

Ethno-National Identity in Pakistan during Post-Modern Era

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ABSTRACT

This paper is an attempt to explore views of historians about the Ethno-National Identity in Pakistan during Post Modern Era. Historians have assessed Ethno-National identity in the prism of nationalism; while explaining different inclinations of any nation to express themselves; their ethnic behavior, exposure and attitude with the help of their distinctiveness; related to their own history and culture. As far as national identity is concerned, Herodotus was for the forerunner of ethnic identity. He was the one who well-defined the Greeks in positions of their ethnicity, and the rest of people as savages. A struggle will be made in this paper to disclose the role played. This paper will present an analysis of the works of Pakistani historians on the ethnic identity. In Pakistan, ethnic identity increases at the cost of its national identity, and due to such an incursion in ethnic identities, Pakistan has been even acknowledged as a country without having any identity of a nation. Thus, the paper will help to fulfill existing an important gap related to historical literature and would help to study the prevailing views about Ethno-National Identity in Pakistan during Post-Modern Era. If we deliberate the question of ethno national identity in the outline of post modernism, then there is a resolution for every problem, because every group is permissible to recollect its identity. Multiplicity is measured to be a component of appreciation.

Keywords: *Ethnic, Nationalism, Identity, Post-Modernist, Paradigm*

Introduction

Ethno-national identity is a form of nationalism in which nations tend to define themselves in terms of their ethnic identity, representing their own history and culture. Herodotus was the pioneer of ethnic identity. He was the one who defined the Greeks in terms of their ethnicity, and the rest of people as barbarians. In

Pakistan, ethnic identity is on the rise at the cost of its national identity, and due to such an influx in ethnic identities, Pakistan has been even declared as a country without having any identity of a nation (Jaffrelot, 2004, p. 7).

Ethno-Nationalism vs Nationalism

Ethno-nationalism is a by-product of nationalism. In heterogeneous societies, where the state fails to deliver its services to its citizens, the concept of ethnic nationalism emerges. Ethnic nationalism is a sense of pride countering the identity of a state. In a sense, ethnic identity criticizes the government to rectify its policies by considering the demands of its citizens. Ethnic nationalism is not a new phenomenon, but is masked under the disguise of nationalism due to the policies of the state that tends to be a welfare state. Ethno nationalism became alarming when it challenges the concept of nationalism and tries to bring its superiority over the state. Such moves have witnessed the rise of chaos and anarchy in third world countries.

Nationalism tries to unite all ethnic groups by providing them a single identity in the form of a national identity. Nationalism is often referred to patriotism to counter ethnic nationalism, but to make it practical, the state must fulfill its duties. Nationalism emerged after World War-I, when the nations tried to make their own homeland by using the right of self-determination, and naming their country by their ethnic identity. Thus ethnic nationalism gave birth to new states that were ethnic in nature. The idea of ethnic nationalism remained a success for the developed nations having large number of ethnic group. However, ethnic nationalism posed a threat for unity in third world countries. To solve the issue of ethnic nationalism in third world countries, the frame work of post modernism is being used.

How Post-Modernists View Ethno-Nationalism in Contemporary Times?

In the framework of Post modernism a way towards the truth, Pakistan has to face internal challenges along with the issue of regional identity, and its failure to build an identity for itself (Dutt, 2000, p. 215) In Pakistan, the post-modern era has become a deadlock between the nationalists, traditionalists and modernists. An unending struggling is going on between different ideologies, everyone trying to supersede on another, and the result is the weakening and loss of national identity. The sense of Ethno-National identity among the Muslims, traces its root back to the days of pre partitioned India (post 1947 era), when the concept of two nation theory was propagated, and Hindus and Muslims were divided into two different communities, in order to get a separate homeland for the Muslims on the basis of their religious identity. (Jaffrelot, 2004, p. 308) All India Muslim League which was in forth front for propagating the concept of a separate identity among the Muslims in united India, left its task unfinished, when it did not unite the ethnic elites of different groups into a single united nation (Amin. 1988, p.78).

It is not a new phenomenon for Pakistan because the countries located in the southern region of the globe are having heterogeneous societies (Wong and Thomps, 2005, p.180). In post-modern era, those nations having heterogeneous societies are passing through a turmoil in which national identity is being masked by ethnic identities. Such states are referred as “weak states” (Brown, 1994, P.4). Incidentally, the case of Pakistan is the same with regard to the question of

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national identities. One school of thought propagates the argument that, development of ethnic identity is because of the legacy of colonial rule; whereas another school of thought argue that it is the concept of modernity that is dividing the societies (Amin, 1988, p. 77).

Other schools opine that it is the ethnic elite that is exploiting the “ethnic antipathy” to gain economic benefits and also to sustain their power base (Amin, 1988, p. 77). But when the case of Pakistan is discussed in modern perspective, we find three paradigms that focus on the issue why ethnic identity is on the rise despite the separation of Muslims from the Hindus in independent states.

Gellner, who is a liberalist, argues that nationalism is the symbol of modernity. Ethnic identity evolves when a society is transforming into a society that is to be called a modernist society (Smith, 1983, p. 231) The reasons put forward by this school for ethnic identity are (1) failure of the state to create an egalitarian society, (2) conflict between different ethnic elites to gain power, and (3) concept of an ideal ethnic state (Amin, 1988, p. 77).

Marxist paradigm put the blame on the capitalist and argues that it is the economic system that is dividing the society and defending the interests of the elite (Amin, 1988, p. 77). The reasons for division are (1) unequal distribution of wealth in the society, (2) the existing political setup, and (3) the existing culture.

The third view is of the follower of Islamic ideology. Maududi says that nationalism is against Islam as it divides the human being into different ethnic groups, thus negating the divine concept of origin of man from single parent (Hassan, 1986, p.172). The propagator of this school says that being a Muslim, there is no place for ethnic nationalism on the basis of these arguments. (1) Muslims are an ummah, (2) Muslims have to abide by the shariah, and (3) Muslims must follow the Sunnah of the prophet PBUH (Amin, 1988, p. 50).

Development of Ethnic Identity in Pakistan

The development of ethno national identity in contrast to nationalistic identity in Pakistan during post-modern era is because of the fact that, Pakistan failed to trace its identity; so the fear of losing ethnic identity as compared to the national identity forced the nationalist to struggle for the supremacy of their identity. The identity of Pakistan kept on changing from time to time depending upon the type of rule it inherited. Certain historians tried to trace the identity from Indus civilization, certain from Muhammad bin Qasim’s invasion of Sindh, certain traced it from the birth of Islam, and thus a contradiction exists, that what is the true ideology of Pakistan. Such an identity crisis motivated the members of particular ethnic group to support their leader, and make their ethnic identity more important as compared to their nationalistic identity.

Analyzing the Case of Development of Ethno-National Identities in Four Provinces of Pakistan

The adoption of Sindhi language in Sind is a prime example of such awareness. Urdu speakers in Sindh are still trying to retain their Urdu speaking identity by using the identity of Muhajir. Pakhtun to show their identity forced the government to rename the then NWFP as KPK. The Baloch are trying to get separation to preserve their identity. The Sairiks in Punjab are demanding for a

new province by their name. The Hazaras are also claiming for identity in terms of a province, and so the people of Gilgit Baltistan are trying to get full provincial status for their province.

Thus it can be understood why commoners support their elites in regard to the question of ethnic identity. The claim of Wali Khan saying that we are Pashtun for 1400 years highlights the fact that ethnic identity was much stronger among Pashtuns than the Muslim identity. (Talbot, 1998) The roots lie in pre-partition era when the claim for Pakistan was justified on the basis of two nation theory. Now ethnic identity is on the rise in Sindh, Balochistan, KPK, G.B., and in Punjab. To understand and to solve the problem, we need to discuss the ethnic movement one by one. The composition of different ethnicities in Pakistan in regard to their population is mentioned in the table drawn below.

Table 1
Prominent Linguistic groups in Pakistan

Territorial Division	Language Variations	Percentage in national population
Punjab	Punjabi	44.15
	Siraiki	10.53
Sindh	Sindhi	14.1
NWFP*	Pashto	15.42
Balochistan	Balochi	3.75
All Provinces of Pakistan	Urdu	7.57
Others	-----	4.66

* NWFP is now called Khyber PakhtunKhwā (KPK); Source: (Javaid and Hashmi, 2012. P. 60)

KPK is the province that has started its struggle for a separate identity on the basis of distinct ethnicity. The concept was named as Pashtunistan-homeland for the Pakhtoons, but later on the claim for a separate Pakhtoon state was abandoned (Shah, 1997, p.167). Pashtuns were and are much concerned about their ethnic identity as others are, and are a great supporter of their leader, in terms of their norms, which they call Pukhtunwali (Rengel, 2004, P. 34). Afghans war (1979-89) united the Pakhtuns on both side of the border to defend their identity (Jafferlot, 32). In post-modern era, the issue of ethnic identity was raised by the people of the former NWFP (now KPK), that their province must be renamed as Khyber Pakhtoon Khuwa (KPK).NWFP was named as KPK during PPP's regime. (Rehman, 2010). As a reaction to this, the Hazara community residing in the province of KPK raised its voice and is struggling for their separate identity, i.e. Hazara province.

The case of Balochistan is different from that of the people of KPK. The People of Balochistan are struggling with the federal for maximum provincial autonomy and also for their independence. The movement started by them has become a serious threat for the integrity of Pakistan (Hasnat, 2011, 88). The movement is not only a threat for Pakistan, but also for Afghanistan and Iran as they (the Baloch) claim for a greater Balochistan. The movement initiated by the Baloch people traces its origin back to the "force merger" by Pakistan (Shah, 95). In Sindh, there is war going on in Karachi between the Muhajirs (Urdu speaking) and the Sindhis. Karachi as it has been called "the city of lights" has been turned down into a city of chaos and darkness. In 2011, more than 2000 killings have occurred on the basis of ethnicity. "A number of Punjabis, who served the army, allotted lands in Sindh from the government and put down their roots here" (Hashmi, 2012, p. 60).

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After independence, a large number of Muslims from India were rehabilitated in Sind (Bates, 2001, p. 248). In 1978, Mohajir Students organization was formed on the basis of ethnic identity. Later it assumed the name of Mutahidda Qaumi Movement (MQM) (Javaid and Hashmi, 64). As a reaction to the formation of MQM, Sindhis launched a movement named as "Sindhu Desh". In 1986, this movement emerged in Northern and southern part of Sindh aimed at countering the non Sindhi speaking people dominating in Sindh (Qadeer, 2006, p. 73).

It is the state that provides justification and power to the ethnic group. When the state power is crumbled that is overwhelmed by ethnic groups and thus conflict arises. It is because ethnic groups have concrete attachment with their historical symbols and myths (Brown, 2). The state of Pakistan viewed the ethnic claimers as traitors and enemies of Islam and in Pakistan they have been marginalized.

The military cum bureaucracy tried to find out the cause and gave its solution. For them, the issue of ethnic identity is because of politicians and once they are trialed and removed, the issue will be solved. An attempt was done by Ayub Khan (1907-1974) through the implementation of one unit, but it failed and further marginalized the people. The people of other provinces developed Punjabi phobia (Azam, 1974, p. 33). The centre tried to curb every movement through the use of force, and they believed that economic development would hamper the situation.

So far, in the post-modern era, the ruling elite of ethnic groups remained stuck to their traditional ideas of controlling and mobilizing the masses for their own purposes. It is in a sense sort of slavery, and this institution is retained by the ethnic elites in Pakistan. Ethnic elites of all the provinces, except Punjab, fear that strong centre with Punjabi domination would threaten their interests and identity. Jinnah considered provincial identities emerging on the basis of ethnicities as a "curse" and "Chinese puzzle" weakening the foundations of the claim of a state as a nation. (Amin, 1988, p. 85)

Jinnah further said that, "... If we begin to think of ourselves as Bengalis, Punjabis, Sindhi, etc. first. Muslim and Pakistani only incidentally, then Pakistan is bound to disintegrate." (Siddiqui, 1996, p. 322)

Yes but the Punjabi is so arrogant; when you speak to the Punjabi or non-Bengali, he says yes but these people do not want us here, they want to get us out. Now this is a vicious circle, I do not think anybody can solve this Chinese puzzle. The question I, who is going to be more sensible, more practical, more states-man-like and will be rendering the greatest service to Pakistan? So make up your mind to put an end to this sectionalism (Amin, 1988, p. 74).

Agricultural lands should not be allotted to army for their residents and cantonment. It affects the economy and deprives the people from their job, as we have the precedent in Sindh, where hundreds of thousands of hectares land was given to army who were Punjabis.

In the time of materialism, economic developments must be initiated in the far flung areas of Sind and Baluchistan especially in the sector of health and Education. The province of Baluchistan and FATA regions is the hub of Jihadi extremist and the number of Madrassa is on the increase. Musharraf tried to modernize the educational system prevailing in the Madrassa, but he failed, it was

because the people that become very conservative and have been resisting change, as a result, ignorance and poverty is on the rise. (Gannon, 2005, 147)

Implementing New Approach

In contemporary era, the institution of democracy is considered to be the only option for solving all the problems, but ironically, since its independence, Pakistan has been using its army for the solution of its problem. In Pakistan, military option is preferred over all other option, which is the last option in the entire world. For solving the issues of Pakistan, it is mandatory to keep the army away from the politics; and to make it possible, the power of army must be reduced through constitutional amendments. For this, the defense budget must be made transparent, i.e. it must be discussed in the assembly Security issues and expenditure on such events must also be ratified by the parliament (Harrison, 2009, p. 35).

Marginalized people must be brought back to the main stream; this strategy must be applied especially in the case of Balochistan and in FATA (Siddiqi, 2012, p. 76). To make it possible the people of that area must be given surety that Punjab is not dominant rather struggling for strong and united Pakistan. To provide provincial autonomy; to keep army away from politics that always destroys the situation. Baloch nationalists declared ceasefire when the PPP government was elected, but the Army did not reciprocate (Dashti, 2012, p. 300).

Construction of new military cantonments in Baluchistan should be suspended, and unnecessary check posts by Coast Guard in Baluchistan should be abolished. The control of city must be given under the control of DC and Police and not Para military forces. The Constitution Of 1973 must be implemented at its full spirit. Constitution always safeguards the rights of the citizens of the state and keeps a check on the balance of power. Military coups destroy the validity of constitution thus destroying the society at all. The 1973 Constitution provided for the elimination of the Concurrent List by 1983 (Harrison, Pakistan, 36).

Solving the Question of Economy

Eighteenth amendment bill has been passed in the parliament of Pakistan to give provincial autonomy to the Provinces, but surprisingly in practice there is no sign of such an act. However, due to abolishment of concurrent list, judiciary has been involved in politics. On every issue between centre and provinces, judiciary has to intervene as there is no concurrent list. Provinces must be given the right to use maximum of their resources for their own benefit. Provinces must solve their issues rather than federal government. Punjab has been dominating the three provinces in the distribution of tax, controlling the water of Indus to Sind, and the monopoly to use the natural resources of other provinces (Mahmood, 2001, p. 125). The government should take into consideration the per capita income of each province, intensity of development, and revenue generated by each province.

The bone of contention between Punjab and other provinces is because of the use of natural resources by Punjab. Royalties paid to Baluchistan for Sui gas must be reconsidered, and the projects of Sandak and Rekodik must be used for development projects in Baluchistan. "Part Five, section 158 of the 1973 Constitution should be implemented, and Part Two, section Three should be nullified to avoid conflict with Article 70 (4), which gives autonomy to the provinces in resource exploitation."

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Water of river Indus is a grave concern for the province of Sind, as its irrigation is depending on it. The inter-provincial accord of 1991 on Indus waters must be implemented, i.e., no construction of barrages and link canals is permitted that halt the flow of water to the province of Sind. Moreover, hydroelectric power projects must be initiated in Sind to generate electricity for its commercial use (Harrison, Pakistan, 38).

Recognizing Ethnic Identities

Renaming of NWFP as “Khyber Pukhtun Khwa” was the first step to recognize the ethnic identities in Pakistan. This process must also be followed in other provinces. In 1958, India readjusted its provincial boundaries on the basis of linguistic identity which led to the reduction of inter-provincial tensions (Gillis, 2007, p. 196) To minimize the ethnic tensions, all provincial languages must be accepted as national languages along with Urdu. On the other hand, local languages must be included in the educational curricula. Harrison, Pakistan, 40.

Conclusion

In every nation, there is a strong connection of ethnic identity with their own history and culture which works as their identity; to define themselves and to introduce themselves in connection with their differentiated ethnic identity. Therefore, ethno-national identity is considered as a form of nationalism for different people belonging to different ethnic background and cultural associations. Moreover, Nationalism is often referred to patriotism to counter ethnic nationalism, but to make it practical, the state must fulfill its duties. The development of ethno national identity in contrast to nationalistic identity in Pakistan during post-modern era is because of the fact that, Pakistan failed to trace its identity; so the fear of losing ethnic identity as compared to the national identity forced the nationalist to struggle for the supremacy of their identity. So far, in the post-modern era, the ruling elite of ethnic groups remained stuck to their traditional ideas of controlling and mobilizing the masses for their own purposes. It is in a sense sort of slavery, and this institution is retained by the ethnic elites in Pakistan. Ethnic elites of all the provinces, except Punjab, fear that strong centre with Punjabi domination; would threaten their interests and identity.

If we consider the issue of ethno national identity in the framework of post modernism, then there is a solution for every problem, because every group is allowed to retain its identity. Interestingly, diversity is considered to be an element of appreciation. It is the diversity that gives birth to novelty, and balances the society producing a cluster of culture and identities. Where there is a variety, there is choice and prosperity. Every ethnic group must be allowed to present its own culture, and the state must be effective to identify the existing diversities in its territory. But in order to make it practical, Pakistan need to define its ideology, and a definition of nation in terms of heterogeneous society, accepting the demands of ethnic identities while consolidating the concept of strong Pakistani nationalism in order to develop national integration, cohesion and solidarity; amidst of existing ethno national associations in post-modern era.

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