

Abstract

The idea of Pakistan was debated in public arenas in the Pakistani Punjab between 1947 and 1977. The emergence of Pakistan as neither a theocratic state nor a secular state owes much to the recognition of different debates in public arenas by the constituent assemblies. Vibrant discussions in public gatherings and processions, literary circles and public parlors influenced the debates in constituent assemblies of Pakistan. For analytical purpose my study focuses on the nature of debates such as Islamic state or secular state, the status of minorities, center - provinces relations, fundamental rights and democratic values. The contesting positions in the public arenas—the religious rightist and Sufis propagating a case for theocratic Islamic state on the one hand, and leftist activists pleading a secular state on the other. Over time, the constitutional framers had to consider these debates in defining the idea of Pakistan. The constitutional framers imagined Pakistan as the Islamic Republic of Pakistan in the constitutions of 1956, 1962, and 1973, an attempt to collide two seemingly opposite categories –Islam and republic.