

## **ETHNIC DIVERSITY AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT IN PAKISTAN**

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### **Abstract**

*Ethnic diversity is the most significant aspect in the study of politics. It plays a powerful role in political development and change. This study examines the politics of Pakistan with theoretical as well as practical analysis based on racial, cultural and historical characteristics of Pakistani society. The cultural pluralism plays an important role in the politics of Pakistan based on cultural and regional outlets of ethnic diversity. It has direct impact on both central-provincial-local relations on the one hand, and problems of national integration, on the other hand. This study further analysis the integration, rejection and Multiculturism policies of the state of Pakistan.*

**Key words:** *Ethnicity, Multiculturism, Impact, National Integration, Integration, Rejection, Cultural Pluralism, Political Development, Ethnic Diversity and Multicultural Policies.*

### **Introduction**

Ethnicity is a state of being ethnic which means a specific subgroup of population, and can be described as a peculiar group. It is based on different characteristics such as racial, cultural and historical. The group is divided into further subdivisions like sects, casts, language or region within a political society. Ultimately these subdivisions become the core of ethnicity. (Greetz, 1968, p. 10) . Ethnic groups can be called modern interest group which use ethnicity trait as their strategy to achieve their interests and to make demand on governmental

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resources .Thus politicizing ethnicity for the interests of a specific group. Ethnicity can also be taken as a trait based on certain circumstances to make it political aspect of a society (Rothschild, 1981, p. 15)

In developing nations, ethnic factor is becoming an indicator of political behaviour as a common trend. Ethnicity and ethnic identities are dynamic and vary according to circumstances or environments and states. Max Weber describes ethnicity as a subjective belief related to physique, custom or both not necessarily based on blood relation (Weber, 1978, p. 389) Ethnic identity is one among various identities that an individual possess. Identity itself is a complex phenomenon to explain. Identity can be defined as a set of characteristics or traits by which an object, individual, person or group of individuals and nation is known for its existence. It includes beliefs, values, personalities, who they are, from where they belong, what are their differentiation and specialties? Identity may be categorized as self-identity, social identity and national identity. Individual identity is a self -recognition, self-esteem, belief, personality, values, who he is, to whom he belongs. Social identity is one's relation with society, values, beliefs, attitude relative to society. National identity is above all these identities making a nation composed of recognized and dignified individuals. It is process from downward to upward and an individual identity crisis would lead towards social group (ethnicity) identity crisis and national identity crisis. Therefore, ethnic crisis in a society is in fact an identity crisis of a group. Ethnic Group with its social norms, culture, language and behavior turn into a political group or ethnic movement on no recognition and acknowledgement by state and leads to political demands and urges for representation in decision making process.

In South Asia, societies are heterogenic and ethnically divided onto a number of groups which affects political development. The concept of democracy in ethno prone society, particularly in Pakistan, has been shifted from majority-minority process of decision making to the demand for representation of ethnic groups in the government It has led to the emergence and rise of ethnic groups as political force to represent their identity and demand for goal-achievement.

Pakistan is ethnically a diversified society with a pluralistic culture. Its political culture stems from both the eastern i.e. traditional and the Western i.e. European in its socio-economic and political value-system. It is difficult to place Pakistan in a single category of political culture. According to Pye and Verba, political culture emerges from history and stems from public and private events of the socio-cultural environments (Pye & Verba, 1965, p. 8) Its society is in transition phase and political system is under development phases, therefore, there is more than one political culture in the country.

Political development is a varying phenomenon. It has been defined in several terms by different scholars in the light of social, economic and political values of a society (Almond & Powell, 1966). However, political development in general indicates the socio-economic and political stability leading to the welfare of the general masses. Thus political development is recognized particularly with the achievement of:

A bottom line for the general masses for their welfare

A check on autocratic tendency and monopolistic rise of economic power, and maintaining a distributive justice in the political system.

In its cultural pluralism Pakistan is a land of great variety with diverse social-cultural and regional outlets comprising ethnic diversity. Because of the different geographical attributes and ethnic diversity, people in Pakistan vary in language, appearance and behavior. There are about thirty different languages representing different cultures. Therefore, essentially the political development in Pakistan involves a process of fusing together diverse tribes, families and religious groups in a single force of integrity for collective betterment and as an ingredient of nation-building. In Pakistan, democracy, in its transitional stage, has diverted to the emergence of ethnic groups as political force. The task before national and political leadership is to bring these diverse groups to a single platform for political development and national integration. But there is a high degree of distrust prevalent in the political system.

For ethno-prone and complex societies a structural arrangement is provided in the form of federalism. Federalism is borne out of emotional feelings, sentimental attachment of the people for a region. For example in 1947, establishment of Pakistan and its federating units were the result of some sentimental attachment and also a suited structural arrangement for complex society of western part of India. It was also a cultural arrangement for heterogenetic society of Pakistan. Federalism creates a sense of 'political identity' for heterogeneous societies and they are motivated by a sense of affiliation and commitment to larger structure over them. Through federalism such societies can achieve stability but operative cause is not federalism rather than convocational arrangements such as proportional representation.

Pakistan is a Federal State with a tendency for more centralized state authority over the Federal and Local units in the system. There has been a continued debate on Central-Provincial-Local relations in regard to economic, political and administrative policies of the state. The coercive state response to ethnic group has given rise to phenomenon of ethnicity and ethno-nationalism in the country, which has ultimately impeded political development and democratization. The

emergence and rise of ethnicity is because of socio-political and economic injustice with ethnic nationalities in power structure of Pakistan. It relates with the betterment of life and distributive justice i.e. to create a socio-economic order in Pakistan.

### **Ethnic Politics and National Integration**

Both ethnicity and national integration have been a serious issue particularly in the contemporary political study. After the close of the Second World War there emerged several independent nations on the globe. Nationalism in Africa and Asia appeared as a negative phenomenon to get rid of western colonialism with no coherent national identity, common culture and language which are essential elements for a nation state (Kautsky, 1962, p. 33). These new states “are not yet nations in being but only nations in hope” (Emerson, 1960, p. 94)) and thus suffered from ethnic crisis and ultimately got involved into the issue of national integration. The major problem of such a situation has been conflicting socio-economic and political fibre in such newly emerged independent nations with ethnic diversity. Such diverse fibre which was based on ethnic composition could not be handled properly by newly emerged states.

Consequently, these states adopted authoritative policy by expanding its power and position. It resulted into provoking ethnic groups for participation in ethnic politics to preserve their identity. And these ultimately led to ethnic movements which became challenged to national integration.

National integration is a process to unify contrasting identities of social system under one government. Therefore, it is difficult when different group make demand for favourable political consideration. Ethnic societies has different customs, languages and identity; therefore, relationship between ethnic politics and national integration becomes a challenging task for state to understand. This is the reason that national identity and integration has to be maintained to eliminate the conflict in a nation state.

In developing societies ethnic identities are problematic concerns for national identity which leads to unstable democracies. For national integration in a society with cultural fragmentation and ethnic diversities generally three types of state policies are used as a force to achieve national integration;

- I. Integration policy
- II. Rejection policy
- III. Pluralist policy or multiculturalists policy

Pakistan is a nation of cultural pluralism. Its political culture is combined with ethnic heterogeneity, under its pluralistic culture. The ethnic development emerges in a society with language and culture which ultimately becomes a supportive element for the creation of a nation state (Coakley, 2012, pp. 55-65). This nation state with a combination of different languages and culture needs to promote national integration for the betterment of its citizens.

Pakistani culture is a blend of both foreign and local influences. Its foreign influences derive from the invasion of India by outsiders from ancient times to modern period of its history which included Aryans, Greeks, Arabs, Persians, Turks, Afghans and the Mughals. On the other hand, it has local influences also of the native Dravidians. Thus, Pakistan can be placed into a typical politically pluralistic cultural society in which ethnicity has become a divisive factor for Pakistani nationhood.

Creation of Pakistan was the result of Anti-colonial Nationalism (Kellas, 1991, p. 76), at the later stage after creation of Pakistan, language which became the main cause of cessation of East Pakistan and the creation of the nation state of Bangladesh with the crisis between Urdu and Bengalis. Thus, here also language as an attribute of ethnicity has played role of nation building and also affected the process of national integration. (Laporte, 1975, p. 40)

### **Conclusion**

To create a better environment for achievement of national integration and political development in such ethnic heterogeneity, what is needed to be that Federalism should be designed for multi-ethnic societies accepting socio-political pluralism integrating different ethnic groups in nationhood. The national policy should be shaped with the consideration of ethnic factors. The ethnic groups should be involved in political engagement and reforms with significant compromises.

A three tier process may lead to democratization and political development in Pakistan with the concept that:

More concentration on economic development through privatization will lead heavily towards democracy and development.

The first tier is concentration on economic development through privatization that would lead to cultural harmony through cultural secularization for regional ethnic unity.

The second tier is that the cultural harmony will in turn lead to socio-political development. However, these must achieve:

- I. Improvement in the quality of life
- II. Curbing economic monopolistic trend and
- III. Distributive socio-economic justice

The third tier is that the social-political development will lead to democracy. The restructuring of Pakistani society must be based on particular ideological, political and economic systems. Ideologically, Pakistan must maintain Islam as a complete code of life with consciousness of tolerance, humanism and brotherhood including trust and confidence. Politically, there is need for decentralization of power with the emergence of strong local institutions through which an individual regardless of social status and ethnic background, can be involved in decisions that affect the political, economic, cultural and ecological environment.

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