functions previously assigned under the National Counter Terrorism Authority Act, 2013, adapting them to contemporary challenges and evolving threats.

These recommendations aim to forge a robust, centralized, and efficient counter-terrorism department, equipped to address the multifaceted nature of terrorism and extremism in Pakistan. By streamlining efforts under a unified command, Pakistan can enhance its resilience against security threats and reinforce its national integrity.

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