

# “Military Islamism, Moderate Liberalism And Theater Development In Pakistan”

Yu Hao<sup>1</sup>, Tahir Mahmood<sup>2</sup>

## Abstract

*This article examines the relationship between Pakistani theatrical growth, moderate liberalism, and military Islamism. The intricate relationships between more liberal, secular forces and traditional religious views have molded Pakistan's cultural environment throughout the years. Historically, the military has shaped public policy and cultural expression by frequently aligning itself with Islamic forces in the nation's politics. As a result, there is now censorship and a closed atmosphere surrounding cultural pursuits, such as theater, which is frequently seen as a kind of social and political criticism. But moderate liberalism has endured as a counter-narrative, supporting progressive concepts and cultural advancement, in spite of these obstacles. <sup>1</sup>The evolution of theater in Pakistan has been greatly impacted by this conflict between Islamism and liberalism, as performers have had to negotiate censorship, social expectations, and ideological differences. In order to examine how political and ideological influences have both hampered and encouraged dramatic creativity, the article explores significant historical moments and significant people in Pakistani theater. It also looks at how Pakistani modern theater practitioners are recreating the genre while striking a balance between tradition and modernity in the framework of a changing national identity. This essay explores the relationship between political Islam, liberal thought, and theater in order to shed light on Pakistan's larger cultural problems and emphasize the importance of the arts in promoting critical thinking and conversation in a nation riven by ideological divisions. This article also explore the theatre development during two military dictators in Pakistan- General Zia-ul-Haq and Pervaiz Musharraf.*

**Key words:** Islamism, Military, Liberalism, Theatre, Pakistan.

## Introduction

The postcolonial Indian subcontinent got acquainted with literature, creative writing, music, performing arts, art design, and dance because theater offered a plethora of intellectual and artistic forms to be presented on a single platform. The British colonial era is particularly significant since it was during this period that artistic arts were recognized as the vehicle for modern intellectual progress (Ahmed, Tahir & Bhatti, 2022). Then theatre was developed and later on by local artists and actors. Theatre history has seen a number of ups and downs from its beginning till today. In the beginning it was considered to be liberal and westernized. Another development during the same period was of decline in the progressive and experimental theaters in Pakistan. The vibrant and progressive theater scene, which had

---

<sup>1</sup>. PhD scholar, Department of History and Pakistan Studies, University of the Punjab, Quaid-e-Azam Campus, Lahore, Punjab. Lecturer, Department of Media and Film, Huanggang Normal University, Huanggang, Hubei, China.

<sup>2</sup>. Professor, Department of History and Pakistan Studies, University of the Punjab, Quaid-e-Azam Campus, Lahore, Punjab.

flourished during 1960s and 1970s began to decline under Zia’s regime (Syed, 2024). Political and social critique in plays was no longer tolerated, which forced many theater practitioners to either tone down their messages or face the consequences of censorship. A number of playwrights, dramatists and actors changed their fields and some transformed towards less controversial and safer subjects which lead theater and drama towards experimental and bold theater. Contrary to this the main themes of theater were changed to religious contents which were enforced with force which deteriorate the main agenda of the theaters, the themes increase in production of plays which have religious ideas.

The state supported and approved of more conventional and religiously themed plays since theatre was urged to reflect Islamic ideals. Plays that upheld conventional gender roles, piety, and family values became more prevalent. Without mentioning the significant contributions Tehrik-e-Niswan and Ajoka made to making theatre in Pakistan a recognized cultural force, no assessment of the art form would be complete. Both groups, which arose from a protest-oriented atmosphere, had demonstrated their political leanings early on by endorsing labor unions and the women's movement, which was born in response to Zia-ul-Haque's laws discriminating against women. Instead of claiming to provide an overview of all the theatrical practices that were in existence prior to the formation of these two groups. This article examines the development of Pakistani theater under General Pervez Musharraf (1999–2008) and General Zia-ul-Haq (1977–1988), who represented the philosophies of Moderate Liberalism and Military Islamism, respectively. Theater censorship and the suppression of creative freedoms were results of Zia's tight Islamization program. During this time, theater was required to adhere to religiously conservative principles, and political disobedience was severely punished. As a result, creative expression was restricted. Musharraf's moderate liberalism, on the other hand, promoted a rebirth of the arts and made it possible for theater to openly address social and political themes while also enjoying greater freedom from the media and less restriction (Mason, et al, 2016).

### **Literature Review**

A number of articles and books have been produced both the on the miliary Islamism of Zia-ul-Haq and liberal approaches of General Pervaiz Musharraf. Some of the articles and books are reviewed to understand the basic notion and research for this research article. While reading overall, literature it is observed that separate articles have been produced on the history of the theatre during this period but no comparative works have been undertaken. As it is mentioned by Fawzia Afzal-Khan that The theatrical output of numerous alternative theater groups, including Tehrik-I-Niswan, Ajoka, and Punjab Lok Rehas, which were founded in Pakistan in the early 1980s primarily to oppose the oppressive religious policies being imposed under Zia ul-Haque, has made this connection between postmodern capitalism and the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in that country clear (Afzal-Khan, 1997). In fact, many of the more recent plays that are part of the repertory of several of the organizations that I have been studying do make these connections. One such play is called Dukhini by the Ajoka Theater group, which sheds light on these issues by focusing on the theme of women trafficked under false pretenses from Bangladesh's impoverished state across India and into Pakistan. In the same way, while writing on the impacts of Zia-ul-Haq religious ideas and its impacts on society has presented that following his ascent to power, Zia imposed harsh punishments under the pretext of Sharia law, including the practice of flogging for a number of crimes such as rape, theft, murder, intoxication, prostitution, adultery, and so forth. These penalties were intended to scare away those who disagreed with him and deter those who participate in unlawful conduct. Zia's detractors claimed he brought up the topic of Islamization to undermine Bhutto's and the Peoples Party's influence. Zia's opponents attacked him for this. He said in his opening speech that political, legal, and economic reforms would be implemented in keeping with the Quran and Sunnah's teachings and that Islam would be embraced in all spheres of life (Zaheer, 2021).

Another approach on the military promotion of liberalism has also been widely researched. Beginning in 2002, the media experienced a dramatic shift under General Pervez Musharraf that resulted in a boom and prosperity in Pakistani electronic media and also paved the path for its ascent to political power (Talbot, 2002). The state's monopoly on electronic media was broken by new, progressive media legislation. Private media outlets received licenses for FM radio and TV transmission (Cheek & Baig, 2015). The threshold for privately owned and run FM radios and television channels that offer news, infotainment, and entertainment material was raised. Before the year 2000, Pakistan's media sector was characterized by print-only media, with no idea of digital content. However, with the issuance of 91 television licenses and 140 FM radio licenses, the industry saw a tremendous boom. Similarly, Musharraf's own deeds and omissions further damaged his standing as a liberal leader. Despite the inherent absolutism of military dictatorship, Musharraf made few efforts to fortify democratic institutions, which may have enhanced the general quality of government both during and after his tenure. His much-discussed economic liberalization proved to be little more than a short-term budgetary boost that was reliant on Western interests in the area and did not contribute significantly to Pakistan's economic independence. (Afzal, 2007)

Zia frequently exploited his position of power to subvert the judiciary and the constitution. For instance, he kept the nation's Islamic laws in place, which imposed harsh punishments for "crimes" including adultery and blasphemy. In addition, he supported the expansion of extreme Islam in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan provinces in order to keep such areas under control and suppress ethnic minorities. This also had a great effect on theatre as well. Fawzia Afzal-Khan's book "Theatre and Activism in Pakistan" delves deeply into the ways that theater and social and political activity have interacted in Pakistan, especially during periods of military rule and political repression. The book focuses on the important role that theater has played in this country, where political, religious, and cultural influences have frequently put pressure on the arts, as a tool of resistance and a means of expressing dissent (Mee, 2007).

Ahmed Bilal believes that one of the oldest cultural traditions in South Asia is theater. The Parsis were the pioneers of Urdu theater, which rose to prominence in the middle of the 19th century as the primary commercial theater. On the other hand, theater has never been able to fully establish itself as an art form in Pakistan. In this region of South Asia, there have been two distinct forms of theater: popular drama centered around comedy or jaggat, and British adaptations showcased in art councils. In the 1980s, a parallel kind of theater developed that focused on various social and political themes before evolving into theater with an NGO foundation. Students at various institutions have also been experimenting with the media through theater societies (Bilal, 2018).

### **Methodological Approach**

Since the research is qualitative in nature, primary data was gathered through in-depth interviews with playwrights, directors, and actors involved in Pakistani theater. Snowball sampling was used to conduct the interviews. Furthermore, secondary data from previously published works, interviews, and books has been incorporated. The main methodological approach in this research study is based on qualitative comparative method which is essential to trace out the results of the research with utilizing the documented sources (Spaulding, et al, 2009).

### **Military and Islamism**

The cultural and historical influences of the Middle East, Central Asia, and South Asia, as well as the legacy of British colonialism and the difficulties faced in nation- and state-building in the twenty-first century, have influenced Pakistan's contemporary political and sociological

profile. Pakistan's aspiration for its own state was fuelled by nationalism and religion, yet these elements were insufficient to maintain nationhood. Establishing a decentralised, pluralist, participatory political structure that takes into account linguistic, ethnic, and regional diversity as well as economic inequities proved to be difficult for Pakistan. The growth of Islamic militancy and extremism presented additional difficulties, with ramifications for Pakistan's international and domestic politics (Shuja, 2007). Pakistan, throughout its history, has gone through strong Islamist laws and approaches which were adopted for a number of reasons from which one was to control the society according to the norms and culture of the people on which the country was established, along with strong Islamic ideas the patterns the rules and laws used to become lenient. The most Islamic mindset laws were introduced by Zia-ul-Haq the military dictator. In this article, the main focus is to compare the Zias Islamic ideas and rules with Pervaiz Musharraf moderate liberal military rule on theatre and drama (Shah, Waris & Basit, 2016).

Zia-ul-Haque utilized Islam to justify his autocratic authority under the mullah-military coalition that formed his administration. The Mullah-Military alliance's internal component was related to the regime's need to maintain power by pandering to right-wing religious and political organizations. The Soviet Union's military intervention in Afghanistan was a factor in the external dimension. The military of Pakistan supported the Jihadis in their proxy conflict with the former Soviet Union in order to prevent the government from taking a direct role in the impasse. Thus, Pakistan's Zia policies allowed Islamization to take root and spread throughout the nation. The first Pakistani leader to consistently implement practical measures for Pakistan's Islamization process was General Zia-ul-Haque (Abbasi & Jaffar, 2021). Zia and his associates were the first to determine that Islam could serve as their nation's primary unifying force. One of the main drivers for Zia's adoption of Islamic philosophy was his fervent desire to rally support from urban activist centers, which would have provided Nifaz-i-Islam with significant assistance. These facilities served as organizing hubs for the anti-Bhutto campaign, which included some of the most well-organized fundamentalist organizations, such as Jamaat-i-Islami (JI). Zia felt that women should be kept inside the four walls of the house and had a very shallow understanding of the place and function of women in Islamic culture (Arif, Ali & Asfaham, 2022).

In the same way, Zia-ul-Haq's rule in Pakistan (1977–1988) had a profound impact on many aspects of society, including the arts, media, and theater, largely due to his policies of Islamization. His government sought to reshape Pakistani society along conservative Islamic lines, and this had direct effects on cultural and artistic expressions, including theater. As Zia-ul-Haq implemented very strict version of Islamization including enforcing the Islamic basic laws, introducing religious education at school and university level, and at the same time promoting conservative social values and norms. As a result, things like entertainment and the arts were restricted since they were thought to be immoral or un-Islamic. Zia-ul-Haq regime become strict towards media, performing art which also include theatre. The basic notion of the theater which is social and cultural was deteriorating by adding new patterns and approaches which only promoted the Islamic ways of acting and performing (Butt, Jaffar & Mehmood, 2020). Plays with themes deemed to be anti-Islamic or politically critical of the government were either completely banned or subject to severe censorship. The freedom of expression and artistic innovation were severely curtailed by with all these approaches. The arts were expected to reflect Islamic morals and social norms. With the help of censorship topics that dealt with issues such as gender equality, political criticism, or liberal themes were not allowed to be played in theatre and the contents which used to address the women's rights, secularism, or modernity was often labeled as corrupting Western influence (Mughal, Cooper & Brooks, 2014).

Similarly, state owned media cells, television like PTV and radio were the primary media outlets, and their programming was closely monitored to endure adherence to Islamic principles. All these same patterns were also applied to theater productions, which were often scrutinized to ensure to reflect the values of the regime. Zai ul Haq military rule imposition and restrictions were penetrated in society deeply which changed the basic ideas and thinking of the people. Islamization bring a fear among the people due to strong rule of law and very strict punishments. This affected the theatre as a whole and playwrights, actors and other people who were attached with theatre felt the fear that anything which is being done with the help of theater would not be bear by the theater experts and other related people (Sulehria, 2020).

To get away from the oppressive creative climate, a number of well-known members of the theatre and arts communities either moved abroad or went into self-imposed exile. The deterioration of Pakistan's theatre scene during this time was further exacerbated by this brain drain. Many theatre professionals responded to the constraints by focusing on lighter, more commercial genres like comedies, musicals, and folk performances, which were thought to be immune to censorship. While this meant a move away from serious social and political commentary, it also meant that the theatre industry survived. Even after his death in 1988, Pakistani theatre struggled to recapture its former vigour as a result of the conservative policies of the Zia administration. It took years for the theatre industry to revive, and the censorship system and orthodox social norms imposed during his reign endured in one form or another. But the end of the Zia era also ushered in a more daring and progressive theatre movement in the 1990s, as artists started to question social mores and tackle previously unpopular topics. Pakistani theater's expansion was severely restricted by Zia-ul-Haq's Islamization, which stifled artistic expression and political criticism. While more progressive and critical voices were silenced or driven underground, the theatre landscape changed towards commercial entertainment and content that was acceptable to religious groups (Ahmed, Tahir & Bhatti, 2022).

During Zia's rule, there was a collapse in many public theaters, especially in urban areas, as a result of strict censorship and conservative policies. Actors, directors, and playwrights had to either adjust to the new climate or disappear. Numerous well-known theater professionals who had previously contributed to lively and thought-provoking productions either left the nation, changed careers to other media, or quit their jobs altogether. Long after Zia's authority ended, theater was still influenced by the cultural backlash of his time. The arts' creative expression stagnated as a result of repression and the imposition of conservative ideals. Pakistan's once rich and varied theatrical traditions were eclipsed by the focus on moral and religious compliance. The spirit of resistance via theater persisted in spite of the harsh environment. The socially and politically aware theater that would blossom in the post-Zia era was laid by organizations such as Ajoka and Tehrik-e-Niswan. These organizations contributed to the tradition of using art to affect social change in addition to preserving theater. Pakistani theater was negatively impacted by Zia-ul-Haq's dictatorship, which suppressed artistic expression and supported a conservative cultural agenda. But it also gave rise to a strong artistic resistance movement, with underground theater companies fighting against persecution and censorship and creating the foundation for a more progressive theatrical renaissance in the post-Zia era (Chelkowski, 1985).

### **Military, Liberalism and Theatre**

When talking about liberalism in Pakistan it has been controversial for several reasons, as most of the researchers and the experts believe that liberalism is a term only used in Pakistan, it has never been adopted by any government. In the same context, the liberalism was also not much penetrated in theatres but this term was used widely to compare it with the previous military rule in Pakistan, which was imposed for 11 years by Zia-ul-Haq. This comparison made the

Musarrif era of dictatorship better for the society and theatre as a whole (Bibi, et al, 2021). First of all, it is essential to understand the socio-political implication and barriers created during the last military rule in Pakistan. Significant political and military upheavals that impacted Pakistan's socio-cultural landscape, including its theater and arts sector, occurred between 1999 and 2008. General Pervez Musharraf's military rule (1999–2008) embraced a nuanced approach to liberalism, striking a balance between authoritarian control and targeted liberalization in specific social and cultural spheres. Theater and other artistic mediums were impacted by this setting in special ways. After a military revolution overthrew the previous government in 1999, General Pervez Musharraf implemented modernizing measures for Pakistan (Daechsel, 1997).

This was a good omen for the theater in Pakistan due to which social and political with modern contents were allowed to be performed in big cities of the country. Pervaiz Musharraf presented himself as a moderate, progressive figurehead who supported the idea of "enlightened moderation," which aims to soften the image of Islam while opposing religious fanaticism. With softening the image of the Islam, theater manager who were not allowed to perform their role which a theater could play in society during Zai-ul Haq period, Certain liberties in the media, arts, and culture were permitted under Musharraf's government, despite the suppression of political dissent and the tightening of military power (Akhtar, 2010). Key elements of this era included the expansion of independent media, the liberalization of radio and television networks, and a relative relaxation of censorship. These ideological patterns were true that all the social departments were allowed to do their work freely but still theater management were not totally free to criticize the Marshal Law administrator, bad governance and several other related issues within the theaters were which shows that the liberalism for which was loudly announced was not purely applied. In the context, of openness of the theater that women were allowed to work and could continue as an actor was allowed which was not very common during the rule of general Zia-ul-Haq. It was seen that top 20 theater groups flourished during this period with making different types of contents which could reform the society with modern modes and thinking (Abbas, 2024).

Pakistani theater saw a boom in the 2000s, particularly in major cities like Karachi, Lahore, and Islamabad. A new wave of directors and playwrights began exploring daring topics of politics, identity, and social issues. The theater evolved into a forum for subliminal political criticism. Playwrights have commented on the country's socio-political problems, corruption, extremism, and regime through the use of satire and allegory. Although it was dangerous to openly criticize the military government, authoritarianism and societal problems were frequently addressed in the theater in symbolic or humorous ways. This also the openness of the theater contents which allowed playwrights and actors to flourish and make an earning. This was the period that in most of the big cities of Pakistan artists and actors joined theater as part of the entertainment and as a profession which was supported by government morally (Kayani, et al, 2018).

As this approach and process of theatre development is mentioned by Fawzia Afzal Khan in her book that this reduce the gender gap as well which was developed due to the Zia-ul-Haq period Islamization and restrictions on women and theatres as a whole. Theater was also influenced by exposure to international media and ideas, partly because of the internet and satellite television. In theater plays, there was a greater emphasis on identity politics, globalization, and human rights, which reflected larger global debates. Pakistan had both military authoritarianism and restricted liberalization between 1999 and 2008. Although Musharraf's government fostered a more open atmosphere for the arts, the state's fundamental authoritarianism placed unmistakable restrictions on the extent to which performers and artists might push boundaries. However, during this time, there was a noticeable increase in the quantity and quality of cultural and intellectual conversation, with theater serving as a major

medium for reflecting and influencing social developments. This is essential to understand the basic roots of today development of stage dramas especially in Punjab and KPK.

A number of Playwrights in and theatre actors developed their works during this period. The main playwrights of this period were Anwar Masood, Imran Aslam, Shahid Nadeem, Madeeha Gohar and several others. Similarly, the main theatre actors in this duration were Talat Hussain, Sania saeed, Faisal Rehman, Nimra Bucha and the most famous groups of theatres which were working in this period were Ajoka theatre, Tehrik-e-Niswan and Katha Theatre. Between 1999 and 2008, these writers, performers, and theater companies made significant contributions to Pakistan's cultural landscape, enabling theater to continue serving as a forum for artistic expression and critical discussion despite the country's political unrest. Compared to earlier administrations, Musharraf's allowed a greater degree of tolerance for political commentary and humor, particularly in the early years. Plays making social commentary on delicate subjects such political corruption, religious fanaticism, women's empowerment, and human rights were produced during this time. This comparatively open atmosphere was exploited by playwrights such as Anwar Maqsood, Imran Aslam, and Shahid Nadeem, who used satire to question government policies and social conventions. Actors and writers had additional opportunities when private television networks flourished under Musharraf. The audience for theater-based performances increased as a result of these channels' frequent airing of dramas and stage plays with wider audiences. Despite the revival's greater emphasis on electronic media, it helped foster the development of theater actors who could also appear on television. Musharraf's administration was willing to sponsor cultural events and festivals. Theaters benefited indirectly, if not directly, from cultural activities like fairs, festivals, and exhibitions. Pakistan received periodic invitations from international theater groups, and local artists were given the chance to exhibit their work overseas (Rashid, 2015).

These socially oriented theater companies kept on their production of plays that were both politically and culturally significant. Even though they occasionally encountered opposition from conservative factions, Musharraf's general climate encouraged more audacious storytelling. Plays that addressed historical topics, women's rights, and criticisms of extremism became increasingly prevalent. Under Musharraf's leadership, there was a surge in cultural events, especially theater, especially in the cities. Compared to earlier administrations, his government permitted more artistic freedom, although censorship and conservative opposition persisted as major issues. During this time, the theater's realm for social and political commentary grew, giving artists the freedom to create more intricate stories that spoke to Pakistan's modern society (Sengupta, 2014).

### **Comparative analysis**

An intriguing perspective through which to look at how political ideologies have impacted Pakistan's cultural output, especially theater, since its founding is a comparative study of Military Islamism, Moderate Liberalism, and Theatre Development. Pakistan's theatrical expression has developed under a variety of regimes, each enforcing its own unique set of ideals that either promoted or discouraged the arts. This analysis will mainly concentrate on the periods of military Islamism (represented by the rule of General Zia-ul-Haq) and moderate liberalism (represented by the rule of General Pervez Musharraf), examining how these political philosophies influenced the evolution of theater. General Pervez Musharraf's "Enlightened Moderation," in contrast to Zia's strict Islamism, spurred the arts and culture, especially theater. In an effort to fight the growing impact of extremism and advance Pakistan's progressive image internationally, Musharraf positioned himself as a moderate leader. The liberalization of the media was one of Musharraf's major contributions to the development of theater. New venues for theater plays were made possible by the growth of private television channels and the relaxation of government regulation over the cultural industry. With TV

audiences at their disposal, theater directors, actors, and writers could now share their works with a wider public (Fayyaz, 2012).

Compared to the Zia era, Musharraf's government loosened restrictions, enabling more political humor and critical social commentary. In line with the new, more liberalized cultural atmosphere, plays that tackled urgent societal concerns including government corruption, human rights, and extremism were performed with greater freedom. Political theater made a comeback thanks to Musharraf's considerable cultural freedom. Theatrical ensembles like Ajoka and Tehrik-e-Niswan gained prominence by staging plays that addressed touchy subjects including women's rights, the war on terror, and the role of the military in politics (Roy, 2012).

Under Zia, military Islamism aimed to synchronize theater with religious and conservative ideals, drastically restricting the possibilities for artistic expression and political opposition. The state-approved cultural landscape was dominated by religious themes, and theater content was strictly regulated. Musharraf's moderate liberalism, in contrast, made theater content more diverse. Theater developed became a forum for political criticism, satire, and progressive social commentary, even if there were still boundaries, particularly with relation to military criticism. It would be possible to discuss themes like modernity, radicalism, and gender rights rather openly (Paul, 2015).

### **Conclusion**

The development of theater in Pakistan under the opposing ideologies of Moderate Liberalism and Military Islamism illustrates how political contexts influence artistic expression in general and performing arts in particular. General Zia-ul-Haq's dictatorship served as an example of military Islamism, which imposed stringent censorship and ideological control on theater, restricting artistic freedom and driving political dissent underground. Theater's potential to be a vehicle for social criticism or political activism was severely curtailed by Zia's Islamization drive, which restricted the genre to religious and conservative topics. The reduction of women's roles in theater was another measure taken by the government to stifle progressive ideals. On the other hand, through a more liberalized and open cultural policy, Moderate Liberalism under General Pervez Musharraf encouraged a rebirth of the arts, especially theater. Musharraf's "Enlightened Moderation" paved the way for a revival of political theater, with actors and playwrights tackling modern problems including political corruption, gender rights, and extremism. Under Musharraf, the media was liberalized, giving theater professionals additional outlets to reach a larger audience and promoting public discussion of important social and political issues. Although theater faced difficulties in both periods, Zia's rule was marked by censorship and repression, which restricted theater's growth to a specialized form of resistance. On the other hand, theater was able to thrive during Musharraf's rule as a dynamic and public cultural venue that embraced progressive ideas and added to a wider national conversation. In the end, the comparison of these two eras highlights how crucial political beliefs were in forming Pakistan's cultural fabric. As a means of expression and resistance, theater has not only endured but flourished, adjusting to the changing political climate to continue being a useful instrument for activism and social change.

### **References**

1. Ahmed, S., Tahir, M., & Bhatti, M. S. (2022). Not for 'Respectable' Women: Attitudes towards Theatre in Pakistan. *Annals of Human and Social Sciences*, 3(3), 378-391.
2. Syed, A. N. (2024). Postcolonial Theatre and Ibsen Productions in Pakistan: A Historical Overview. In *Ibsen in the Decolonised South Asian Theatre* (pp. 21-40). Routledge.
3. Mason, D., Ahmed, S. J., Davis, C. C., & Dharmasiri, K. (2016). Modern theatre in Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka. *Routledge Handbook of Asian Theatre*, 268-289.



4. Afzal-Khan, F. (1997). Street theatre in Pakistani Punjab: The case of Ajoka, Lok Rehas, and the woman question. *TDR* (1988-), 41(3), 39-62.
5. Zaheer, F. (2021). Theatrical Milieu: Investigating Drama and Theatre in tandem with Socio-Political Landscape of Pakistan. *sjesr*, 4(2), 278-287.
6. Talbot, C. (2002). So Who Needs Agencies. Memo, University of Glamorgan.
7. Afzal-Khan, F. (2007). Pakistani Muslim Theatre at Home and Abroad: A Critical Manifesto for a Feminist Homecoming. In *Staging International Feminisms* (pp. 184-193). London: Palgrave Macmillan UK.
8. Mee, E. B. (2007). A Critical Stage: The Role of Secular Alternative Theatre in Pakistan, and: Poetics, Plays, and Performances: The Politics of Modern Indian Theatre, and: Theatres of Independence: Drama, Theory, and Urban Performance in India Since 1947. *TDR: The Drama Review*, 51(4), 181-184.
9. Bilal, A. (2018). Oppositional cultural elements in the emergent cinema of Pakistan. *South Asian Popular Culture*, 16(1), 21-28.
10. Spaulding, S. B., Banning, J., Harbour, C. P., & Davies, T. G. (2009). Drama: A comparative analysis of individual narratives. *The Qualitative Report*, 14(3), 524.
11. Spaulding, S. B., Banning, J., Harbour, C. P., & Davies, T. G. (2009). Drama: A comparative analysis of individual narratives. *The Qualitative Report*, 14(3), 524.
12. Shah, A. S., Waris, M., & Basit, A. (2016). Islamization in Pakistan: A critical analysis of Zia's regime. *Global Regional Review*, 1(1), 260-270.
13. Abbasi, A. H., & Jaffar, S. (2021). Islamization of Zia Regime: an appraisal from gender perspective. *Al-Duhaa*, 2(02), 17-28.
14. Arif, M., Ali, I., & Asfaham, M. (2022). Domestic Policies of General Zia Ul Haq towards Islamization during 1979-88. *Harf-o-Sukhan*, 6(1), 60-69.
15. Butt, S., Jaffar, S., & Mehmood, K. (2020). An overview of Islamisation during Zia regime. *Al-Sharq (Journal of Religious Studies)*, 1(2), 01-08.
16. Mughal, S., Cooper, B., & Brooks, E. (2014). The fate of tomorrow is in the hands of women: Gender, social position, and the media during Zia-ul-Haq's Islamization campaign' (Doctoral dissertation, Honors thesis, New Brunswick: Rutgers University, <http://history.rutgers.edu/honors-papers-2011/289-the-fate-of-tomorrow-is-in-the-hands-of-women/file>. Accessed 2 July).
17. Sulehria, F. (2020). Jihad on screen: The role of jihadi drama and film and their press coverage, 1979–89, in *Islamising Pakistan*. In *From Terrorism to Television* (pp. 39-60). Routledge India.
18. Ahmed, S., Tahir, M., & Bhatti, M. S. (2022). Not for 'Respectable' Women: Attitudes towards Theatre in Pakistan. *Annals of Human and Social Sciences*, 3(3), 378-391.
19. Chelkowski, P. (1985). Islam in modern drama and theatre. In *Der Islam im Spiegel zeitgenössischer Literatur der islamischen Welt* (pp. 45-69). Brill.
20. Bibi, A., Ashfaq, S., Ullah, Q. M. S., & Abbas, N. (2021). Ajoka theatre as an icon of liberal humanist values. *Review of Education, Administration & Law*, 4(1), 279-286.
21. Daechsel, M. (1997). Military Islamisation in Pakistan and the spectre of colonial perceptions. *Contemporary South Asia*, 6(2), 141-160.
22. Akhtar, A. S. (2010). Pakistan: Crisis of a frontline state. *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 40(1), 105-122.
23. Abbas, Q. (2024). NGOs and the Neo-Liberalization of Political Theatre in Pakistan: Ajoka's Surrender to the Politics of Rights. *New Theatre Quarterly*, 40(1), 31-47.
24. Kayani, T., Termizi, A. A., Yahya, W. R. W., & Bahar, I. B. (2018). Politics of Staging Capitalist Society in Transcultural Adaptations of Brecht's the Threepenny Opera by Ajoka Theatre in Pakistan. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature*, 7(3), 23-34.
25. Rashid, T. (2015). Theatre for community development: Street theatre as an agent of change in Punjab (Pakistan). *India Quarterly*, 71(4), 335-347.
26. Sengupta, A. (2014). Introduction: Setting the stage. In *Mapping South Asia through Contemporary Theatre: Essays on the Theatres of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka* (pp. 1-62). London: Palgrave Macmillan UK.
27. Fayyaz, S. (2012). Pakistan response towards terrorism: a case study of Musharraf regime (Doctoral dissertation, University of Birmingham).
28. Roy, P. (2012). *Pakistan A Crisis of Legitimacy and Liberalization 1980-2010*.

29. Paul, T. V. (2015). *The warrior state: Pakistan in the contemporary world*. Oxford University Press.