A DESCRIPTIVE ASSESSMENT OF SUICIDE ATTACKS IN PAKISTAN

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Abstract

Suicide bombing is one of the ugliest and the most menacing forms of terrorism plaguing Pakistan. The person blowing himself up is merely a tool and it is not possible to devise a fool-proof mechanism to foil every suicide bombing attempt. Clearly identifying the factors that make the bomber commit this heinous act is the key to uprooting this evil. Many reasons and explanations have been put forth by government officials, law enforcement personnel, academics and other sections of the society. Without a doubt, it is a very complex issue which has its roots in a number of factors including religious extremism, foreign intervention, political instability, economic conditions, poverty, etc. Several studies have identified that the youth of the tribal areas from where most suicide bombers are recruited, are driven by a set of factors including hatred of government policies, lack of education, unemployment and the severe lack of basic amenities. The present study evaluated the data on such incidents in Pakistan from 2001to 2009 by applying the descriptive statistical techniques. The data on such attacks as per Islamic calendar showed a systematic pattern however the trend does not indicate the retaliation within the different sects of the religion. The study highlights the need to find out the country specific reasons of such attacks.

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Introduction

There may have been differences in the formal definition of suicide attacks however the common element is this regard is the probability of the death faced by the attacker. Any attack cannot be treated as a suicide attack unless the probability of death faced by the attacker is 1 or very close to 1. This factor differentiates suicide attacks from the rest of all forms of violence. The motivation factor for such attackers is one of the key elements to know in order to counter such attacks. The motivation factors behind these attacks may vary region to region. Whatever the motivations may be, the fact of the matter is that these attacks cannot be countered with the counter terrorism forces alone[1]. There are numerous studies on the subject, that attempt to explain the root causes of suicide attacks however the quest of the causes is still going on. The suicide attacks are treated on case to case basis. The suicide attackers are the heroes in some cases and Villains in the other. A common element is most of such cases is that the suicide attacker aims to achieve a target, which is superior to his life in his eyes. Keeping the definition of suicide attack (based on the probability of death) the first suicide attack in the documented history of the world is reported in the holy Bible. The story of Samson (a positive character according to the Bible) ended on his suicide attack when he freed the Israelis from Philistines[2]. The Kamikazes are the heroes of Japanese history because of their suicide attack on the American Pacific fleet in the World War II.[3]

The modern wave of suicide attacks started in December 1981, when the Iraqi embassy in Beirut was under attack. 27 persons killed and around 100 were injured in that attack. From 1983 to 2001, there have been at least 188 incidences of suicide attacks all over the world. Even though the Western media focuses more to the Muslim groups in case of suicide terrorism however the data on suicide terrorism tells a different story. 75 suicide attacks from 1980 to 2001 are attributed to be the activity of a single group, Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. This group is based on Marxist/Leninist ideology[4]. The phenomenon of suicide terrorism in general and suicide bombing in particular is a burning issue of the twenty first century. The trend of modern suicide attacks can be dived into two distinct periods; the pre 9/11 period and the post 9/11 period because such attacks increased exponentially after 9/1.[5]

Objectives of the study

- To assess the history of suicide attacks in Pakistan.
- To assess the causes of suicide attacks in Pakistan

[1] Atran, S (2004). Mishandling Suicide Terrorism, Washington Quarterly, 27-3, pp-67-90.
[2] Bible, Judges 16: pp.28-30
[3] Madsen, J (2004). Suicide Terrorism: Rationalizing the Irrational, *Strategic Insights*, Volume III, Issue 8.
[4] Pape, R (2003). The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism, American Political Science, 97, pp.343-361.
[5] Crenshaw, M (2007). Explaining Suicide Terrorism: A Review Essay. Security Studies 16- 1, pp.133–162.

History of Suicide Terrorism

Historically, the use of suicide attacks by terrorists dates back to ancient times. Terrorist suicide attacks are not a new method. In fact, suicide attacks are a very old modus operandi. In ancient times two notorious sects, the Jewish Sicairis and the Islamic Hashishiyun became infamous for such attacks. In the eighteenth century, suicide tactics were used on the Malabar Coast of southwestern India, in Atjeh in Northern Sumatra and in Mindanao and Sulu in the Southern Philippines.

Simultaneous suicide and homicide has been employed as an act of warfare since ancient times. In the Middle Ages the Jewish Sicairis and Islamic Hashishiyun sects were infamous for such attacks. In the eighteenth century suicide–homicide tactics were used in India, Sumatra and the Philippines, and in the 20th century the Japanese launched kamikaze attacks during the Second World War.

Another group, the Muslim Assassins (also known as Ismailis-Nazari) that operated in the eleventh through the thirteenth centuries, conducted suicide missions. Although they did not have Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) that could be used to kill both their victims and themselves simultaneously, they conducted their operations that ensured their death as part of the mission. They used daggers to kill their victims, usually prominent officials, in public places where there were many witnesses. This assured publicity of their acts. The group's description of these assassins as "fedayeen," which means consecrated ones and their admiration for martyrdom during these attacks mirrors some actions of Islamic terrorist organizations today.[6]

Muslim communities in Asia from the eighteenth through the early twentieth centuries experienced suicide operations too. Muslims in regions of Southwestern India, Northern Sumatra, and in the Southern Philippines used suicide attacks to punish and instill fear in the European colonial powers. Prior to these attacks, the attackers participated in religious rituals believing they would be seen as martyrs as they sacrificed their lives for their cause. In each case, the suicide attacks against civilians followed unsuccessful warfare against a more powerful European military force.[7]

After the invention of dynamite in the late nineteenth century, terrorists began using bombs in their attacks. Groups, such as the Narodnaya Volya (People's Will) in Russia, used suicide bombers to get close to their victims since these early devices were not the most effective.

In October of the same year a suicide bomber detonated a truck full of explosives at the U.S. Marine Corps barracks located at Beirut International Airport killing 220 U.S. Marines and 21 other U.S. service members. On the same day, a separate blast on the French compound in Beirut killed 58 French service members. These attacks resulted in

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[6] Rohan Gunaratna, "Suicide Terrorism: a Global Threat," in "Suicide Terrorism in Sri Lanka" IPCS Research Papers, No. 5, R. Ramasubramanian (August 2004), p.3.

[7] Audrey Kurth Cronin, Terrorists and Suicide Attacks (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service Report for Congress, 28 August 2003), p.2.

the withdrawal of Western forces from Lebanon. Hezbollah then started using suicide attacks against the Israeli Defense Force in Lebanon and against South Lebanese Army posts.[8] Although Hezbollah was a relatively unknown group at this time, their introduction of suicide attacks allowed the group to gain global publicity, with their willingness to sacrifice themselves for their cause.

After the actions by Hezbollah, suicide terrorism spread throughout the world becoming a frequently used tactic by many terrorist organizations. Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad started suicide attacks in Israel in 1993, killing and wounding hundreds of people. Although they focused their initial attacks against military targets, they quickly changed tactics to targeting civilians. Gama'a al-Islamiya and the Egyptian Islamic Jihad, both Egyptian terror groups, have also conducted suicide attacks, but not in Egypt itself due to their reluctance to alienate their constituency in Egypt. Gama'a al-Islamiya attacked a police station in Croatia in October 1995 and the Egyptian Islamic Jihad used two suicide bombers to destroy the Egyptian embassy in Pakistan in November 1995. After military setbacks in Southeast Turkey negatively impacted the group's moral in 1996, the Kurdistan Worker's Party (PKK) began to use suicide attacks to boost the morale of its fighters. Not only did these attacks show the PKK's ability to damage their opponents, but also demonstrated their willingness to die for Kurdish national goals.

The Tamil Tigers (LTTE) in Sri Lanka, however, are recognized as the most effective and brutal organization to utilize this form of terrorism. The LTTE has a suicide unit, The Black Panthers that consists of both men and women that direct their attacks primarily against senior government and military personnel. Between July 1987 and February 2000, the LTTE carried out approximately 168 suicide attacks in Sri Lanka and India killing and wounding thousands of innocent bystanders. Additionally, it is the only organization that succeeded in assassinating two heads of states. Former Prime Minister of India Rajiv Gandhi was killed in May 1991 by a female suicide bomber and Sri Lanka President Prendesa was killed in 1993 by a male suicide bomber who had lived at the president's premises for about a year prior to conducting the suicide attack.[9]

Al-Qaeda is probably the terrorist group that Americans are most familiar with today. Their use of suicide terrorism may not be as prolific as some other groups, but they do have a history of conducting the "spectacular" event resulting in large-scale casualties. They were responsible for the suicide attacks on the U.S. Embassies in Nairobi and in Dr-esalaam in 1998, the USS Cole in Aden Harbor in 2000, and the World Trade Centre and Pantagon attacks in September 2001

In short, suicide terrorism has been on a continuous incline over the past 20 years. From compelling both the Americans and the French to leave Lebanon in 1983, to concessions granted to the Tamil Tigers by Sri Lanka, terrorists groups have learned that it often results in success. Consequently, many of the terrorist leaders credit their gains to the use

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[8] Yoram Schweitzer, "Suicide Terrorism: Development & Characteristics," International Policy Institute for Counter-Terrorism Article (21 April 2000)

[9] DCSINT Handbook No.103, Suicide Bombing in the COE, 10th August 2006, pp.1-4

of suicide terrorism, which probably has encouraged terrorist groups to expand the use of suicide attacks.[10]
The last decade of Pakistan's history has witnessed some of the worst bloodshed due to the rise of suicide bombings all across the country. From a few isolated incidents in the 80s and 90s, suicide bombings have become the weapon of choice for extremist groups. The suicide attacks have been progressively increasing in numbers and ferocity since 2001.(see table 1)

The targets of these attacks initially were security forces and government establishment, but over time this has become a 'nothing is off-limits' game. The suicide bombers have been attacking shops, mosques, funeral processions, shrines, educational institutions and several other 'soft' targets. The army and law-enforcement personnel are no longer the only casualties; it now includes women, children, and elderly as well. Suicide bombings have historically been used as a means to resist foreign military occupation, but this is not the case in Pakistan because there is no direct military occupation. The targets of the bombings are mostly state authorities, US interests and religious/sectarian. The operation in Lal Masjid was the turning point for these bombings because after that the extremists came down hard on the state and the military operation in the tribal areas of Waziristan and Swat only escalated it.[11]

Causes of Suicide Attacks in Pakistan

The factors that make the bomber commit this heinous act are the key to uprooting this evil. Many reasons and explanations have been put forth by government officials, law enforcement personnel, academics and other sections of the society. Without a doubt, it is a very complex issue which has its roots in a number of factors including religious extremism, foreign intervention, political instability, economic conditions, poverty, and hatred of government policies, lack of education, unemployment and the severe lack of basic amenities etc.

According to psychologist Maxwell Taylor (New York Times, 1988), have tried to address what motivates terrorists or to explain personal characters of terrorists, on the supposition that terrorists can be recognized by these attributes. Conversely, although an understanding of the terrorist state of mind would be the key to understanding how and why an individual turns into a terrorist, numerous psychologists have been not capable to sufficiently define it. Indeed, there appears to be a common agreement among psychologists who have studied the topic that there is no one terrorist state of mind. This view, though, itself needs to be elucidated.

Religious extremism is cited as one of the primary reasons for the rise of terrorism, especially suicide bombings in Pakistan. It is true to some extent that the distorted religious information fed to the impressionable recruits helps in motivating and recruiting the suicide bombers, but beyond that, social and cultural factors also play an important

[10] Ibid.
[11] http://www.ict.org.il/articles/articledet.cfm?articleid=112intenet; accessed 10th November 2004

part in the decision of the recruit to commit for the gruesome task. There are several other factors also at play, such as:

- Many would be suicide bombers experience a lack of personal identity and the strong religious influence in their environment fills the gap so that their religious identity takes the driving seat.
- The 'war on terror' has created a shared identification among the Muslims all across the globe. They identify with the misery and the plight of their brethren and develop a strong sense of resentment and anger towards the western powers and their allies. This sense of brotherhood makes the jobs of the masterminds easy when recruiting the young bombers.
- The military might and the endless resources of the western countries involved in the war on terror create a sense of desperation which suggests that it is not possible to fight these powers one-on-one. Therefore, the only methods left are such extreme activities that can cause significant damage at a lower human cost.
- Revenge is another strong motivator; the Pakistani government's war against terror has created a lot of personal tragedies. Countless families have lost one or more members of the family. It becomes very easy for the recruiters to convince the vengeful and desperate young men to not only exact their revenge, but also find their way to heaven.

Review of Literature

There are numerous studies on the different dimensions of suicide attacks and attackers. The review of some selected studies is presented below.

Madsen (2004) discussed the different aspects of suicide terrorism. The study discussed that the planners of such attacks are not irrational as they are generally perceived. Suicide attack is probably the most efficient mode of action that can cause maximum damage at minimum cost. These attacks are carried out at the places of high priority and the timing of such attacks is flexible that ensures maximum damage. This time flexibility advantage is not possible in case of applying the other methods like time bomb. The study concludes that the different organizations would continue to use suicide attacks as an efficient technique whenever face powerful enemy. The situation can be controlled by removing the conflicts within and across nations as these conflicts leads to the growth of using suicide attacks as an efficient technique.[12]

Pape (2006) opposes some major assumptions regarding suicide attacks round the world. The author stated that most of these assumptions are failed to get support from the comprehensive data set of Chicago Project from the Defense Threat Reduction Agency, Department of Defense. The data failed to support that the suicide bombing has its links with religion as the leading suicide attackers as well as the majority of all suicide attackers were found to have secular identities. In order to counter the author presented a military strategy for the Persian Gulf named as "off shore balancing".[13]

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[12] Madsen, J(2004). Suicide Terrorism: Rationalizing the Irrational, Strategic Insights, Volume III-8.

[13] Pape, R (2006). Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism, Australian Army Journal, 3-3, pp.25-37.

Berman and Laitin (2006) empirically analyze the differences between the approaches adopted by civil war insurgents and suicide bombers. The study used three data sets of around fifty years and applied descriptive and inferential statistical methods. The authors found that the civil insurgents generally do not use suicide attack as a technique of achieving their objectives. The insurgents generally target poor countries however the suicide bombers do not. The authors found that the suicide attacks have an association with the radical religious groups in the countries they studied.[14]

Benmelech and Berrebi (2007) empirically evaluated the relationship between human capital of the attacker and the outcomes of their suicide attacks. The study used a data set consisted of the suicide attack by Palestinians against Israel from 2000 to 2005. The study concluded that the suicide attacker with more human capital is more destructive than his counterpart with less human capital.[15]

Freytag et. al (2010) discusses the socio-economic factors that cause or may cause terrorist activities. The study employed a negative binomial regression model and found that the factors that adversely affect the socio-economic conditions of a region are in fact reducing the opportunity cost of participation in a terrorist activity. The reduced opportunity cost may instigate a person to participate in that activity even being a rational decision maker. Moreover, the same process continues even after a certain level of development in the region. In this way, the study divided the geographical regions into several groups namely OECD, Europe and Islamic countries.[16]

Nojumi, Neamatollah, 2002. They act in the faith that they will go straight to heaven, where they will get places of honor next to God. Most of the bombers are associated to the Palestinian militant groups Hamas or Islamic Jihad. Such attacks are, according to psychoanalysts, planned scrupulously, along the lines of a military operation. In some cases, hold up teams transport the bomber by van or car to the location minutes before the explosion. Psychologist describes six psychological types who would be most possible to threaten: paranoids, paranoid schizophrenics, average mental defectives, schizophrenic types, passive-aggressive character types, and sociopath personalities. Some thinks sociopaths the most possible actually in suicide bomber. They points out that large-scale distribution of chemical, biological, or radiological agents need a group effort, but that "Schizophrenics, in particular, frequently have complicatedness functioning in groups.[17]
According to psychologist the most unsafe terrorist is possible to be the religious terrorist. Post has gave details that, not like the average political or social terrorist, who has a distinct mission that is to some extent measurable in terms of media concentration or government reaction, the sacred terrorist can give good reason for the most heinous

[14] Berman, E and Laitin, D. D (2006). Hard Targets: Theory and Evidence on Suicide Attacks, NBER Paper No. 11740.
[15] Benmelech, E and Berrebi, C (2007). Human Capital and the Productivity of Suicide Bombers, Journal of Economic Perspectives, 21- 3, pp 223-38.
[16] Freytag, A., Kruger, J. J and Meierrieks, D (2010). The Origins of Terrorism: Cross-Country Estimates on Socio-Economic Determinants of Terrorism, Economics of Security Working Paper 27.
[17] Nojumi, Neamatollah. 2002 The Rise of the Taliban in Afghanistan: Mass Mobilization, Civil War, and the Future of the Region. New York, Palgrave, p.260

acts "in the name of Allah," for instance. One could add, "in the name of Aum Shinrikyo's Shoko Asahara.[18]

Suicide Attacks in Pakistan

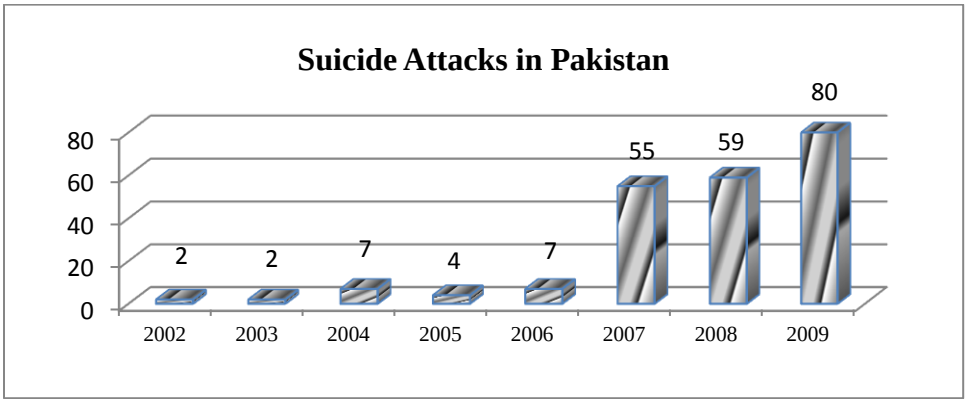
On 17 March 2002, the grenade attack on a church in Islamabad was the first suicide attack in the Pakistan in which five persons were killed including the Sri Lankan high commissioner to Pakistan. In the same year, on 8th of May, 2002, the country faced the second suicide attack in Karachi that led to the killing of 14 persons including 9 French engineers who were participating in the sales deal of Agosta submarines to Pakistan. This was the beginning of a new trend of violence that grew exponentially with the passage of time and the process is still going on.

Table 1

Suicide Attacks since 2001-2009		
Year	2001 to 2008	2009
Total attacks	130	86
Total death	1883	1217
Total wounded	3819	2305

Sources; CPLC

Chart 1



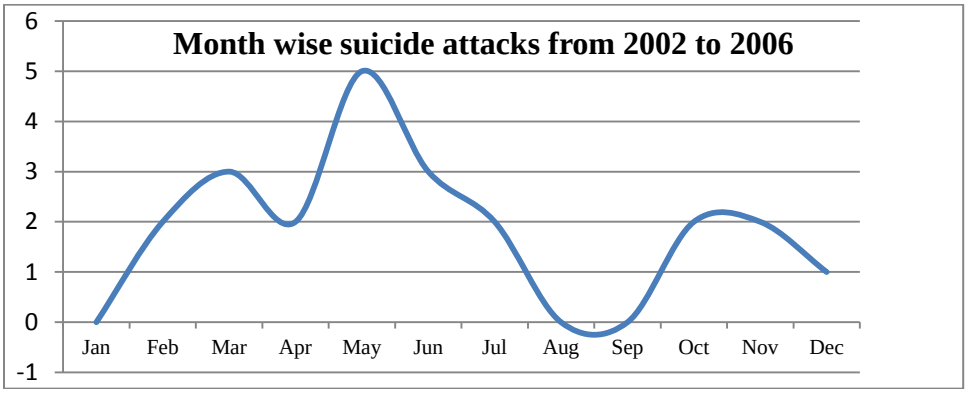
Source: National Crises Management Cell

The phenomenon of suicide attacks is not as old as it is generally understood. Before 2002, the data shows no such thing as a suicide attack in Pakistan however the in the last 8 years period, these suicide attacks have become an unfortunate reality in Pakistan. The bar diagram shows that these attacks remained very low from 2002 to 2006 however they grew almost 8 times between 2006 to 2007. The data before 2007 shows increasing and decreasing yearly movement however from 2007 onwards, the data shows a smooth increasing trend.

[18] Peter. 2002, The Taliban: War and Religion in Afghanistan. New York, Zed Books,. p.162

As the chart 1 clearly divides the suicide attacks into two time periods on the basis of the frequency of suicide attacks. It is therefore pertinent to analyze the month wise trend of these attacks into two different time periods. The graph 1 shows the month wise trend of these attacks from 2002 to 2006.

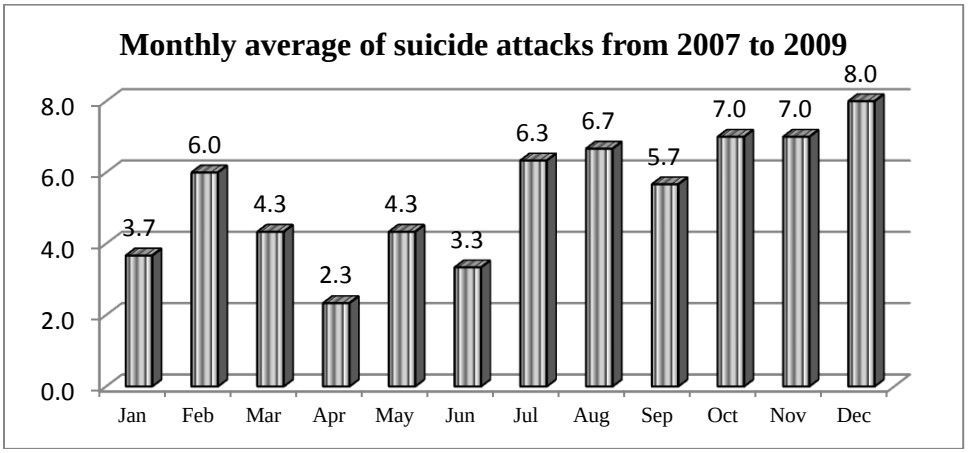
Graph 1



Source: National Crises Management Cell

The attacks from 2002 to 2006 started smoothly. Eventhough the total number of such attacks in the five year period were 22, the starting and ending months of an year showed none or very few of such attacks. The suicide attacks reached to the peak in the month of May, than declined consistantly from June to August and remained zero in September. Though it starts increasing afterward however the year end is revealed to be the attack declining period. The month wise trend of suicide attack from 2007 to 2009 period is presented in the chart 2.

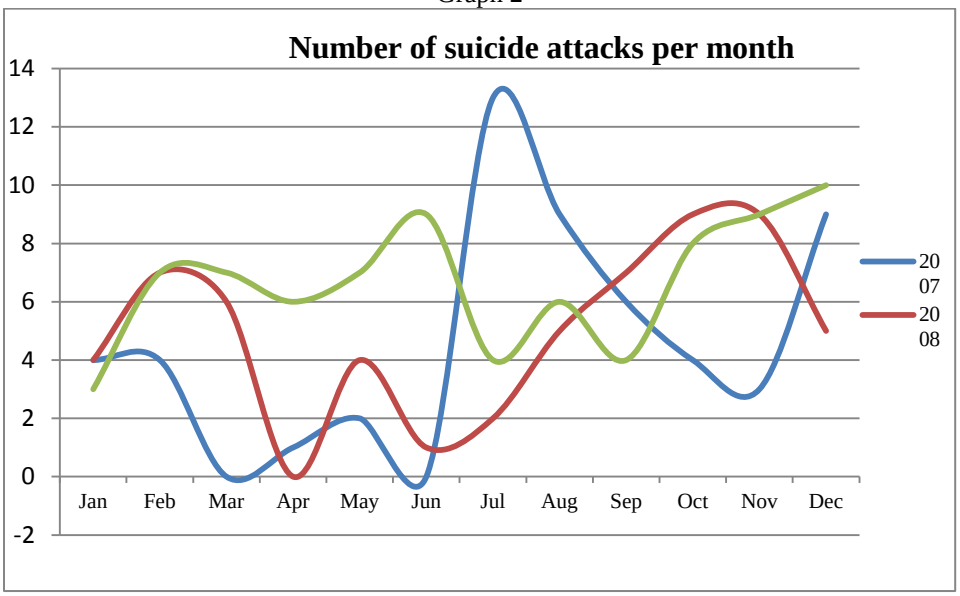
Chart 2



Source: National Crises Management Cell

There is a change in the frequency s well as in the timing of suicide attacks in the period 2007-09. The chart shows that the yearend which was the suicide attack declining period in 2002-07 data, become the period of extensive suicide attacks in 2007-09 period. The month of April is found to be the relatively safest and December is found to be relatively dangerous month in the context of suicide attacks. February, July, August, October and November are almost equally sensitive months in this context from 2007 to 2009. The half yearly period of July to December is revealed to exhibit smooth and consistent trend of suicide attacks. The graph 2 compares the month wise trend of suicide attack from the period 2007 to 2009.

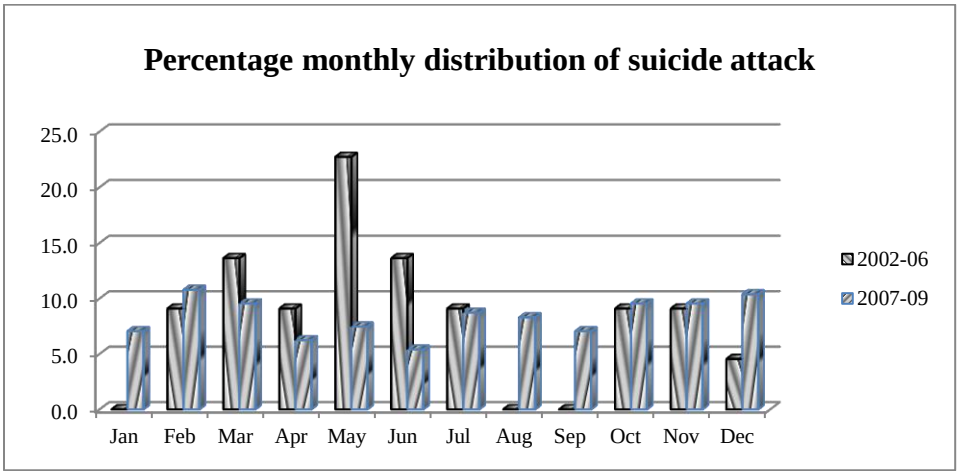
Graph 2



Source: National Crises Management Cell

The suicide attacks in 2007exhibits more variation. The trend shows that the attacks peaked in the month of July, preceded by zero and followed by nine suicide attacks in June and August respectively. Though 2007 ended on nine attacks however the year 2008 started with relatively better situation. The absolute number of suicide attacks have been increasing year by year and even more alarming thing, that can be seen is that these attacks are becoming less variant and evenly distributed round the year. This is probably the reason why the people become less responsive of these attacks in their daily routine. The percentage monthly distribution of such attacks in the period 2002-06 and 2007-09 is presented in the chart 3.

Chart 3



Source: National Crises Management Cell

Though the series of suicide attacks started in 2007 outnumbered the attacks from 2002-06 period in terms of absolute values however these two series of attacks are comparable in terms of their percentage monthly distribution round the year. The alarming thing in the trend is that the series of attacks in 2007-09 are more stable and evenly distributed round the year. The table 1 compares the statistical characteristics of month wise suicide attacks from 2002 to 2009.

Table 1

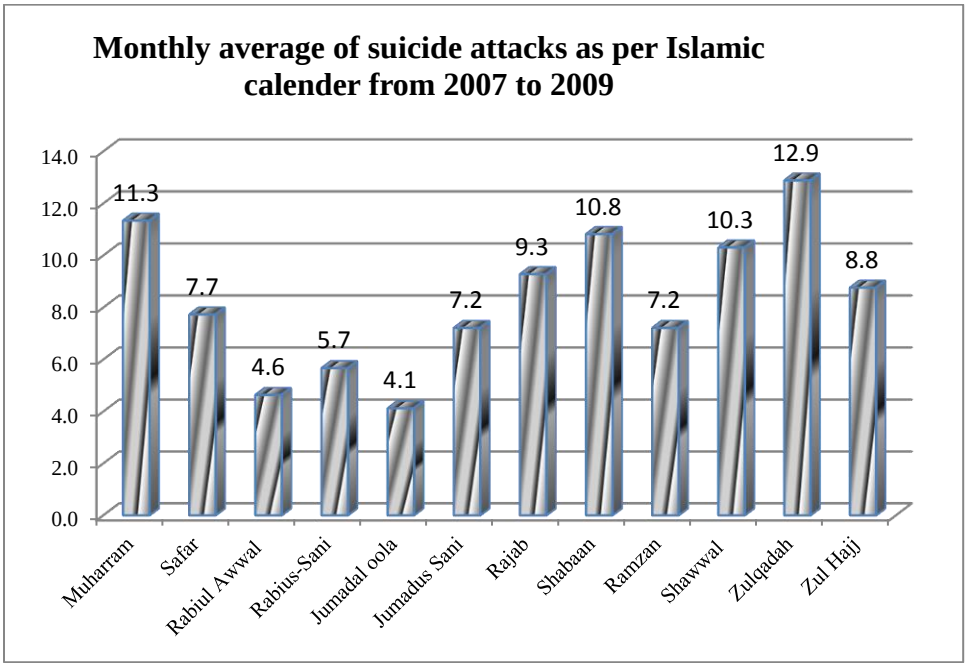
Statistical characteristics of suicide attacks per month					
	Mean	S.D	COV	Min	Max
2002	0.17	0.39	233.55	0	1
2003	0.17	0.39	233.55	0	1
2004	0.58	0.79	135.94	0	2
2005	0.33	0.65	195.40	0	2
2006	0.58	0.79	135.94	0	2
2007	4.58	4.01	87.50	0	13
2008	4.92	2.91	59.11	0	9
2009	6.67	2.19	32.82	3	10

Source: Authors' estimation

The table compares the month wise average (Mean), Standard deviation (S.D), Coefficient of variation (COV), Minimum (Min) and Maximum (Max) of the suicide attacks on monthly basis. The table shows that the month wise average of such attacks

has an overall upward movement and the coefficient of variation has been sharply declined in the overall period. This indicates that the trend has been increasing in an organized and systematic manner and becoming more consistent year by year. In order to observe any religious trend in the data, the chart 4 presents the monthly average of suicide attacks from 2007 to 2009 as per Islamic calendar.

Chart 4



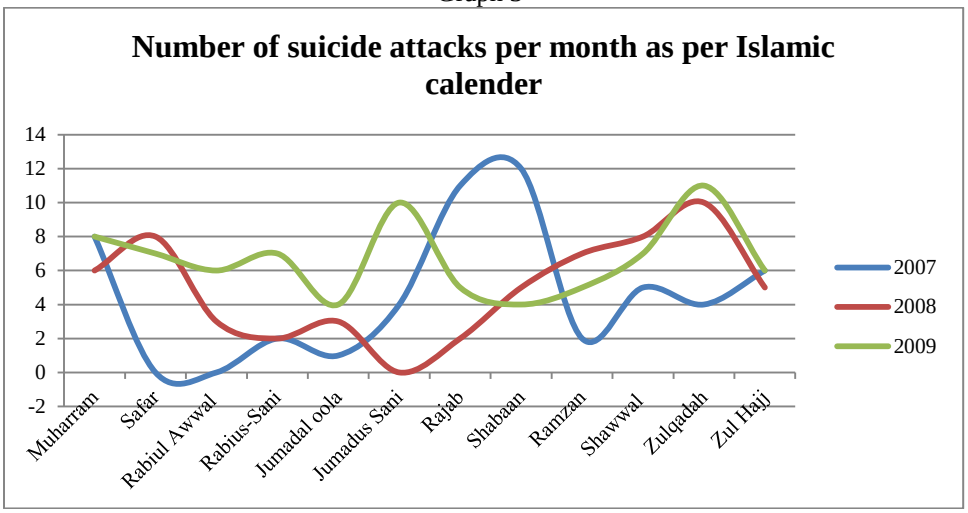
Source: National Crises Management Cell

Suicide attacks as per Islamic calendar

The chart shows Jumadal oola as the safest month on an average and the Zulqadah as the most sensitive month of Islamic calendar from the suicide attack perspective. Muharram is the second most sensitive month in this regard and Rabi-ul-awwal is the second safest month of Islamic calendar from 2007 to 2009[19]. The second half of the Islamic calendar from Rajab till Zul Hajj showed a relatively consistent pattern of suicide attacks. Graph 3 compares the month wise suicide attacks from 2007 to 2009 as per Islamic calendar in order to observe the yearly trend of such attacks.

[19] In 2010 however, there were 9 suicide attacks in Rabi-ul-awwal, preceeded and followed by 4 suicibe attacks in the months of Safar ans Rabius Sani respectively.

Graph 3



Source: Authors' conversion of National Crises Management Cell data

The graph show that in 2007, the suicide attacks peaked in the month of Rajab and Shabaan with 12 attacks. In 2008, the attacks peaked in Zulqadah with 10 attacks and in 2009, the maximum number of suicide attacks (11 attacks) were also in the month of Zulqadah. The graph shows a right word movement in the peak of these attacks.[20] Safar and Rabi-ul-awwal were the safest months in 2007 with none of such attacks throughout the month. Jamadus Sani was the safest month in 2008 with none of such attacks in the whole month. Jamadal oola and Shabaan were the relatively safest months with 4 of such attacks each month. The overall trend indicates that year by year, peak has been becoming bottom and vice versa. One of the most sensitive Islamic months Shabaan in 2007 became one of the safest month in 2009. One of the safest months Rabi-ul-awwal in 2007 with none of such attacks faced 6 attacks in 2009 and 9 attacks in 2010. (The highest in this year so far). If this trend is continues, the month of Muharram is expected to be relatively safest month while Rabi-ul-awwal and Jamadus Sani can be sensitive months of Islamic calendar in the coming two or three years.

Research Methodology

In the present research, methodology includes Secondary data analysis. For collection of secondary data a verity of sources were helpful for gathering data including various international reports, issued by United Nations, books various periodic publications, Articles, News papers, journals, National Crises Management Cell, and CPLC reports from 2001 to 2009.

[20] The peak moved to Rabi-ul-awwal with 9 attacks in 2010 as per an updated data set.

Then evaluated the data on such incidents in Pakistan from 2001to 2009 by applying the descriptive statistical techniques and presented in simple tables, charts and graphs. The data on such attacks as per Islamic calendar showed a systematic pattern.

Conclusion

The phenomenon of suicide terrorism is a new phenomenon in Pakistan however the data shows that it has been increasing in an organized and systematic manner. The data shows that month wise average of these attacks has been increasing while variations in such attacks have been sharply declining. This declining in the variations of such attacks is one of the reasons why people are becoming less responsive of such attacks.

Some of the social scientists argue that suicide attacks have none or very low relation with any religion rather are serving as a powerful tool of achieving the goals pertaining to the political, social, economic and international cascade effects . The data on Pakistan also indicates the possibility of such situation as the data does not indicate the evidences of retaliation in the context of sectarian violence within the religious groups or the inter religion violence.

The month wise data on suicide attacks as per Islamic calendar shows a trend of changing the peaks and trough of such attacks. There is a need to evaluate the different dimensions and the related links of such attack in order to find out the country specific reasons of the attacks. Without knowing the country specific causes of such attacks, the quest for peace through guns could prove to be less effective.

Recommendations:

The Pakistani government has been trying hard to curb terrorism in general and suicide bombings specifically, but the increase in the frequency and ferocity of these acts clearly indicates that the efforts of the government are falling short. In order to effectively address this problem the government needs to take some of the following steps:

- Instead of using religious extremism as the scapegoat, acknowledge the socioeconomic factors mentioned above that are among the driving forces behind suicide bombings.

- Enhance the operational capabilities of the law enforcement agencies by providing them with the training and equipment necessary to stop these attacks.

- Engage the civil society, especially the clergy and religious scholars, so that they can reach out to the masses in the areas from where the bombers are recruited and educate them about the folly of this act. Many religious scholars have categorically denounced suicide bombings which help to counter the propaganda of the extremists.

It is encouraging to see that the majority of the public does not support the suicide attacks which shows that continued efforts to raise awareness can be helpful in this fight.

The definite solution for this problem is to eliminate the root causes of the problem. As long as the Pakistani government fails to acknowledge the root causes of this problem, the human bombs will keep decimating the innocent people.