

HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF ELITE' STRATEGIES AND NATIONAL INTEGRATION IN PAKISTAN: 1947-77

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Abstract

National integration has become the most persistent need in the contemporary world. It is considered the most significant tool to attain political and socioeconomic development in any society. The creation of national integration is a complex task in multicultural and multilingual societies, due to their multifariousness and heterogeneity. In the states like Pakistan, the process has become more complicated, because, the systems of such states are not having any capability to effect the objective of national integration. Political elites to create national integration without knowing the nature of the society have deployed a number of strategies in Pakistan. But, the result was the exacerbation of ethno-regional conflict. This study is an attempt to examine and analyze the elite's strategies used as an effort to foster national integration in Pakistan from 1947 to 1977. The study also argues that the ill planned strategies, not only struck the process of National integration rather strengthened the feelings of resentment and separation.

Key words: National integration, assimilation, exclusion, ethnicity, regionalism and federalism.

Introduction

National integration is a multi-dimensional phenomenon. It is the process, which brings all the socio-cultural, ethno-regional and linguistic groups of the society together and reduce their differences and blunting the edge of their ethnic, regional and parochial affiliations. In multi-ethnic and multi-cultural societies, National integration is considered, the most essential condition for the economic and political upbringing. National integration is worldwide phenomenon and it is obvious from the history that it is the common problem faced by almost all of the states at various stages of the history. The concept of Integration or disintegration has always been there in both new and old societies, in developed and developing states (Jones, 1972). The western countries, although with more or less homogeneous societies are able to remove their differences easily. These developed states with their modern and well functional political and social systems have all propensities to accommodate all the ethanol-regional and socio-cultural differences (Bell, 1974). On contrary, the underdeveloped countries with heterogeneous societies have display the different picture. Along with their transitional systems and heterogeneous nature of society, these developing states are not even able to integrate their variant groups and classes. These systems are unable to accomplish their task and perform their due functions in terms of national integration (Weiner, 1974).

One of the reasons for the lack of national Integration is that, these systems followed the westernized model of nation state. Attempts to submerge or subordinate separate cultural identities into an arbitrarily defined nation-state generates conflict and puts the legitimacy of the state and ruling elite in question. Moreover, those states, which were remained under the dominion of imperial powers such as African, South Africans and specially South Asian states, have to witness the cultural, ethno-religious and parochial conflicts. As the political and social system of these states are not sturdily organized, therefore the people of such state are not trained enough to convert their regional or parochial loyalties and affiliation towards the state. Even the political



elites of such states usually adopted strategies, which remained injurious to ethnic, cultural, linguistic and regional identities and ultimately fail to create harmony and national integration (Phandis, 2001).

Strategies for National Integration

Generally, two types of public policies are adopted for the creation of national integration;

- The exclusion of the distinct cultural qualities of minority, and then merging them into "national" culture. This policy of cultural domination is generally symbolized as "assimilationist": "Americanization," "Burmanization" "detribalization".
- ➤ The formation of national consecrations without the eradication of subsidiary cultures, which signifies the policy of "unity in diversity".

Despite its religious uniformity, Pakistan society represents a multitude of sociocultural diversity, heterogeneity and pluralism. Like other South Asian societies, Pakistan is a reservoir of distinct languages, dialects, ethnic groups, religious sects, tribes and cultures and is confronted by the challenges and dilemmas of adjusting traditional value postulates with modern compulsions (Kaushik, 2001). The regional cultural diversity and weak common cultural bonds reinforced the negative effects on national integration of physical discontinuity, imbalance in numerical strength, distribution of wealth and resources, and linguistic diversity. Therefore, the leading elites in Pakistan, as in other third world countries, adopted the policies of modernization and centralization on the same model of western nation-state for the development of national integration.

There is little doubt that Pakistan was created with a provisional sense of nationalism and national identity which was advanced due to the aggressive Hindu nationalism. The leading party Muslim League was able to mobilize several Muslim groups in the subcontinent through Islam (the dominating force for Muslim nationalism) and in doing so, was very effective in persuading Muslims to suspend their cultural, ethnic linguistic and regional identities (Abid, 2013). The common bond of Islam was the unifying ideological force, and a consciousness of common Muslim history had provided a basis for national solidarity. However, this "newfound" sense of Muslim nationalism does not mean that the other cultural, ethnic or regional identities had been adjusted or assimilated. Regional and ethno cultural diversity lay dormant under these sentiments, but after independence, they emerged and gained ascendancy over the sense of national cohesion.

Elite Strategies and the Civilian Phase: 1947-1958

There is no doubt that the Pakistani nation was united as mentioned earlier, through the source of Islam but simultaneously they were a heterogeneous groups of people belonging to distinct culture and traditions and speaking diverse languages, identifying with at least five major cultures, and numerous minor subcultures (Kaushik, 2001). The major subcultures were Bengali, Punjabis, Sindhi, Pakhtun and Balochi. Urdu speaking refugees, the Mohajirs, constituted another major subculture. Thus to integrate the culturally and geographically diverse Bengali sub-nation was the most arduous issue of national integration. This matter was crucial as Bengalis being the largest group, comprising 54 percent of the total population of Pakistan and the accommodation of this major portion of the society presented the ruling elites in the post-1947 period with a unique problem of integration. There were severe cultural, demographic, economic, and linguistic variances between East and West Pakistan. The situation in Western part was more notably problematic. As compare to West



Pakistan, East Pakistan was more homogeneous culturally and linguistically. On the other hand, West Pakistan was extremely heterogeneous, with multiple cultures, variation of languages, different dialects, multifarious castes and tribal disparities. These differences created a mixture of primary conditions, which were mainly unfavorable, to the development of national integration.

Unfavorable Conditions for National Integration

Among the unfavorable features, the country lacked physical contiguity, as both of its wings were distant by 1,200 miles of Indian Territory and the Eastern part was almost surrounded by India. A second unfavorable condition was the distribution of population, land, and natural resources between the two wings. East Pakistani society was relatively egalitarian and homogeneous, with a large class of peasants forming the base of the pyramid. This homogeneity increased as the rapidly multiplying population and slow economic development created a large rural proletariat. West Pakistani society, on the other hand, remained highly stratified and feudalistic, despite timid attempts to change its structure.

East Pakistan had 56% of the population, but only one-fifth of the total area, which was subjected to frequent cyclones and floods. It did not have abundant natural resources and did not inherit much industry. It earned foreign exchange through jute, which supported the further expansion of industry and wealth, as well as the import of foreign consumer goods in the West wing. The Bengalis were visibly considered "backward" people in a "backward" region who were poorly represented in army, civil service, and business as well. This dependency and vulnerability raised the feeling of resentment and urged Bengalis to demand for greater autonomy and economic self-sufficiency, which brought Pakistan to several constitutional impasses and political crises (Young, 1976).

A third condition unfavorable to national integration was the lack of a common language, as well as racial and cultural disparity in two wings. Bengali was the most commonly used by the people of East Pakistan other the other hand they were not familiar with the Urdu and hardly 1 percent Bengalis could understand the Urdu language, which was, identified the national language of Pakistan. These linguistic complexities created problems for national integration, including a demand for equal status of Bengali with Urdu, and a demand by Sindhi, Pakhtunn, and Balochi counter elites for the conservation of their linguistic heritages in counter to the increased in the face of expanding ascendancy of English as well as of Urdu. The imposition of Urdu as the national language, and the parity formula were perhaps the most detrimental to integration.

The inherent disparities in two parts were undoubtedly excavated by the policies pursued by the ruling elite in the first decade of Pakistan's independence. In the very first years of Pakistan's existence, the viability of the new state was so much in doubt that the nation's policy makers were compelled to pursue policies maximizing the state's cohesion. Thus, the policy pursued by the "national elite" in the early years- a policy of one state, one government, one economy, one language, one culture- tended to perpetuate this imbalance and was a significant factor in the growth of Bengali alienation. Moreover, the unbalance political system also led to uneven allocation of power among the assorted subnational groups. Hence, in East Pakistan the loud voices were raised for autonomy, in the early fifties when the Bengali found that their representation in the power center of the state was virtually nil. The Muslim political elites of both east and West Pakistan had no direct political connections with one another at the provincial level.



In the absence of cohesive patterns of cultural and social structural integration, three seemingly integrative institutions bound Pakistan: the Muslim League, the British trained and predominantly West Pakistani military and civil bureaucracy, and a federal structure. The Muslim League in a short time gained widespread support among the Muslim elite as well as the masses in various provinces, especially where the Muslims had been in a minority, for the creation of Pakistan. This was later to confront Pakistan with immense divisions.

The Muslim League was unable to be transformed in a genuine national political party. Moreover, the leaders showed more concern for office and power than for evolution of a stable representative political system. The League's strategies toward integration led to mutual suspicions among representatives of various ethnic groups. Their loyalties tended to be provincial.

Muslim League badly defeated in the 1954's election in East Pakistan and was defeated by the United Front, that was composed of all provincial political parties. References to Islam, recitation of Hindu threat, and revival of the pre-partition slogan of Islam in danger did not help the Muslim League, which came to be seen as an alien and oppressive organization by Bengalis and Pakhtuns. Finally, by 1954 Islam as an integrating strategy was no longer viable. Deep cleavages were developing due to the League's strategy of imposing Urdu as the national language, and restriction of political activity by opposition groups. Moreover, the dismissal of elected provincial government in East Pakistan by Governor General increased the sense of deprivation among the Bengalis. Thus, the seeds for the disintegration of Pakistan were firmly embedded in the soil in the period 1947-1958.

The Ayub khan's Strategies on National Integration 1958-69

When Ayub Khan, the Martial Law administrator captured the power in 1958, he tried to deploy new strategies for achieving and promoting national integration. The military elite diverted the concentration from ideological or religious issues to economic and national development, by using the bureaucratic mechanisms instead of ideological means for the promotion of national integration. Ayub khan believed that the reasons of all the Bengali "grievances" are the insufficient economic policies (the inadequate distribution of economic growth) which distended the gap between these two wings (Huntington, 1972). Therefore, he preferred to adopt such economic policies, which could foster the national integration. However, the matter of the fact was that, the integration of east-west Pakistan was more political than the economic. The regime's economic strategy did succeed in increasing economic development and modernization in East Pakistan. However, in did not meet the Bengali's expectations who were already dissatisfied with the economic growth of eastern wing as compare to the Western wing.

Weak Federation

The federation, which has been considered the essence of political system in Pakistan, could not be strengthened. The federal government structure was a third integrative institution inherited by Pakistan and considered an effective device for maintaining diversity of regional culture within a common political structure. After the creation of Pakistan, the federal features of the 1935 Act were incorporated in the Indian Independence Act, which remained the constitutional framework until the 1956 constitution was introduced (Callard. 1854). Consequently, in the constitution the provinces of Pakistan were to enjoy considerable autonomy. However, in practice, the imperatives of maintaining cohesion, the lack of experienced administrators, the centralized organization of Pakistan Muslim League emasculated the federal character



of the new state. The federal structure again turned in favor of unitary form of government under Ayub Khan. Thus, Pakistan was deprived of a possible political device for remaining a united country with autonomous constituent units, a device that the Bengali counter elite demanded should be effectively instituted. The promised provincial autonomy for all of Pakistan did not materialize, as the national elite frequently intervened in the provincial politics of East Pakistan. The ruling national elite frequently dismissed provincial ministries and imposed central rule.

Another strategy was the bureaucratization of the political system and politicians. In order to eliminate the politics, the military- bureaucratic elites were ingrained in the Political system of Pakistan. Along with political monopolization, they also establish their authority over other political functions i.e. interest articulation and interest aggregation. The basic function, which they did not perform, was the promotion of national integration. As, they could not connect their roots to the indigenous culture and values of Pakistan. The military and bureaucracy was largely unrepresentative of Bengalis, Sindhis and Balochis. From the Bengali point of view, the bureaucracy and the military became a symbol of Mohajir, Punjabi and Pakhtun domination. The administrative state that Ayub Khan built restored the balance of power in favor of West Pakistan, which prevailed in the early 1950s (Jahan, 1972).

Centralized Tendencies

By its very nature, the Ayub's military regime was highly centralized and left little room for regional loyalties. During 1958 to 1962, the military took a hard line against politicians, particularly those who had been active in regional politics. As a result, the regime abolished national and provincial legislatures, banned political parties, controlled the mass media and disqualified the politicians from politics who could challenge the regime (Sayeed, 1980).

Dearth of Political Participation

The military regime introduced the Basic Democracies system, a four-tiered system of local government that served as an electoral college for elections of the provincial and national assemblies and the president. However, this system could not provide the Bengalis effective participation in the national political system. The main reason in Bengali alienation during this period was the dearth of considerable participation and representation in the military- bureaucracy and the national decision-making process. The regional counter elite's resentment against its exclusion from effective participation in the power structure increased, especially after promulgation of the new constitution. The military regime's response was generally coercive. The intensity of coercion increased with the articulation of the Six Point Formula by the Awami League. Ayub Khan threatened to unleash his army on the Bengalis if their demands were not toned down. This policy of repression culminated in the arrest of a number of Bengali civil and military officers and politicians, including Mujibur Rahman, Maulana Bhashani in East Pakistan, and Mengal and Wali Khan in West Pakistan. The military regime also departed from the Muslim League's traditional strategy of seeking national unity through invocation of extreme threat and Islamic ideology. Instead, it sought to de-emphasize the links of Islam to national unity. Although, the original name, Islamic Republic of Pakistan, was dropped. An Islamic research institute was established to develop and project an image of Islam that facilitated, rather than impeded modernization. In addition, the effort to inflict Urdu as the official language, the banning of Bengali literature and the refutation of population-based representation developed the feelings of complete distrust among



the Bengali elites. Therefore, the Bengalis started to demand the autonomous provinces and a comparatively weaker center. Hence, the Bengali claim for provincial autonomy grew into a demand for separation. Sheikh Mujib came out with a new programme for maximum provincial autonomy for East Pakistan (Burki, 1970). There was unrest in the areas of Balochistan and N.W.F.P (now KPK, Khyber Paktunkhaw), but Ayub khan did not like to solve the problem politically, he rather than to negotiate with sheikh Mujib, put him behind the bars under different allegations.

These "pragmatic" policies of nation building by Ayub khan to an extent failed to produce the expected results, and in some respects proved counterproductive, due partly to the internal dynamics of Pakistan's development, and partly to external changes and foreign policies.

Yahya Khan's Strategies on National Integration

To be acceptable and effective, the new regime of Yahya Khan had to try new strategies to solve old problems. None of the old solutions was acceptable to Bengali counter elite. Even the power sharing solution under a parity formula, once acceptable, was rejected, as the Six Point formula of the Awami League was aimed at the dilution of central power, and not at obtaining a greater share of it. Bengalis also believed that Martial Law has not only snub their rights rather undermined their identity.

As part of a new strategy of national integration, the Yahya Khan's military regime accepted the major demands of the regional elites of both East and West Pakistan, as well as those of national opposition parties. It was the credit of Yahya khan who tried to build a political structure that could unite the two wings of Pakistan. Provinces were restored. Yahya khan also announced that elections would be held as soon as possible. The parity formula was abandoned in favor of creating a unicameral national assembly elected based on adult franchise, in which the number of seats for each province would be in proportion to population, to frame the future constitution of the country.

The political response to the new strategy of national integration from the regional elites in both wings was positive. Their two basic demands of recreating provincial governments and doing away with the parity formula were accepted. The new order provided the Bengali counter elite with an opportunity to dominate the national assembly and to frame a constitution of its choice (Jahan, 1972). The Yahya Khan's regime, however, had hoped that the election would not necessarily give total control of the national assembly to the Bengali elite and ultimately the Bengali elites would be forced to bargain with other centrist parties and dilute their demand for maximum provincial autonomy. The military regime did not expect that it was unleashing forces that would undermine the power structure and drive it to rescue itself by extensive coercive measures. It was again the credit of Yahya khan who acknowledged the need to distribute representation in accordance with population numbers.

After the elections, three major politics figures i.e. Yahya khan, Sheikh Mujeebur Rehman and Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto were left, who had difference of opinion related to power making and to build a consensus among them became a hard task. The Awami League in East Pakistan swept the polls. In West Pakistan, the Pakistan People's Party under the leadership of Bhutto emerged victorious in Punjab and Sindh (Baxter, 1970) Each party failed to elect a single member in the other wing. A serious political bifurcation, so far unknown in Pakistan, had occurred, setting the stage for the disintegration of the country. Mujib, who measured his electoral victory based on the popularity of his six Points Formula, Yahya Khan, after meeting with Mujib, got the



impression that the Six Points were negotiable. Bhutto, in a later meeting with Mujib, did not get a similar impression. He then worked to mobilize public opinion in West Pakistan to force Mujib to compromise on the six Points and to share power with him. Mujib refused to share power with Bhutto, as he could frame a new constitution with the help of the counter-elite in KPK and Balochistan. Subjected to these pressures, Yahya Khan first summoned the National Assembly and then, postponed the meeting. This decision led to the situation out of control and Bengali civil disobedience movement on the final round of negotiation in March 1971. The failure of these negotiations among Yahya, Mujib, and Bhutto grew a general suspicion that Mujib and the Awami League were set on a path of secession with Indian collaboration. This led the military action against the Bengali elite and civil war, Indian intervention, and the emergence of Bangladesh in December 1971. Yahya Khan's failure virtually ended whatever positive development Pakistan had experienced in the previous two decades. At the end of Yahya's tenure, Pakistan was even more "moth eaten" than at the time of partition (Dunbar, 1972).

Bhutto on National Integration

Bhutto proved to be commanding and autocratic like his predecessors as Prime Minister. However, when he was out of his office, he used to talk about the advantages of democratic practices and need of federalism and national integrity for the survival of Pakistan. In 1960s, Mr. Bhutto wrote about and made a considerable number of speeches concerning the question of national integration and the Pakistani polity. Bhutto considered the strong federation as a pre-requisite for the development of national integration. He argued that federalism is the only system, which is based on the division of sovereignty and political power. He believed, that Pakistan has continued to be a quasi-unitary state.

While conceding that federalism is essentially a first step in the march toward unity in diversity. Bhutto quoted Stalin's thesis that "no unification of peoples into a single state can be firm unless these people themselves voluntarily so decide". With reference to Pakistan, Bhutto also mentioned that Muhammad Ali Jinnah's also wanted to protect the autonomy and equality of all the component units of country. Bhutto also used Islamic arguments to call for provincial autonomy in federal arrangements (Bhutto, 1954). Bhutto argued that Islam does not allow suppressing the regional cultures by bullying.

In the aftermath of the 1971 civil war, Bhutto argued, that one of the two main reasons for the breakup of Pakistan was that the former governments could not successively ensured a federal system and inhuman victimization of the common people was other reason.

Bhutto used three main strategies for integration: (a) coercive— he attempted to neutralize the military, bureaucracy, and the counter elites; (b) utilitarian— through economic and social policy. However, Bhutto's regime attempted to build a cohesiveness among the workers and peasants, as well as attempting to coopt the counter elite through the tripartite agreement of 1972, and to create a federal constitution which granted power to regional elites; and (c) normative active— the third strategy employed by Bhutto. The civil regime used extensive propaganda and socialist symbolism to foster Integration.

The period between 1971 and the end of 1972 was marked by political crisis revolving around the question of lifting martial law, the autonomy of provinces, and the formulation of an agreed constitution. The ruling PPP faced two main opposition



parties, the *National Awami Party* (NAP) and the *Jamiat-uL-Ulema-e-Islam* (JUI); both these parties had their political base in the KPK and Balochistan. Bhutto attempted to fetch these parties into the national cause through a national accord. The agreement involved an apparent trade-off where the NAP and JUI would consent to the constitution-making process, while the PPP would accept the governments of NAP and JUI in KPK and Balochistan (Burki, 1980).

However, the cooperation and compromise between the PPP and the NAP-JUI did not last long. Two major issues were responsible for this breakdown, 1: the nomination of governors in the provinces of Balochistan and KPK, and 2: the introduction of land reforms introduced by Bhutto's regime. Due to their majorities in the provinces of Balochistan and KPK, NAP and JUI were demanding the appointment of provincial governors with their consent. However, Bhutto ignored their demands and appointed the governors from his own party (PPP) by disregarding the challenge of popularity and impact of NAP. Moreover, PPP was also blamed by the members of NAP to organize *Kissan Mazdur Party* against the property owners of KPK. Therefore, Wali khan, the leader of NAP and Mir Ghaus Bakhsh Bizenjo, elevated an appeal for Baloch- Pakhtun nationalism in order to resist the policies of Bhutto's government. The attentive elites in these provinces wanted that, Bhutto should rejuvenate the democratic system by lifting the Martial law in Pakistan.

The political crisis deepened when the PPP's drafted interim constitution was submitted and severely criticized by the opposition parties. The draft supported the Presidential form of government, with presidential prerogative to dissolve the National Assembly, which was criticized and rejected by all the opposition parties particularly by NAP. The opposition parties also criticized the strong centre with maximum authority. Old and sensitive issues such as provincial autonomy or the federal principle remained loosely defined in the constitution. There was little change from the conventional paths taken by the past regimes. The National Assembly retained the power to amend any clauses relating to provincial interests or the centers of powers to suspend provincial governments without a referendum of consent from the provinces concerned.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it must be stressed that ruling elites are far from being silent spectators or victims of the preexisting cleavages of divided societies. In the decisions and policies they make, the general strategies they follow, they influence the development of group consciousness and the patterns of group conflict. In Pakistan, during civilian rule, the government made crucial decisions that affected the development of nationalism in the KPK and Balochistan. Bhutto started out calling for decentralization within a federal structure and democratization through radical reform. After an apparent consolidation of coalition parties, he soon moved to centralization of power in his own hands. In general, the civilian regime failed to recognize ethnic diversities or to grant them institutional expression. The civilian regime was unable to equalize or ameliorate perceived imbalances between the Punjab, Balochistan, Sindh and the KPK. The civilian strategy of coercion and decapitation in Balochistan convinced the Baloch elite that in the future no amount of institutionalized pluralism would prevent Punjabi domination. They, therefore, changed their strategy and wait for the option to secede from Pakistan.

Finally, Nation-building or solidarity is a complex problem, but it's essential means must be political representation, accommodation of regional or ethnic interests, and fashioning a decentralized state structure. A nation in a culturally diverse environment



should be conceived as a political category with its functions, capacity, and relationships to be determined by the constituent groups.

In order to foster national integration, the constitutional politics is necessary along with the equal arrangements of power sharing which can guarantee the political and cultural rights of all the groups. One of the major reasons of the issues of national integration is the problematic nature of the federation. Due to which the leaders leaned towards the centralization and undercut the importance of multiple identities and federating units. Such attitudes of the leading elites resulted in aggregating the disparity between center and provinces and even intensified the conflict and strife, which ultimately created serious problems of integration.

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