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# State versus Nations in Pakistan

Sindhi, Baloch and Pakhtun  
Responses to Nation Building

Ashok Behuria



INSTITUTE FOR DEFENCE  
STUDIES & ANALYSES

रक्षा अध्ययन एवं विश्लेषण संस्थान

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# List of Abbreviations

AT: Awami Tehreek

BLA: Baloch Liberation Army

BLF: Baloch Liberation Front

BNA: Balochistan National Alliance

BNM: Balochistan National Movement

BNP: Balochistan National Party

BRA: Baloch Republican Army

BSO: Baloch Students Union

CEC: Chief Election Commissioner

CID: Criminal Investigation Department

COPHC: China Overseas Port Holding Company

FATA: Federally Administered Tribal Areas

GDA: Gwadar Development Authority

GDS: Gas Development Surcharge

GST: General Sales Tax

GTC: Greater Thal Canal

IQ: Intelligence Quotient

ISI: Inter-Services Intelligence

JSM: Jeay Sindh Mahaz

JSMM: Jiye Sindh Muttahida Mahaz

JSQM: Jeay Sindh Qaumi Mahaz

JSQP: Jeay Sindh Qaumparast Party

JST: Jeay Sindh Tehrik

JWP: Jumhoori Watan Party

KNP: Kalat State National Party

MCC: Metallurgical Corporation of China

MFN: Most Favoured Nation

MQM: Muttahida Quami Mahaz

NAP: National Awami Party

NBP: National Bank of Pakistan

NRO: National Reconciliation Ordinance

NWFP: North-West Frontier Province.

PATA: Provincially Administered Tribal Areas

PML-N: Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz

PNP: Pakistan National Party

PONM: Pakistan Oppressed Nations Movement

PPP: Peoples Party of Pakistan

PTI: Pakistan Tehrik-e-Insaf

PTV: Pakistan Television

QAT: Quomi Awami Tehrik

SDLA: Sindhudesh Liberation Army

SNM: Sindh National Party

SPLGA: Sindh Peoples Local Government Act 2012

SPLGO: Sindh Peoples' Local Government Ordinance

SPNA: Sindh Progressive Nationalist Alliance

STP: Sindh Taraqqi Pasand Party

SUP: Sindh United Party

TTP: Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan

UN: United Nations



## Preface

All post-colonial states in the Asia and Africa, following their independence, found the twin problems of state- and nation-building hard to resolve. Most of them were multi-cultural and multi-national in character, but tried to build singular national identities, often actively promoted by the states themselves. This led to political turmoil and fragmentation, and in some cases resulted in secession and formation of separate states. While some states focussed more on strengthening the state institutions than on nation-building and banked on a sound political system to develop a sense of community by emphasizing on rather than dismissing pluralism, others were obsessively focussed on employing common denominators to build a model unified nation out of disparate ethno-cultural sectarian and linguistic identities. In the later case, the result was disastrous. Pakistan falls in the later category.

Pakistan lost its east wing— then called East Pakistan—to its short-sighted policy of steamrolling diversity through strong-armed tactics in 1971. Much is made out of India midwifing the creation of Bangladesh, but the fact remains that India had no role to play in accentuating the sense of alienation among the Bengali Muslims of East Pakistan, which was rather carelessly nurtured by the West Pakistani elite and primarily by the army. However, the lessons of this experience were mostly lost on the wayside. The post-1971 Pakistan returned to its project of nation-building with a vengeance, which widened the gulf between the Pakistani state and peripheral ethno-national communities. In the subsequent years of unstable and divisive politics interrupted by long spells of military rule, the attempt to reinforce a particular version of national identity has continued with little success. This has strengthened a sense of alienation among the Balochis and a sense of national consciousness among the Sindhis; while the Pashtuns may have been mainstreamed economically and politically, the state's professed confessional orientation— born of the zeal to build Pakistan's national identity on the basis of Islam, the common denominator— has induced in them the determination to impose a radical version of

Islam on the state. This has had disastrous consequence for the Pakistani state; it has adversely affected the internal security situation and added to the fragility of the Pakistani state.

Similarly, other important markers of the state-sponsored national identity —*urdu* as national language, anti-Indianism, irredentist claims on Kashmir, disproportionate faith and confidence in the institution of the army, etc.— have not appealed to the non-Punjabi minorities and created an environment for consolidation of their ethno-national identities. The project of nation building is thus in urgent need of a course correction, especially at a time when the signs of an alternate discourse on Pakistani nationalism seem to be emerging on the horizon.

The present monograph traces the origins of Pakistani state and the processes that encouraged the state sponsored efforts to build a Pakistani nation, and seeks to isolate various problems associated with the nation-building efforts in Pakistan. The first chapter of the monograph introduces the problem, outlines the scope of the study, presents the main hypotheses and spells out the methodology employed for the study.

The second chapter embeds the discussion in a historical context. It provides the backdrop to the study and makes an attempt to acquaint the readers with the conceptual categories of state, nation, nation-state and state-nation; identifies the superfluity in the argument that state must and nation must be coterminous for a state to survive; and hints at the unquestioning acceptance of such philosophy by the leaders of the India and Pakistan. Through a brief but discursive account of the Pakistan movement, the chapter isolates the main strands of Pakistani nationalism, which were propagated through active efforts of the state to build the nation-state of Pakistan in the subsequent period.

The third chapter grapples with the nation-building efforts in Pakistan. It identifies the main markers of Pakistani nationalism, serves the main arguments advanced by the state in their favour and their weaknesses. It points out the limitations of the efforts made by the state over the years and their net effect on the local national identities.

The fourth chapter brings together the evolution of nationalist consciousness among the Sindhis, the Baloch and the Pakhtuns. It

provides useful historical backdrop against which such consciousness took shape and developed as ineradicable ethno-cultural identities, isolates the main markers of these identities, and situates them in the contemporary political context. The disjunctions between the state-sponsored pan-Pakistan national identity and these 'local-provincial' identities are discussed in this chapter in an elaborate manner.

The concluding chapter compares and contrasts the identities, analyses the reasons for clashes among them, and discusses the direction in which these different sets of identities are moving.

The study would not have been complete without active persuasion and encouragement from my colleagues in the South Asia Centre, especially Vishal, Smruti, Shreyas and Yaqoob, active cooperation of the library staff, especially Mukesh, constructive comments of anonymous referees, which helped me in sharpening some of my arguments, and last but not the least, patience of both Dr Arvind Gupta, former director general of IDSA and Brigadier Rumel Dahiya, deputy director general of IDSA, with the delay in the finalisation of the draft and their insistence that the study deserved an early publication. It is my earnest hope that the study will contribute to better understanding of the forces of contradiction that problematize the identity of Pakistan and, perhaps, determine its behaviour as a state.

*Ashok Behuria*

# Prologue

*Pakistan was an idea before it became a country,  
and whether it is a nation remains doubtful even today.<sup>1</sup>*

Edward Mortimer

## 1.0 Introduction

Forty years after Pakistan came into being, a well-known Pakistani scholar rued that it was “still a country in search of an identity”<sup>2</sup>, despite the best efforts of its elite to carve out a national identity for the state. Few years later, on the occasion of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its creation, a team of scholars brought out a book—titled *Pakistan: Nationalism without a Nation?*<sup>3</sup>—which continued to wrestle with this moot question. In 2002, another Pakistani observer lamented that the leaders of the

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<sup>1</sup> Edward Mortimer, *Faith and Power: The Politics of Islam*, Faber and Faber, London, 1982, p. 191.

<sup>2</sup> Hamza Alavi, “Nationhood and the Nationalities in Pakistan”, *Economic and Political Weekly*, 24 (27), Jul. 8, 1989, p. 1527. Interestingly, in an essay, in March 1956, Hans J Morgenthau, often regarded as the founding father of realism, also held that “there is enormous and, so it seems, irremediable weakness [in the way US is approaching Pakistan]”, because, “Pakistan is not a nation and hardly a state. It has no justification in history, ethnic origin, language, civilization, or the consciousness of those who make up its population. They have no interest in common save one: fear of Hindu domination. It is to that fear, and to nothing else, that Pakistan owes its existence, and thus far its survival, as an independent state.”

<sup>3</sup> Christophe Jaffrelot (ed.), *Pakistan: Nationalism Without a Nation?*, Manohar Publishers, Delhi, 2002. In an earlier joint piece, Jaffrelot and Rasul Bakhsh Rais, debated the issue of ethnic assertion in Pakistan, where Jaffrelot argued that the centralising reflexes of the Pakistani state induced vulnerability in the ethnic groups leading to their national assertion. “Interpreting Ethnic Movements in Pakistan”, *The Pakistan Development Review*, 37 (4), Papers and Proceedings PART I, Fourteenth Annual General Meeting and Conference of the Pakistan Society of Development Economists Islamabad, January 28-31, 1999, pp. 153-179.

state had “failed markedly to inculcate a collective identity in a disparate people”.<sup>4</sup> Pakistan was also characterised by external observers around the same time as a ‘nuclear Yugoslavia’ and as ‘a state without an authentic nationhood’<sup>5</sup>. A close American observer of Pakistani politics also commented in 2002 that real problem about Pakistan was “the intricate interaction between the physical/political/legal entity known as the state of Pakistan and the idea of the Pakistani nation”, “with the Pakistani state often operating at cross-purposes with the Pakistani nation”.<sup>6</sup>

In recent years, perceptive observers in Pakistani media have noted that Pakistan “remains an enigma” “clutching at an identity beset by an ambiguous relation to Islam” and struggling still with a coherent national identity”<sup>7</sup>. Moreover, it is perhaps “the only country in the world where some of the important opinion makers still ask, 65 years after its founding, why it was created in the first place”<sup>8</sup> and other similar questions, like, “Does Pakistan Make Sense?”<sup>9</sup>. An American professor of political geography has recently argued that the “root cause of these manifold failures...is the very artificiality of Pakistan [nation if not state] itself”.<sup>10</sup>

All such observations—some of them exaggerated—are predicated on one fundamental hypothesis, i.e., the task of nation-building has

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<sup>4</sup> A Z Hilali, “The Challenges to Pakistan’s Domestic Security”, *Journal of Third World Studies*, 19 (1), Spring 2002, p. 68.

<sup>5</sup> Robert D. Kaplan used these expressions while reviewing two books on Pakistan by Owen Bennett Jones and Mary Anne Weaver in *New York Times* in 2003. Reproduced in <http://www.balochunity.org>.

<sup>6</sup> Stephen Cohen, “The Nation and the State of Pakistan”, *The Washington Quarterly*, 25 (3), 2002, p. 109.

<sup>7</sup> Farzana Shaikh, *Making Sense of Pakistan*, Foundation Books, Hurst & Co, London, 2009, pp. 1 & 9.

<sup>8</sup> Anwar Syed, “The Art of the Possible”, *The Daily Times*, September 25, 2012, p. 3.

<sup>9</sup> Haider Nizamani, “Does Pakistan Make Sense”, Part I & II, *The Daily Times*, August 8-9, 2010, p. 3.

<sup>10</sup> Robert D Kaplan, “What’s Wrong with Pakistan?”, *Foreign Policy*, July/August 2012.

not been attempted well by its leadership throughout the last 67 years of its existence, and rather than uniting disparate ethnic and sectarian groups, the official nationalism engendered by the state has released centrifugal tendencies amongst ethnonational and sectarian identities, which have jeopardised the process of nation-building in Pakistan and added to its weaknesses. The present study seeks to analyse the responses of the ethnonational groups to the process of nation-building by the state.

Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the architect of the Pakistani state, had acknowledged in 1948, that Pakistan was “a nation, containing many elements”.<sup>11</sup> But he had understated the importance as well as the legitimacy of many ethno-national identities crowding the Pakistani socio-cultural landscape then. Not even a year later, in June 1948, he had come face to face with the demands from different identities for autonomy, which he termed as “provincialism”:

Local attachments have their value but what is the value and strength of a “part” except within the “whole”. Yet this is a truth people so easily seem to forget and begin to prize local, sectional or provincial interests above and regardless of the national interests. It naturally pains me to find the curse of provincialism holding sway over any section of Pakistan.<sup>12</sup>

These so called local identities in Pakistan have been both ‘self-defined’ as well as ‘other-defined’, to use the conceptual categories introduced

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<sup>11</sup> In his message to the nation on August 15, 1947, hours after the founding of the Pakistan state, on the occasion of the inauguration of the Pakistan Broadcasting Service, Jinnah stated: “The creation of the new State has placed a tremendous responsibility on the citizens of Pakistan. It gives them an opportunity to demonstrate to the world how can a nation, containing many elements, live in peace and amity and work for the betterment of all its citizens, irrespective of caste or creed.” *Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah, Speeches and Statements as Governor General of Pakistan 1947-48*, Government of Pakistan, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, Directorate of Films & Publications, Islamabad, 1989, p. 8.

<sup>12</sup> Jinnah’s reply to the civic address presented by the Quetta Municipality on June 15, 1948, *Ibid.*, p.34.

by Walker Connors.<sup>13</sup> The people claiming these identities are quite zealous about the protecting their distinct socio-cultural character, and for an outsider looking at Pakistan, each one of them also appears to have its unique individuality as a group.

Among all these local-provincial identities, the first to assert its claim for statehood was the Bengali nationalism. The demand of the Bengali-speaking Muslims of Pakistan for a separate state culminated in the formation of Bangladesh. Even after formation of Bangladesh, Pakistan could hardly consolidate itself either as a ‘Muslim nation’—based on the ‘two-nation theory’ or ‘Muslim ethnicity’<sup>14</sup>—or as an ‘Islamic nation’—based on the ideology of Islam. It could not hide the fragility of its nationhood in the post-1971 political context. Surprisingly, the process of construction of national identity in Pakistan did not diverge much from the pre-1971 period and displayed the very same enthusiasm for defining Pakistani identity in terms of Islam and anti-India sentiments. The creation of Bangladesh in 1971 did not affect the ‘nationising project’ of the ruling elite, which continued with its task of nation-building in loose Islamic terms.

The effort to build a national identity for Pakistan peaked in favour of ‘Islamisation’ in the late 1970s and the 1980s, during the military rule of Zia-ul-Haq (1977-1988), who aimed at building the Pakistani nation by inculcating the so-called ‘Pakistan spirit’ in its people. The ‘Pakistan spirit’, largely left under-defined, found its expression in school textbooks emphasising on Islam and a wilful distorted reconstruction of history seeking to imagine the shadow of Pakistani history backward in time since the advent of Islam into the subcontinent.<sup>15</sup> Such an imagined retrospective shortened the pre-Islamic phase and over-emphasised the Muslim rule in the subcontinent, which could be possible

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<sup>13</sup> Walker Connors employs this method of identifying the authenticity of the claims of national identity. A nation or an ethnonation, as he would put it, ought to be an other-defined as well as a self-differentiating and self-defined entity.

<sup>14</sup> As has been argued by Hamza Alavi in his famous article: “Pakistan And Islam: Ethnicity And Ideology”, in Fred Halliday and Hamza Alavi (eds.), *State and Ideology in the Middle East and Pakistan*, Macmillan Education, London & New York, 1988.

<sup>15</sup> See Ashok K Behuria and Muhammad Shahzad, “Partition of History in Textbooks in Pakistan: Implications of Selective Memory and Forgetting”, *Strategic Analysis*, 37 (3), May-June 2013.

because of what it called the ‘Pakistani spirit’. Thus, Muhammad Bin Qasim (695-715AD) was projected as having laid the foundation of the Pakistan spirit, which in due course of time culminated in the movement for Pakistan and the establishment of the Islamic state of Pakistan.

However, such imaginary reconstruction of history has failed to blunt the edge of the ethnonational communities within Pakistan. Even if the pressures from these ethnonational assertions have not threatened the existence of the state of Pakistan, they have certainly exposed the weaknesses of Pakistan as a nation, if not as a state. In fact, in the absence of any overarching sense of unity, Pakistan has largely managed to survive as a state by “force” rather than “will”; by the coercive might of the state rather than the spirit of spontaneous solidarity among its people. The legacy of the empire has emerged as the only defence against anarchy and dissolution. This is not to deny that the 67 years of collective emotional experience of history and politics, quite eventful in Pakistan’s case, within a defined territorial space does provide the necessary building blocks for a non-religious, territory-based state-national identity; however, the leaders of Pakistan—both political and military—have failed to identify the weaknesses of the nation-building project and continue to use the old rhetoric which only harden the ethno-national sentiments further jeopardising the process of socio-political and national integration in Pakistan.

## 1.1 Universe of the Study

As has been indicated above, the Pakistani quest for an identity even after 67 years of its formation as an independent state signals the poverty of the nation-building project attempted by its leadership over the years. Rather than binding disparate group identities together through an inclusive philosophy, the coercive process of identity-construction by the state disregarding diversity and difference has rather reinforced disjunctions between the state and its constitutive units, which have manifested in persistent claims of nationhood by different ethno-linguistic groups from time to time. The state’s attempt to manufacture an official Pakistani nationalism through conjured history,<sup>16</sup> and

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<sup>16</sup> Ayesha Jalal, “Conjuring Pakistan: History as Official Imagining”, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 27 (1), Feb. 1995, pp. 73-89.



propagation of such an identity through educational institutes and media has failed to assimilate local identities. This warrants deeper understanding of the process of nation-building in Pakistan and the strengths and limitations of state-driven initiatives in taking the process to its logical end. This study has identified three ethno-linguistic communities which have claimed that they had, all throughout history, maintained their independent character; they were older than Pakistan and they must be accepted as self-legislating and self-governing nations.

No study so far has approached the problem of Pakistani nation-building and identity politics from this perspective. It is necessary therefore to identify the basic reflexes that condition the efforts aimed at constructing the 'national' identity in Pakistan. At the same time, it is essential to study the way the ethno-linguistic-national identities emerging at the peripheries define themselves. Thus, it is not so much the politics of the state as the politics of nation-building that is being examined here in the subsequent discussion, although the study is alive to the impact of state politics on the processes of formation and consolidation of identities.

Before taking up the case of Pakistan, it is necessary to emphasise here that the problem of nation-building is not unique to Pakistan, and many postcolonial states in the world today share the very same dilemmas that Pakistan is experiencing now. But what may be distinctive about the Pakistani case is that despite its failures, the state continues to make an attempt to steamroll all identities and build an overarching national identity in exclusive terms, rather than allow local identities to grow as complementary identities. The state has perhaps looked at local identities as existential threats, and therefore, tried to overwhelm them with a state-sponsored grand hegemonic narrative of national identity. On the contrary, the three separate ethnonational identities, taken up for study here, while demonstrating their susceptibility to coercion at times, have proved their inerasable and unique characters over time. The competition as well as clash between these two sets of identities—which has possibly undermined the nation-building exercises being undertaken in Pakistan and emitted destabilising impulses—is the subject matter of the present study.

## 1.2 Objectives of the Study

The study introduces the concepts of nation-state and state-nation as a theoretical backdrop and goes on to examine the specific case of Pakistan, seeks to identify the signifiers of Pakistani state nationalism on the one hand, and those of the three major ethnonationalisms within Pakistan—Sindhi, Balochi and Pakhtun—on the other, and makes an effort to find out the complementarities and disjunctions between these two sets of identities. It does not intend to provide an in-depth analysis of the internal politics of Pakistan with its impact on the nation-building process.

## 1.3 Hypotheses

The main hypotheses of the study are: (i) the process of national identity construction in Pakistan has ignored and underestimated the strength of ethno-linguistic-national identities; (ii) there is a lack of correspondence between the markers of identity(ies) at the state and provincial levels and (iii) the ongoing tension between the state-nation and the multiple local/ethno-national identities is likely to continue in the absence of any creative attempt to develop an inclusive identity.

## 1.4 Methodology

The study employs a historical-analytical method, and makes use of many primary as well as secondary sources to gather necessary data on the theme and analyses them in an objective manner.

## Chapter II

# The Concept of State and Nation and Formation of Pakistan

*A nation is a sentiment, a spiritual principle which is based on two things: One is in the present, the other in the past; one is the common possession of a rich inheritance of memories, and the other, a common consent, a desire to live together...  
The existence of a nation is a daily plebiscite.*

*Ernest Renan*<sup>17</sup>

Before taking up the specific case of Pakistan, it is pertinent to dwell upon the processes that marked the rise of the state and nation in history. It is important because the basic structure as well as the functions of the 'state', as one sees them today, have adduced to them universal legitimacy as agencies of power and legitimate force. Closely associated with this is a sense of 'legitimacy' accorded to states to fashion out their own nations to ensure cohesion and integration among their people. The complex processes of state-formation and nation-building and the efforts to establish modern nation-states in the colonial spaces need clear and critical analysis, to understand the challenges faced by a postcolonial state like Pakistan.

In the following discussion, an effort has been made to (i) introduce the concepts of state and nation, and interaction between these two conceptual categories in the colonial and postcolonial contexts; (ii) situate the specific case of Pakistani nationalism in its unique historical context and (iii) identify the fundamental impulses, signifiers or markers that characterise the Pakistani 'national' identity.

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<sup>17</sup> Ernest Renan, in his classic lecture, "Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?" ("What is a Nation?"), at Sorbonne, on March 11, 1882, in Geoff Eley and Ronald Grigor Suny (eds.), *Becoming National: A Reader*, Oxford University Press, New York and Oxford, 1996, pp. 52-54, at [http://www.cooper.edu/humanities/core/hss3/e\\_renan.html](http://www.cooper.edu/humanities/core/hss3/e_renan.html).

## The Nation-State

*[A]bout 90 per cent of 160-odd politically 'independent' states are not nation-states. Only about 10 per cent of them are nation-states by the criterion of 90 per cent or more of the population speaking a single language.*

*Pierre L. van den Berghe<sup>18</sup>*

It has been the ruling faith (or superstition?) of our times that every nation should have a state of its own, and alternately, every state must aspire to be a nation. However, most states in the world today are plural in character, and even the states of the Europe, earlier perceived to be mono-national, have revealed many hitherto ignored nationalities within their entrails. However, the romantic appeal of the idea of “one-state, one-nation” persists in the world today. In many cases, states have used all means at their command to build ‘nations’ out of ethno-cultural pluralities by emphasising common features, inventing<sup>19</sup> common historical experiences and defining their identities in opposition to some neighbouring community or nation. When they fail to reinforce such identities, they seek to counter the assertion of ethnonational identities within their borders through their coercive might, and often find it difficult to preserve their unity both as a state and as a nation.

The concept of ‘Nation’ as the psycho-cultural dimension of the rational-legal entity called the ‘State’ has in fact been the mother of all disorders in the world today. Consequent attempts by states, especially in multi-cultural and multi-national societies, to manufacture and impose state-national identities have proved counterproductive and provoked identity assertion at the local levels. While various states have tried to build (supra)national identities, the so-called local identities have asserted their rights to be self-governing communities. The unifying forces of globalisation as well as the universal legitimacy of ‘state’ have not managed to deter the passion of these so called “peripheral” collective identities to stake their claims as ‘nations’, deserving their own states.

<sup>18</sup> Pierre L. van den Berghe, in Atsuko Ichijo and Gordana Uzelac (eds.), *When is the Nation?*, Routledge, London and New York, 2005, p. 121.

<sup>19</sup> Benedict Anderson, famously called nation “an imagined political community”, in *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Revised Edition, Verso, New York and London, 1991, p. 5.

## Conflating State and Nation

*Since its inception some 7,000 years ago, the state ...has been the prime killer in human history.*

*Pierre L. van den Berghe<sup>20</sup>*

*[N]ations, like states, are a contingency, and not a universal necessity....each of them had to emerge, and their emergence was independent and contingent. The state has certainly emerged without the help of the nation. Some nations have certainly emerged without the blessings of their own state.*

*Ernest Gellner, Nations and Nationalism (1983)*

## 2.0 The State and Nation-state

The apicality of human being in the realm of evolution of living organism is matched by the apicality of modern state in the realm of evolution of social and political organisation. The state as we see it today emerged out of the welter of warring dynastic realms divided by sectarian and religious schisms, through a series of agreements that are known in history as the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648. While the earlier Treaty of Augsburg in 1555 had secured internal sovereignty of the dynastic rulers, the treaty of Westphalia secured the dynastic states against external aggression. The foundation of the modern state was thus laid emphatically in the European socio-political conditions, and the state attained its distinct individuality as a territorial entity in the family of European state system by the beginning of the 18th century.

Once the state came into being with its elaborate system of administration and rules of governance, it was left to the ideology of liberalism and democracy to introduce the ideal of 'popular sovereignty' over almost a century and half, culminating in the French Revolution of 1789, which catapulted the plebeians to the fore and offered them their rightful place on the high table of politics. The ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity wove together people of a state into a collectivity, united in fraternal bonds, in deep horizontal comradeship. In 1792, in

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<sup>20</sup> Pierre L. van den Berghe, "Introduction", in *State Violence and Ethnicity*, University Press of Colorado, Colorado, 1990, p. 1.

the Battle of Valmy, Goethe was seen to be marking the beginning of the idea of the nation when he saw a rag-tag French army raising the cry of *vive la nation* and holding its ground against a far superior Prussian infantry.<sup>21</sup>

The Napoleonic Wars (1799-1815) subsequently induced nationalism in the territories that the French conquered (the Germans, the Russians and the Spanish among others).<sup>22</sup> The rise of print-capitalism<sup>23</sup> and its effect on revolutionary vernacularisation of language of communication led to crystallisation of new solidarities around language, which formed the basis of the nations. Nation invested the individuated state with a soul and nation-ness emerged as a universally legitimate concept in the political field.

The idea of nation<sup>24</sup> further revolutionised the concept of state. The beginning of 19<sup>th</sup> century saw the flowering of nation-states all over the world. The idea of nation-state was essentially a modern project<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1996, p. 1.

<sup>22</sup> The French connection can be found in the emergence of Italian, Greek, Magyar and Portuguese nationalisms in Europe and Criolo or Creole nationalisms in Latin America too. The principles enumerated in the Universal Declaration of Rights of Man.

<sup>23</sup> Benedict Anderson, No. 19

<sup>24</sup> Ernest Renan, in his classic lecture “Qu’est-ce qu’une nation?” (“What is a Nation?”), at Sorbonne on March 11, 1882, said further: “The nation, like the individual, is the culmination of a long history of efforts, sacrifices, and devotions. The cult of ancestors has made us what we are. A heroic past, great men...common glories, a common wish to do things together- these are the conditions of being a people... Man is a slave neither of his race nor his language, nor of his religion, nor of the course of rivers nor of the direction taken by mountain chains. A large aggregate of men, healthy in mind and warm of heart, creates the kind of moral conscience which we call a nation”. Ernest Renan, No. 17.

<sup>25</sup> See for example approaches by: Ellie Kedouri, Craig Calhoun, Liah Greenfeld and Philip Gorski, Elie Kedourie, *Nationalism*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1960 (Reprint 1993); Liah Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge and London, 1992; Philip Gorski, “The Mosaic Moment: An Early Modernist Critique of Modernist Theories of Nationalism”, *American Journal of Sociology*, March 2000, pp. 1428-68; Craig Calhoun, *Nationalism*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1997.

even if the concept of nation drew its sustenance from group/communitarian identity which had its basis in human history. The idea of nation-state as a natural legatee of the dynastic states of medieval times appealed to the imagination of the people the world over, and very soon it burst open the interiors of the poly-ethnic realms. One has to remember here that the sense of legitimacy attached to the concept of mono-national state implied its dialectic opposite: the supposed illegitimacy of poly-national states.

The idea that each nation should be a sovereign and self-legislating community, with its own sovereign state apparatus, has been the hallmark of socio-political organisation the world over in the aftermath of the French Revolution.<sup>26</sup> The ‘interutilization’ and equalisation of the twin concepts of ‘nation’ and ‘state’ on the one hand, and universal use of ‘national’ as an accepted adjective of state on the other, provided the multi-national states with a handle to be more forceful about their ‘nationising’ endeavours in territorial-cultural terms. The strategy they adopted included refashioning of history, invention of commonalities, either by disregarding multiple identities or managing ethnic differences through forced assimilation or de-culturation, which emerged as essential correlates of the dominant nationalist ideology.

The discussion above suggests that the ideology/concept of nation as well as nation-state<sup>27</sup> retains its appeal in the international politics today.

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<sup>26</sup> It is quite another thing that there was an unlikely cohabitation of two apparently conflicting ideologies after the French Revolution. At one level, the French Revolution dreamed of fraternity of men and prepared the grounds for a republican and civic nationalism where the basic political unit was the individual and not the community. But the collateral idea of fraternity that the revolution brought forth soon exhibited itself in the shape of national spirit in the revolutionary and Napoleonic wars, induced national consciousness in other poly-ethnic or pluri-national dynastic states and the concept of nation-state gained legitimacy the world over. The pathological strain inherent in such nationalism had made Einstein characterise it as “an infantile disease”. “It is the measles of mankind”, he in fact wrote.

<sup>27</sup> Rudyard Kipling wrote about nation-state in these terms: “Our hearts where they rocked our cradle/ Our love where we spent our toil, / And our faith, and our hope, and our honour, /We pledge to our native soil. /God gave all men all earth to love / But since our hearts are small / Ordained for each one spot should prove/ Beloved over all.”

The upsurge in ethno-nationalist assertions all over the world and especially in many previously considered mono-national states of Europe after the end of the Cold War in the early 1990s proves this point. The splitting up of USSR and Yugoslavia and rise in demands for autonomy or independence by many ethno-cultural groups in many states across the globe destabilised the states internally, and there was a mushrooming of literature on the theme of ethnicity, nationalism and ethno-nationalism. While some theoreticians like John Mearsheimer used terms like ‘hyper-nationalism’<sup>28</sup> to explain state behaviour in the post-Cold War international politics, others focussed on the explosive capacity of radicalised group consciousness within the states and called the idea of ‘nation-state’ as the ‘mother of disorder’<sup>29</sup>.

In fact, there is a growing body of literature questioning the legitimacy of the idea of nation-state and supposed compatibility between the concepts of nation and liberal democratic state. Concepts like ‘multiculturalism’,<sup>30</sup> ‘plurinationalism’<sup>31</sup> and ‘postnational state’<sup>32</sup> are in vogue today. In view of the globalisation-enabled cosmopolitan culture emerging all over the world today, the universal appeal of civic-territorial or citizenship-based identity at one level and global humanism at another is slowly replacing the narrowly defined nationalism or national identity as a legitimate conceptual supplement to state. Nevertheless, as it has been argued above, the concept of nation-state continues to hold its way, and it will take a long time before it is replaced by such progressive notion of group identity. Against this backdrop, it is useful to situate the present study and analyse the case of nation-building in Pakistan.

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<sup>28</sup> John J. Mearsheimer, “Why We Will Soon Miss the Cold War”, *The Atlantic Monthly*, August 1990, 266 (2), p. 38.

<sup>29</sup> Christian P. Scherer, *Ethnicity, Nationalism and Violence*, Ashgate, Aldershot, 2003, p. 7.

<sup>30</sup> See for example: Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship. A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1995.

<sup>31</sup> See for example: Michael Keating, *Plurinational Democracy. Stateless Nations in a Post-Sovereignty Era*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2001.

<sup>32</sup> See for example: Jurgen Habermas, *The Postnational Constellation, Political Essays*, The MIT Press, Massachusetts, 2001, pp. 58-112.



## 2.1 The Concept of State-Nationalism

It has been well-argued by many scholars of nationalism that the wide acceptability and legitimacy of the idea as well as the modular form in which it was available for replication led to proliferation of demands for national self-determination around the world.<sup>33</sup> The political ambitions of hitherto unassertive communities, hardly conscious of their existence until then, demonstrated the explosive capacity of the idea of nation-state.

There was indeed an obverse duality in the hyphenated expression called the nation-state. It meant at one level that every nation had a natural right to selfhood and self-legislation, i.e., every nation must have its own state. As a corollary, it legitimated the reverse hyphenation as well, i.e., the idea of the state-nation, i.e., every state must have the sovereign authority to invent, imagine and propagate an idea of nationalism or nation, co-terminus with the state, among its own people. It is as if the Treaty of Augsburg (1555), which recognised the authority of the dynastic rulers even to determine the faith of their subjects in 16<sup>th</sup> century Europe, had come full circle here. It is in this context that the socio-political and cultural reality of colonial India has to be revisited.

### 2.1.1 The Colonial Experience

The concept of state-nationalism has been particularly used in the case of poly-national states that achieved their independence in the colonial world in the aftermath of the Second World War. In the colonised terrains in Asia and Africa, where the colonial masters brought about administrative unification of vast territories—evidently pluri-cultural and poly-national a hybrid nationalist consciousness gained ground, woven around commonalities, often shallow and superficial, but

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<sup>33</sup> Benedict Anderson introduced the concept of modular nationalism which has been critiqued, among others, by: Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse?*, Zed Books, London, 1986 and Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1993. But for the benefit of the present study, I would like to blend the two strands and argue that even if the colonial cultures retained their cultural sovereignty, the fact remained that the elite in these colonial societies adopted existing model of nationalism and nation-state to express their cultural uniqueness in characteristically similar Continental ways.

primarily anti-colonial and libertarian in spirit. Most of these societies inevitably faced a crisis of identity after they achieved independence and sought to use the postcolonial state structure to consolidate national identities. The virus of nationalism, which had affected the international political consciousness by then, lent credence to the processes of nation-building in these societies.

This is where the reverse hyphenation (state-nation) came in with great gusto. Rather than nations claiming statehood, the states started claiming nationhood for themselves. The inviolability of concept of state sovereignty and the legitimacy accorded to the new concept of nation saw the rise of an omnipotent, or rather overdeveloped state, continuously engaged in the act of hegemonic re-articulation of the concept of nation. The process of such nation-building even assumed a sense of urgency once the antagonistic dynamic between the state-nation, and peripheral ethno-nationalisms made its presence felt in the realm of politics.

Paul R. Brass, one of the most engaging theoreticians of the phenomenon of nationalism and ethnicity in the Indian subcontinent, has gone to the extent of discovering a sense of inevitability about the states in postcolonial societies of India and Pakistan, in their efforts to build national identities, “favour[ing] some classes and ethnic groups over others at particular points of time”<sup>34</sup>. He also observed that this led to stabilisation, expansion and strengthening of the institutions of a centralised state with a reflexive attempt to penetrate into empty territories or peripheral areas and culturally and economically diverse regions.<sup>35</sup> It is as good as saying that it was in the fitness of things that the state had to be what it has all along been, primarily, because its very survival depended on such inegalitarian principle of privileging of few, who guided the state during its formative phase.

To turn to discourse theories, in the postcolonial states, with an inherited legacy of colonial state architecture, the instruments of state power and the reflexive reactions (challenges to state power) were well

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<sup>34</sup> Paul R. Brass, *Ethnicity and the State: Theory and Comparison*, Croom Helm Publishers, 1991, p. 9.

<sup>35</sup> Paul R. Brass, *The Politics of India since Independence*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1990, p. 31.

conceived and well laid out for the postcolonial elite. The postcolonial elites were as passionate about defending their country, mother-land or state as their predecessors, the imperial masters, had been about guarding and securing their colonial possessions. If Churchill thundered that he would not be His Majesty's first servant to preside over the liquidation of His Empire, the postcolonial elites would be as zealous about guarding the artificial frontiers of an artificial state, largely made possible by the colonial might, held together more by force than will of the people, which is fundamental to legitimation of the process of state-formation.

The spirit of anti-colonialism that became the proverbial glue to join disparate ethno-cultural identities became the chief locomotive for 'nation-building' during the colonial times. This, in fact, served as the starting point for nation-building in the postcolonial phase. The postcolonial states often felt compelled to imagine<sup>36</sup> and in many cases, invent national identities to become nation-states, which they considered as a more legitimate qualification to be members of the comity of nations.

In this context, the power of hegemonic nationalism often found itself pitted against alternative, fragmentary imaginings by ethno-national collectivities. As Foucault had put it in the context of discourse theory, the archaeology of an all-pervasive, hegemonic power, which he also calls 'governmentality', found itself "juxtaposed with localised genealogies of power forming a curious assemblage of discourses, not necessarily mutually antagonistic, but definitely defiant and subversive".<sup>37</sup> Discourse theorists would rather argue that the nation-

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<sup>36</sup> It is impossible to be left uninfluenced by the excellent treatise of Benedict Anderson on 'Nationalism'; see: Benedict Anderson, No. 19. I can only say this in my defence (since the term "imagined" has raised a certain degree of controversy among scholars of nationalism) that when I am using it I (like many scholarly defenders of Anderson's hypothesis) do not mean that the nationalism that is imagined is imagined from nowhere. I would like to side with Smith's ethno-symbolism to argue that one can only imagine with existing symbols and can only manipulate these to produce something novel, if at all it can be so perceived. Such inventions have a well-traceable ancestry, and they cannot quite wrench themselves out of the mould they originate from.

<sup>37</sup> The argument here has been taken from the discussion on Foucault in: M. Barrett, *The Politics of Truth: From Marx to Foucault*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1992, p. 132.

building exercises aimed at manufacturing consensus through persuasion than force makes the state employ grand discursive ideologies of nationalism to ensure political obligation and loyalty that legitimates the authority of the state at one level and construct a collective consciousness and a ruling commonsensical nationalism suited to the existential needs of the state at another.

However, discourse theorists emphasise on the ‘unfixity’ or ‘impermanence’ of any dominant discourse. This is so because all discourses are limited by the signifiers they employ, which change their shape and content over time and may also engender resistance to the hegemonic discourse. This underlines the point that identities are impermanent, constantly being reinterpreted, revised and rearticulated. Thus, a better understanding of nationalism as an ideology will be possible only if it is “unpacked or deconstructed to reveal its constitutive elements and internal tensions” from time to time.<sup>38</sup> And more importantly, rather than looking at such phenomena through the prism of generalised mega-theories, each manifestation of nationalism has to be examined in its specificity.

## 2.2 The Specific Case of Pakistan

When one approaches the specific case of Pakistani nation from this perspective, one is confronted with a plethora of historical facts that complicates the discourse on nationalism and begs for de-generalisation of historical realities and re-analysis of the state-national identity that forms the core of Pakistani identity. It is interesting to observe that in the absence of the hegemonic power of state at its command, the Muslim elite in the sub-continent had fashioned out a radical and assertive, if pathogenic, collective identity and secured a state for itself. But once the demand for the State of Pakistan, the imagined nation of Muslims, was conceded by both the colonial administration as well as the nationalistic Indian leadership, the Pakistani state had to explicate its identity as a nation. The nation-building exercise undertaken by the elite in Pakistan and the responses from the regional ethnicities will thus require careful study. The basic aim of the present paper here is to

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<sup>38</sup> Claire Sutherland, “Nation-building through Discourse Theory”, *Nations and Nationalism*, 11 (2), 2005, p. 197

deconstruct the state-nationalism and ethno-nationalisms in Pakistan and try to find out the complementarities as well as disjunctions between the way these two sets of identities have been imagined and constructed and the way they have interacted with each other over time.

### **2.2.1 Nationalism in Colonial India**

The colonial rule by European powers engendered the grammar and language of nationalism and nation-states through re-adaptation of a well-developed machinery of state as well as through the permeation of the ideals of liberty, equality, fraternity and democracy in colonised terrains. Driven by the idea of sub-continental India as a unified cultural whole and progressive expansion of colonial administration to unify such territory, the British, in a sub-conscious way, laid the foundation for an abstracted Indian nationalism which was later duly developed by the anti-colonial, native elite armed with the ideals of freedom, liberty and nationalism.<sup>39</sup>

### **2.2.2 Anti-Colonial Nationalism: The Irremediable Binaries**

On the whole, the anti-colonial Indian nationalism, as it was imagined by the anti-colonial liberal and libertarian leadership, wove the disparate trends of Indian history together into a purposeful tapestry that endorsed the idea of tolerance and diversity that was regarded crucial to the survival and development of the people and civilisation which was trying to make its mark as a nation in the comity of nations.

However, it was not long before the liberal political leadership encountered the antithesis of such a process. The leadership hardly noticed that the national identity it was busy fashioning favoured, at least in its use of symbolism and vocabulary, a particular community (Hindus). They borrowed from the age-old Indian philosophical tradition the principles of tolerance and diversity as a distinct marker of Indian nationalism. The idiom, the metaphors and the symbols that

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<sup>39</sup> One has to acknowledge here that the colonial inquisitions about native Indian philosophical and literary traditions and their effort to study and analyse the ancient texts led to a cultural renaissance, the importance of which has not been well researched. This had had an inescapable impact on the way national identity in India was to be imagined subsequently.

nationalist writings used manifested an unmistakable religious tinge, if not fervour. In fact, the early espousers of Indian nationalism took exception to the European idea of nationalism, which emphasised that the essential conditions of nationality were unity of language, unity of religion and life and unity of race. In one of his early writings on the theme, Aurobindo, the rebel-turned-poet-cum philosopher, wrote:

*A common enthusiasm coalescing with a common interest is the most powerful fosterer of nationality.* We believe that the necessary elements are present in India, we believe that the time has come and that by a common resistance to a common pressure in the shape of the boycott, inspired by a common enthusiasm and ideal, *that united nationality for which the whole history of India has been a preparation,* will be speedily and mightily accomplished.<sup>40</sup>

The ‘sleeping beauty’<sup>41</sup> idea of an Indian nationality waiting to happen or rather preparing for its final realisation infected the writings of most Indian intellectuals in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. What was more remarkable was the way such nationalistic mode of discourse imagined India through *Puranic* metaphors closer to Hindu sensibility, i.e., India as *Bhavanni Bharati* (Mother India), political activity as a *Yajnya* (for national emancipation), invocation to Hindu deities like *Mahishamardini* (Durga), the goddess with eight or ten hands, the ideal of *Ram Rajya* (the golden rule by the mythical King Rama in *puranic* history), etc.

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<sup>40</sup> *Sri Aurobindo*, Birth Centenary Edition, Volume 26, p. 32.

<sup>41</sup> Prof. Arnold Toynbee wrote in 1915: “British statesmanship in the nineteenth century regarded India as a ‘Sleeping Beauty,’ whom Britain had a prescriptive right to woo when she awoke; so it hedged with thorns the garden where she lay, to safeguard her from marauders prowling in the desert. Now the princess is awake, and is claiming the right to dispose of her own hand, while the marauders have transformed themselves into respectable gentlemen diligently occupied in turning the desert into a garden too, but grievously impeded by the British thorn-hedge. . . . now that she is awake, she wishes to walk abroad among her neighbours; she feels herself capable of rebuffing without our countenance any blandishments or threats they may offer her, and she is becoming as weary as they of the thorn-hedge that confines her to her garden. . . it is inevitable that she should lead a more and more independent life of her own.”

The point here is that even if the Indian nation was conceived pre-eminently by politicians associated with the Indian National Congress Party, in accommodative, consensual, inclusionary and anti-colonial terms, unsullied by narrow-minded religious bigotry, there was no mistaking it that the cultural roots that propped up such a nation owed much to the underlying religious ideals, reinterpreted and reconfigured in imaginative fashion.<sup>42</sup> And as such, there was a ruling trend among various Congress leaders across the country to adorn Indian nationalism with Hindu symbols and verbiage which unwittingly betrayed the ‘exclusionary’ dimension of such nationalism. The majoritarian reflex of such nationalism was quite visible, and the leaders were unapologetically wedded to it, initially unmindful of the reaction it could provoke among the non-Hindus, and later apathetic to the allegations from minority quarters that such nationalism alienated them.

An eminent Indian scholar, Partha Chatterjee, who considers nationalism as a “problem in the history of political ideas” has called the encounter between Indian nationalism and the Colonial world, a “derivative discourse”<sup>43</sup>. He seeks to critique the theory of modular replication (Benedict Anderson) of European experiment by elites in colonial societies, and has in fact laid emphasis on the view that while the externality of colonised consciousness pretended to grapple with the issue of colonialism and often betrayed a sense of surrender, the internal core remained largely unperturbed beneath an insuperable integument of native aloofness. This cultural autonomy took the shape of anti-colonial nationalism. Before the discourse on Indian nationalism reached its “moment of arrival”, it went through its “moment of manoeuvre”, and “political appropriation of Gandhian intervention in nationalist politics” exemplifies this process, according to Chatterjee.<sup>44</sup> He also

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<sup>42</sup> For example, Nehru had this to say about the Indian nation: “It is a country held together by strong but invisible threads .... About her there is the elusive quality of a legend of long ago; some enchantment seems to have held her mind. She is a myth and an idea, a dream and a vision, and yet very real and present and pervasive”. Jawaharlal Nehru, *Discovery of India*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1982, p. 545.

<sup>43</sup> Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and The Colonial World, A Derivative Discourse*, Zed Books, London, 1993, first chapter, pp. 1-35.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid. p. 169.

acknowledges the fact that religion provided the basis for resisting the colonial mode of hegemonising the political and cultural domain in India.

The introduction of modern categories for enumeration and quantification of population through census, and consolidation of territorial stretches through cartography, brought about revolutionary transparency and accuracy into the imagination of the intellectuals seeking to define themselves in the colonised spaces. The absolute quantification of different categories of population like Hindus and Muslims also added to the binary system of political 'identitisation'<sup>45</sup> (identity-formation) that was taking place at a particular historical moment in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The colonial state, demonstrating its indifference to religion, reflexively used the evolving antagonisms to its own advantage and through its policy of separate electorates legitimated the communitarian concerns of various communities in India, more visible numerically after the official Census and more conscious of their geographical spread.

### **2.2.3 Mutual Insecurities: The Two Nation Theory**

The dreadful prospect of the legitimacy of majoritarian rule in the event of introduction of representative rule in India made the leadership of the Muslim community wary and scary. The more the anti-colonial leadership in India pressed for democracy and 'home rule', the more the elite among the Muslims felt endangered. The elite of the minority community suspected and feared eternal marginalisation, in a democratic set up, at the hands of the majority community, and the resultant competition for power among the two communities inevitably led to partition and establishment of Pakistan. The sense of insecurity among Muslim elite was so acute that Sir Syed Ahmed Khan (1817-1898), one of the first Muslim leaders to compare Hindus and Muslims with 'two beautiful eyes of a beautiful bride' during the 1860s came out with the observation in the Governor General's Council on January 12, 1883, that the Hindus and the Muslims were the two separate nations which could never be integrated into a single national whole.

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<sup>45</sup> I am using this neologism deliberately to make my point here regarding the process of identity formation.



This sense of insecurity even expressed itself more vociferously in the observations of later-day Muslim *maulanas* who had this to say about the prospect of being left to Hindu-dominated rule after the departure of the British:

Only 4 1/2 crores of Englishmen have practically swallowed the whole world by becoming powerful. And if these 22 crores of Hindus who are equally advanced in learning, intelligence and wealth as in numbers ... become powerful, then they will swallow Muslim India and gradually even Egypt, Turkey, Kabul, Mecca, Medina and other Muslim principalities, like *Yajuj-Majuj* (it is so mentioned in Koran that before the destruction of the world, they will appear on the earth and will devour whatever they will find) ... So it is the essential duty of every devout Muslim to fight on by joining the League so that ... a Muslim rule may be established in India as soon as the English depart.<sup>46</sup>

One feels tempted here to add the example of Sir Syed Ahmed deriding the idea of being ruled by Bengali clerks, “who would crawl under the table at the sight of a kitchen knife”<sup>47</sup>.

The Hindus in turn had their own sense of insecurity too. In fact, people like Lala Lajpat Rai (1865-1928) went to the extent of expressing his apprehensions about Muslim invaders in hordes coming from Afghanistan and Central Asia and ravishing India in future.<sup>48</sup> Even the

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<sup>46</sup> Maulana Azad Sobhani, in his speech on the January 27, 1939, at Sylhet, reported by *Anand Bazar Patrika* in Bengali, quoted in B.R. Ambedkar, *Pakistan or Partition of India*, Thackers, Bombay, 1945, at [http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00ambedkar/ambedkar\\_partition/412a.html](http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00ambedkar/ambedkar_partition/412a.html).

<sup>47</sup> Speech of Sir Syed Ahmed, at Lucknow, on December 18, 1887, quoted in *Sir Syed Ahmed on the Present State of Indian Politics, Consisting of Speeches and Letters*, The Pioneer Press, Allahabad, 1888, p. 10, at [http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00islamlinks/txt\\_sir\\_sayyid\\_lucknow\\_1887.html](http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00islamlinks/txt_sir_sayyid_lucknow_1887.html).

<sup>48</sup> He wrote to C.R. Das: “I am not afraid of seven crores in Hindustan but I think the seven crores of Hindustan plus the armed hosts of Afghanistan, Central Asia, Arabia, Mesopotamia and Turkey will be irresistible. I do honestly and sincerely believe in the necessity or desirability of Hindu-Muslim unity. I am also fully prepared to trust the Muslim leaders, but what about the injunctions of the Quran and Hadis? The leaders cannot override them. Are we then doomed ?” (Quoted in *Ibid.*)

famous poet, Rabindra Nath Tagore, who was an ardent critic of the idea of nationalism in general, had expressed his concerns about the extra-territorial loyalty of the Muslim leaders with whom he had discussed the future of India. The poet had reportedly said that he had very frankly asked many Muslims whether, in the event of any Muslim power invading India, they would stand side by side with their Hindu neighbours to defend their common land, and he could not be satisfied with the reply he got from them. He said that he could definitely tell that even leaders like Muhammad Ali had declared that under no circumstances was it permissible for any Muslim, whatever his country might be, to stand against any other Muslim.

Long before Muslim League endorsed the Pakistan resolution, Maulana Akbar Shah Khan of Najibabad in all seriousness, wrote a letter to Madan Mohan Malavya in 1928 that the Hindus and Muslims should fight<sup>49</sup>, under test conditions, fourth battle on the plain of Panipat to decide who should succeed the British as rulers of India.

#### **2.2.4 Pathways to Separation**

The Muslim politicians were not ready to forge such combative and overtly communal positions into Muslim politics until the early 1940s. Jinnah was busy defending himself against the smear campaign unleashed against him as a communalist. Barkat Ali, Chairman of Reception Committee of the Muslim League in 1931 came out with the following observations:

We refuse to be parties to ... propaganda which would (urge us) ... to be Muslim first and Indian afterwards. To us a slogan of this kind is not only bare, meaningless cant, but downright mischievous.... *India and Islam in India are identical, and whatever is to the detriment of India must, from the nature of it, be detrimental to Islam whether economically, politically, socially or even morally* ... Those

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<sup>49</sup> Cited in Dr B.R. Ambedkar, Pakistan or the Partition of India, internet edition available at [www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00ambedkar\\_partition/4126.html](http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00ambedkar_partition/4126.html). It is an irony that it was exactly at the time when Maulana Akbar Shah Khan was challenging Pandit Malavya, Muhammad Ali Jinnah was making an effort to settle the Hindu-Muslim issue and even readying the League for joint electorates.

politicians, therefore, are a class of false prophets and at bottom the foes of Islam, who talk of any inherent conflict between Islam and the welfare of India. Further, howsoever much our sympathy with our Muslim brethren outside India ... we can never allow that sympathy to work to the detriment of the essential interests of India ... And if ever the time comes, God forbid, when any Muslim Power from across the Frontier chooses to enslave India and snatch away the liberties of its people, no amount of pan-Islamic feeling, whatever it may mean, can stand in the way of Muslim India fighting shoulder to shoulder with non-Muslim India in defence of its liberties.<sup>50</sup>

However, by 1940s, and especially after the 1937 elections, there was a massive floor-crossing between these two contending blocks of Muslim opinion makers. Various objective and neutral historical analyses that have gone into the study of the final parting of ways would present us with a huge cache of hypotheses which would explain the final parting of ways between the Muslims and the Hindus: the failure of Nehru-led Congress to strike a deal with Muslim League; the politics of *divide et impera* adopted by the British at every stage of colonial politics to keep the pressures emanating from the representative politics in check; massive political mobilisation by the conservative Muslim opinion makers towards the close of 1930s; the personification of the Muslim movement by an able leader like Jinnah; the worsening communal equation during the final lap of the freedom movement; etc.

But closer examination of the social and political processes suggests that the Muslim nationalism that was on the rise since the dawn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century had set a particular trajectory for itself and the political process that was unfolding in the shape of representative politics in India as well as the political ideologies that were being bandied about in the socio-political realm, and the binary-systemic ways (inclusive-exclusive) in which anti-colonial nationalism in India presented itself (with overt or covert anti-Islamic overtones), made the process of progressive polarisation between the two communities almost inevitable.

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

As it emerges from the writing of Ram Manohar Lohia in *Guilty Men of India's Partition*<sup>51</sup>, no serious effort was ever made by the leadership of the Congress Party to accommodate the League leadership in any joint venture. There were several instances where the two could have worked together. Various agreements (like the Lucknow Pact of December 1916 and the Bengal Pact of December 1923), (Jinnah's fourteen points in March 1929), Gandhi-Jinnah talks in September 1944 following the CR Formula and even occasions provided by the British (Cabinet Mission plan of 1946), which could have provided some ground for cooperation, were wasted by both the parties.

The Congress leadership's inability to gauge the Muslim popular sentiment, especially its vulnerability to radical mobilisation in the name of Islam and minority rights, and its reluctance to accept Muslim League as the sole representative of the Muslims, may be for good reasons—because it would have alienated an equally potent Muslim leadership aligned to the Congress party and militated against the core principle the party espoused—shut the door on any possibility of a coalition of interests between the leaderships at the political level.

In a perceptive essay, Ayesha Jalal has argued forcefully:

The claim that Muslims constituted a 'nation' was not incompatible with a federal or confederal state structure covering the whole of India. But for the federal idea to be acceptable, the logic of majoritarianism and minoritarianism had to be abandoned and the fact of contested sovereignty acknowledged. In keeping with the better part of India's history, the overture to shared sovereignty enunciated by Jinnah and the League seemed the best way of tackling the dilemma.<sup>52</sup>

In the absence of any constructive mediatory politics, such middle ground (shared sovereignty), was not given any serious consideration, even if Nehru had expressed his preference for federation in opposition

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<sup>51</sup> Ram Manohar Lohia, *Guilty Men of India's Partition*, Rammanohar Lohia Samata Vidyalaya Nyas, Publication Dept., Hyderabad, 1970.

<sup>52</sup> Ayesha Jalal, "Nation, Reason and Religion: Punjab's Role in the Partition of India", *Economic and Political Weekly*, 33 (32), Aug. 8-14, 1998, pp. 2185-6.

to partition. Thus, Jalal concludes that there “was no room here for negotiating with the League’s demand for ‘Pakistan’”.<sup>53</sup> Moreover, the overlap between the Congress and the Hindu Mahasabha in sensitive provinces like Punjab led to further consolidation of Muslim identity in religious terms.

Against this backdrop, the political awareness among the Muslims of India that they formed a separate nation spread rapidly. Such notional communitarian sentiment was given political connotation in no uncertain terms by Jinnah when he asserted in March 1940 that “by all canons of international law, we [Muslims] are a nation”. By then, a significant section of the intellectuals in India from both the communities had started accepting that the issues that divided the Hindus and the Muslims were far more vital than the things which united them, and some of them even went to the other extent of applying the ‘sleeping beauty’ idea of nationalism to the Muslim situation in India as well. Ambedkar wrote about it in his book *Pakistan or the Partition of India*: “It is possible for nations to exist and even for centuries, in unreflective silence, although there exists that spiritual essence of a national life of which many of its members are not aware. Some such thing has no doubt happened in the case of the Mussalmans.”<sup>54</sup>

### 2.3 Muslim Nationalism Takes Shape

The role of intellectuals in identifying the constitutive elements of an identity and defining the same in convincing ways has to be emphasised here before we look into the way Muslim nationalism was imagined in the subcontinent. It requires no effort to prove that the League, since its formation in 1906 till the Khilafat movement (1919-1922), remained

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid. p. 2187.

<sup>54</sup> He wrote further: “They were not aware of the fact that there existed for them the spiritual essence of a national life. This explains why their claim to separate nationality was made by them so late. But, it does not mean that the spiritual essence of a national life had no existence at all.” He justified his position even by quoting the views of Hindu Mahasabha members like Bhai Parmanand who attested to the position that Muslims and Hindus could never make a single nation. Available at [http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00ambedkar/ambedkar\\_partition/102.html](http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00ambedkar/ambedkar_partition/102.html).

confined to the Muslim elite, more bothered about securing its class privileges than championing the interests of the community.

Khilafat movement (1919-1924) signalled the high water mark of inter-community amity. The movement managed to attract Muslim masses into the fold of the movement. But as soon as it reached its climax, the movement collapsed because of its popular rejection by Muslims in Turkey. However, quite unmistakably, the Muslim identity had started asserting itself, and the impact of mass participation was not lost on the Muslim leadership. The years following the movement witnessed a high incidence of communal riots in the north Indian states. The change in the perspectives of the Muslim leadership on inter-communal harmony was too obvious to be missed.

For example, Muhammad Ali (1878-1931) who had compared Gandhi to Jesus (in 1923) issued a categorical statement in 1924 that according to his “religion and creed” he held “an adulterous and a fallen Mussalman to be better than Mr. Gandhi”. Muhammad Iqbal (1877-1938) of *Tarana-i-Hind*-fame<sup>55</sup> composed *Tarana-i-Milli* and expressing his concern about the Muslim *umma* emphasised the need to redeem Muslims of India through *Shariat*. On December 29, 1929, he came out with his logic of a separate state for Muslims from the League platform, where, as he indicated in line with his famous correspondence with Jinnah—between May 23, 1936 and November 10, 1937 (comprising eight letters)—that the Muslims could enforce their Sharia and live justly and religiously only in a state built solely for the Muslims, and it was impossible in a united India. The alternative to this, he concluded, was civil war which was going on in the shape of communal riots.

<sup>55</sup> Iqbal wrote the immortal couplets of *Sare jahan se achha Hindustan Hamara* and also *Phir hai Ram key wajud per Hindustan ko naz/ Ahley nazar samajtey hein usko Imam-I-Hind, Kuchh Baat Hai Ki Hasti Mitti Nabin Hamaari/ Sadiyon Raba Hai Dushman Gaure-e-Jaban Hamara*, or his poem titled *Naya Shavalaya* where he writes: *Shakti bhi Shanti bhi Bhagton key geet main hai/Dharti key basiyan ki mukti preet main hai*. In clear contrast, in *Tarana I Milli*, he wrote: *Cheen O Arab hamara Hindustan hamara, Muslim hain ham watan hay sara jaban hamara, Tegan key saya main pal kar javan hoey hain, Khanjar balal ka quami nashan hamara*. Quotations from V N Datta, “Iqbal, Jinnah and India’s Partition”, *EPW*, December 14, 2002 and April 19, 2003.

The movement for uniting Muslims started gathering momentum, ahead of even the dream of a separate state, by the Muslim leadership of all hues towards early 1930s. Both anti-colonial nationalist and separatist Muslim leaders thought it necessary to bring the diverse elements within the Muslim *ummah* together. One is reminded here of Iqbal's suggestion to Jinnah regarding the need to understand the problems of the poor Muslim masses and draw them into the fold of the movement.

It is true that during Iqbal's lifetime, the Muslim identity was inchoate and diffuse, but the movement in the direction of Pakistan had been taken even if Jinnah summarily rejected the proposal of Rehmat Ali (1895-1951)<sup>56</sup> in 1933 when the latter presented him with the idea of Pakistan, which he had brought out in his pamphlet *Now or Never*. That the movement for Pakistan had already begun its historical journey was evident in the fact that only within a span of six years, Jinnah adopted the nomenclature with great gusto. In fact, in all, it took just 14 years for the idea to materialise. During these years, the critics of the idea of Pakistan, among the Muslims, were seen to be veering towards the "Two Nation Theory" which formed the basis for the partition of India and formation of the separate state of Pakistan.

The following section will seek to analyse the nature and character of the aforementioned Muslim nationalism.

## 2.4 The Communitarian Impulse: Stress on Islam

The communitarian impulse that characterised the movement during the late 1930s and the early 1940s was essentially an elite construct and the result of the strategy of effective political mobilisation in the name of religion. But there was a cognitive hiatus between the enthusiasm of the masses mobilised on the name of a 'separate homeland' and

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<sup>56</sup> It was during the years 1930 through 1933, that he seemed to have established the Pakistan National Movement, with its headquarters at Cambridge. On January 28, 1933, he issued his first memorable pamphlet "Now or Never"; where he demanded a separate national status for a new entity, and coined its name as 'Pakistan' (from Punjab, Afghan province, Kashmir, Sindh and Balochistan). He spoke of an independent homeland for Muslims, "Pakistan", in the northern units of India, "Bang-i-Islam" for Muslims in Bengal and "Usmanistan" for the Muslims in Hyderabad.

'Islam', and the inclination of the elite leadership who had turned the movement into a mass hysteria. Riding happily on the crest of such a popular wave, the Muslim elite had allowed themselves to be guided by its currents.

Undoubtedly, the elite amongst the Muslims embarked upon the road to partition for fear of marginalisation in a Hindu-majority India. They were no champions of democracy or liberalism. Interestingly, leaders like Jinnah, who was more of a constitutionalist than a democrat, were distinctly unenthusiastic about using the masses for any kind of political struggle. In fact, Jinnah left Congress when Gandhi appeared on the scene with his mass-based political strategies like civil disobedience and mass boycotts.

#### **2.4.1 The Rise of Fall of Jinnah's Politics**

If Jinnah was convinced about elite monopoly over politics, the feudal elements that constituted the bulk of the League leadership were nervous about the republican face of democracy that the leadership of Congress espoused. The attitude of the leadership towards popular democracy revealed itself more conspicuously during elections in 1937 when Congress won majority of the reserved seats for Muslims. It was only after this that the League seriously thought of demonstrating its popular constituency to secure any political advantage for itself. Moreover, the League, so far confined to Muslim minority states of north India, sought to expand its political base in Muslim majority states. The pattern of political mobilisation in Muslim majority states which has been studied by various scholars<sup>57</sup> reveals that no stone was left unturned to drive home the message that in an independent India Muslims would be reduced to second-class citizens, and in the interests of Islam, the Muslims should work and vote for the League, and the League alone.

It has to be remembered here that all kinds of ideologies were doing the rounds among the Muslim elites during that period. The conservative Deobandi *Ulema* were wedded to anti-colonialism and their logic of using Hindus against the British, who had displaced the Muslims as

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<sup>57</sup> David Gilmartin, "Religious Leadership and the Pakistan Movement in Punjab", *Modern Asian Studies*, 13 (3), 1979, pp. 485-517.



rulers. The *Abrars* in Punjab were quite militant about their convictions that the British were a more dangerous enemy (than the Hindus) they should guard against. The Jamiat-i-Islami was opposed to partition, and the Pakistan movement for it would make the Muslims of the subcontinent lose the ground for *tabligh* in India.

But for the Muslim masses, the idea of a Muslim-majority state where they would live their lives according to the principles of *Sharia* was too alluring to be resisted. The movement for Pakistan during the 1940s, for all practical purposes, donned the garb of an Islamic Pakistan. Hitherto un-political and apolitical Muslim *pirs*, *makhdooms*, *sajda nashins* and local *mauhvis* were used effectively for political mobilisation and, as a noted Pakistani scholar has put it, the process epitomised “the politics of identity in its most negative form: when trust and understanding (had) been undermined and instead fear and insecurity reigned supreme, generating angst at various levels of state and society”.<sup>58</sup> In the process, a pathogenic identity was created as a defence against an imagined identity of Hindus, conceived in equally pathogenic terms, numerically superior and likely to devour the minority community in a united India.

It was against this setting that Jinnah came out with his observations on March 24, 1940 in the Lahore session of the Muslim League:

We are a nation with our own distinctive culture and civilization, language and literature, art and architecture, names and nomenclature, sense of values and proportion, legal laws and moral code, customs and calendar, history and tradition, aptitudes and ambitions; in short, we have our own distinctive outlook on life and of life. By all canons of international law, we are a nation... We wish our people to develop to the fullest our spiritual, cultural, economic, social and political life in a way that we think best and in consonance with our ideas and according to the genius of our people.

When it came to defining such a nation, it had to be defined in terms of ‘the other’, which was unmistakably ‘Hindu’. In another speech,

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<sup>58</sup> Ishtiaq Ahmed, “The 1947 Partition of India: A Paradigm for Pathological Politics in India and Pakistan”, at <http://www.apnaorg.com/articles/ishtiaq/ishtiaq.html>.

few years later, Jinnah in his inimitable way argued that the two communities never struck a chord of unity and lived apart from each other in spite of the fact that they had lived side by side for centuries:

Pakistan started the moment the first non-Muslim was converted to Islam in India long before the Muslims established their rule. As soon as a Hindu embraced Islam he was an outcast, not only religiously but also socially, culturally and economically. As for the Muslim, it was a duty imposed on him by Islam not to merge his identity and individuality in any alien society... Throughout the ages, Hindus had remained Hindus and Muslims had remained Muslims, and they had not merged their entities - that was the basis for Pakistan.<sup>59</sup>

There is no doubt that Jinnah's elucidation above, enthused the Muslim masses. In fact, by 1940, the movement had found its leader in Jinnah and guided him in his deliberations on Muslims and Pakistan. Like Sir Syed, Iqbal, Muhammad Ali and a host of others, Jinnah emerged as a champion of Muslim nationalism and references to 'Islam' became more and more prominent day by day. His utterances revealed clearly how the Pakistan movement had a firm grip on his imagination. The image of Akbar as a ruler who ensured fair representation of all communities in his court had stopped appealing to him. In some of his formulations, he even said that Akbar could never be offered as an example to endorse the idea of a united India, because Akbar was after all a Muslim king. It is also interesting to note that after Pakistan came into being, Jinnah snubbed Mountbatten when the latter recommended the example of Akbar as an inspiration for the Pakistani state by saying that the toleration that he would allude to in Akbar was displayed in an even more exemplary way by the Holy Prophet himself 800 years before Akbar ruled in India. If ever he had to go backward, he would go all the way back to the days of Prophet Muhammad, he meant to say.

Jinnah's secular life style, his liberal outlook and his distaste of mass politics defined his 'being' as an elitist politician. However, by the mid-

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<sup>59</sup> Jinnah delivered this speech at a lunch hosted by the Vice Chancellor of the Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh on March 8, 1944.

1940s, the trickle of Muslim political consciousness had become a torrent, enabled by a steadily polarising socio-political context. By then Jinnah had also cast aside his reservations against mass mobilisation, an issue over which he had left Congress years ago. The spontaneous response of the Muslim masses to Jinnah's call for direct action day on August 16, 1946, suggested that Muslims had more or less come together as a political community, if not as a nation, aware of their common cultural moorings, in their urge to affirm their separateness and claim political power. The use of Islamic symbols and slogans (*Pakistan ka matlab kya*, *La Ilaha Il aIlah*, *Lar kar lenge Pakistan*, etc.) and enrolment of local religious leaders—who were inherently conservative and found in the Pakistan movement an opportunity to participate in high politics and bring in their religious perspective—had transformed the nature of political discourse centred around the movement for Pakistan. From the two nation theory, the national identity of Pakistan quietly moved towards emphasis on Islam which informed the state's approach to nation-building in subsequent years. The ongoing tussle between the conservative and liberal interpretations of Islam characterised the unresolved dilemma as to whether Pakistan should be a Muslim state or an Islamic state.

#### **2.4.2 Changing Image and Declining Importance of Jinnah**

Some Pakistani analysts have pointed it out that Jinnah, a good lawyer and statesman that he was, was not a consistent political thinker.<sup>60</sup> He was a liberal Muslim who sought to balance out the principles of liberalism with those of Islam and was convinced that there was absolutely no tension between the two. The fact that his oft-quoted speech on August 11, 1947 which equated Pakistani nationality with Pakistani citizenship irrespective of religion and caste and creed, surprised and shocked many of his close camp followers. So much so that Jinnah's chief lieutenant, Liaquat Ali Khan, wanted the newspapers to censor this passage

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<sup>60</sup> For example, Sharif al Mujahhid tasked by Ziaul Haq to project Jinnah's Islamist outlook came out with this observation: "Jinnah was a political leader and not a systematic thinker... For a brilliant and accomplished lawyer as Jinnah was, his academic grounding was rather inadequate... Jinnah could not work out a consistent theoretical framework of Pakistan. For one thing his was not the role of a systematic theoretician nor was he qualified for it."

from the original speech while publishing the full text. Accordingly, his Principal PRO, Mr Majid Malik, was asked to issue verbal press advice to all newspaper editors to censor this passage from his speech.<sup>61</sup> And as we see from the observation below, Jinnah's liberal posture did not survive him. The Islamic flavour of the Pakistan movement overtook Jinnah's dream of founding an effective liberal state of Pakistan as an answer and an alternative to his counterparts in India.

It has been pointed out by some scholars that Jinnah's ability to sway public opinion when it came to defining the contours of the evolving polity or Pakistan nation was momentary. A Pakistani scholar avers:

[His] political genius lay precisely in his ability to orchestrate a loose, volatile and unpredictable coalition of forces. He is generally pictured as a man with a firm and total grip over the groups that he was leading. But that is a myth, made plausible by his powerful and commanding personality. In reality his hold over the various groups was quite tenuous and he had to take them on their own terms. He merely stood at the centre of a political process around which diverse regional groups revolved, over whom he had little control.<sup>62</sup>

That is why even when Jinnah was still alive, in the evening of his life, his views on the emerging statecraft in Pakistan (in secular and non-religious terms) were not taken too seriously and were in fact repudiated in practice. The process of history seems to have overtaken him in the long run. In some ways, in the process of enabling a political mass movement in support of a Muslim state, where he emphasised on Islamic principles and values, he had 'poured baby with the bathwater'. Soon after his famous address to the Pakistan constituent assembly on August 11, 1947, where he asked his colleagues to work towards a system where 'citizenship' of the state would be more important than the religion of a person, he would ask each Pakistani to "take vow to

<sup>61</sup> The incident is quoted in: Mohammad Shehzad, "Press Freedom - an unfulfilled dream?", *The Friday Times*, XIV (10), May 3-9, 2002.

<sup>62</sup> Hamza Alavi, "Pakistan And Islam : Ethnicity And Ideology", in Fred Halliday and Hamza Alavi (eds.), *State and Ideology in the Middle East and Pakistan*, Cornell University Press, London and New York, 1988, p. 70.

himself and be prepared to sacrifice his all, if necessary, *in building up Pakistan as a bulwark of Islam*”, “*to develop the spirit of Mujahids*” and be unafraid of death because “*our religion teaches us to be always prepared for death. We should face it bravely to save the honour of Pakistan and Islam. There is no better salvation for a Muslim than the death of a martyr for a righteous cause*” (Italics by the author).<sup>63</sup>

Jinnah’s appeal as a secular Muslim leader who sought to build Pakistan as a progressive and liberal democracy has been in the decline since the 1980s. The image of Jinnah as a symbol of Pakistani unity has therefore suffered a setback. Excepting the Punjabis and perhaps the Mujahirs, other ethno-nationalist groups—particularly, the Sindhis, the Baloch and the Pakhtuns—do not have a very favourable opinion about Jinnah. Some observers in Pakistan have lamented the gradual fading away of Jinnah’s tradition in Pakistan and urged the state to reintroduce him as a national icon.<sup>64</sup> Moreover, since the 1980s, there have been efforts to recast Jinnah as an apologist of an Islamic state. Those who do it selectively pick up Jinnah’s statements stressing on Islamic tenets and argue that the Qaid (great leader) had recommended an Islamic state. The ‘Islamist impulse’<sup>65</sup> that haunted the nation-building efforts in the subsequent days has problematised the whole narrative of nation-building as we can see the subsequent discussion.

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<sup>63</sup> “The Tasks Ahead”, speech at a rally at the University Stadium, Lahore, on October 30, 1947, at <http://quaid.gov.pk/speech11.htm> (Accessed September 30, 2013).

<sup>64</sup> See, for example, an emotional input by a reader, Mohsin Raza Malik, from Lahore, in *Dawn*: “Ironically, the tradition of wearing Jinnah cap and sherwani is fading. We seem to be disrespecting rather ridiculing our great Quaid’s dress. The media should play its due role in highlighting the importance of wearing our national dress on public occasions and international events.” Mohsin Raza Malik, “Quaid’s Dress: Our National Identity”, *Dawn*, July 8, 2013, at <http://www.dawn.com/news/1023644/quaid-dress-our-national-identity>.

<sup>65</sup> The author has elaborated on this in one of his earlier pieces. See: Ashok K. Behuria, “The Islamist Impulse Haunting Pakistan”, *Strategic Analysis*, 35 (1), January 2011, pp. 12-16.

## Chapter III

# State-Nationalism in Pakistan

*Pakistan...is still a country in search of an identity...That is not because the issue of our nationhood has not preoccupied our minds. To the contrary, it is one that we have been obsessed with.*

*Hamza Alavi*<sup>66</sup>

### 3.0 A Muslim Nation?

Pakistan as a state for the Muslim nation was the logical culmination of the idea of nation-state that has been the ruling superstition of our times. Every national consciousness has its own locus of growth. And as identity politics reveals, in the history of the world, a people might have multiple layers of identities, but which of them will come to the fore and assert itself is largely determined by a particular set of historical and political forces. That religion can act as the basis of a nation rankles in the minds of many philosophers to this day. But Pakistan was made possible in spite of it. Indeed as some social thinker has summarised, “a people becomes a nation when it feels it is one”. The compulsion of defining the national basis of Pakistan compelled the leadership in Pakistan to progressively call Pakistan an ideological state where the central ideology was Islam and all other liberal principles/values like liberty, equality and democracy were to be refracted through the lens of Islam to be acceptable in Pakistan. The hyphen that linked the Pakistani state with the imagined Pakistani nation was to be tenuous in the subsequent days.

### 3.1 Signifiers of Pakistani State-Nationalism

The process of conjuring up the Pakistani nation began in right earnest

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<sup>66</sup> Hamza Alavi, “Nationhood and Nationalities in Pakistan”, *Economic and Political Weekly*, July 8, 1989, p. 1527.

with emphasis on ‘Two Nation Theory’ (or *Do Quami Nazriyat*<sup>67</sup>, as it is popularly called in Pakistan) after Pakistan came into being as a sovereign state on August 14, 1947. Unlike Indian nationalism which was well-articulated by intellectuals in an accommodative and inclusionary manner throughout the anti-colonial freedom movement, the national identity of Pakistan had not taken firm shape by the time the imagined Muslim nation secured a state for itself. The only thing that provided lifeblood to the idea of the Pakistani nation was the ‘two nation theory’, and deliberate amplification of the differences between the two principal communities of the subcontinent—the Hindus and the Muslims.

The most popular argument in favour of a separate state was that it was impossible for the Muslims to live in a democratic set up in a united India where Hindus were in absolute majority. Pakistan nationalism was thus perceived at the popular level as no less and no more than the celebration of the feeling of deliverance from the expected tyranny of majority Hindus in an undivided India. In fact, in the western Indian states like Sindh and Punjab where Hindus were economically better off, at the mass level, the idea of Pakistan came in as a liberating force, as an emancipatory mechanism. The latent sense of hostility between the two communities, perhaps more because of class than religious differences, poured out onto the streets in a nasty and communal manner as the line of partition was being decided by Radcliffe.

The two nation theory, in operation, characterised Hindus and Muslims as two culturally separate nations with mutually exclusive and

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<sup>67</sup> The Editor-in-Chief of the Nawai Waqt group of newspapers established Nazaria-i-Pakistan Trust (NPT) in 1992, and he is the current Chairman of the Trust. He has vigorously campaigned for “Two Nation Theory” or *do quami nazaria* through his Trust, literatures produced by it and his newspapers, the vernacular version of which called *Nawai Waqt* emphasises on Two Nation Theory and Islam as important markers of Pakistan identity. As the literature provided in the NPT website reveals, Nizami “remains a fierce and open opponent of friendly relations with India”, and his trust has tried to disseminate literature virulently anti-India in tone and tenor from time to time. See, for example: <http://majidnizami.com/index.php?page=profile> (Accessed September 30, 2013).

irreconcilable worldviews. The large-scale human displacement and bloody riots, following the infamous Calcutta killings, in the wake of the Direct Action call by the League leadership in August 1946, played their role in reinforcing the view that communal reconciliation was impossible. In the immediate aftermath of the partition, the communal polarisation was too acute not to have any effect on the statecraft in Pakistan. In fact, there was a strange sense of urgency in Pakistan to define the identity of Pakistanis not as Muslim citizens of a modern secular state, but as faithful members of an Islamic El Dorado. The leaders of Pakistan also felt it necessary to define their national identity in opposition to the identity of India. For example, if Pakistan were to adopt secularism then the logic of partition was difficult to be rationalised. That is why, when Jinnah projected Pakistan as a secular entity on August 11, 1947, his followers found it hard to buy the line even from the principal architect of Pakistan, its “sole spokesman”.

Once Pakistan finally came into being, it was important to isolate the real signifiers of Pakistani state-nationalism. The signifiers which emerged after the partition were the following: (i) *Islam* as a unifying principle based on ‘*Two Nation theory*’ as a justifier for the formation of Pakistan and *false historicisation of the Pakistani national identity* (ii) *Urdu* as the language of Muslims of the sub-continent<sup>68</sup> (even if the percentage of Urdu-speaking population is abysmally low even after 60 years of official acceptance of Urdu as the national language) (iii) *Anti-Indianism*,<sup>69</sup> which has even assumed greater salience in the post-1971 context (iv) *Preponderance of the army* in Pakistani state and *coercion* as the only option

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<sup>68</sup> In fact, the choice of Urdu was more important as a marker of identity principally because it had assumed a special legitimacy as the language of Muslims mainly after the Hindi was privileged over Urdu in northern India since 1860s.

<sup>69</sup> Khaled Ahmed, a distinguished columnist in Pakistan, known for his incisive insight into Pakistani politics and history, made this emphatic point in a meeting of South Asian Free Media Association (SAFMA) in Ashoka Hotel in New Delhi in October 2004. During his presentation, he said: “The nationalism in Pakistan is constructed in such a way that about 90 percent of it is based on sheer anti-Indianism. This has induced a peculiar sense of fear and insecurity in the people of Pakistan and that explains the importance of military in Pakistan politics.”



for ensuring unity and integrity of the state (as was seen in the case of formation of Bangladesh, and state's approach to Sindhi and Pashtun nationalists and the Baloch insurgency from 1958 till date) (v) *Obsession with Kashmir as terra irredenta* or unredeemed territory (vi) *Acquisition of nuclear weapons* "as an instrument for building or consolidating a national spirit"<sup>70</sup>.

It will be useful to analyse the way Pakistani state has sought to make use of these signifiers over the years and to see whether they have produced the desired effect.

### 3.1.1 Islam: The Adhesive that Does Not Work

The division of Pakistan in 1971 gave a big jolt to the 'Two Nation Theory' and induced a sense of identity crisis in Pakistan which has been well analysed by many researchers in India and abroad. The two nation theory stood delegitimated once the Bangladeshi experiment proved that Muslims could not stay together as one nation. One of the most respected historians in Pakistan made it very obvious in his observation in 1970s:

What are the links that bind us? What is our national identity and the peculiar oneness that makes us a nation apart from others?... If we let go the ideology of Islam, we cannot hold together as a nation by any other means... If Arabs, the Turks, the Iranians, God forbid, give up Islam, the Arabs yet remain Arabs, the Turks remain Turks, the Iranians remain Iranians, but what do we remain if we give up Islam?<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> This has been forcefully argued by Pervez Hoodbhoy, a noted Pakistani observer in one of his recent articles. Pervez Hoodbhoy, "Nationalism and the Bomb", Chapter-6, in Pervez Hoodbhoy (ed.), *Confronting the Bomb: Pakistani and Indian Scientists Speak Out*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2013, p. 134. The author thanks the anonymous referee for drawing his attention to the nuclear dimension of the nation-building exercise in Pakistan.

<sup>71</sup> Waheed-uz-Zaman, in his editorial note, *In Quest of an Identity*, Proceedings of the First Congress on the History and culture of Pakistan, held at University of Islamabad in April 1973, quoted in Edward Mortimer, *Faith and Power: The Politics of Islam*, Faber and Faber, London, 1982.

The constitution of 1973, drafted under the leadership of Bhutto, a forward looking, left-leaning politician, accommodated Islam in a symbolic sense. The state of Pakistan through constitutional provisions declared the Ahmadiyahs non-Muslims. This policy of sectarianisation of official Islam was pursued further by his nemesis and successor Zia-ul-Haq who sought to introduce a Sunni variety of Islam on the people of Pakistan. This angered the Shias and as a response to their large demonstration in the capital, Zia had to recant his step. However, the sectarian turbulence that has plagued Pakistan in the subsequent years lends credence to the observation that Islam can no longer act as an adhesive and far from being inclusionary it has become exclusionary in outlook.

Nevertheless, due to the pan-sectional/sectarian appeal of 'Islam' as a symbolic point of reference, the political elite has professed development of the Pakistani state in light of the principles of Sharia and Islamic values. This may have proved electorally profitable at times, but it has had disastrous effect at the social level. The more the state emphasises on Islam politically, the more the sectional/sectarian/ideological fissures reappear in the society. For example, in recent years, apart from Shia-Sunni divisions, the Deobandi-Barelvi divisions have looked quite ominous within the Sunni fold.

The power-elite in Pakistan, however, continues to invoke Islam at critical moments, hoping to use the overall appeal to build national consensus. When Musharraf talked of Pakistan as an ideological state, as a 'fortress of Islam' in a televised address eight days after 9/11 on September 19, 2001, he tried to convince the people of Pakistan that it was in the country's interest to support the US war on terror, primarily because he apprehended that not doing so would harm "Islam". He stated clearly: "Pakistan is considered to be the fortress of Islam and if this fortress is harmed, Islam will be harmed".<sup>72</sup> His successor, General Ashfaq Parvez Kayani, also stressed on the Islamic identity of Pakistan on many occasions and stated that the army of Pakistan was ready to

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<sup>72</sup> Text of Musharraf's address to the nation on September 19, 2001, "Text: Musharraf rallies Pakistan", BBC News, 19 September, 2001, at [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/world/monitoring/media\\_reports/1553542.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/world/monitoring/media_reports/1553542.stm).

die for Islam and Pakistan.<sup>73</sup> That the net effect of such emphasis on Islam has been counterproductive can be surmised from that fact that the same General, towards the end of his tenure, on August 14, 2012, alluded to the assertion of radical Islam in Pakistan and held that no person or sect had any right to impose a particular version of Islam on others.<sup>74</sup>

There is some recognition at the top level that the stress on ‘Islamic Pakistan’ has only strengthened the radical forces in Pakistan and created a context where they would dictate the terms of discourse as far as Islam is concerned. In all, instead of uniting Pakistan, use of Islam as a unifier has only deepened the sectarian fissures in Pakistani society. The rising tide of inter- and intra-sectarian conflicts in different parts of Pakistan, and violent contestation for power between different versions of Islam bear testimony to the hazardous impact of the state’s policy of employing Islam as an important marker of Pakistani nationhood. With the rise of Pakistani Taliban, the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), which is demanding imposition of Sharia in Pakistan, the threat of Talibanisation looms large in the horizon. Pakistan state’s legitimisation of Islam as an inalienable component of its identity has only enabled TTP-like radical groups to transform the Pakistani state after their image. This is a dangerous proposition but eminently possible, primarily because of the persistence of a jihadi radical culture in the Pakistan-Afghanistan borderlands and the state’s inability as well as unwillingness to contain the tide.

### **3.1.2 False Historicisation of Identity, Inventing the Past**

The ‘Spirit’ of Pakistan officially articulated since the mid-1970s, and propagated through a specific subject called “Pakistan Studies”, in

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<sup>73</sup> General Kayani reiterated this in his address at the Rawalpindi’s Parade Lane mosque in December 2009 and held that the army would die for Islam and Pakistan, and confirmed that faith came ahead of the state. See: Khaled Ahmed, “Pakistan and nature of the State: Revisionism, Jihad and Governance”, *Criterion Quarterly*, 5 (2), 2010, p. 4. Also, watch his speech on the occasion of Yum-e-Shuhada (Day of the Martyrs) on April 30, 2011, at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SG150-dsuc8> (accessed on July 12, 2014)

<sup>74</sup> Watch the video coverage of Gen Kayani’s Address on the occasion of Azadi Parade at PMA Kakul on August 14, 2012, at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4yZaRMBiSgo>.

schools and colleges, betrays an overtly Islamicist orientation with emphasis on situating Pakistani identity in Islamic history. As if borrowing from what Jinnah has stated in 1940 in Aligrah (that the foundation of Pakistan was laid on the very day the first Hindu converted to Islam), the official historian of Pakistan traces the origin of Pakistan to the advent of Muhammad Bin Qasim (711 AD) to the Indian subcontinent. The day Bin Qasim entered Sindh is celebrated as Youm-e-Babul Islam<sup>75</sup>, and there are even efforts to situate it backward in history to the Mohenjodaro and Harappa civilisation. As Eric J Hobsbawm writes, “History is the raw material for nationalist or ethnic or fundamentalist ideologies, as poppies are the raw material for heroin addiction” and “if there is no suitable past, it can always be invented”, because “the past legitimizes [*sic*]” and it “gives a more glorious background to a present that doesn’t have much to celebrate”. Contesting an assertion about 5,000 years of Pakistan, he writes:

There is no evidence of any more connection between the civilisation of Mohenjo Daro and the current rulers of Islamabad than there is of a connection between the Trojan War and the government in Ankara, which is at present claiming the return...of Schliemann’s treasure of King Priam of Troy. But 5,000 years of Pakistan somehow sounds better than forty-six years of Pakistan.<sup>76</sup>

After an invented throwback into the past, the Pakistani history reinforces the differences between the Hindus and Muslims and paints Hindus as a community eternally conspiring against the Muslims.<sup>77</sup>

There is also a perceptible Deobandi slant in the school curricula which regards all eclectic incursions into Islam as heretical and anti-Islam. Thus, for a Pakistani nationalist historian, Akbar is less important than

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<sup>75</sup> On this day, students are asked to take “inspiration and many lessons of courage, fortitude, boldness, patience, tolerance, balanced behavior, power of decision making and commanding ability from Muhammad bin Qasim’s personality.” *Daily Times*, August 13, 2012.

<sup>76</sup> Eric J Hobsbawm, “History and Nationalism”, extracts from his writing, reproduced in *Daily Times*, October 09, 2007, p. 3.

<sup>77</sup> See: A. H. Nayyar and Ahmad Salim (eds.), “The Subtle Subversion: The State of Curricula and Textbooks in Pakistan, Urdu, English, Social Studies and Civics”, Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), Islamabad, 2003.

Maulana Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi (1564-1624) who had started a movement to purge Islam of all non-Islamic practices during Akbar's rule.<sup>78</sup> Aurangzeb emerges as the greatest champion of the 'Pakistan spirit'. The insinuations against Hindus come in all shades, like the description of the rule of lesser known Khusraw (1316-1320), depicted as a low-born Hindu slave, who passed on the administration of the kingdom to the hands of Hindus who "openly insulted Islam, dishonoured mosques and used copies of the Quran as pedestals for idols. This situation was very difficult for the Muslim of South Asia to digest. They gathered around a Tughluq noble popularly known as Ghazi Malik (Ghiyas-ud-din Tughluq Shah), who defeated and killed Khusraw".<sup>79</sup> The Hindu constantly appears as the pronounced 'other' all through the discussions.

Such reinvention of history is designed to build the Pakistani nation in opposition to the Indian nation, which is primarily conceived as a Hindu nation with a secular façade, and through celebration of successful invasions by Muslims on India, a spirit of jingoism and chivalry is created to provide strength to the Pakistani nation. However, in reality, such education has given rise to a culture of intolerance and violence and has been rather counter-productive.<sup>80</sup>

### 3.1.3 Urdu Language

As regards projecting Urdu as the official language of Pakistan, the leaders of Pakistan thought it useful to promote Urdu as the national

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<sup>78</sup> For a detailed study of unsympathetic portrayal of Akbar in history text books in Pakistan, see: Mubarak Ali, "Akbar in Pakistani Textbooks", *Social Scientist*, 20 (9/10), September- October, 1992, pp. 73-76. Also see: K. K. Aziz, *The Murder of History*, Vanguard Book Pvt Ltd, Lahore, 1993; Tariq Rahman, *Denizens of Alien Worlds, A Study of Education, Inequality and Polarization in Pakistan*, Oxford University Press, Karachi, 2004; Rubina Saigol, *Education: Critical Perspectives*, 1993; Pervez Hoodbhoy and A H Nayyar, "Rewriting History of Pakistan", in Asghar Khan (ed.), *Islam Politics and the State*, Zed Books, London, pp. 164-177.

<sup>79</sup> Such version of Pakistan history is also being peddled through the Internet in recent years. See, for example, storofpakistan.com. This quote is to be found on <http://storyofpakistan.com/tughluq-dynasty/>.

<sup>80</sup> For a brilliant explication, see: Rubina Saigol, "Textbooks: An Education in Demonology", *India Today*, August 11, 2012.

language despite the aversion of the other linguistic groups (see Table-1)—especially the Bengalis and the Sindhis<sup>81</sup>—towards it. It was deemed necessary on the part of the Pakistani leadership to develop Urdu as the language for inter-communication among provinces, because, as Jinnah stated in his special convocation address at the Curzon Hall in Dhaka University on March 24, 1948, “more than any other provincial language, [Urdu] embodie[d] the best that [was] in Islamic culture and Muslim tradition and [was] nearest to the languages used in other Islamic countries”.<sup>82</sup> Three days earlier, Jinnah had already planted the seeds of secession in East Pakistan by expressing these sentiments in a hugely attended public rally at the Ramna Race Course Maidan (now Suhrawardy Uddyan) on March 21, 1948. It must be remembered that linguistic nationality question in East Pakistan provided fillip to the movement for separation which culminated in division of Pakistan in December 1971.

**Table-1: Population by Mother Tongue (In per cent)**

Administrative Unit	Urdu	Punjabi	Sindhi	Pushto	Balochi	Saraiki	Others
Pakistan	7.57	44.15	14.1	15.42	3.57	10.53	4.66
Rural	1.48	42.51	16.46	18.06	3.99	12.97	4.53
Urban	20.22	47.56	9.20	9.94	2.69	5.46	4.93

Source: Census by Pakistan Government, 1998<sup>83</sup>

<sup>81</sup> Tariq Rahman notes, “In independent Pakistan the only provinces in which the indigenous languages were the media of instruction in the non-elitist state schools were Bengal and Sind.” See: Tariq Rahman, “Language, Politics and Power in Pakistan: The Case of Sindh and Sindhi?”, *Ethnic Studies Report*, XVII (1), January 1999, p. 26.

<sup>82</sup> Jinnah’s speech cited by Lawrence Ziring, “Politics and Language in Pakistan”, in Aziz Ahmad, Karigoudar Ishwaran (eds.), *Contributions to Asian Studies*, Official publication of the Canadian Association for South Asian Studies, Volume 5, 1971, p. 115. Also watch the video at [http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player\\_embedded&v=G20Wzck-SLw](http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=G20Wzck-SLw).

<sup>83</sup> Pakistan Government Census figures as provided on <http://www.census.gov.pk/MotherTongue.htm>.

In a way, after six decades of state patronage, even if only 7.5 per cent of the people acknowledge Urdu as their mother tongue, it has managed to work as a link language, especially among the literati in post-1971 Pakistan. But it has not quite replaced the local languages. These languages retain their appeal and remain powerful tools of communication among local populace who tend to look upon Urdu as an unnecessary imposition by the state. In Sindh, for example, Urdu is perceived as a language of the Muhajirs, the migrants from India, and to some extent, Sindhi nationalism drew its sustenance among other things from the popular resentment against imposition of Urdu as the official language of Pakistan (the issue will be discussed later). However, there has not been any powerful, disruptive linguistic assertion so far after division of Pakistan in 1971; even if there have been demands for state patronage of regional and local languages. A case in point is the rising assertion of Punjabi language in Pakistani society in recent years.

As a scholar working on the language issue in Pakistan, Tariq Rahman has noted that the “major consequence of the privileging of Urdu has been ethnic resistance to it”.<sup>84</sup> As a country speaking six major and over 59 local languages, Rahman suggests that instead of looking at local languages as disintegrative factors, the state should promote “additive multilingualism”, whereby “Pakistani languages will gain vitality and survive as cultural capital rather than cultural stigma”.<sup>85</sup>

### **3.1.4 Promotion of Anti-Indianism**

From the very beginning, the leaders of Pakistan tried to define Pakistan in opposition to India. In order to justify partition, it was considered necessary for Pakistan to be what India was not. Moreover, anti-India mindset was nurtured officially to provide legitimacy to the Pakistani identity. As far as Pakistani national unity is concerned the Pakistani elite used anti-Indian and anti-Hindu rhetoric in times of crisis with great effect. As has been stated above, history of Pakistan was rewritten

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<sup>84</sup> Tariq Rahman, “Government Policies and the Politics of the Teaching of Urdu in Pakistan”, *The Annual of Urdu Studies*, p. 96.

<sup>85</sup> Tariq Rahman, “Language Policy, Multilingualism and Language Vitality in Pakistan”, 2003, at [http://www-01.sil.org/asia/ldc/parallel\\_papers/tariq\\_rahman.pdf](http://www-01.sil.org/asia/ldc/parallel_papers/tariq_rahman.pdf).

vilifying the Hindus and Indians. In the past, many leaders of Pakistan reaped a good political harvest by referring to persistent Indian antipathy towards Pakistan and their determination to stand up to the Indian threat. To be labelled as ‘pro-India’ or ‘a friend of India’ is generally considered politically too risky a proposition in Pakistan. During much part of post-independence history, many leaders have succeeded politically by branding their political opponents as friends of India. Bhutto did it with dexterity vis-à-vis Ayub Khan. Musharraf did it vis-à-vis Nawaz Sharif through his symbolic absence from the reception to host then Indian Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee in Lahore in February 1999, when Nawaz attempted to initiate a dialogue process with India.

Interestingly, the same leaders, while in power, often engaged India in dialogue when it suited them, and disengaged from the process by reverting to the phrase ‘our number-one-enemy’ whenever they found themselves in political wilderness. In contrast, the conservative/religious elite has raised the bogey of Indian cultural imperialism every now and then and tried to convince the masses that the permissive culture that India promotes carries a pernicious influence which the Pakistani people should guard against. Interestingly, the use of a Hindi word, ‘*vishvas*’ (trust) by the then Pakistani Prime Minister Raja Pervez Ashraf, in the Pakistani Supreme Court in September 2012, prompted heavy censure from media and one of the commentators called it a “silent invasion” that was “symptomatic of a creeping cultural penetration of Pakistan by our eastern neighbour [India], to which the government seems to be completely oblivious.”<sup>86</sup> Reacting to such comments an analyst lamented that after 1947, the co-extensive culture “that joined Pakistan with India” was discouraged and “Pakistan...killed culture to face India more effectively in the battlefield” instead.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Asif Ezdi, “A Silent Invasion”, *The News*, September 03, 2012, at <http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-9-129727-A-silent-invasion>.

<sup>87</sup> Khaled Ahmed, “‘Vishvas’: A word that threatens Pakistan”, *The Express Tribune*, September 18, 2012, at <http://tribune.com.pk/story/438587/vishvas-a-word-that-threatens-pakistan/>.



A powerful section of the elite in Pakistan has sought to sustain anti-Indian temperament among the people through misinterpretation of Indian policies and criticism of Pakistan Government's overtures for peace with India. The vernacular media for example, allegedly under the influence of military, reacted sharply in November 2011 when the Zardari government came out with a declaration that it would work towards according Most Favoured Nation (MFN) status to India. The tone and tenor of some of the editorials clearly indicated their intense hatred of India. For them "*Pakistaniyat*" or Pakistani identity was nothing but negation of India and whatever India stood for.<sup>88</sup> A recent study argues forcefully that "fragility of the Pakistani state" and its "ill-defined nationhood" has driven its war-mongering attitude vis-à-vis India to validate its nationhood abroad and regard its "opposition to India" as central to its discourse on nationality.<sup>89</sup>

The electoral success of Nawaz Sharif in the May 2013 elections, despite his open advocacy of normalisation of relationship with India indicates that the politicians like him may have realised that promotion of anti-India sentiments only weakens their position vis-à-vis the military within Pakistan. However, any reversal of the process (of building Pakistani national identity on anti-India sentiments) would require sustained and concerted effort by the political leadership in this regard.

### **3.1.5 Faith in the Military**

The perennial Pakistani sense of insecurity vis-à-vis India has given birth to a peculiar variety of praetorianism in Pakistan. It has legitimised the army's preponderance and in fact made it the sole saviour of the Pakistani state and final arbiter in politics riven by conflict. As a noted Pakistani observer says:

Pakistani nationalism pitted a small-and-unequal Pakistan against India and thus created trigger-happy and nervous generals who shunned the intellectual side of war. Because the state was small

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<sup>88</sup> One editorial in the Urdu language daily, *Nawai Waqt*, for example, called India a poisonous snake whose head has to be crushed, and another asked how an enemy country can be "most favoured"?

<sup>89</sup> Farzana Shaikh, No. 7, p. 8.

and unequal it had to nurture mindless military leaders in order to better fight its large enemy.<sup>90</sup>

The military of Pakistan has weakened the state institutions and stunted the growth of democracy in the country through repeated usurpation of power at regular intervals. Interestingly, in line with the argument above, in moments of political crises, which is quite natural in multi-cultural plural societies, the people of Pakistan have often welcomed dictators as saviours. It is quite another thing that they have also resented prolonged dictatorial rule, and as in the case of Gen Musharraf versus the Chief Justice, they have taken to the streets and launched their movements for democracy. The fact remains however that they have often relapsed into the delusion that the military can save the nation every time the country plunges into a crisis.

For the people of Pakistan, the most important stabilising factor in Pakistan has been the uninterrupted legacy of military-bureaucratic cohesion. The role the Pakistani military has played in holding the Pakistani state and nation together often through coercive means has to be acknowledged to some extent in the face of recurring threats to its unity and integrity as a state. Through primary use force, in the absence of any political alternative, which has been partly disabled by the military itself, it has kept the disintegrative threats from within at bay. With the exception of Zia-ul-Haq, the military has largely adopted a neutral posture in matters concerning religion, but its leadership has referred to Islam as a beacon and stuck to its anti-Indian line firmly. Knowing that the military draws its sustenance from unreasoned fear of India, in recent times, Pakistani politicians have refrained from using anti-India rhetoric and rather stressed on a relationship of good neighbourliness. However, without the blessings of the military, such policies are unlikely to succeed.

The military has particularly assumed the role of an arbitrator in national politics and protector of national interests. Even when the military has gone back to the barracks, it has exerted disproportionate influence in internal politics in Pakistan, starting from settling political differences

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<sup>90</sup> Khaled Ahmed, "Second Opinion: Small State as Warrior", comments on the Urdu Press, *Daily Times*, December 24, 2004, p. 3.

among politicians to dictating terms in matters concerning foreign policy in the name of national interest as can be shown in the case of the National Reconciliation Ordinance (NRO) and the Memogate case in 2011-2012 in Pakistan. It has jealously guarded its turf and its interests and brooked no interference in its affairs. It is well-known that the last civilian government's attempt (during 2008-2013) to curtail the powers of the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) and civilianise the army fell through on the face of stiff resistance from the Pakistan Army.

As the Peoples Party of Pakistan (PPP)-led coalition was well on its way to earn the reputation of being the first democratic dispensation to complete its tenure, the unusual attention given to Pakistan Army Chief's assurance<sup>91</sup> in December 2012 that there would be free and fair elections betrayed the popular faith in the institution of the army as the main driver of Pakistan state. Kayani's reported assurance to the then Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Justice (ret'd) Fakhruddin G. Ebrahim was widely commented upon and many liberal analysts heaped praise on Gen Kayani for 'allowing' the democratic experiment to succeed and some of them even argued that Gen Kayani should have in fact stepped in and thrown out the civilian government headed by Zardari which was corrupt and self-serving. It was also quite interesting to find some observers letting the army off the hook and blaming the civilian government for the decline in the security situation within Pakistan, with the frequency of sectarian attacks, and attacks on the security forces going up day by day. It is common knowledge in Pakistan that the security policy is the reserve of the army and any constructive initiative (like bringing ISI under civilian control), would be impossible to implement. Moreover, the security situation in the country has gone beyond the capacity of the civilian government primarily because the army has not created the necessary condition for civilian intervention. However, in Pakistan, the preponderance of the army is a given, and any challenge to it is regarded as a bid to weaken the Pakistani nation.

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<sup>91</sup> "Iftikhar A. Khan, "ECP assured of full army cooperation", *Dawn*, December 27, 2012, at <http://www.dawn.com/news/774177/elections-on-time-delimitation-in-karachi-not-possible-says-cec-ecp-assured-of-full-army-cooperation>

### 3.1.6 Obsession with Kashmir

Kashmir as a *terra irredenta* or unredeemed territory has also been projected as a major component of Pakistani national identity. As the 'K' letter in Rahmat Ali's formulation of Pakistan, for the elite in Pakistan, Kashmir remains fundamental to the national identity of Pakistan. Thus, one finds the leadership from Jinnah onward churning out formulations of Kashmir as 'sehrag' or jugular vein of Pakistan. Gen Musharraf, while extending his hand of friendship towards India, underlined the non-negotiability of Kashmir issue in any dialogue with India and said, "Kashmir runs in our blood". During the last five years of civilian rule, the political as well as military leadership have reiterated their demand for resolution of the issue. In September 2013, while addressing the United Nations General Assembly, Nawaz Sharif raised the Kashmir issue and said that "[t]he suffering of the people cannot be brushed under the carpet, because of power politics."<sup>92</sup> Previously, former President of Pakistan, Asif Ali Zardari, had also raised the issue in the UN in September 2012, and drawing the attention of the UN towards the issue, he had stated: "Kashmir remains a symbol of failures, rather than strengths of the UN system".<sup>93</sup> There is a view that the discussions on Kashmir during Musharraf's rule and solutions worked out on certain issues could not proceed because of Gen Kayani's hard line views on Kashmir.<sup>94</sup>

The state-controlled media in Pakistan, both print and audio-visual, have sought to inflame the passion in Pakistan through selective portrayal of inhuman excesses by Indian security forces. Kashmir is projected as an instance of Indian highhandedness. On the occasion of the Pakistan Day (March 23) or Kashmir Solidarity Day (5 February), columnists in Pakistani newspapers are often seen to be thanking Allah for providing

<sup>92</sup> Quoted in "Pakistan Committed against Extremism, but Drones Must Stop: Nawaz at UN", *The Express Tribune*, September 27, 2013, p. 1.

<sup>93</sup> President Zardari's speech at 67th UN General Assembly Session on September 25, 2012, at <http://www.presidentofpakistan.gov.pk/index.php?lang=en&opc=3&sel=1&pId=39&pNum=1>.

<sup>94</sup> See, for example, the media report on the leaked US cables; "Kayani Last Obstacle to Kashmir Deal", *Hindustan Times*, April 04, 2011, p. 1.

the Muslims in Pakistan with a safe refuge away from the mainland Hindu India. Imagined oppression by Hindu majority in a united India forms the basis of such postulation.

### **3.1.7 Nuclear Bomb as a Factor: Quest for Parity with India**

For a state labouring under an exaggerated sense of insecurity vis-à-vis its larger neighbouring state, it is natural that much of its attention and resources would be spent in strengthening its defence forces as an existential requirement. Therefore, an important element defining Pakistani identity has been its continuing quest for parity, in terms of acquiring the necessary capability to deter India. Pervez Hoodbhoy, a nuclear physicist and noted commentator from Pakistan argues that “nation-building is the process of creating, or reinforcing a national identity using the power of the state” and in Pakistan “nuclear weapon” has been used “as an instrument for building or consolidating the national spirit”.<sup>95</sup> This explains Zulfikar Ali Bhutto’s famous statement that Pakistan would eat grass but make bomb after Pakistan’s defeat in 1971 war, in the aftermath of India testing its nuclear device in 1974. Pakistan tested its nuclear device in May 1998 and it was believed in Pakistan that “nuclear weapons would make [the] country an object of awe and respect internationally, and that it would acquire the mantle of leadership of the Islamic world”.<sup>96</sup> However, Hoodbhoy observes that “the bomb does create a national consensus, but only in a narrow sense”, and the national unity induced by possession “is unlikely to create anything more than an illusory notion of nationhood, or lead toward a more stable and secure state”.<sup>97</sup> Disagreeing with the father of the Pakistani bomb, Abdul Qadeer Khan’s claim that India would not have been able to dismember Pakistan in 1971, if it possessed nuclear bomb, Hoodbhoy argues forcefully: “Given that 30,000 nuclear weapons failed to save the Soviet Union from decay and defeat and

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<sup>95</sup> Pervez Hoodbhoy, No. 70, p. 134.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., p.136.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

collapse, how could the bomb have saved Pakistan in 1971?”<sup>98</sup> Hoodbhoy laments that in the post-Bhutto period, enthusiasm for nuclear bomb has been replaced by a misplaced notion that a return to fundamental Islam can resolve all the crises faced by the Pakistani state.

### **3.2 Weaknesses**

The discussion above indicates that the signifiers/markers of Pakistani national identity have failed to create a sense of unity among the people of Pakistan which is critical to the process of nation building in any state. The twin factors of Islam and anti-Indianism drive the state-led efforts to create a national consciousness, which far from appealing to the people have created further faultlines in Pakistani society and polity, exposing the weaknesses of the entire exercise aimed at nation-building. At the societal level, it has given rise to ethno-nationalist assertion, while at the political level, it has hampered the process of democratisation by amplifying the salience of military in the internal power dynamics in Pakistan.

In the following chapters, an attempt is being made to study the phenomenon of ethno-nationalist assertion in Pakistan, which is posing a critical challenge to the nation-building exercise.

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid., p.140.

## Ethno-Nationalism in Pakistan

### 4.0 Cultural heterogeneity

A western observer of Pakistani political scenario in the 1960s, Karl Von Vorys, took due note of the rich mosaic of ethnic groups with little sympathy for each other, participating less in common ideals, suspicious of and hostile to each other and, in the absence of any centralising principle, held together only by the might of the state. “The net result is a Pakistan which is culturally and socially heterogeneous, economically proliferated and held together internally only by frail national ties....It is doubtful that either Islam or threat of an external enemy can generate sufficient cohesion for a national orientation...on a country-wide scale.”<sup>99</sup> The situation remains the same even now, after four decades.

The identity construction by the Pakistani state has failed to generate the necessary impulse to build an overarching national consciousness. Apart from occasional rallying point provided by anti-India sentiments, most other markers of Pakistani national identity have not been able to either co-opt or overwhelm the local identities. In this section, an attempt is being made to study three powerful provincial identities—Sindhi, Pakhtun and Baloch—and see whether each of the identities could complement the national identity, or there are inherent contradictions inhibiting the process of harmonisation of differences. This section will also seek to isolate the weaknesses and challenges that weaken the hegemonised process of nation-building within the Pakistani state.

### 4.1 Ethno-national identities or Sub-national?

The collective consciousness of stateless people, existing as self-differentiating ethnic groups, within a state, is conventionally labelled

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<sup>99</sup> Karl Von Vorys, *Political Development in Pakistan*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1965, p. 91.

as sub-nationalism, micro-nationalism, ethnic nationalism, ethnism, ethnicism, ethno-regionalism, parochialism, regionalism, provincialism or linguistic nativism. In contrast to state-nationalism, which is regarded as civic, legitimate and sublime nationalism, such ethnic identities are regarded as primordial, ethnic and 'banal nationalism', subversive and undeserving of statehood.

The study here steers clear of such pejorative definitional traps and employs a conceptual category used by Walker Connors, i.e., 'ethnonationalism',<sup>100</sup> which conflates 'ethnic' and 'national' and holds the view that they are one and the same. This denotes both loyalty to a nation yet to acquire its own state and also loyalty to an ethnic group within a specific state, particularly where the latter is conceived as a 'nation-state'. In other words, ethnonationalism is conceived in a very broad sense and may be used interchangeably with nationalism. This category is deliberately employed here not so much to legitimise such identities as to lend some respectability to such collective consciousness especially vis-à-vis the nationalism advocated by the state.

The study of ethnonationalism within Pakistan is engaging as well as challenging.<sup>101</sup> This is especially so because they are relatively more

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<sup>100</sup> Walker Connors, *Ethnonationalism: The Quest for Understanding*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1994.

<sup>101</sup> There are several impressive works on the question of ethnicity in Pakistan which dwell on the politics of ethnic identity and the causes and consequences of ethnic rebellion/insurgency. Some of the important ones among them are: Feroze Ahmed, *Ethnicity and Politics in Pakistan*, Oxford University Press, Karachi, 1998; Adeel Khan, *Politics of Identity: Ethnic Nationalism and the State*, Sage, Delhi, 2005; Nadeem Ahmad Tahir (ed.), *The Politics of Ethnicity and Nationalism in Europe and South Asia, Karachi*, 1998; Paul Titus (ed.), *Marginality and Modernity: Ethnicity and Change in Post Colonial Balochistan*, Oxford University Press, Karachi, 1996; Ishtiaq Ahmed, *State, Nation and Ethnicity in Contemporary South Asia*, London, 1996; Yunas Samad, *A Nation in Turmoil: Nationalism and Ethnicity in Pakistan, 1937-1958*, Sage, New Delhi, 1995; Tahir Amin, *Ethno-national Movements of Pakistan: Domestic and International Factors*, Institute of Policy Studies, Islamabad, 1988; Farhan Hanif Siddiqi, *The Politics of Ethnicity in Pakistan, The Baloch, Sindhi, and Mobajir Ethnic Movement*, Routledge, London, 2012. The present work draws upon these studies with a special focus on national identity construction by the Indian state and ethnic groups.



convincingly grounded in their ethno-histories when it comes to constructing their identities as nations. The Sindhi, Balochi and Pakhtun ethno-nationalisms taken up for study here are important because they have been known for posing a challenge to the Pakistani nationalism over the years, and the study seeks to find out the constitutive elements of these nationalisms.

## 4.2 The Sindhi National Identity

*Ours is the neck under the knife, Our slogans yet are the slogans of love  
By the name of the holy Sindh, We shall die, but die we shall smilingly.*

*Ayaz.*<sup>102</sup>

The Sindhis consider themselves as legatees of various strands of cultures, and a rich civilisation that had its roots in the Indus Valley. The national history traced by Sindhis continues through the rule of the Hindu kings, attack by Alexander, the tales of resistance to attacks by early Ummayad Caliphs (661-750) and the conquest of Sindh by Muhammad Bin Qasim (711-2 AD). The succeeding rules by deputies of the Ummayad and Abbasid Caliphs continued till 861 AD during which Sindh, as the remotest and less accessible province of the Caliphate, acted as a refuge for the dissident, the persecuted and minority sects of Islam. The rule by different dynasties often pledging loyalties to rising Muslim powers in the north and west and during the rule of Mughals in the east continued till the advent of the British. The region known as Sindh today was ruled by different dynasties like Sumras (of Arab origin, 1010-1352), the Smamas (of Syrian or Persian origin, 1352-1524), the Arghuns (claimed descent from Timur, 1530-1600), the Kalhoras (claimed descent from the Prophet's family, 1650s-1780s) and the Talpurs (of Balochi origin, 1780s-1840s). During the rules of these dynasties, the Sindhi language gradually developed through mystic and Sufi literature by saints and preachers like Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai (1689-1752), Abd Al Wahab or Sachal Samast (1739-1828), and Chain Rai Bachumal (1743-1850) among others.

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<sup>102</sup> Ayaz quoted in G. M. Syed, "Sindhu Desh and Pakistan", Chapter II, *A Nation in Chains - Sindbudesh*, G. M. Syed Institute of Social Sciences Sindh, at <http://gmsyed.org/nation/book5-chap2.html>.

#### 4.2.1 Consolidation of Language, and Communalisation of Politics

It fell upon the British to give Sindhi language a formal shape after Charles Napiere's conquest of Sindh in 1843. Upon Napiere's retirement in 1847, the British-occupied terrain of Sindh was ruled as a *Commissionerate* within the province of Bombay. The British officers played a major role in converting an oral vernacular language into a written one with *Naks* script. The most prominent Sindhi who assisted the effort of the British was Mirza Kalich Beg, son of a Georgian Christian migrant, Sydney, who wrote, translated and adapted nearly 350 works in Sindhi. The resistance from the Ulema who were more eager to adopt Arabic script and Arabic than Sindhi language was overcome through tact and force. *Madrassas* adopting Sindhi language were given fiscal incentives while those resisting such a move were forcibly taken over. The Sindhi language, thus, attained its present form and gradually formed the basis of a linguistic community. The consolidation of Sindhi national identity thus took a definite shape after the advent of the British rule.

The initial impetus given to the idea of Sindhi autonomy came from a Herchandrai Vishindass, a Hindu, who in 1913 demanded from the Congress platform the need to carve out a separate province of Sindh. This was eight years before Congress took an official position on constitution of linguistic provinces. Muslim leadership in Sindh, which was gradually emerging out of the feudal social structure of Sindhi society and asserting itself politically, took up the idea passionately and worked vigorously towards separation of Sindh from Bombay. On April 1, 1936, Sindh became a separate province. Like Punjab, a Unionist political party was created, and the Sindhi leadership sought to bridge the communal gap between Hindus and Muslims without success.

The class differences between the two communities, with minority Hindu entrepreneurs firmly in control of the means of production and majority Muslims languishing in poverty, aggravated the communal equation in Sindh. There were bloody riots in Larkana, Sukur, Karachi and other townships. In fact, the Hindu leadership in Sindh disassociated itself from the movement for separation of Sindh in the backdrop of increasing communalisation of Sindhi politics. It was thus natural that during this time, among the Muslims in what is now Pakistan, the Sindhi

Muslim leaders were the most enthusiastic supporters of the Pakistan movement. In October 1938, in a conference of Sindh Provincial Muslim League, in Karachi, the Sindhi leaders played a major role in drafting out a resolution which demanded that since “evolution of a united India and a united Indian nation inspired by common ideals and common aspirations” was impossible, it was “absolutely essential” for political self-determination of the two nations known as Hindus and Muslims” and devise a constitution “under which Muslims may attain complete independence”. This was the precursor of the Lahore (Pakistan) Resolution of 1940.

The later-day champion of separate sovereign state of *Sindhudesh*, G. M. Syed (1904-1995), was one of the most fervent advocates of Pakistan and played a big role in orchestrating ‘hate campaign’ against the ‘Hindu money lenders and *banias*’ during the early 1940s. In a very fiery speech to Sindh legislature on June 30, 1941, Syed urged the Muslims not to have any inhibition in using ‘hate’ as a weapon against the Hindus. Calling the idea of Hindu-Muslim unity “mischievous and dangerous”, he said, “In that (hate) lies the mystery wherewith the oppressed takes revenge upon the oppressor”. He outdid Jinnah in outlining the points of differences between Hindus and Muslims and attested the “two nation theory” with great enthusiasm.

It is an irony of history that only four years hence, G.M. Syed resigned from Muslim League Working Committee in 1945 and demanded parity as a nation with Punjabis and asked Muslim League to honour the spirit of Lahore resolution and let Pakistan emerge as a loose federation with Sindh and Punjab among others as sovereign federating units. One has to add here that the Sindhi legislature was the first to pass the Pakistan resolution, moved by G.M. Syed on March 3, 1943. But to be fair to Syed, the resolution that was passed in 1943 was carefully drafted to accommodate sovereignty for Sindhu nation. It read: “Whereas the Muslims of India are a separate nation... they are justly entitled to the right as a single, separate nation, to have independent national states of their own, carved out in the zones where they are in majority in the sub-continent of India.”<sup>103</sup> He was expelled from the

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<sup>103</sup> G M Syed, *The Case of Sindh*, Naen Sindh Academy, Karachi, 1994, at <http://www.sindhudesh.com/gmsyed/case/saen-book1-app3.htm>.

League in 1946, and his passionate demagoguery championing the cause of Sindhi nationalism was drowned in the cacophony of Pakistan.

If one analyses the quality of leaders Sindh had at that time, almost all of them—G.H. Hidayatullah (1879-1948), M. Ayub Khuro (1901-1980), Mir Bande Ali Talpur (d. 1946), M. Hashim Gazdar (1893-1966), Pir Illahi Baksh (1890-1975), Yusuf Haroon (1916-2011), Allah Baksh Soomro (1900-1943) and others<sup>104</sup>—look pathetically self-serving, power-seeking, dishonest and perpetually engaged in conspiracies against one another. They were hardly guided by any nationalist motive during the course of the Pakistan movement, and if certain elements pretended to have any nationalist commitment, it was basically a quest for power by other means. The Sindhi nation was yet to self-differentiate itself convincingly enough and was lacking self-confidence as well. The group consciousness that Sindhis gathered vis-à-vis their perceived Hindu oppressors was overtaken by the prevalent Muslim nationalistic fervour and the leadership was too pusillanimous to come out forcefully with a parallel nationalist movement. However, Sindhi nationalism was lying in wait to burst out into open.

#### 4.2.2 Post-partition days

The post-partition days removed the principal cause—exploitation by the Hindu moneylender or *bania*—that had brought about communal unity among the Sindhis. Interestingly, historical records suggest that immediately after partition, the Sindhis were more worried about Muslims pouring into Karachi from various parts of India than Hindus. The then Ayub Khuro government in Sindh was seen to be trying to protect Hindus from attacks by Muslim refugees pouring in from India, for which Liaquat Ali Khan then Prime Minister of Pakistan was so incensed with Khuro that he had asked the latter, right in front of a

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<sup>104</sup> Interestingly, Jinnah had nothing but scorn for all of them. In one of his interactions with the British Governor in 1940s, he reportedly told that he could buy all of them with 5 lakh rupees. The Governor replied: “I can do it a lot cheaper”. Mentioned in: Ian Talbot, *Provincial Politics and Pakistan Movement*, OUP, Karachi, 1988, p. 50.

silent Jinnah, in January 1948, to leave Karachi and to “go make your capital in Hyderabad or somewhere else”.<sup>105</sup>

Thus, new issues came up for Sindhis to rally around. The very first was, as has been indicated above, the decision by the Pakistan Government to take Karachi out of Sindh and run it as a capital territory in 1948. The next was the case of settling Muhajirs from India, who had come to Pakistan, their Islamic Eldorado. Between 1947 and 1952, the demography of Karachi and some other Sindhi cities changed vastly. The 1951 Census showed that the Muhajirs constituted about 57 per cent of the population of Karachi, 66.08 per cent of Hyderabad, 54.08 per cent of Sukkur, 68.42 per cent of Mirpurkhas and 54.79 per cent of Nawabshah. The Hindu upper class that had monopolised the economy of Karachi and Sindh was progressively replaced by the new entrepreneurial class consisting of Muhajirs and Punjabis. There was also the instance of massive popular demonstrations against declaration of Urdu as the only official language in Sindh, and also the case of underrepresentation of the Sindhis in bureaucracy and constituent assembly.

The one unit scheme, started in Pakistan since 1955, brought out into open the resentments of peoples of other provinces including the Sindhis. During the military rule of Ayub, the issue of settling Punjabis and Pathans in Sindh also raised an alarm amongst the Sindhi nationalists. The Sindhi nationalist ideas started taking firmer roots during this period.<sup>106</sup> Some analysts have argued:

The struggle to attain provincial autonomy through democratic process could not succeed and faced a major setback. Sindhis were alienated from the centre and nationalist feelings found a

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<sup>105</sup> Cited in Haider Nizamani, “Who Orchestrated the Exodus of Sindhi Hindus after Partition?”, *The Express Tribune*, June 4, 2012, at <http://tribune.com.pk/story/388663/who-orchestrated-the-exodus-of-sindhi-hindus-after-partition/>

<sup>106</sup> For details, see: Sultan Mubariz Khan and Ishtiaq Ahmed, “Struggle for Identity: A Case of Sindhi Nationalist Movement 1947-1955”, *Interdisciplinary Journal of Contemporary Research in Business*, 2 (5), September 2010, pp. 532-559; also see: Y. Samad, *A Nation in Turmoil: Nationalism and Ethnicity in Pakistan, 1937-1958*, Sage Publication, New Delhi, 1995.

fertile ground to flourish. That sowed the seeds of nationalist movement in Sindh.<sup>107</sup>

There was an effervescence of Sindhi literature on the discriminatory policies of the central government in Pakistan during the 1950s and 1960s. The fact of Sindhi under-representation in bureaucracy, military, the discrepancy between the fiscal contribution of Sindh to the central government and central allocation to Sindh, the policy of damming river Indus at the upper reaches in Punjab to irrigate lands, primarily in Punjab, have been highlighted as proof of indifference of the Pakistani Government towards the genuine demands of the Sindhis ever since.

### 4.2.3 Language issue

The majority of people in Sindh speak the Sindhi language. Sindhi had also been recognised as the official language of the region under the British rule. However, Sindhi nationalists allege that after partition, fellow Muslims rulers of Pakistan gave orders to shut down Sindhi medium schools. In one year after partition about 1,500 Sindhi medium primary schools were shutdown in main towns<sup>108</sup>, and this process, they allege, goes on till today. They also say that the state-controlled Pakistan Television (PTV) only provides about 40 minutes' transmission per day in Sindhi language and that Sindhi language has been marginalised to such an extent that its survival is under threat.

The central government of Pakistan has been particularly conscious of the capacity of Sindhi language to generate a sense of identity among the people in Sindh, and therefore, the practice of this language was discouraged right since partition. When there was a move by the regional government, with the spontaneous backing of the people of Sindh, to make it necessary for all government servants to know Sindhi in 1972, the central government—even if it was then led by Z.A. Bhutto, a Sindhi politician—found it difficult to accept it in the face of resistance

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<sup>107</sup> Ibid. p. 556.

<sup>108</sup> Intervention Of Interfaith International by Dr. Haleem Bhatti at the 61st Session of the Commission on Human Rights, Agenda Item 6: Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and all Forms of Discrimination, at <http://www.sindhudesh.com/iionline/statements/intervention3.html>.

from non-Sindhi and primarily Urdu speaking population in Karachi and other cities. The language riots of July 1972 forced the Bhutto government to prevail upon the provincial government to bring about an amendment saying that the Sindhi language bill would not be applied in a manner prejudicial to the interest of the national language of Urdu.<sup>109</sup>

There is no official assistance to the Sindhi press/media. On the contrary, laws are passed to curb Sindh press, which has traditionally championed the cause of the Sindhi people. In the late 1990s, for example, the Governor of Sindh—constitutionally an agent of the central government—promulgated an Ordinance to decrease the advertisements quota for the ‘regional’ newspapers published in Sindh to 50 per cent. Consequently, many Sindhi dailies had to cease their publication. Another important feature of the government’s repressive policy has been the imposition of censorship or a blanket ban on Sindhi nationalist literature. Most of the writings by G.M. Syed have been banned ever since they were printed, and only recently his works are being reproduced and circulated through the Internet by enthusiastic Sindhi nationalists in the West.<sup>110</sup> In fact, after partition, G.M. Syed spent most part of this life either in jail or under house arrest, till his death in 1995.

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<sup>109</sup> It is useful to point it out here that after the dissolution of the one unit in July 1970, elections to the provincial assembly were held in December 1970, in which the National Awami Party, a combination of nationalist parties in Balochistan and NWFP held their sway in the two states while Bhutto’s PPP managed to form the government in Sindh. It is interesting to note that while the two nationalist groups in NWFP and Balochistan accepted Urdu as official language, PPP brought out an ordinance on July 7, 1972 for progressive use of Sindhi as official language. Z.A. Bhutto, an ethnic Sndhi, had tacitly approved the original bill, but succumbed to the pressures from Punjabi politicians and staged a hasty retreat, as was later reported in the media. In his typical demagogic style Bhutto said: “Qaid was not Urdu speaking but he commanded us to make it the national language. Our love for Pakistan is so great that had he asked us to accept Arabic as national language, we would have accepted it.”

<sup>110</sup> Some of the well-known websites advocating Sindhi nationalism are <http://www.sindhudesh.com>, <http://www.gmsyed.org/>, <http://www.worldsindhicongress.org/>, etc.

#### 4.2.4 Identity construction

*Sindh can exist without Pakistan, but Pakistan cannot exist without Sindh. Pakistan's existence depends on how its ruling classes treat Sindh. If they don't revise their attitude and accept the national existence of Sindh and the people and grant them their rights, no power on earth is going to save Pakistan.*

G M Syed<sup>111</sup>

It would be interesting to see how Sindhi nationalism is being projected in post-partition days. Sindhi nationalism has been the most vocal of all ethnonationalistic identities in Pakistan. Sindhis have tried to situate their identity in history and held that Sindh and Sindhi language are much older than Pakistan and Urdu language. G. M. Syed has been quoted by K R Malkani in his book as saying:

As for the state of Pakistan, Sindh rejects it wholly. Sindh has always been there, Pakistan is a passing show. Sindh is a fact, Pakistan is a fiction. Sindhis are a nation, but Muslims are not a nation. Sindhi language is 2,000 years old, Urdu is only 250 years old. Sindhi has 52 letters, Urdu has only 26. The enslavement of Sindh by the Punjab in the name of "Pakistan" and "Islam" is a fraud. It is the most serious crisis in the history of Sindh in the past 2,000 years.<sup>112</sup>

As regards Islam which is projected as a binding force in Pakistan and a major constituent of Pakistani identity, the Sindhis have been quite circumspect. G. M. Syed was of the view that "the claim for Pakistan to be an Islamic state [was] but a self-deception".<sup>113</sup> Malkani paraphrases

<sup>111</sup> G.M. Syed, *A Nation in Chains - Sindhudesh*, G.M. Syed Institute of Social Sciences, 1974, at <http://www.sindhudesh.com/gmsyed/nation/book5-chap4.html>.

<sup>112</sup> K R Malkani, *The Sindh Story*, reproduced as an e-book by Sani Hussain Panhwar, at <http://www.panhwar.com/BooksbySani/THE%20SINDH%20STORY.pdf>, p. 107.

<sup>113</sup> G. M. Syed, *Sindhudesh: A Study In Its Separate Identity Through The Ages*, a translation of "Sindhu Jii Sanjaah", at <http://www.sindhudesh.com/gmsyed/sindhudesh/Sindhu%20Jii%20Sanjah%20-%20GM%20Syed.pdf>, p. 11



G M Syed as saying that the Sindhis “had thought that the Islamic state of Pakistan” would be good for them. But it had been a disaster. As Malkani states, “We are reminded of the animal which went to get some horns, and returned with its ears chopped off.”<sup>114</sup> Syed even rejected the Arab version of Islam (*Arab-Chhap* Islam, as he called it) and, along with it, the ideologues/proponents of Pakistan, Iqbal and Jinnah:

Sindh rejects the Arabian edition of Islam, it rejects the Punjabi version of Pakistan, and it rejects made-in-India Urdu. Iqbal and Jinnah have been worse disasters for Indian Muslims than Chenghiz and Halaku. Sindh rejects them both.... A Sufi Sindh and an Islamic Pakistan cannot coexist, even as you can't put two swords in one scabbard. If Pakistan continues, Sindh will die. If, therefore, Sindh is to live, Pakistan must die.<sup>115</sup>

#### **4.2.5 Alienation, Xenophobia and Sindhi Identity**

Sindhi identity has assumed a xenophobic character in the post-partition period and has asserted violently against major ethnonational categories migrating to Sindhi townships—especially the Muhajirs, the Pathans and the Punjabis. The only ethnonational group with which it has struck a chord of unity has been the Baloch, even though the points of friction with Baloch still remain in certain locales.

*This Sindhi sense of alienation or xenophobia has been the result of increasing differentiation of Sindhi ethnonational identity from the hegemonic Pakistani national identity on the one hand and growing distance from other neighbouring ethnonationalities on the other. The self-definition of Sindhis has accordingly undergone significant changes. So much so that G. M. Syed who was one of most vocal proponents of anti-Hindu sentiments was seen to be championing a very tolerant and syncretic idea of nationalism. In his own deliberations, as well as nationalist writings by many Sindhi intellectuals, the gap between mainstream political Islam and Sindhi nationalism widened considerably since 1950s. Rather, the*

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<sup>114</sup> K R Malkani, No. 111, p. 107.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 108.

Sindhi intellectuals led by Syed formed a cultural organisation called Bazm-e-Sufiya-e-Sindh, and developed a “reformed version of Sufi Islam”<sup>116</sup> which was different from the “folk Sufism” prevalent in rural Sindh to underline their differences with Pakistani state’s emphasis on Islam, and this formed the core of Sindhi separatist movement that gained much influence in the 1960s and 1970s. There were other nationalist writers like Shaikh Ayaz, Ghulam Mustafa Shah, Abdulwahid Arear, Hamida Khuro, Fahmida Riaz and G. Allana who reinterpreted Sindhi nationalism in the post-Pakistan perspective. These writers differed in their approaches to Sindhi nationalism.

#### 4.2.6 Differences among Sindhi Nationalist leaders

For G.M. Syed, Bhutto’s PPP was an insurmountable political enemy and had done the greatest damage to Sindhi national cause, and to contain the growth of the party he had struck a political deal with Zia-ul-Haq in 1980s, which among other things affected his political image in Sindh. Moreover, his un-progressive attitude in matters related to land reforms and his well-known sympathies for the minority Sindhi feudal class to which he himself belonged had reverse impact on his appeal among the Sindhi masses. Another towering Sindhi nationalist leader, Rasul Bux Palijo—who had worked with Syed in the 1960s and had been part of the Bazm-e-Sufiya group, favoured the politics of protest (Movement for Restoration of Democracy) against Zia-ul-Haq, even if it meant supporting Bhutto. Palijo formed his Awami Tehrik (AT) in 1970 and moved away from Syed.<sup>117</sup>

Similarly, Shaikh Ayaz, known for his inflammatory poetry of the underprivileged people of Sindh had been successfully co-opted by Pakistani government too. The pro-PPP Ghulam Shah’s espousal of Sindhi cause through his sharp criticism of the ruling Punjabi-dominated administration in Pakistan has been limited by his party’s penchant for political power in whole of Pakistan. Hamida Khuro has been more

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<sup>116</sup> For details, see: Oskar Verkaaik, “Reforming Mysticism: Sindhi Separatist Intellectuals in Pakistan”, *International Review of Social History*, 49, Special Supplement, 2004, pp. 65-86.

<sup>117</sup> For intra-ethnic differences, see: Farhan Hanif Siddiqi, No. 100, p. 91.

sympathetic towards her family's contribution to Sindh and Sindhi nationalism, and her views, as they appear in her writings, suggest again a typical class flavour which limits its appeal and reach. However, in the subsequent discussion, it would be useful to dwell upon the nature and character of Sindhi nationalism as it emerges from the writings of its principal advocates.

#### 4.2.7 Articulation of Sindhi Culture and Identity

In his writings, G.M. Syed—who has written extensively on the origin of Sindhi nation—has gone to the extent of saying that the black stone in Ka'ba was nothing but a *Shiva linga*, suggestive of the fact that even Arabs used to worship Shiva. He has also mentioned that “according to the Quranic concept, the belief in the various religions, prophets and their books, was necessary for being a true Muslim”, but the Arabs interpreted Islam wrongly and sought to wipe out traces of all non-Islamic religions from the face of the earth. Sindhis were, unlike the Arabs, very peace-loving and non-violent people, who have understood real Islam and thus they have shunned violence. The Arab interpretation, he has mentioned in his book *Sindhudesh*, has been close to the interpretation of Islam by the ‘Punjabis’.<sup>118</sup> While Islam emphasised on the unity of mankind, the Arabs and the Muslims focussed on unity among Muslims. The characterisation of Muslim heroes like Muhammad Bin Qasim and Ahmad Shah Abdali<sup>119</sup> by Sindhi nationalists

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<sup>118</sup> A Sindhi nationalist, Ali Ahmed Rind mentioned in his paper presented in the 15<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Sindh, London, on September 27, 2003: “Punjabi rulers have nothing to do with real Islam. They are abusing a universal religion to pursue their colonial agenda. They call Pakistan a citadel of Islam when fact remains that Pakistan is only country where no believer can offer prayer without being protected by some gun totting security man standing outside Mosque or Imam Bargah.”

<sup>119</sup> For example, G. M. Syed writes about Abdali: “In 1740, Ahmad Shah Abdali was invited by Walliullah Mohadis Dehlavi, on the pretext of fighting the Marhattas in the 3rd battle of Panipat, but the real purpose was to attack the kingdom of Awadh. Having lost it, near Faizabad, Ahmed Shah's wild Afghan boards looted Delhi, raped innocent girls night and day, their (girls) terrorized shrieks were heard whole night ... and carried away loot and 20 thousands girls. Six thousand (6000) Muslim gentry committed suicide in Delhi as a result of their wives, sisters and daughters being raped. But the Muslims of this sub-continent present Abdali as a Muslim hero.” G. M. Syed, No. 113, p. 154

has been different too. They are shown as blood-thirsty, depraved, degenerate and debauched invaders. While during Zia-ul-Haq's time it was a fashion to celebrate the day of invasion of Sindh by Bin Qasim as Yum-e-Bubool-e-Islam day, the Sindhis denounced it as a day that signified oppression of the Sindhis by outsiders. G.M.Syed's views on Bin Qasim are instructive here:

Muhammad-Bin-Qasim had made slaves 30,000 men and girls of Sindh and sold them in Arabia, and looted over 40,000,000.00 (Rupees Forty Crores) and sent to Arabia and is said to have committed rape on Raja Dahir's two daughters. Can such a person be called a Muslim Mujahid (crusader)? Can libraries, colleges, roads and ports be named after him? Can such a man give a good name to Islam?<sup>120</sup>

#### 4.2.8 The Grievances:<sup>121</sup>

Sindhis say that in no other region of Pakistan is the divide between urban prosperity and rural deprivation as wide as it is in Sindh. Due to the concentration of commerce and industry in its capital city, Karachi, Sindh has the highest per capita income in Pakistan while its people are amongst the poorest. Most Sindhis believe that for them the most repressive form of colonialism started after the creation of Pakistan.

Sindh accounts for Pakistan's 99 per cent coal reservoirs (Total: 96.297 billion tons). Sindh has 99 per cent coal reservoirs of Pakistan, which are located in Lakhra, Soondha, Thar, Meeting-Jhampeer and Badin. Among these, Thar coal reservoirs are the largest in the world.<sup>122</sup> Sindh also accounts for 48 per cent of the natural gas production in Pakistan. There are 10 gas fields in the province in the following areas: Kandhkoat, Khairpur, Mari (the largest), Suri/Hundi, Golarchi, Khaskheli and

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<sup>120</sup> Ibid., p. 55.

<sup>121</sup> Data taken from Khalid Hashmani, "Sindh: A Tale of Exploitation and Discrimination", *Indus Asia Online Journal*, August 19, 2009, at: <http://iaoj.wordpress.com/2009/08/29/sindh-a-tale-of-exploitation-and-discrimination>.

<sup>122</sup> *Source*: Sindh Coal Authority, cited in Ali Nawaz Butt, "Wealthy Sindh's Poor People", at <http://www.scribd.com/doc/7712918/Fact-About-Sindh>.

Leghari. It also produces 62 per cent of total oil produced in Pakistan. Almost entire fish exports from Pakistan go from Sindh and Balochistan (worth US\$ 199 million in 2005).

In most federal systems around the world, federal revenue is distributed taking multiple factors into account (India uses 11 factors). But Pakistan uses population as a key factor. This has been a major issue with provinces with lesser population in Pakistan. As far as Sindh is concerned, it contributes 67.65 per cent in Direct Taxes (Income Tax: 86.40 per cent, Wealth Tax: 63.21 per cent, Capital Gains Tax: 32.60 per cent, Workers Welfare Fund: 45.53 per cent) and 68.32 per cent in Indirect Taxes (General Sales Tax (GST): 62.10 per cent, Federal Excise Duty: 39.40 per cent). Whereas in 1999, Sindh contributed 63.7 per cent to the divisible pool, it received back only about 23.5 per cent.

According to sources in Sindh, there has been no effort to change the socio-economic profile of the province. Three out of five children between 5-9 years do not go to school. The literacy rate in rural Sindh is only 35 per cent. There is no move to fill up the post of 17,000 additional doctors in government hospitals. Therefore, 50 per cent of all hospitals (many of them in rural areas) remain closed. 80 per cent of the hospitals do not have specialists. 26 per cent of Sindh's population has no access to drinking water. 58 per cent of population has no sanitation facilities. Out of all factories and industries located in Sindh, only about two per cent are owned by native Sindhis and only about five per cent of native Sindhis are employed therein. Only about five per cent of all federal employees are native Sindhis and their presence in the armed forces is as low as about five per cent.

Among other issues agitating the Sindhi nationalists and giving rise to an overall feeling of neglect and alienation are: wrong-implementation of the 1991 water apportioning accord, diversion of Indus water to Punjab through Greater Thal Canal (GTC), Kalabagh Dam and also inadequate allocation of funds for Sindh in the National Finance Commission Awards, etc. Above all, the Sindhi demand for independence, as the discussion above suggests, has largely crystallised around a feeling of marginalisation and neglect.

The Sindhi condition is perpetuated by the insensitivity of the central government on the one hand and negative images about Sindhis in

Pakistan, on the other. If one were to add the ethnic stereotypes built over the years about the Sindhis the discourse gets even worse. For example, many non-Sindhi Pakistani intellectuals would ascribe economic backwardness to the wretchedness of the Sindhi people and deviousness of Sindhi landlords, to the low intelligence quotient (IQ) of the Sindhis and even “cultural perversity” of the Sindhi people in general.<sup>123</sup>

#### 4.2.9 The Shape of Sindhi Nationalism Today: Palijo’s March in 2005

A popular resistance movement took shape at the grassroots level in Sindh against the demand especially from Punjab to build a big dam on Indus at Kalabagh and construct the Greater Thal Canal. Interestingly, on March 1, 2005, exactly around the time when in India, Gandhi’s Dandi March was being re-enacted, Rasool Bux Palijo, leader of Awami Tahreek in Sindh and more an autonomist than a separatist, led a 685 km-long Sukkur to Karachi protest march. The popular response was spontaneous and all along the route protest marchers came out slogans like “*Karballa karballa—Sindh lai karballa, Parvez Musharaf ker Ailan...Dam khahey ya Pakistan??, Darya Khatir Jhero aaa, Panee khatir jhero aaa*”. The march was welcomed by PPP, Jiye Sindh Quami Mahaz, Sindhiani Tehrik and Sindhi Taraqi Pasand Party. During the meetings along the route, Rasool Bux Palijo came out with indirect threats that if the situation obtaining then persisted the unity and integrity of Pakistan would be at stake. Rasool went to the extent of saying that “the original Pakistan was lost in the battlefields of Dhaka, and this is no more the Pakistan of MA Jinnah” and Sindhis will have no inhibition in revisiting the option of joining Pakistan if their genuine needs are not addressed.<sup>124</sup>

<sup>123</sup> An interesting discussion on these ethnic stereotypes about Sindhis can be found in: M. Rashid Memon, “Ethnic Stratification in Pakistan’s Labor Market”, Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, New School University, Ann Arbor, USA, pp. 2-3.

<sup>124</sup> This protest march was given due coverage in the Pakistani media, but the international media largely lost sight of this march. The quotations and observations here draw upon author’s correspondence with advocate Ayaz Latif Palijo, who participated in the march and has been at the forefront of the anti-Kalabagh Dam and anti-Thal Canal movement in Pakistan.

Against this setting, it is pertinent to discuss the shape the Sindhi nationalist movement has assumed in recent years. On May 21, 2005, at Bhitshah, the birth place of Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai, the saint poet of Sindh, Sindhi nationalists placed a Charter of Demand on the Pakistani state and proclaimed that “Sindh reserves the right to revisit its historic decision (to join Pakistan) in light of the way it has been (*mis*)treated within the union.” The Charter also demanded that the state of Pakistan “must stop and reverse all acts of ethnic cleansing and demographic re-engineering of Sindh, which is designed to convert native population into a minority through massive importation of immigrants from all over the world.” Further, it demanded rewriting of constitution to ensure maximum possible autonomy to the provinces failing which the Sindhi nationalist struggle which was a basically intellectual struggle would be forced to turn into an armed struggle against the dominance of the Pakistani Army, which was an ethnic and regional army and dominated by the Punjabis.

#### **4.2.10 Sindh wants Feedom** *(Sindh Ghurey Thee Azadi)*

From 2005, the Pakistani state has maintained a close watch on the functioning of the nationalist groups in Sindh. The Sindhi nationalists are divided into many groups whose demands have ranged from autonomy within the Pakistan state to secession and independence. Sindhi outfits like Jeay Sindh Qaumi Mahaz (JSQM), Jeay Sindh Tehrik (JST), and some factions of Jeay Sindh Mahaz (JSM), for example, call for independence of Sindh, while other nationalist groups like AT, Sindh Taraqqi Pasand Party (STP) and the Sindh United Party (SUP) who have had an alliance, called the Sindh Progressive Nationalist Alliance (SPNA) want greater autonomy within Pakistan federation. Most of these outfits are personality oriented and stick to their own grooves without making any effort to come together. They have hardly come together to propound the Sindhi nationalist narrative. Even then, with the Baloch insurgency peaking in the immediate neighbourhood, the security forces regarded Sindhi nationalists as a fifth column and quietly launched their operations in the hinterland. Since 2002, various bomb blasts targeted railway tracks and government installations in Sindh. As per government reports, between 2002 and 2006, out of 120 such attacks, the state Criminal Investigation Department (CID)

could solve 52, while 68 cases remained unresolved. The ‘Red Book’ brought out by CID in 2007 included Shafi Mohammad (Burfat) alias Commando alias Ghulam Hussain Chandio of JSQM in the list of suspects for these acts. However, Shafi Mohammad Burfat had started his own outfit Jiye Sindh Muttahida Mahaz (JSMM) in November 2000, which is being considered as the radical nationalist organisation responsible for most of the unclaimed and unresolved bomb blasts in interior Sindh. Since 2009-2010, a lesser known shadowy militant outfit called Sindhudesh Liberation Army (SDLA) commended by one Darya Khan Marri has announced its presence in Sindh<sup>125</sup>, which is supposed to be the underground militant wing of JSMM. It has re-emerged since 2012 and has been allegedly involved in politically motivated assassinations and attacks on branches of the National Bank of Pakistan (NBP) in different districts of Sindh.<sup>126</sup> Indiscriminate police action, often disproportionate to the attacks by Sindhi radical outfits, has radicalised the Sindhis in the hinterland and Sindhi nationalism has manifested in assertive terms in the last decade (2001-2010). Some commentators in Pakistani media have interpreted it as a throwback to the days of G.M. Syed.<sup>127</sup> In reality, however, the situation is much more critical now than it was even the days of Syed.

In fact, for two consecutive years in 2011-12, a faction of JSQM (originally founded by G.M. Syed) led by Bashir Khan Qureshi organised rallies called “Freedom March”, in Sindh on the Pakistan day, on March 23, 2012. Bashir openly advocated independence from Pakistan and stated, “We Sindhis now disown the Pakistan Resolution, say it good bye and demand independence of Sindh according to historical status”. A few days earlier on March 18, 2012, JST had also held a similar rally called “March against Slavery”, and its leader Safdar Sarki (who had

<sup>125</sup> Aamir Majeed, “Sindhi Separatists Announce Comeback”, *Pakistan Today*, February 26, 2012, at <http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2012/02/26/city/karachi/sindhi-separatists-announce-comeback/>.

<sup>126</sup> *Counter Terrorist Trends and Analysis*, 5 (1), International Centre for Political Violence and Terrorism Research, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Singapore, January 2013, p. 36.

<sup>127</sup> See: Nadeem Piracha, “Smoker’s Corner: Back to G M Syed?”, *Dawn*, March 11, 2012, at <http://dawn.com/2012/03/11/smokers-corner-back-to-g-m-syed/>



been earlier abducted and kept under detention allegedly by security forces during February 2006–April 2008) had given a call for an independent Sindh. He had gone to the extent of challenging the view that the nationalist did not have enough popular support in Sindh and had called for a referendum on independence of Sindh to clear up whether people wanted independence or not.<sup>128</sup>

Few days after the successful rally organised by Bashir in Karachi, Bashir Khan died under suspicious circumstances on April 8, 2012. Media reports based on initial forensic reports suggested that Khan died of a cardiac arrest “due to the ingestion of some poisonous food”.<sup>129</sup> The detailed forensic report few days later on April 18 confirmed this.<sup>130</sup> A month later, on May 22, bullet ridden body of Muzafar Bhutto, another well-known Sindh nationalist leader and general secretary of JSMM was found in Hyderabad.<sup>131</sup> Muzafar had gone missing since February 2011. Such police excesses were committed perhaps to send a strong message to the nationalists in response to their defiant call for independence. The nationalists, in their turn, responded to such action by security forces by organising mass rallies in interior Sindh.<sup>132</sup> This

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<sup>128</sup> “JST Demands Sindh’s Independence”, *Dawn*, March 19, 2012, at <http://dawn.com/2012/03/19/jst-demands-sindhs-independence/>.

<sup>129</sup> “Basheer Qureshi was Poisoned to Death, Claim Sources”, *Dawn*, April 9, 2012, at <http://dawn.com/2012/04/09/basheer-queshi-poisoned-to-death/>.

<sup>130</sup> Khurshid Abbasi, “Bashir Qureshi was Poisoned to Death: Medical Board”, *The News*, April 19, 2012, at <http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-13-14025-Bashir-Qureshi-was-poisoned-to-death-medical-board>.

<sup>131</sup> Hafeez Tunio, “JSMM’s Muzaffar Bhutto Found Dead after Going Missing for Over a Year”, *The Express Tribune*, May 23, 2012, at <http://tribune.com.pk/story/382707/jsmms-muzaffar-bhutto-found-dead-after-going-missing-for-over-a-year/>.

<sup>132</sup> As per media reports, “[b]usiness and trade activities were completely closed in most parts of Sindh, including Hyderabad, Mirpurkhas, Nawabshah, Sukkur, Tando Allah Yar, Thatta, Badin, Khairpur, Jamshoro, Tando Muhammad Khan, Shahdadkot, Shikarpur, Kandhkot, Dadu, Jacobabad, and Ghotki”. See: “Interior Sindh Shut Down over Karachi Attack, Muzaffar Bhutto’s Killing”, *The News*, May 24, 2012, at <http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-13-14830-Interior-Sindh-shut-down-over—Karachi-attack>.

vicious cycle of police excesses and militant attacks continues to characterise Sindhi nationalist politics since 2012. Radical Sindhi nationalists continued with their strategy of targeting railway tracks, banks and inter-provincial transportation systems and making their presence felt in interior Sindh. In 2012, there were 27 such attacks without any casualty, whereas in 2013 the number of attacks dropped to 23, but resulted in the death of three civilians and four policemen.<sup>133</sup>

The Sindhi popular nationalist sentiments poured out again onto the streets in the wake of the decision of the PPP-led government's decision in October 2012 to restore the local government system—Sindh Peoples' Local Government Ordinance (SPLGO—introduced earlier by Musharraf in Sindh). This was perceived to have been done under pressure from the Muttahida Quami Mahaz (MQM). This was happening against the backdrop of alleged chalkings in Karachi in favour of a “Muhajir Suba” (a separate province for the migrants), in the Muhajir-dominated areas, which was detested by the Sindhi nationalists.<sup>134</sup> Awami Tehreek party led by Ayaz Latif Palijo—which is fighting for greater autonomy for the Sindhi people, within the Pakistani federation—brought out a rally, *Mohabbat-e-Sindh*, to register his protest against the government's move. The rally was attacked allegedly by MQM snipers and this led to death of at least 11 participants.<sup>135</sup> The nationalists of all hues called it a conspiracy against Sindh and argued that the local government system, under which metropolitan corporations were to be established in certain urban areas (particularly in the districts of Karachi, Hyderabad, Larkana, Sukkur and Mirpurkhas), would favour the MQM in the urban areas and bring about a dual system of governance, curtail the powers of the provincial government and deepen the ethnic divides in the state. The nationalist parties teamed up with the Awami National Party and even PML-N

<sup>133</sup> The data used here are culled from *Pakistan Annual Security Report 2013*, Pakistan Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS), Islamabad, January 2014.

<sup>134</sup> Idrees Bakhtiar, “‘Muhajir Suba’ Movement Shrouded in Mystery”, *Dawn*, May 21, 2012, at <http://dawn.com/2012/05/21/muhajir-suba-movement-shrouded-in-mystery/>.

<sup>135</sup> “Eleven Killed in Karachi Rally Firing”, *The News*, May 22, 2012, at <http://www.thenews.com.pk/article-50465-Eleven-killed-in-Karachi-rally-firing>.

to resist the measure. After the PPP-MQM coalition introduced and passed Sindh Peoples Local Government Act 2012 (SPLGA), the movement even gathered further momentum forcing the PPP to pass yet another bill in the Sindh legislature to repeal the SPLGA 2012 on February 21, 2013, restoring the commissionerate system of the 1979 in the province. The nationalists also rejected the PPP's plans to develop Zulfikarabad (named after Zulfikar Ali Bhutto) in Thatta district as a model town because they feared that the plan would pose a demographic challenge to Sindh by acting as another attractive city for non-Sindhi migrants from other areas.<sup>136</sup>

In 2013, following police action and death of top nationalist leaders including Bashir Khan Qureshi and Muzafar Bhutto, there was a perceptible lowering of nationalist activities. However, from early 2014, the nationalists started raising their ante and organised a “freedom rally” on March 23, 2014. Two days prior to the rally, burnt out bodies of two JSQM leaders—Bashir's brother, Maqsood Qureshi and Salman Wadho—were found in a car near Karachi.<sup>137</sup> The two leaders had gone to Karachi to mobilise support for the rally. While rest of Pakistan observed “Pakistan Day”, led by Bashir's son Sunan Qureshi, Sindhis from different parts of the province wearing signature Sindhi caps and *ajrak* sang the anthem of Jiye Sindh and the chants of ‘*Sindh Ghuray thee Azadi*’ (Sindh wants freedom) rent the air in Karachi.<sup>138</sup> The Sindhi sense of alienation and neglect is likely to continue and the nationalists may consolidate their position if they close their ranks and come together with a genuine sense of unity among them.

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<sup>136</sup> “Sindhi Leaders Reject Division, New City Project”, *Dawn*, July 2, 2012, at <http://dawn.com/2012/07/02/sindhi-leaders-reject-division-new-city-project/>.

<sup>137</sup> “JSQM Leader Found Dead in Mysterious Circumstances”, *Pakistan Today*, March 21, 2014, at <http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2014/03/21/national/jsqm-leader-found-dead-in-mysterious-circumstances/>.

<sup>138</sup> Ramzan Chandio, “JSQM Demands Independent Sindh at Freedom March”, March 24, 2014, at <http://www.nation.com.pk/karachi/24-Mar-2014/jsqm-demands-independent-sindh-at-freedom-march>.

#### 4.2.11 Divisions among Sindhi Nationalists Today

Sindhi nationalists can be broadly divided into two groups—those who demand complete independence and those who seek more autonomy within the state of Pakistan. The former ones subscribe to the ideology of GM Syed even if they are divided among themselves. After the demise of GM Syed, his JST split into more than 11 political groups: JSQM groups led by Bashir Qureshi and Arisar, JSMM led by Burfat, JST factions led by Dr Safdar Sarki and Shafi Karnani, Jeay Sindh Qaumparast Party (JSQP) led by Qamar Bhatti, SUP led by GM Syed's grandson Jalal Mehmood Shah, JSM led by Abdul Khaliq Junejo, JSM splinter groups led by Riaz Chandio, Rasool Bux Thebo and Sufi Hazoor Bux. These groups demand secession from Pakistan.

However, there are other autonomist nationalist groups like Dr Qadir Magsi's STPP, Rasool Bukhsh Paleejo's AT, Ayaz Latif Palijo's Quomi Awami Tehrik (QAT), Magsi, SUP led by Jalal Mehmood Shah and Sindh National Movement (SNM) led by Ali Hassan Chandio, and Amir Bhambaro's Sindh National Party (SNP), who do not subscribe to GM Syed's ideology. Some of these later groups—Ayaz 's QAT, Jalal Mehmood Shah's SUP and Magsi's STPP, who had formed a coalition by the name of Sindh Progressive Nationalist Alliance (SPNA) in 2010—entered into a political alliance with PML-N in Sindh on the eve of 2013 elections to defeat PPP and MQM. The 10-party electoral alliance of which these nationalists joined ironically consisted of several mainstream political parties with whom they do not have any ideological affinity such as PML (Functional), Jamiat-e-Islami, Jamiat-e-Ulema Islam, Jamiat-e-Ulema Pakistan, Pakistan Sunni Tehreek and National People's Party. Such an alliance was bound to fail. Sharif cold-shouldered these groups after the elections, which is likely to fuel the sense of alienation and anti-Punjabi sentiments among the nationalist leaders. While the nationalists may not be able to pose any existential threat to Pakistan, they may continue to exert disintegrative pressures on the state.

#### 4.2.12 Markers of Sindhi Identity

G M Syed called Sindhi people “a separate nation” and identified five basic principles of Sindhi nationalism:

- (i) Belief in Sindh as a separate country.

- (ii) Belief in Pakistan not as one country but as a group of four countries.
- (iii) Belief in the Sindhi people as a separate nation on basis of homeland, language, cultures historical traditions and identity of political and economic interest.
- (iv) Belief in the right of the Sindhi nation to decide their future as a people.
- (v) Belief in the fact that ideology of Pakistan and concepts of Islamic Raj, Strong Centre and National Interests of Pakistan are the greatest obstacles in the way of the realisation of Sindhi nationalism.<sup>139</sup>

Based on Syed's identification and the discussion above, it can be concluded that the Sindhi national identity has several constitutive elements, i.e., attachment with Sindhi language, a geo-cultural sense of history of the province that does not correspond with the official national history churned out by the Pakistan state, a xenophobic aversion for non-Sindhi migrants (muhajirs, Paunjabis, Pashtuns, etc.) into Sindh, lack of emphasis on Islam and a pathological sense of neglect by the Pakistani state. It is clear that there is no correspondence between the hegemonic state-nationalism being pushed by the state and the Sindhi ethnonationalism advanced by the local leadership.

#### **4.2.13 The Future Portents**

If one follows the politics of Sindh, one finds out that in spite of the fact that Sindhi nationalism has a wide popular appeal in Sindh, it has not fared well in the electoral politics of Sindh. In a way, the sense of victimhood propagated by the nationalists which percolates down to the people of Sindh has, in many ways, led to the electoral success of PPP, which is regarded as a primarily Sindh-based party. The PPP's successful penetration into interior Sindh and the popular notion that the party led by the Bhuttos is the best bet to showcase the political strength of Sindh and Sindhis has weakened the political position of the nationalist to a great extent.

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<sup>139</sup> G. M Syed, No. 111.

As has been stated above, the Sindhi nationalists are divided into two broad groups—the one advocating maximum autonomy within the Pakistani state and other seeking total independence. However, there has all along been a third group of Sindhi politicians, mainly composed of the remnants of the feudal era, who are doing fine in the business of politics in Pakistan. They have exhibited strong nationalist leanings at moments, but they are only interested in maintaining the *status quo* and would seek power by every means to perpetuate their hold on society. They have managed to keep themselves politically alive through their manipulation of the ‘unorganised and unawakened’ local constituencies in rural Sindh.

As long as the feudal character of the society exists in Sindh, the hold of the Mirs, Pirs, Sajida Nashins and Waderas does not wane and the nationalists stay divided and work at cross purposes, Sindhi nationalism, in spite of its self-differentiating tendencies over the years, may not quite unshackle itself from the federation of Pakistan. Moreover, the rise of PPP, a Sindh-based political party, in Pakistani politics has affected the appeal as well as performance of the radical nationalist groups in Sindh, and as long as PPP manages to dominate politics of Sindh and participates usefully at the central level, nationalists will find it hard to push their secessionist agenda among the people. However, the persisting sense of alienation together with growing assertion of Sindhi nationalists on the streets, may complicate the internal security situation, and further problematize the official nation-building efforts by the Pakistani state.

### 4.3 The Baloch<sup>140</sup> Nationalism

*If you see the sun red...any redness in flowers,  
these must be the blood of my people.*

*Gulam Rasool Mulla (1939)*

The Baloch ethnonationalism has convincing claims about its origin and development over time in history. The Baloch people claim that

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<sup>140</sup> Alternatively Baloch people are also known as Baluchi, Balochee, Baluchee, Balochis and Beloochi, but they all mean the same. In this paper, one or more of these expressions have been used, but they all refer to the Baloch people. Similarly, for a long time, the province was called Baluchistan, and now it is spelt as Balochistan; however, they refer to the same province and territory in Pakistan.

they were a self-differentiating and self-defining ethno-cultural category throughout history even if they did not have the required sense of social or political solidarity to assert themselves as a nation as it is understood in present day world for most part of their history.

The Baloch people trace their origin to Aleppo, in northern Syria, a strategic trading point, midway between the Mediterranean Sea and the Euphrates along the river Quweiq. They are ethnically related to the Kurds and they started leaving the region from fourth till about seventh century AD. The Kurds went to Iraq, Turkey and northern Persia while the Baloch people came to Persia and southern Caspian region, and over a period of time, entered southern Iran and south-west Pakistan. Their migration was planned, and gradually they settled down around the place where they are found today in Sistan Balochistan in Iran and Balochistan in Pakistan.

#### **4.3.1 Brief Background: The Khannate**

The Baloch people's entry into the region, then known as Turan, was subsequent to the invasion by Alexander and predates the Islamic invasion in the seventh and eighth centuries. Those living around Kalat—which later became the nerve centre of Baloch rule—were subjects of Sewai Hindus till 16<sup>th</sup> century, when the Mughals and the Baloch came together to drive the Sewais out of Kalat. The Baloch came of age politically only in 15<sup>th</sup> century as an assertive community during the Rind era (circa 1400-1600). The feud between Rinds and Lasharis, both Baloch, continued for 30 years and led to disintegration of Baloch who then migrated towards Sindh, Punjab, Delhi, Junagarh, Mysore and even Deccan India as well. During the early part of their assertion, the Baloch had to fight with the powerful Mughals and could not quite achieve any autonomy till about 1666 AD when Mir Ahmed Khan of Kambarani tribe started the Ahmedzai dynasty which continued to rule till 1850s, when the British swept the entire terrain.

During the initial phase of Ahmedzai rule too, the Baloch tried to maintain good relations with the Mughals.<sup>141</sup> As far as their administrative

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<sup>141</sup> For instance, they defeated the Kalhoras of Sindh and arrested their chiefs and sent them to Aurangzeb in 1695, who in turn gifted away Karachi port to them.

system is concerned, the Baloch developed the *sardari* system during the Rind era in early 15<sup>th</sup> century which is prevalent even till today. The *sardars* pledged their loyalty to the Baloch Khan at Kalat and defended Khan's khanate or kingdom against any outside attack or provided the Khan with material and moral help during his campaigns. It was a well-federated system operating through tribal loyalty and system of patronage. Ordinary Baloch were resigned to their Sardars and were characterised by the British as 'slaves of the sardars'.

It was during the reign of Ahmedzai ruler Nasir Khan I (ruled 1749-1817) that Turan region was renamed "Baluchistan" and the Balochis regard his rule as the golden period in Baloch history. Nasir Khan ruled through a council of Sardars, and representatives from the area which paid tribute to Kalat. Even if the Khans ruled more or less independently within their Khannate, they swore their loyalty severally to the emperors of their times, Mughals of Delhi (till 1707), Persian king Nadir Shah (till 1747) and later Afghan king Ahmad Shah Abdali. During third battle of Panipat, the Balochis helped Abdali with 25,000 troops. It was typical of the empire system of the medieval times to have tributaries spread around a powerful centre. In that sense, the rulers of the area we know as Sindh and Balochistan today did not quite evolve as fully independent sovereign power centres.

#### 4.3.2 The Colonial Period

After the death of Nasir Khan in 1817, his successors could not bring the Balochis together, and the advent of British introduced a different dimension to the inter-tribal relationship. In fact, by 1839, the British had already made their presence felt in the region, and by 1876, the Balochi Sardars rallied around Robert Sandeman and demanded that Sandeman be given rights to mediate differences between the tribes, which was earlier the proud privilege of the Khan of Kalat. The pledge of loyalty to the Khan was made conditional, and Khannate became a loose federation, a ghost of its former self. Moreover, in the same treaty, the British forced the Khan to lease away Quetta, Nushki, Nasirabad and Bolan.

By 1905, the demarcation of boundary between British India and Iran on the one hand and between British India and Afghanistan on the



other had quite effectively and unalterably divided the Baloch people among three states, i.e., British India, Afghanistan and Iran. And the Khannate was reduced to a ghost of its former self. Even inside Balochistan, under British control, direct British rule was imposed on certain strategic areas like Derajati, Jacobabad and Sibi, and the rest of the Baloch territory was under the control of the Khan of Kalat, whose Khannate was a mere protectorate of the British Government. In order to further delimit Khan's influence, the British encouraged the vassals of the Khannate in Makran and Las Bela to emerge as separate protectorates, and thus there was practical administrative trifurcation of the Khannate even within British India, i.e., the British Baluchistan, the Khannate and Independent princely states of Makran, Kharan and Las Bela and tribal territories.

As a border area, the British were more interested in keeping the area calm and quiet. Through the principalities and the tribal Sardars, the British had astutely created a system of collaborative administration of the area and its people, which proved really effective. The Khannate of Kalat was completely subdued and with the emasculation of the predominant seat of power in Balochistan, the British had ensured perpetuation of their rule in the entire region. The British system had in fact developed a curious sense of 'centripetality' about it too. The moment Pakistan emerged as heir to the British in 1947, the Shahi Jirga, a remnant of the British system of patronage, consisting of collaborative Sardars and feudal overlords, immediately veered around Pakistan and supported Balochistan's accession to Pakistan. The rulers of Kharan and Makran were also too timid to support the Khan. Against this backdrop, the Khan felt compelled to accede to Pakistan in March 1948 against the wishes of the Baloch people, which was resisted by the popular Baloch leadership. Pakistan's efforts to deal with the issue by force have provoked armed resistance from the Baloch people which has continued since 1948 in five distinct phases.

#### **4.3.3 Baloch Resistance Phase I: Khannate Absorbed into Pakistan**

It is a fact that the Khan of Kalat, Mir Ahmed Yar Khan, who had Jinnah in his payrolls as the legal advisor to the Kalat state, had expressed his enthusiasm for Pakistan, but at the same time, he did not want to

compromise Kalat's independence. Jinnah had successfully pleaded the case of Kalat's sovereign independence in 1946 before the Cabinet Mission. Once Pakistan was formed, Jinnah pushed for Kalat's accession to Pakistan, while the Khan stuck to the legal position that with the lapse of paramountcy, Kalat was an independent and sovereign entity and territories leased out to the British around Quetta should be returned to Kalat, and so also the smaller principalities of Makran, Kharan and Las Bela would be left independent to decide to rejoin Kalat. However, these smaller principalities chose to join Pakistan, while the Baloch Tumandars of Bugti and Marri territories, expressed their desire to join the Kalat federation.

A timid Khan made a last ditch effort to stop Kalat's absorption into Pakistan, and on August 4, 1947, in a meeting with Jinnah and Liaquat Ali Khan signed a stand-still agreement with the state of Pakistan. As per the terms of the agreement, the Khan celebrated the independence of his Khannate on August 5, 1947. He also allowed the Kalat State National Party (KNP), founded in 1937 and banned till 1947, to participate in the elections for the lower house, Dar-ul-Awam, the other house being the upper house called Dar-ul-Umra. The KNP won a comfortable majority (39 out of 52). A day after Pakistan came into being, the Khan declared independence of Kalat on August 15, 1947. Under pressure from Pakistan to accede to Pakistan, the Khan sought the opinion of the twin legislatures on the matter. The two houses took a unanimous decision not to join Pakistan and pledged to work towards reuniting Baloch people and consolidate their hold on the areas where Baloch were in majority. Ghaus Bux (also written Bakhsh) Bizenjo, addressing the session of the assembly forcefully argued how Baloch identity was separate from Pakistani identity and advocated the right of the community to have its own state:

We are Muslims but [it] did not mean [that it is] necessary to lose our independence and merge with other [nations] because of the Muslim [faith]. If our accession into Pakistan is necessary, being Muslim, then Muslim states of Afghanistan and Iran should also amalgamate with Pakistan... We have a distinct civilization and a separate culture like that of Iran and Afghanistan... We were never a part of India before the British rule. Pakistan's unpleasant and loathsome desire that our national homeland, Balochistan

should merge with it is impossible to consider. We are ready to have friendship with that country on the basis of sovereign equality... We can survive without Pakistan. But... what Pakistan would be without us? If Pakistan wants to treat us as a sovereign people, we are ready to extend the hand of friendship. We want an honourable relationship not a humiliating one. If Pakistan does not agree to do so, flying in the face of democratic principles, such an attitude will be totally unacceptable to us, and if we are forced to accept this fate then every Baloch son will sacrifice his life in defence of his national freedom.<sup>142</sup>

Jinnah as the legal advisor of the Kalat state was different from Jinnah as the Governor General of Pakistan. Under his leadership as Governor General of Pakistan, the Government of Pakistan, legal heir to the British imperial system, followed a policy not too different from the policy adopted by the British in 1839 in Kalat. Through forceful nudges, the principalities of Kharan, Makran and Lasbela were merged to Pakistan in March 1948. There were reports that during this period the Khan had sought Indian help but his request was turned down. However, Nehru denied the report completely. The rumour was enough for Pakistan to threaten the Khan with preparation for military takeover, and on March 30, 1948, in what the Khan construed as a decision taken in the interest of Baloch nation, without obtaining formal sanction from the Baloch Sardars and in opposition to the decision of the Baloch legislature (in October 1947), signed the treaty of merger with Pakistan state. In April 1948 Pakistan enforced the *status quo ante*, i.e., Kalat was to be ruled by an agent of the Pakistani state. The Baloch nationalists launched their first phase of armed resistance under the leadership of Khan's brother, Abdul Kareem Khan, which continued till 1950 when the latter surrendered.

After the departure of the British, Pakistan adopted the same imperial tactic of divide and rule, of false promises and deception and made it

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<sup>142</sup> Quoted in: Inayatullah Baloch, *The Problem of Greater Baluchistan: A Study of Baluch Nationalism*, Steiner Verlag Wiesbaden GMBH, Stuttgart, 1987, p. 184. Also see: Baren Ray, "Balochistan and the Partition of India: The Forgotten Story", *Occasional Paper*, South Asia Centre for Strategic Studies, New Delhi, 1998, p. 6.

an inalienable part of Pakistan. By 1952, the princely states were united to form Baluchistan states union which became part of the then West Pakistan as the Kalat Division in 1955. The British Baluchistan along with the tribal agencies became part of West Pakistan as the Quetta Division in the same year. The One Unit Plan started in 1955, in the face of rising assertion of Bengalis in East Pakistan subsumed all ethno-national aspirations in West Pakistan, which also strengthened the ethno-nationalist sentiments. With the abolition of One Unit plan on July 1, 1970, the combined divisions of Quetta and Kalat came together as the separate province of Baluchistan.

#### 4.3.4 Phase II & III: Baloch Assertion (1958-60 & 1962-69)

Balochi nationalists within the Khannate took serious exception to the One Unit Scheme, and in a meeting with Pakistani President Iskander Mirza in October 1957 discussed about exempting Kalat from the One Unit Scheme and more governmental spending on developmental activities in Kalat. But very soon Ayub Khan's ambitions changed the political matrix in Pakistan, and when some sardars started non-cooperating with the Pakistani commissioner, under a flimsy pretext that the Khan had raised a parallel army to attack Pakistani Military, Ayub ordered Pakistani Army to march into Kalat on October 6, 1958, a day before he imposed martial rule in Pakistan.

Pakistan military's campaigns in Danshera and Wad were resisted ably by the Jhalawan Sardars loyal to the Khan. The octogenarian chief of Jhalawan, Nawab Nauroz Khan Zehri, put up a stiff resistance in the Mir Ghat Mountains, but Pakistani Military swore by Quran and urged Nauroz and his men to give up arms and prepare for negotiations. Nauroz Khan obliged, as soon as they laid down their arms the military put Nauroz and his sons behind the bars and hanged Nauroz's sons in Hyderabad and Sukur. A shocked and surprised Nauroz died soon afterwards in prison. Ayub's message to the Baloch people of Kalat who were the first to challenge the might of the Pakistani state, was clear. He reportedly threatened 'total extinction' of Baloch people if they did not mend their ways.<sup>143</sup>

<sup>143</sup> Ahmad Yar Khan Baluch, *Inside Baluchistan: A Political Autobiography of His Highness Baiglar Baigi, Khan-e-Azam-XIII*, Royal Book Company, Karachi, 1975, p. 189.

Following the second phase of armed resistance from the Baloch in 1958, the Pakistan army set up military garrisons in interior Balochistan. The Baloch led by Sher Muhammad Marri launched guerrilla struggle, heavily influenced by left-wing Marxist/communist philosophy, against the state of Pakistan, with Baloch insurgents called *Pararis*, in the Baloch heartland extending from Jhalawan to the area under the control of the Marris and Bugtis. The response of the Pakistani state then under Ayub's dictatorship, was quite severe. Sher Muhammad, affectionately called as Gen Shero and Baloch Tiger, had to face the wrath of the Pakistan Army which destroyed almond trees planted in thousands of acres of Marri land. The guerrilla warfare continued till Ayub Khan's departure and revocation of the One Unit Scheme in 1969.

#### **4.3.5 Phase IV: Baloch Resistance of the 1970s and Pakistani Over-reaction**

While the nationalist sentiments held sway among the Baloch people, a section of the nationalist leadership took to rudimentary politics during Ayub's Basic Democracies. They struck a chord of unity with the Pakhtuns in North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) and formed a National Awami Party (NAP) upon the dissolution of the One Unit Scheme in 1970. In the elections of 1971, while Bhutto's PPP swept the polls in West Pakistan, the NAP won in Balochistan and NWFP. The attacks on Punjabi settlers in Quetta and Mastung in early 1973, the perceived defiance of the Ataullah Mengal-led government in Balochistan and the discovery of a large consignment of weapons in the Iraqi embassy were woven together to be served as conclusive evidence of Baloch militant intentions, and General Tikka Khan was sent by Bhutto to Balochistan to lead the second military attack on Baloch nationalists. Pakistan, smarting under the shock of its vivisection in 1971, certainly over-reacted to the Baloch nationalist assertion.

The encounter between the Pakistani Army and Baloch nationalists continued for about two years, and the Iranian Shah apprehending trouble in Iranian Balochistan supported the Pakistan forces in decimating Baloch resistance. Most of the Baloch leaders left Pakistan and went into exile in Afghanistan, the UK and other places outside Pakistan.

The anti-Bhutto sentiments of the Baloch nationalists were well-manipulated by Zia ul Haq after he seized power in 1977, and his

show of clemency was received well by many Baloch leaders including the Baloch triumvirate: Ghaus Bux Bizenzo, Ataullah Mengal and Akbar Khan Bugti. However, a rebel faction of the Marris went on defying the Pakistani administration ever since. When Zia found that his reconciliatory approach could not tame the Baloch, he reportedly stated that in order to erase the appeal of ethnic identities he would go to the extent of dividing Pakistan into 53 small provinces.<sup>144</sup> And, as a proof of the irreconcilability of Baloch nationalism with the Pakistani state-nationalism, the most aggressive and fiercely independent of all Baloch factions, the Baloch Students Union (BSU), has reorganised and reasserted itself since the early 1990s.

#### 4.3.6 Signifiers of Balochi Nationalism

The very fact that the Balochis have stood out both as both a self-differentiating other-defined and collective group attests to their claims of a separate ethnonational group. A close study of the history of Balochistan reveals that the ethno-cultural identity that flourished irrespective of the politics of war and subordination over history combined traces of pre-existing culture, i.e., the Dravidian culture in the Indus Valley Civilisation, the Aryan, Hindu and Buddhist civilisations following that, and later the Islamic culture that swept the region since eighth century AD. The markers of Baloch nationalism are discussed as follows:

##### *(i) Emphasis on tribal ethnicity*

The Baloch national identity, as it has been built up by the nationalists, emphasise their distinct tribal character, their centuries-old culture and their specific territorial presence. It clearly emerges from the discussion with the leaders of the Baloch movement today that they disregard Islam as a prime component of their national identity when they compare it with the way Islam is woven into the state-nationalist consciousness being patronised by the Pakistani elite. While they accept Islam as an important fact of life conditioning their existence, they do not define it in opposition to India or Hinduism. During the ongoing phase of militancy in Balochistan, there were reports that Pakistan Military had

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<sup>144</sup> See: Selig Harrison, *In Afghanistan's Shadow Baluchistan: Baluch Nationalism and Soviet Temptations*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, New York / Washington, 1981, p. 151.

enabled an Islamist constituency in the province, well in line with their alleged tactic of “crudely injecting a puritanical strain of Islam into what are almost entirely secular nationalisms”<sup>145</sup>, to subdue Baloch nationalism. Several sectarian organisations from Punjab and elsewhere in the country were sent both to make Balochis good Muslims and also to blunt the appeal of local cultural national consciousness through focussed Islamisation so that they would be able to accept Pakistani identity wholeheartedly. The case of a Baloch suicide bomber, Haq Nawaz Baloch<sup>146</sup>, in an attack on a Shi’ite mosque on April 16, 2010, may signify the beginning of a distressing trend in Baloch politics, unless the traditional left-leaning Baloch nationalism sustains itself.

### *(ii) Language*

The Balochi and Brahui languages, the two principal vernacular languages spoken in the region bear influences of all these preceding cultures and civilisations. The role of language in generating ethnonational consciousness is well known. In case of Balochistan too, these two languages have acted as languages of communication among the people for a long time. It is also a fact that Baloch language has a long history and a rich tradition and that over time the permeability between Baloch and Brahui languages has increased.

However, due to lack of effort to standardise Baloch language and the inability to project it as the language of the people has considerably affected the development of a sense of unity among the Baloch people at the inter-regional levels. The Baloch nationalists have failed to forge it effectively into their nationalist struggle. It was interesting to find the provincial legislature voting in favour of Urdu as the only official language of Balochistan in 2003. The nationalists in Balochistan have

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<sup>145</sup> See Nadeem Piracha, No.127, wherein he refers to the perception in Sindh based on his interview with people there. The interviewees suggested that the army was trying out radical Islamist elements, “those who are ideological and political ‘allies of the military-establishment’” to make the people of Sindh and Balochistan amenable to the idea of Pakistan.

<sup>146</sup> “Lashkar-e-Jhangvi Claims Responsibility for Friday’s Quetta Blast”, *Hindustan Times*, April 17, 2010, at <http://www.hindustantimes.com/world-news/lashkar-e-jhangvi-claims-responsibility-for-friday-s-quetta-blast/article1-532512.aspx#sthash.BJRRrBIG.dpuf>.

also accepted it even without a murmur. Therefore, even if Baloch language remains an emotive issue and brings about a sense of fraternity among the Baloch people, it has not assumed as much salience as the Sindhi language has among the Sindhis.

### *(iii) Sardari System*

Until the 1990s, an important characteristic of the Balochi nationalist movement has been its proclivities for Sardari driven socio-cultural system, which is sometimes passionately cited by unthinking nationalists as a typical symbol of Balochi ethnic identity. In fact, some close observers of the Balochi political life especially by British intelligence officials working amongst the Baloch in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century have suggested that “Baloch is a slave of his Sardar”. Neither the British nor the Pakistani authorities have done anything to replace the Sardari system with a more, open egalitarian system for the fear of provoking the anger of the Sardars. They have pursued the imperial policy of ruling through collaborators and indirectly strengthened the Sardari system over the years. While this has served as a marker of Baloch national condition, it has inhibited the growth of a pan-Sardar, national solidarity. The inter-tribal, inter-Sardari rivalries, partly traditional and partly constantly reinforced by the Pakistani administration<sup>147</sup>, have disallowed the development of a formidable resistance base among the Balochis.

It is interesting to note, however, that in recent years, a new leadership is emerging from among the Balochis, cutting across different regions and socio-economic classes.<sup>148</sup> They are toying a separate line and urging

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<sup>147</sup> This has been reinforced by the governmental recognition, direct or indirect, of privileges accorded to Sardars, patronising of Sardars and indirectly through perpetuating poverty, illiteracy and lack of socio-political awareness among the masses.

<sup>148</sup> There is a neo-literate leadership coming up in the next generation of the Mengals, Bugtis and Marris, and apart from that relatively newer faces like Sanaullah Baloch, Bizen Bizenjo, Imdad Baloch and Dr. Jumma Marri are seeking to pursue the issue of Baloch autonomy with passion and vigour. If this new leadership succeeds in creating an appeal beyond the old Sardari sentiments, and only if they generate resources to propagate their convictions more freely and widely and communicate their grievances well, they will be able to create a larger and stabler constituency of nationalist-minded Baloch who can take the flame of Baloch resistance forward.



the Sardars to leave their collaborative policies and champion the nationalist causes. The process of horizontalisation of the Balochi society and polity may have just begun. The Balochi nationalists may have thus embarked upon a long journey ahead.

*(iv) Xenophobic Aversion towards Punjabi Migrants*

The most significant aspect of Balochi nationalism as we find it today has been the pervasive suspicion and fear that the Pakistani authorities have sought to reduce Balochis to a minority in their province. Many young Balochi nationalists even hint at the dilemma they are facing these days when they encounter the sad reality of developmental activities—undertaken by the Pakistani authorities in the shape of building highways, developing the port of Gwadar—bringing in a fresh wave of Punjabi and Pakhtun/Pushtun settlers into Balochistan. The Pakistan Government on its part has also added to the Baloch sense of insecurity by disregarding Baloch sensitivities and going ahead with its plans of setting up additional military cantonments or regular presence in Gwadar, Kohlu, Sibi, Ormak and Pasni to secure the passageways being built up to facilitate surface trade and commerce through Balochistan.

The economic exploitation of the Baloch people has also been a point of unity for them of late. As per the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)'s Pakistan National Human Development Report 2003, out of Pakistan's top 20 most backward districts, 10 lie in Balochistan. Balochistan is the most poorly represented province in national services. There is gross under-representation of the Baloch in Pakistan government services, for example, ex-servicemen from Balochistan for the period from 1995-2003 numbered 3,753 men only, while the numbers for Punjab and the NWFP for the same period were 1,335,339 and 229,856, respectively. The province, their leaders have argued has not been adequately compensated for the proceeds from the Sui gas fields (total reserve 25.9 trillion cubic metres), as well as the exploitation of the mineral resources of the province. Similarly, they allege that the prosperity of Gwadar port will never accrue to the people of Balochistan, and the ongoing grafting of Punjabis and Pathans in the province will create further avenues for these forces to rob Balochistan of its economic resources.

### 4.3.7 Ongoing Baloch Resistance and State of Nationalist Politics

*A nation which is not governed well is perpetually to be conquered.*

*Edmund Burke*

The post-1975 politics of the Baloch people, in spite of the strategic show of sympathy from the Zia-ul-Haq administration, had been one of reconciliation and refashioning of their demands in un-aggressive terms. Even if leading Baloch poets like Mir Gul Khan Naseer, Gul Rasool Mullah and Sayad Zahoor Shah continued to urge the Baloch to fight the injustice inflicted on them, the political leadership who stayed back practised caution in projecting their nationalist agendas. The willingness to accept Baloch nationalism as a sub-national strain of wider Pakistani nationalism, conceived in whichever way, Islamic or otherwise, featured prominently in Baloch nationalist discourse.

Even if some of them then living in forced- or self-exile, like Ataullah Mengal in London and Khair Bux Marri in Afghanistan, continued to pitch their demands high, many other Baloch leaders showed greater moderation, partly because of Zia's ability to co-opt them. The former BSO president and guerrilla militant Khair Jan Baloch, for instance, gave up the fight and former Governor Bizenjo created the Pakistan National Party (PNP) in order to put pressure on the regime from inside, and emphasise better functioning of the federal structure enshrined in the Constitution of 1973. Many Sardars preferred to collaborate with the military government at centre, which was most willing to co-opt them.

From 1988 onwards, the democratisation process offered even more room for manoeuvre to the Baloch notables in the political arena, and the more they took part in competitive elections, the more they got divided. In November 1988, Sardar Akhtar Mengal, formed the Balochistan National Youth Movement, which later became Balochistan National Movement (BNM) and played a pivotal role in the new coalition government headed by Nawab Akbar Bugti. The Baloch coalition enabled by Bugti was called the Balochistan National Alliance (BNA). Bugti's chief ministership lasted about one and half years from February 1989 to August 1990), when the provincial assembly was

dissolved under instruction from the president. However, factional conflicts became acute when the 1990 interim elections approached. Bugti broke away from the BNA in 1990 and launched the Jumhoori Watan Party (JWP) which made an alliance with Nawaz Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N) in the elections. That was a clear indication of an interesting change in the strategy of the Baloch politicians: factional rivalries within Baloch groups led them to make alliances with national parties which could help them in getting access to power at the centre.

Sardar Ataullah Mengal returned to Pakistan and formed a new party, named the Balochistan National Party (BNP) in January 1996, which contested the February 1997 elections and emerged as the largest Baloch national party in the state legislature with 10 seats out of 43. Ataullah's son Akhtar Mengal formed a coalition government with the support of the PPP. Simultaneously, the BNP supported the PML-N in the National Assembly, another indication of the increasingly pragmatic relationship between the Baloch leaders and the national, mainstream parties.

However, this arrangement did not last long. Akhtar Mengal resigned in July 1998 in protest against the conduct of the nuclear tests in Balochistan because, he claimed, the decision to do so was taken by Nawaz Sharif government without consulting him and the honour of the Baloch was at stake. After he resigned, Mengal reverted back to his traditional Baloch nationalist discourse. In an interview to *The Muslim*, he declared, for instance: "We are forced to look for our identity."<sup>149</sup> Mengal resented the way the Centre kept for itself an unwarranted share of the royalties from gas extracted from Balochistan. He was also very critical of the decisions of the National Finance Commission which, according to him, were highly biased against Balochistan.

#### **4.3.8 The Latest Phase of Militancy**

The latest phase of militancy started during the Musharraf-led military rule. Among other reasons, the decision of the military regime under

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<sup>149</sup> *The Muslim*, July 31, 1998, cited in Christophe Jaffrelot, "Interpreting Ethnic Movements in Pakistan", *The Pakistan Development Review*, 37 (4), 1998, p. 167, at <http://www.pide.org.pk/pdf/PDR/1998/Volume4/153-179.pdf>.

Gen Musharraf to lease out the Saindak mining project in Chagai district to China in October 2002 for 10 years is cited by Baloch analysts as the immediate reason for the start of militancy during the continuing phase of Baloch resistance, which has persisted for more than a decade.

#### 4.3.8.1 *The Saindak Mines Issue*

The Saindak mines have a reserve of 78 million tonnes of minerals<sup>150</sup> consisting of copper, gold and other deposits with an estimated output of 2000 tons blister copper, 1.4 tons of gold, 2.76 tons of silver and 30,000 tonnes iron annually for 19 years. Under Sino-Pak bilateral agreement, the project was leased out to Metallurgical Corporation of China (MCC), during the first phase of the project for 10 years. MCC had initially planned to invest 350 million dollars for the development of the project.<sup>151</sup> MCC had pledged to generate \$ 500,000 per month for Pakistan for 10 years plus 50 per cent of the total revenue from mineral sale, and Balochistan was supposed to receive a paltry \$ 0.7 million as royalty per annum.

As per reports in March 2013, according to official estimates, MCC had invested only \$ 23 million and reaped a good harvest out of the project. It is also estimated that ores found in Saindak mines contain on average 0.5 gram of gold and 1.5 grams of silver per ton. The Pakistan Senate Committee on Petroleum and Natural Resources, reacting to the government's decision to extend the contract for another five years, observed on March 19, 2013, that the government did not have any credible information about the amount of minerals being extracted and reportedly "asked the government to ensure the detailed examination of the minerals from the international laboratory with a view to knowing the exact ratio of copper and gold in the minerals being extracted from the Saindak mines".<sup>152</sup>

<sup>150</sup> [http://www.balochistan.gov.pk/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=1005:objective-a-functions&catid=40&Itemid=1224](http://www.balochistan.gov.pk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1005:objective-a-functions&catid=40&Itemid=1224).

<sup>151</sup> "Saindak Copper, Gold Plant Goes into Production: Rs 2.5 billion to be Saved Annually", *Business Recorder*, August 7, 2003, reproduced at <http://forum.pakistanidefence.com/index.php?showtopic=16645>.

<sup>152</sup> Khalid Mustafa, "Saindak Gold Mines Again Given to Chinese Company", *The News*, March 20, 2013, at <http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-2-166251-Saindak-gold-mines-again-given-to-Chinese-company>.

Senator Mustafa Kamal, Member of the Senate committee, reportedly “slammed the decision saying the extension in the agreement is a criminal act”, and said that “Balochistan’s minerals valuing billions of dollars were being swindled”.<sup>153</sup> If this is the way senators from other provinces of Pakistan feel about projects leased out to China by the central government, one can well imagine the sense of reservation in Balochistan among the Baloch people.

#### *4.3.8.2 The Gwadar Port Issue*

The development of the Gwadar port along the Makran coast close to the strategic Straits of Hormuz by China added to Baloch concerns, especially because of their fear that the development of the port would not benefit the people of Balochistan and provide an excuse for migrants from other areas to settle down in and around Gwadar, in the name of development, and pose a demographic challenge to the Baloch people by reducing them to a minority in their own province.

As per government reports, the Gwadar project started in March 2002, and Gwadar Development Authority (GDA) was set up in October 2003. The development plan earmarked an area of 19,500 acres for residential purposes 200 acres for commercial and 210 acres for recreational purposes. Given the magnitude of the project, the Baloch feared that it will bring in a massive outsider population and the port would only fill the coffers of the central government. The Baloch experience in the case of Saindak mines (where most of the revenue went to the centre) led them to suspect that all such developmental measures were conspiracies against the people of the province who did not have any sense of ownership over their own resources. The first phase of the Gwadar port construction ended in December 2006 with an investment of \$ 293 million (by China and Pakistan), and the port was inaugurated by Musharraf in January 2007. A Singaporean company, PSA International won the contract for operation of the port in 2007 for 40 years, even as China went ahead with the second phase of the construction of the Gwadar port.

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<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

However, by 2011, media reports suggested that the port was hardly doing in any business, and later PSA International expressed its inability to go ahead with the contract because of Pakistan Government's lapses concerning award of land for port development. On February 19, 2013, Pakistan formally awarded the contract for operation of Gwadar Port to a Chinese state run firm China Overseas Port Holding Company (COPHC). This was resented by the Baloch nationalists, who look at Pakistan-China strategic alliance around Gwadar with lot of anxiety and hold that Pakistan is engaging China, a rising world power, in Balochistan to primarily strengthen its control over the restive province. As a prominent Baloch militant leader argues:

The Gwadar project has been planned in the interest of Punjabi and colonial powers and not for the welfare of Baloch people. It's meant to bring demographic change in Balochistan; they want to bring in the Muhajirs –immigrants – and other people into Balochistan in order to unbalance demography. Gwadar is a death warrant for Baloch people.<sup>154</sup>

#### ***4.3.8.3 Nationalist Assertion***

As the nationalists, especially young Baloch students, came out with their opposition to developmental projects being initiated by Pakistan since early 2001, the Musharraf government adopted a heavy-handed approach towards them. In the subsequent days, disproportionate use of force by the Pakistan Army strengthened the resolve of the Baloch youth to resist the perceived repressive and exploitative policies of the government by all means. Various prominent Baloch mainstream political parties like the Baloch National Party (BNP) led by Akhtar Mengal, the National party led by Hasil Bizenjo, Jumhoori Watan Party led by Nawab Akbar Bugti, also criticised Musharraf's coercive policies. The refusal of these parties to participate in the 2002 and 2008 elections led to absence of credible systems of governance in the state and gave

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<sup>154</sup> “Baloch Groups to Unite Against Pakistan”, Karlos Zurutuza's interview with Allah Nazar, Commander, BLF, *Inter Press Service News Agency*, October 16, 2012, at <http://www.ipsnews.net/2012/10/qa-baloch-groups-to-unite-against-pakistan/>.

rise to a culture of patronage and nepotism disrupting the links between the government and the people of Balochistan.

Thus, the progressive alienation of the Baloch people has reached an all-time high because of the following reasons: total lack of sympathy for the Baloch point of view; resorting to excessive military tactics; killing of Baloch youth leaders like Ghulam Muhammad, Lala Munir and Munir Ahmad; the use of helicopter gunships and heavy artillery against the rebels especially in Bugti and Marri areas, which led to the killing of the veteran Baloch leader Nawab Akbar Bugti in August 2006; the decision to establish cantonments in Gwadar, Dera Bugti and Kohlu; proliferation of security check-posts in Baloch areas (493 by the FC and 91 by the Coast Guards) and lack of sincerity in developing a political approach in consultation with the Baloch nationalist leadership and regular cases of disappearance and murder of Baloch youth at the behest of the security forces, which show no sign of stopping even after a proactive judiciary took notice in this regard.

All this has provided the best fertiliser for the Baloch resistance movement, which has gone on since the last one decade. The BSO factions were the first ones to raise its voice against Pakistan's decision to exploit natural resources available in Balochistan. Soon other groups joined in. Amongst various factions of the BSO, the one led by Dr Allah Nazar, formed in 2001, came out with its stated objective "to struggle for Baloch national liberation and for the restoration of an independent and sovereign Baloch national state". The militant wing of this group is called Baloch Liberation Front (BLF), which enjoys maximum popular support, especially among the Baloch youth. It coordinates its activities with another armed resistance group called the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) being led by Hyrbair Marri, which is supposed to be the most active militant outfit at the moment. Other outfits which are active are Baloch Republican Army (BRA) led by Brahmadaugh Bugti and the Lashkar-e-Balochistan (Balochistan's army) having some links with BNP.

#### ***4.3.8.4 Aghaz-e-Huqooq Package: Delayed Political Move***

The political effort to address the Balochistan issue gathered momentum after the 2008 elections. Based on the previous experience of the efforts

undertaken by the parliamentary committee led by Mushahid Hussain Syed during 2004-2007, the new government came out with the “Agaz-e-Huqooq Balochistan Package” in 2009. The package was presented by Raza Rabbani, the PPP senator heading the parliamentary committee on Balochistan, on November 24, 2009 in the third joint sitting of the parliament. Later in the fourth joint sitting on December 9, 2009, this package was discussed and approved. Through this package, the PPP government did make an effort to address some long standing concerns—improved share of royalty to the province, revision of the formula for distribution of resources in the National Finance Commission awards, removal of concurrent list, placing Frontier Corps under the authority of the state administration, consideration of issues like building of cantonment, allotment of land in Gwadar, judicial scrutiny of cases of disappearance, etc.

Immediately following the announcement of the package the government came out with the seventh National Finance Commission Award. The PPP government launched the award symbolically in Gwadar, Balochistan, on December 30, 2009. In a bid to satisfy the demands coming from the minority provinces, the NFC mentioned that for the first time in the history of Pakistan multiple criteria for resource distribution was adopted, which included “population, human development index, inverse population density and revenue generation”. The share of Balochistan from the divisible pool was increased from 5.11 to 9.09 per cent. In gross terms, Balochistan received Rs 83 billion in 2010-11, compared to Rs 44 billion in the previous year. It went up to Rs 93 billion in 2011-12 and Rs 114 billion in 2012-13. The central government also promised to repay the Gas Development Surcharge (GDS) arrears it owed to Balochistan which was estimated at Rs 120 billion, over a period of 12 years. An additional amount of Rs 10 billion was also released by the Federal Government on account of equalisation of well head price with effect from 2002. This was meant to address a long-standing complaint of the Baloch leadership that they were not given their due share despite the fact that the gas produced from Balochistan accounted for 36 per cent of total gas production in Pakistan and received 12.4 per cent of the royalties from the supply of gas to other parts of Pakistan. Apart from these economic concessions, the government also withdrew cases against 89 out of 150 political leaders from Balochistan, which included Baramdagh Bugti, Akhtar



Mengal, Jamil Bugti, Dr. Allah Nazar Baloch, Sadiq Raisani, Jalil Raki, Abdul Hayee Baloch and Dr. Abdul Hakeem Baloch. In November 2011, the then Prime Minister of Pakistan Yousaf Raza Gilani claimed that his government had implemented 80 per cent of the promises made in the Aghaz-e-Huqooq-e-Balochistan package, with only 27 of 61 proposals left to be implemented.<sup>155</sup>

However, the package did not seem to have cut much ice with the nationalists.<sup>156</sup> The main issue of nationalists' lack of confidence in the government has been their concern over excessive security presence in Balochistan, establishment of cantonments (e.g, in Gwadar, Dera Bugti and Kohlu), increasing cases of disappearances and negative role of intelligence agencies. These are issues which no civilian government can possibly address, given the predominant role the army plays in conducting the security policies of the state. Moreover, the issues of exploitation of Baloch resources that agitate the Baloch people revolve around the development of mega-projects like Gwadar, Saindak and coastal highway. These are cited by nationalists as monumental instances of colonisation of Balochistan. The nationalists believe that Pakistan will continue to exploit the resources of Balochistan without being sensitive to the genuine needs and demands of the Baloch people, and it will deploy the army to ensure such colonial arrangement to the detriment of Baloch interests. They know that despite the promises of the civilian political leadership, the Agaz-e-Huqooq initiative would remain a pipe-dream, unless the army shows some maturity and behaves responsibly. Many of the Baloch nationalist leaders have observed that the package would not satisfy the people of Balochistan, because they were completely disillusioned with the Pakistani state.

#### ***4.3.8.5 Attack on Jinnah's Residency in Ziarat***

One of the most telling example of Baloch resistance to Pakistani state was the rocket attack on the Jinnah residency in Ziarat, in Balochistan,

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<sup>155</sup> "Aghaz-e-Haqooq-e-Balochistan: 80% Work Complete, Says Gilani", *The Express Tribune*, November 30, 2011, at <http://tribune.com.pk/story/299979/aghaz-e-haqooq-e-balochistan-80-work-complete-says-gilani/>.

<sup>156</sup> "Why Has Aghaz-e-Haqooq Failed to Extinguish Baloch Discontent?", *The Express Tribune*, November 30, 2011, at <http://tribune.com.pk/story/299860/why-has-aghaz-e-haqooq-failed-to-extinguish-baloch-discontent/>.

on June 15, 2013, which destroyed it completely<sup>157</sup>. A few days earlier on June 5, Pakistan had celebrated its first ever democratic transition in its history and the new prime minister Nawaz Sharif had expressed his willingness to find out a political solution to the Baloch issue. The people of Pakistan have an emotional affinity for this residency as the founder of Pakistan, Muhammad Ali Jinnah had spent his last days in it fighting tuberculosis, in the sylvan surrounding of Ziarat, away from the din and bustle of Karachi, the then capital of the state. The attack claimed by one of the Baloch militant groups, the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA), clearly indicated the determination of the Baloch nationalists to do away with all the emblems of the Pakistani state. It has to be remembered here that Jinnah, whose towering personality is adored in most corners of Pakistan and celebrated in text books of history, was the legal advisor of the Khan of Kalat during the time of partition. The popular Baloch perception holds him personally responsible for having betrayed his patron and swindling away the principality by force violating the trust reposed by the Khan on him. By August 2014, the Pakistani state rebuilt the residency, but the aversion of the people towards Jinnah as a leader and the accompanying sense of alienation among the Baloch population continue.

#### 4.3.9 The Future

The Baloch are one of the least numerically significant nationalities in Pakistan. According to the last official census of 1998, the total population who claimed Baloch as their mother tongue constituted 3.6 per cent of the population in Pakistan.<sup>158</sup> Out of these, 24 per cent live outside Balochistan. The percentage of Baloch speaking population

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<sup>157</sup> “BLA claims attack on Jinnah residency in Ziarat”, *The Express Tribune*, June 15, 2013, at <http://tribune.com.pk/story/563531/one-official-killed-in-attack-on-quaid-e-azam-residency-in-balochistan/>

<sup>158</sup> The data here have been reproduced from Pakistan Government sources, *Population Census Organization*, at <http://www.statpak.gov.pk/depts/pco/statistics/statistics.html> and *Socio Economic Development Profile of Pakistan*, Population Association of Pakistan (PAP) Secretariat, Islamabad, 2004. If one calculates as per Pakistan Government’s projection of country-wide population growth rate, in 2003 it was in 7.383 million.

inside Balochistan is 54.76.<sup>159</sup> Government estimates in 2008 suggested that 40 per cent of the province's inhabitants spoke Balochi, while 20 per cent spoke Brahui, while Pushtoon speakers were estimated at 25 per cent.<sup>160</sup> As Brahui-speakers are also grouped under the Baloch ethnicity, they would form the majority of Balochistan. However, according to preliminary figures thrown up by the census undertaken in Pakistan in 2012, the population of Balochistan grew by 139.3 per cent compared to overall increase of 46.9 per cent for entire Pakistan.<sup>161</sup> This is primarily because of the growing population of the mainly Pashtun refugees from Afghanistan in the province. This is likely to reduce the Baloch population to a minority in the province and provide further ground for nationalist struggle.<sup>162</sup>

Apart from this, the literacy rate in Balochistan remains abysmal at 26.6 per cent (about 15 per cent among women), which explains that lack of political awareness and the reason for persistence of archaic socio-economic structures that perpetuate the Sardari/feudal system to the detriment of the national interests of the Balochi people. This is likely to be another reason why mobilisation strategy by nationalists may not realise its full potential in the face of appeal by a section of the Baloch leadership to stay within the Pakistani federation and demand greater share of resources.

Among many other challenges that confront the Baloch nationalists seeking complete independence, another important determinant of the course of radical nationalist politics would be the behaviour of the feudal leadership (read Sardars) in Balochistan. In the past, they have

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<sup>159</sup> See census figures on population by mother tongue, at <http://www.census.gov.pk/MotherTongue.htm>.

<sup>160</sup> Muhammad Shayan Lakdawalla, "The Tricky Demographics of Balochistan", *Dawn*, April 5, 2012, at <http://www.dawn.com/news/708123/the-tricky-demographics-of-balochistan>.

<sup>161</sup> Abdul Sattar Khan, "Population Shoots Up by 47 Percent since 1998", *The News*, March 29, 2012, at <http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-13-13514-Population-shoots-up-by-47-percent-since-1998>.

<sup>162</sup> The report in *Dawn* cited above (n. 160) quoted a report by Institute for Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) to substantiate this point.

behaved in unpredictable manner and displayed their enthusiasm for participation in Pakistani politics. They have shown their inclination to be amenable to patronage from Islamabad and join the Pakistani nationalist bandwagon in return for political or economic concessions. It is true that most of those who have hobnobbed with the central administration have come back to radical nationalist politics over the years. The example of Nawab Akbar Bugti is apt here. He was rewarded with governorship of the province by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto for his complicity in the overthrow of the Atallah Mengal government in 1973, and later he had also become chief minister of Balochistan during 1989-90. However, he had gone back to the path of armed resistance before he was killed in a bomb attack by the Pakistan armed forces on August 26, 2006. Akhtar Mengal's return from self-exile to Pakistan in March 2013 to participate in the 2013 elections suggests a similar trend. The approach of the Sardars is likely to alternate between participative and disruptive politics while they continue to champion their loyalty to Baloch nationalism. This will weaken the demand of the militant leadership for independence from time to time.

Over the last decade, the provincial assembly of Balochistan passed a resolution in the assembly to adopt Urdu as medium of instruction in schools. This was done without any significant resistance from the nationalists, superseding the Balochistan Mother Tongue Use Bill, No. 6 of 1990 to use Balochi, Brahvi and Pashto to be taught in school as the language of instruction at the primary school level. This policy reversal at the provincial level shows how the nationalists rather than taking advantage of the linguistic sentiments have acquiesced to the decision to lower the importance of the Baloch language.

The Baloch temptation to tie up with the Pakhtuns in their struggle for national independence also runs counter to their interest and affects the strength of the movement. During Musharraf's rule, the Baloch nationalists tied up with the political front fighting for the rights of the oppressed nationalities in Pakistan. Such participation in political coalitions seeking greater federal share within the Pakistani state reduces the popular appeals of these separate nationalities. Moreover, these groups also tend to fight with one another for their rights. Some sections within the Pakhtuns of Balochistan have in the past demanded a separate

administrative unit<sup>163</sup> or amalgamation into NWFP as a practical solution to ethnic problem within Balochistan. But like the British, Pakistani authorities have found it easier to keep the northern Pakhtun region with Balochistan as a controlling lever, and thus considerably reduced the numerical preponderance of the Baloch in Balochistan.

The fight among consanguine tribal groups, which has assumed violent colour in recent times, for example, among the major intra-Baloch feuds—Gazinis vs Bijranis (both Marris); Marris vs Lunis; Bugtis vs Kalpars, Mazaris, and Raisanis; Rinds vs Raisanis, Hamidzais vs Ghaibezais (both Achakzais in Gulistan); Suleman Khels vs Lawuns, etc.—reduces the potential of the Baloch resistance movement considerably. Similarly, the uncoordinated efforts of the different groups of Marris as well as the fight between Marris and Bugtis create the space for external intervention and dissipate the idea of a combined Balochi resistance. The division between the Brahuis and the Balochis are obvious, and cementing these two groups together for an overarching national cause may not be always easy.

The nationalist consciousness of the relatively more well-informed Baloch (approx. 24 per cent), who live outside Balochistan has not been quite encouraging as far as the movement is concerned, and the most influential among them, the Legharis, Mazaris, Jamalis and others, have been more zealous in championing the cause of state sponsored nationalism in Pakistan than the Punjabi-Muhajir-Pathan lobby who have determined the contours of the Pakistani nationalism from time to time.

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<sup>163</sup> In July 2005, when the Sub-committee of Parliamentary Committee on Balochistan headed by Senator Mushahid Hussain Syed, paid a visit to Balochistan, the first delegation, which met them comprised of members of Pushtoon Ulus Qomi Jirga under the leadership of Senator Nawab Muh-ammad Ayaz Khan Jogazai who demanded division of Balochistan and restoration of Chief Commissionerate Province (the area which was called British Balochistan till 1947 comprising Pakhtun areas of province besides Chaghi, Sibi and some other Baloch areas). The Jirga also placed the demand that Pakhtuns should be given equal rights till the separation of Pakhtun Areas from Balochistan.

This is not to say that the Balochi nationalism will reconcile to Pakistani nationalism on a long term basis.<sup>164</sup> The disjunctions between the two nationalisms will continue to plague the integrationist concerns of the dominant elite in Pakistan for years to come.

#### 4.4 Pakhtun<sup>165</sup> Nationalism

*Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet, Till Earth and Sky stand presently at God's great Judgment Seat; But there is neither East nor West, Border, nor Breed, nor Birth, When two strong men stand face to face, tho' they come from the ends of the earth!*

Rudyard Kipling

The Pathans trace their ancestry to King Saul of Israel, as one of the branches of the lost 10 tribes of Israel. The post-Islamic phase in their identity starts from the legend that one of the descendants of Saul, named Kais converted to Islam, settled around Kandahar (Gandhara of ancient India) and slowly picked up the Gandhari language Pushtu, adapted themselves to local traditions and culture and moved towards Peshawar in south; through intermingling with other races and cultures, the distinct tribal identity of the Pathans gradually took shape.

##### 4.4.1 Pakhtun history

Pakhtun or Pathan<sup>166</sup> society is the largest and most vital of all tribal societies found in the world today. Pakhtuns are spread over north western Pakistan and South and South eastern Afghanistan, and present

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<sup>164</sup> A French scholar based in the US, who followed the unfolding Baloch scenario closely, wrote in 2006: "Baluch nationalism is a reality that Islamabad cannot pretend to ignore forever or co-opt by making promises of development that are rarely kept." Frédéric Grare, "Pakistan: the Resurgence of Baluch Nationalism", Carnegie Papers, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington, 2006, p. 13.

<sup>165</sup> The terms Pakhtun, Pashtun and Pathan denote the same national identity, and they have been used interchangeably in the monograph.

<sup>166</sup> Pakhtuns are alternatively known as Pukhtun, Pashtun, Pathan, Pushtun and Afghan as well. In this paper, one or more of these terms have been used as alternatives to one another, and they mean the same group of people.

themselves as a highly homogeneous and rigid group of people, although they are divided along tribal lines. They are known to be fiercely independent people, immensely concerned with and jealous about their sense of dignity and freedom, and guided by their traditional code of Pushtunwali.<sup>167</sup> A Pathan is condemned to Pushtunwali, and it is difficult to break out of the shell.

Most of the western observers of the Pathan society and politics agree that even if Pathans are suffering a lot and they may be among the poorest in the world today, they would never trade their poverty for their dignity. The hardy terrain in which they have lived over centuries has steeled their nerves, ossified their socio-cultural matrix and endowed them with a strange and inflexible psyche. Kipling's poem *The Ballad of East and West* (from which the quote at the beginning of this section has been taken) is in fact a tribute to the spirit of the Pathan, in whom the snobbish British officer finds his match.

As the inhabitants of the terrain, which has been historically the gateway to the Indian subcontinent, and the route through which traders and invaders moved for centuries, Pathans have been witness to history and participated in the process in their own distinct ways. As the natural guardians of the route, they have demanded their share of the loot from the invaders, profit from the traders and taken full advantage of the inaccessibility of their terrain. They have indiscriminately taken on the might of all invaders and emperors who have either passed by their terrain or sought to tame them to secure their passage across it. All external forces— from Alexander to Mahmud of Gahzni, Muhammad Ghorī, Zahiruddin Muhammad Babur, Nadir Shah, the Sikh King Ranjit Singh, the British and now the Pakistanis and the Americans—have had to reckon with the Pathans and their unbending

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<sup>167</sup> Tribal customs and traditions make up the biggest part of the Pathan society. The true essence of Pathan culture can be seen in the unwritten code of life, called *Pushtunwali* (the way of the Pushtun), and is closest to the heart of every Pathan. *Pushtunwali* is followed religiously, and it incorporates the following major practices: *melmastia* (hospitality and protection to every guest); *nanawati* (the right of a fugitive to seek a place of refuge, and acceptance of his bona fide offer of peace); *badal* (the right of blood feuds or revenge); *tureh* (bravery); *sabat* (steadfastness); *imandari* (righteousness); *isteqamat* (persistence); *ghayrat* (defence of property and honour) and *mamus* (defence of one's women).

spirit. The British were so disgusted with the frontier Pathans that they had to eat their humble pie as far as their undeclared racist policy of civilising the orient was concerned, and replace their ‘forward policy’<sup>168</sup> with ‘closed border policy’ in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. But it goes to the credit of the British to have carved out a portion of the Pathan-dominated terrain as a settled area.

The Pakhtun issue of Pakistan thus revolves around both the settled and the tribal areas—both Provincially Administered Tribal Areas (PATA) and Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA)—where Pakistan has traditionally adopted the British imperial policy of keeping them apart from administrative point of view and sought to mainstream the settled area with its people.

#### 4.4.2 Pakhtun Nationalism

The Afghan Pathans emerged as a self-defining ethnic group only in 14<sup>th</sup> century, after the likes of Bahlul Lodhi and Sher Shah Suri made their mark on the political horizon as rulers of Hindustan. The Mughals displaced the Afghans and took them up as vassals, and the rivalry between Mughals and Afghans is said to have given rise to the nationalist consciousness among the Pathans for the first time in 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century which comes out in the poetry of Khushal Khan Khattak (1613-1690):

*“How can the proud Pathan be friend to the Moghuls?  
How can one, for whom the mountains are the garments of his pride  
Wrap himself up in gaudy Moghul shawls?”<sup>169</sup>*

<sup>168</sup> “‘Forward’ military policies in the border region ... sought to extend British interests and authority beyond its natural or administrative borders... [while] closed border policies envisaged drawing British power – fiscal and material – back across the border into India, crafting an impenetrable defensive system that relied not only on military deterrence but also on a fundamentally secure society that bound together colonial rulers and native subjects”, as argued by Christian Tripodi. See: Christian Tripodi, *Edge of Empire: The British Political Officer and Tribal Administration on the North West Frontier 1877-1947*, Farnham, Surrey, 2011, p. 16.

<sup>169</sup> Khushal Khan continues: “Pukhtun as a people of the human race/ Are closer to the Hindus in disposition and ways../...../ Happy in their ignorance and strife/ But O Kushal, Thank the Almighty/ They are not slaves but free-born men.” I owe a debt of gratitude to my friend Adnan Sattar from Pakistan who has sent me this couplet and modified the original translation.



With the rise of Ahmad Shah Abdali/Durrani<sup>170</sup> in 1761, the Pathan/Afghan national consciousness matured and the Pathan identity surfaced in its present form. The post-Ahmed Shah Afghanistan could not take on the might of the British Empire in the neighbourhood, and in 1893, the Anglo-Afghan understanding led to delineation of the Durand line which divided the Pathans into two separate states. The Pathans of British India, and later Pakistan, have charted a separate trajectory of growth and development and projected an identity which has not quite reconciled to the state-nationalistic identity of the Pakistani state. The pan-Afghan or pan-Pakhtun sentiments have swept the Pathans intermittently, but have never reached the critical threshold in Pakistan even if it has rocked the confidence of the Pakistani authorities in carving out an overarching Pakistani national identity.

#### 4.4.3 Pakhtun Identity in Colonial Context

The British colonialists, guided both by their suspicion of the Russian incursions from the north and their inconclusive encounters with the untamable and unruly Pakhtuns on its imperial frontiers, thought it better to adopt the “closed border policy” and contain the prospect of any mass rebellion among them, either inspired by a nationalist consciousness from within or by the spirit of rebellion, never in short supply, induced from across the border. Thus, while the British pursued a policy of vernacularising languages in other parts of India, they made it a point to largely ignore Pakhtun language and promoted Urdu because they thought that it was the only way they could keep away the influence of the Pakhtun from Kabul and compel Pakhtuns to look towards Punjab and India through a possible linguistic union. All the demands from the Pakhtun leadership to adopt Pakhtun as a medium of instruction were also discouraged by the leadership in neighbouring regions within British India and local forces collaborating with the British.

Simultaneously, the familiar system of collaboration with the nobles started too. The system of loyalty and patronage that the British started

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<sup>170</sup> After Nadir Shah’s assassination in 1747, Ahmad Shah broke away from Nadir Shah’s Persian Empire and established the Afghan kingdom. He called himself *Durr-i-Durran* (Pearl of pearls) and changed the name of his tribe to Durrani.

had no significant effect on the tribal areas, but in the settled districts of Peshawar, Mardan, Kohat, Bannu, Hazara and Dera Ismail Khan, it had managed to create a class of collaborators, who would benefit from the new economic structures (mainly market economy and permanent land-owner system) the British had introduced to the disadvantage of peasants and artisans. “The emergence of the new classes, new status groups, new interests and new demands gave way to the kind of social mobility that was soon to shake up the existing social and economic relations and the patterns of control and authority”<sup>171</sup>, some would argue. Various scholars employing the Marxist theory would say that this system led to the emergence of small Khans who would make their presence felt at the political horizon from the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and use ethnonationalist symbols to mobilise popular participation in a movement which primarily aimed at empowering themselves. Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan (1890-1987) of Charsada and his brother Dr. Abdul Jabbar Khan (1882-1958), better known as Dr. Khan Sahib, epitomised the politics of the smaller Khans.

Ghaffar Khan’s political inclinations brought him closer to Gandhi and Congress, and he evolved a concept of Pakhtun nationalism, which had a romantic flavour, seething with nostalgia, pining for the good old days of Pakhtun socio-political and economic order, which many critics say was never there. But through a consecration of collective memory in his writings, Ghaffar Khan managed to appeal to the imagination of the average Pakhtuns, while his relations with Congress and his success in politics continued to provoke the wrath of the Leaguers, the British and the British-patronised elite who dominated the economy of the province.

#### **4.4.4 Pashto Language**

Through his Khudai Khidmatgar Movement, Ghaffar Khan used Pashto language as a symbol of Pakhtun identity. Since the late 1920s, Ghaffar Khan and his followers wanted Pashto to be used in the

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<sup>171</sup> Adeel Khan, “Pashtun Ethnic Nationalism: From Separation to Integration”, *Asian Ethnicity*, 4 (1), 2003, p. 17

domains of power and to make it the major marker of their identity. It was a way of mobilising the Pakhtuns to agitate for their rights and autonomy on the basis of language which emerged as an identity-marker, less elusive than the Pakhtunwali. In 1938, Dr. Khan Sahib's government introduced Pashtun language as a compulsory medium of instruction at the primary level in education "only in Pushtun speaking areas". During this period, there was also a flowering of Pakhtun nationalist literature. Ghaffar Khan started publishing a magazine called *Pakhtun* in 1928, which was later banned in Pakistan. In 1925, Allah Bakhsh Yusufi launched the *Sarhad*, which was an Urdu paper but had 12 pages devoted to Pushtun language. There was yet another publication by Amir Nawaz Jalia, called the fortnightly *Angaar*, which contained more Pashto columns than Urdu. The Yusufzai Pakhtuns of Swat led by the Wali Miangul Abdul Wadud adopted Pakhtun as the language of Swat state. However, with the amalgamation of Swat into Pakistan in 1969, Pashtun language fell out of favour and Urdu took over as official language once again.

#### **4.4.5 Post-partition Phase: Pakhtun Nationalism Superseded**

When Pakistan came into being, the Pakhtun nationalists felt completely overtaken by the communal temper that overwhelmed the sub-continent. The popular nationalist movement that the Khan Brothers had built up over almost two decades was nearly devoured by the communal fury that defined the Pakistan movement in the early 1940s, and especially in the wake of the call for direct action day on August 16, 1946. For a party that had won the state elections in January 1946 with a convincing margin of 30 out of 50 seats, it was unimaginable to lose the referendum of July 6, 1947. It is true that Khan Brothers had boycotted the referendum, but the League secured more than half of the total votes. Out of the total 5,72,799 votes (from out of total population of 3.5 million in the settled districts), 292,118 (51 per cent) were polled, of which 289,244 (99 per cent) went in favour of Pakistan and only 2,874 in favour of India. The supporters of the League argue that the votes cast in favour of Pakistan was more than half of the total no of votes, while followers of Ghaffar Khan argue that there was massive rigging in the referendum, and Wali Khan came out with his version where he claimed that he met several League sympathisers

who would later narrate with utter sense of self-remorse for having orchestrated rigging at various places.

The preparation for Pakistan in NWFP had started in right earnest since the early 1940s. The British Governor of NWFP between 1937 and 1946, Sir George Cunningham's diaries, letters and official notes quoted in various articles related to the issue confirm this that the British officers encouraged a communal polarisation which they thought was the only strategy to remove the Khudai Khidmatgars from the political scene. Olaf Caroe who succeeded Cunningham as Governor for about a year (1946-1947) was no less prejudiced against Ghaffar Khan and his anti-colonial attitude. The Pakhtun nationalism that Ghaffar Khan had raised could not match the religious frenzy that the movement for Pakistan generated.

The call for separate Pukhtunistan<sup>172</sup> that Ghaffar Khan raised for a while, after being thrown, as he reportedly stated, to the League 'wolves' by the Congress, lost its appeal in the face of the utterly communal hate-campaigns that were sponsored by the supporters of the League in a bid to mobilize popular support against the Congress policy of unity in NWFP. But in changed circumstances his efforts at appealing to the sentiments of Pakhtuns failed completely. Instead, Pakhtun tribesmen were seen to be rearing to launch their Jihad against the oppressors of their co-religionists in Kashmir by October 1947. The movement for Pakistan had swept the Khudai Khidmatgar Movement out of popular consciousness.

The politics of Ghaffar Khan and his successors, (his son Wali Khan and his grandson Afsyander Wali Khan) remained on the nationalist track. But their demands were less assertive in tone and tenor. During the days of the One Unit Scheme (1954-1969) ethnonationalist consciousness in NWFP and Pakistan reached its apogee, even if it was not politically assertive. The Pakhtun ethnonationalists were seen to be deliberately projecting their Pakhtun identity ahead of their Islamic identity. During this time also, in the Pakhtun-dominated federally

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<sup>172</sup> In June 1947, faced with the prospect of partition of British India and formation of Pakistan, and forsaken by the Congress, in a Khudai Kidmatgar party gathering, Ghaffar Khan made a call for an independent Pukhtunistan.

administered tribal area (FATA) religious consciousness rose to the fore and in elections in the 1970s religious parties reaped a good electoral harvest. Ever since, the religious forces have made their electoral presence felt in this region. However, in 1972 elections, when the nationalists came to power in coalition with the Jamiat-e-Ulema-i-Islam (JUI), from April 1972 to February 1973, they moved away from their stated position on Pakhtun language and recognised Urdu as official language.

#### 4.4.6 Role of Islam

The western observers of Pakhtun society and its culture held average 'Pakhtun' as "superstitious, priest-ridden" and slave of the mullahs.<sup>173</sup> Some analysts say that the *pirs* who roused pro-Pakistan sentiments among the Pakhtuns in the 1940s were mostly non-Pakhtuns, endowed with large landed estates thanks to the British policy of legalising their possessions, and they would rather seek recourse to Islam than pretend to be Pakhtun nationalists. The role played by Mullahs in Pakhtun politics is too obvious to be ignored. In fact, starting from Sayiid Ahmed Barelvi (against the Sikhs in 1830s), Mullah Powindah (1890s), Mullah Mastun or Saidullah (the 'Mad Mullah' in 1897), Mullah Basir and Haji Abd ur Razaq in Waziristan (in 1920-21), Haji Mirza Ali Khan or the Fakir of Ippi (of Tori khel tribe, between 1936-1960), and many others, have played distinct roles in manipulating the Islamist susceptibilities of the people. In Pakistan, thanks to the Afghan Jihad and proliferation of madrassas in NWFP during the 1980s, many Pakhtun mullahs have dominated the right-wing politics in Pakistan today. A report by a leading Pakistani news magazine in 2003 revealed that almost all the right-wing factions in Pakistan were led by Pakhtun conservatives. The character of Pakhtun assertion, in reaction to the Pakistani Army action in the 'Pakhtun borderland', has been more on Islamist and tribal than Pakhtun-nationalist line, even if it has been predicated on the tribal codes of honour and retaliation.

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<sup>173</sup> See discussion regarding Pakhtuns in *Frontier and Overseas Expeditions from India, Vol I, Part 1, Tribes-North of Kabul*, Mittal Publications, Delhi, 1983, p.xiv.

#### 4.4.7 Representation in Corridors of Power

At the political level, the British policy of recruiting Pakhtuns as a martial race was followed by the Pakistani authorities, and the Pakhtun representation in Pakistani Army and bureaucracy grew by around 18 percent by 1960s. Moreover, some analysts in Pakistan say that Ayub Khan's being a Pakhtun, like the Sindhi identity of Z.A. Bhutto, dispelled the sense of alienation from among the Pakhtuns. Whether by deliberate action or through mere continuation of the policy by the British, the Pakhtuns became increasingly visible in the corridors of power in Pakistan and with it the appeal of nationalist politics declined.

#### 4.4.8 Nationalist Consciousness Remains Alive

This does not mean however that Pashtun nationalism has disappeared. It is sustained by a committed nationalist political constituency which keeps emphasising on the Pakhtun identity of the people in the NWFP of Pakistan. The Pakhtun nationalists have teamed up with other ethnonationalist groups as was seen in the case of the Pakistan Oppressed Nations Movement (PONM)—a successor of Awami nationalist alliances of the 1960s. Such movements have been particularly active during the days of unrepresentative politics (military rule) and have, quite invisibly, boosted ethnonationalist consciousness in Pakistan. The disaffection among the peripheral counter-elites accruing from a pervasive perception of Punjabi domination in Pakistani politics also keeps nationalist sentiments going.

#### 4.4.9 Trends in Pakhtun Politics

##### 4.4.9.1 *The Case of Pakhtunkhwa: Renaming the Province*

The Pakhtun nationalists are mostly left of the centre in their outlook, pretty much like their Sindhi and Baloch counterparts. Led by Awami National Party, soon after the end of the military rule by Musharraf, the Pashtun nationalists staged a return in the 2008 elections. After coming to power, the ANP revived its long running demand for renaming the province in line with the sentiments of the people living there. On earlier occasions, Pakhtun nationalist leaders had suggested names like Pashtunistan and Pakhtunkhwa to represent the Pakhtun majority populations of the province. The response from the mainstream political parties was not always positive even if the nationalists, since 1980s had started getting into alliances with these parties. The PPP (1988-1990),

PML-N (1997-1999) and PML-driven coalition Islamic Jumhoori Ittehad (1990-1992) dragged their feet on the renaming issue primarily because such a nomenclature, they suspected, could trigger separatist tendencies in the province. But this time round, the PPP-led coalition did take the issue up in right earnest even if the PML-N had reservations about the name, Pakhtunkhwa. Finally, the compromise name of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa was approved by both the legislature on April 15, 2010. This has assuaged the nationalist feelings to a great extent.

#### ***4.4.9.2 Anti-Punjabi Sentiments***

The Pakhtun nationalists have sought to mobilise popular support around issues which retain their appeal amongst the Pakhtuns, i.e., on the disadvantages of Kalabagh Dam, the step-motherly treatment of their province by the entrenched Punjabi elite and the need to strengthen their language and their culture. But the success of their politics will be largely determined by the political matrix that the ruling military-bureaucracy dominated Pakistani state creates in the days to come. At the moment, due to the influence of Taliban politics in the Pashtun-dominated tribal areas, adjacent to the province, Pashtun nationalism is being overwhelmed by an assertive version of Islam. Whereas the Pakistani state had earlier employed Islam as a tool against ethnic sentiments in the provinces, as was seen in the twin cases of Sindhi and Baloch identities, in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, the elite is apprehensive of a combination of radical Islamic and Pakhtun sentiments posing a disintegrative challenge to Pakistan, as has been acknowledged by a retired Pakistani diplomat writing about the situation in the Af-Pak region and Pakistan's sensitivity about the Durand Line, which is regarded as an artificial line by the Pakhtuns residing on both sides of the line.<sup>174</sup>

#### ***4.4.9.3 The Rise of Tebrik-e-Taliban Pakistan***

Since 9/11, the war on terror in Afghanistan led to massive influx of Afghan Taliban elements into FATA in Pakistan and used various agencies in the region as sanctuaries for their operations against international forces in Afghanistan. Together with them, many radical

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<sup>174</sup> See: Riaz Mohammad Khan, *Afghanistan and Pakistan: Conflict, Extremism, and Resistance to Modernity*, Oxford University Press, Karachi, 2011, pp. 128-29.



Islamist elements, who had fought with the Taliban also came back to the Pakhtun tribal borderlands stretching from FATA till north-central Balochistan. These elements have retained virtual control of the area ever since. With their insistence on introduction of Sharia in Pakistan and their militant advocacy of it, they completely changed the socio-political dynamics of the Pakhtun-majority borderlands. The rise of Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) as a terror conglomerate consisting of multiple (the number varies from 13 to 39 and even more) since 2007, demonstrated the resolve of these elements, mainly Pakhtun in terms of their ethnic affiliation, to bring Islamic rule to the terrain and Pakistan. As long as this convulsion lasts, the tribal-Pakhtun identity will remain submerged in the militant clamour for Sharia and Islam.

#### ***4.4.9.4 Failure of Pakhtun Nationalists in Pakistan Politics***

The Pakhtun nationalists led by the Awami National Party (ANP) performed dramatically well in the 2008 elections and formed government in then NWFP. Upon ANP insistence, duly backed by its coalition partner PPP at the centre, the name of the province was changed to ‘Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa’ under demand from ANP in April 2010. However, such nominal gestures could not quite compensate for poor governance record of the ANP rule during 2008-2013. In May 2013 elections, the left-wing nationalist ANP was routed in the elections and, Pakistan Tehrik-e-Insaf (PTI) a relatively new political party primarily based on Punjab, led by Imran Khan, a Pathan cricketer-turned-politician, secured largest number of seats in the state assembly. The failure of nationalist politicians over the years to provide clean and effective leadership has also affected the growth of nationalist sentiments in the province. The political appeal of Pakhtun identity has suffered heavily with the passage of time, even if the identity might not have vanished altogether.

#### ***4.4.9.5 Pakhtun vs Pakistani Identity***

As far as markers of the Pashtun nationalist identity are concerned, they do not correspond too well with the Pakistani national identity projected by the state on the basis of language (*Urdu*), religion (*Islam*) or *anti-Indianism*. Despite Pashtun over-representation in the Pakistan Army, there is no popular sentiment in favour of the *Pakistan Army*—unlike the case in Punjab, where army is regarded as the protector of Pakistan and its ideology. This may be because of the changing



geopolitical dynamics of the Af-Pak region, especially in the Pashtun belt, where Pakistan Military is fighting radical elements overwhelmingly Pakhtun in composition. Moreover, the mobilising appeal of Pakhtun identity may be politically inactive now; however, the identity retains its differentiating significance when pitted against other regional and state-national identities. As Wali Khan, Gaffar Khan's son, stated famously in the 1970s that he had been a Pakistani for 30 years, a Muslim for 1,400 years and a Pathan for 5,000 years. In this context, it can be said that overt Islamicisation of politics in Pakhtun hinterland will not be able to erase the Pakhtun character of the identity. Moreover, the Pakistani state's efforts to steamroll all ethnic identities into a national whole may not be acceptable to the Pakhtuns who are quite proud of their identity. As it was observed in the case of renaming of NWFP, the non-Pashtun political groups were quite apprehensive of the disintegrative effect of nomenclature of the province after a single ethnic group—Pushtunistan or Pakhtunkhwa.<sup>175</sup> Hence, the name was suitably altered (from Pakhtunkhwa to Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa) to dilute its nationalist connotation and drive home the point that the province was not meant only for the Pakhtuns. The PML-N even argued that non-Pashtun minority must also be kept in mind while renaming the province. Since it came to power, there is a move to carve out a new Hazara province out of the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa. Such mindset betrays a sense of fear vis-à-vis the Pakhtuns.

Against this backdrop, when multiple identities are competing with each other for due recognition at the political level, the state's efforts to impose a uniform version of state-national identity may only make the task of nation-building more complex and challenging for the Pakistani state. Unless Pakistan redefines itself in terms of its geography and in an inclusive manner, taking due credit for its ethnonational and ethno-cultural diversity, the tension between two competing sets of identities—state-national and ethno-national—is likely to continue in future.

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<sup>175</sup> See Raja Asghar, "Steep Road Ahead of NWFP Renaming", *Dawn*, November 22, 2008, at <http://www.dawn.com/news/429751/steep-road-ahead-of-nwfp-renaming>; Amjad Mahmood, "Renaming of NWFP: PML-N Suggests 'Hazara Pakhtunkhwa'", *Dawn*, April 13, 2010, at <http://www.dawn.com/news/530316/renaming-of-nwfp-pml-n-suggests-ae%CB%9Chazara-pakhtunkhwaae>.

# Conclusions

*In history, in social life, nothing is fixed, rigid or definitive.  
And nothing ever will be.*

*Antonio Gramsci*<sup>176</sup>

## 5.0 Conclusion

The politics of ethno-national assertion in Pakistan is pitted against the hegemonising efforts of the Pakistani state on the one hand and the appeal of political Islam on the other. While the ethnic movements have managed to survive the assaults of the Pakistani state, they have, at different times in history, displayed a strange sense of vulnerability to both coercive manipulation by the state and Islamist Sharia-centric political mobilisation, as it is happening at present. The underdeveloped, illiterate backyard of the Pakistan—the rural and tribal hinterland of Balochistan, NWFP and Sindh—where ethno-nationalist politics is primarily located, has been targeted as a reliable political constituency by the conservative forces in Pakistani politics, with some degree of success. In fact, the appeal of Islam has been seen to be in fierce competition with the appeal of ethnic identity in the aftermath of the American attack on Afghanistan, especially in the tribal borderlands. Even in Balochistan, where the nationalists traditionally veered towards left-wing politics, a fringe section has emerged pledging its loyalty to radical Islamist politics.<sup>177</sup>

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<sup>176</sup> Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from Cultural Writings*, Lawrence & Wishart, London, 1985, p. 31a.

<sup>177</sup> For example, a shadowy outfit called “Baloch Gharatmand” has tried to reinforce puritanical Islam in areas close to Dalbandin in Chagai district of Balochistan. On April 16, 2010, the first Baloch suicide bomber, named Haq Nawaz Baloch, blew himself up inside the Quetta’s Civil Hospital killing at least eleven people, including two senior police officers and a television journalist. See: Malik Siraj Akbar, *The Redefined Dimensions of Baloch Nationalist Movement*, Xlibris, Bloomington, pp. 201-202.

## 5.1 Clash of identities

However, the strategy of drafting religious groups into the nation-building endeavour of the state may not be able to quite erase peripheral nationalist sentiments. The political scenario as it obtains today in Pakistan shows that after a short spell of anti-US, Islamist politics, the lasting appeal of anti-Punjabi and anti-Pakistani sentiments has again come to the fore, which is quite perceptible at the moment, in Balochistan and Sindh. Even other linguistic groups—Seraikis<sup>178</sup>, Hindko speaking Hazaras<sup>179</sup>, etc.—have started politically asserting their presence in Pakistani politics. From the discussion above it emerges clearly that there is a clear disconnect between the way the ruling elite in Pakistan imagines and constructs Pakistani identity and nationalism and the way the ethno-nationalisms in Pakistan fashion out their separate identities. The resultant irreconcilability between the two will continue to impair the process of (state) nation building project of the Pakistani state for years to come.

It is interesting to observe in the Pakistani context that the hegemonising attempts by the elite in Pakistan to efface outlying national identities within the state, and superimpose a new national consciousness on them at a pan-Pakistan level, has failed miserably and all efforts to induce a cohesive ‘national’ spirit by spreading an anti-India, anti-Hindu, pro-Kashmir, pro-Islam sentiments through official campaigns and hate-education<sup>180</sup> have only succeeded in enforcing at best, a temporary sense of solidarity, which has not been strong enough to bind the

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<sup>178</sup> “Seraikis Demand Seraikistan Province”, *The Nation*, February 2, 2013, at <http://www.nation.com.pk/national/02-Feb-2013/seraikis-demand-seraikistan-province>.

<sup>179</sup> “Resolutions Call for Creating Hazara Province, Renaming Khyber Pakhtunkhwa”, *The News*, March 22, 2014, at <http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-13-29247-Resolutions-call-for-creating-Hazara-province-renaming-Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa>; “Demand for New Provinces”, *Dawn*, May 9, 2010, at <http://www.dawn.com/news/881348/demand-for-new-provinces>.

<sup>180</sup> An updated account of spread of hate-education is provided by a recent study by National Commission for Justice and Peace. See: Nabila Feroze Bhatti and Peter Jacob (eds.), “Education vs Fanatic Literacy: A Study on the Hate Content in the Textbooks in Punjab and Sindh Provinces, Sanjh Publications, Lahore, 2013, pp. 13-24.

people together. The ruling perception among the minority ethnonationalisms about the predominance of a particular ethnic group, the Punjabis, and their disagreements with the basic markers of national identity spawned by the state elite, has weakened their sense of attachment to the Pakistani state.

The Pakistani state on the other hand has been intolerant of any resistance expressed in ethnonational terms and has sought to counter such movements with an iron hand pursuing its agenda of projecting Pakistani nationalism coterminous with its desire to build an over-centralised state. This has hardened ethnic sentiments and compelled the ethnonationalist leaders to come out with secessionist demands openly. The fragility of Pakistani nationalism is more visible in the over-reaction of state towards minority nationalisms. It is also true that the coercive might of the Pakistani state has managed to keep the ethnonationalist assertions within check to some extent; however, it has undeniably led to progressive hardening of ethnonationalist sentiments. The tenuous balance between coercive state power and the appeal of ethnonationalisms best illustrates the Pakistani state-national situation today.

## 5.2 Overdeveloped State, Underdeveloped Polity and Society

The possible answers to why the ethnonational identities have not succeeded in posing a threat to the Pakistani state lie in the prevailing socio-economic situation in Pakistan, which is a classic case of an overdeveloped state with an underdeveloped society and polity. Pakistan today has a strong military and a stable steel-frame bureaucracy. It has reasonable coercive power to subsist as a state by enforcing unity through force rather than will. Paradoxically, as far as communitarian spirit is concerned, the strong Pakistani military-bureaucratic elite has not been able to create a sense of civic unity so critical to consolidation of Pakistan's as a modern state; while weak ethno-cultural societies have persisted with their ethnic solidarity and sense of communal unity leading some observers to argue that Pakistan is a clear case of a weak state-nation and strong societies.<sup>181</sup>

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<sup>181</sup> See: Anatol Lieven, *Pakistan: A Hard Country*, Part 1, Chapter 1, Public Affairs, New York, 2012.

The fact remains that it has a fragile polity and an archaic society, which add to its shakiness as a state. As a society, it has not quite come out of the feudal stage. As a polity, the political leadership has of late displayed some maturity in working together to uphold democracy in the state; however, it has long a way to go to overwhelm a deeply entrenched military-bureaucratic apparatus and set up a truly representative system. It continues to be the “project” of few elite families who are tied closely through inter-marriage and interdependent political and economic relationships. At one point in time in the 1950s, it was claimed that there were only about 80 families ruling Pakistan, by 1980s, the famous Pakistani economist Mahbub-ul-Haq increased the number to about 250 and at the moment the number could be around 500.

### **5.3 Elite Collaboration Weakens Nationalist Movements**

These aforementioned elite families are tapping all available socio-cultural sentiments in Pakistan to keep themselves in power. Thus, one finds Z.A. Bhutto simultaneously encouraging Sindhi nationalism at one level and pandering to the military-bureaucratic sympathies on the other. And leaders like G.M. Syed, Dr. Khan Sahib, Ghous Bux Bizenzo and Nawab Akbar Bugti projecting themselves as uncompromising ethnonationalists during one period and as collaborators in the state-nationalist project during another. The prevailing socio-economic condition in Pakistan, with its rampant poverty, illiteracy and crisis in governance, has brought about a political situation in which the dominance of the feudal constituency has been perpetuated to the disadvantage of the people in general.

#### **5.3.1 Elite Perpetuating Itself at the Cost of State**

The hesitation of the state in extending its writ to the distant corners of Pakistan, where archaic systems of social control continue to flourish, in bringing about land reforms and in taking up measures to liberalise the society has ironically, through the perpetuation of a particular class of people more interested in their survival than anything else, contributed to the strength of the Pakistani state in the long run. The state of Pakistan is thus being held by a precarious balance. The systemic crises that visit the state today will rend the monolith asunder unless the state

revisits its project of nation-building and brings in inclusionary methods to accommodate multi-vocal nationalities within its territory.

#### **5.4 Post-2008 Pakistan Politics: Silver Linings in the Cloud**

In Pakistan, after the end of the military rule in 2008, a new wave of democratic politics set in. During the first successful completion of the five-year tenure of an elected government in 2013, the PPP-led civilian government tried to pursue an equitable policy of ethnic management by letting various forums for dialogue and discussions, regarding distribution of resources to the provinces, and politics in Pakistan operated in a relatively open and transparent manner. The Nawaz Sharif government succeeding it has followed suit ever since it was voted to power in May 2013 elections. The civilian political forces are slowly re-negotiating their hold over power, with the powerful military determined to retain its influence on the levers of power.

Moreover, the proliferation of media in Pakistan has ensured greater political participation, and brought in some degree of transparency and accountability into the process of administration. An assertive judiciary has played its role in stabilising the ongoing process of political transformation. A Pew survey in August 2009, with 1,254 respondents all over Pakistan, indicated that a growing sense of national identity has started taking roots in Pakistan.<sup>182</sup> With the burgeoning media, a new class of intellectuals has made its presence felt in Pakistani society with their bold and diverse opinion critiquing the formulation of Pakistani identity by the dominant elite and its approach to politics. A tremendous political churning is taking place in the country. Taking advantage of this gradual opening up of the space for alternative thinking Pakistanis are gradually forsaking the traditionally obsessive zeal for defining their nationality in negative terms (in opposition to India, Hindus and western liberal values). They are arguing in favour of a territorial and secular

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<sup>182</sup> “Pakistani Public Opinion: Growing Concerns About Extremism, Continuing Discontent With U.S.”, The Pew Global Attitudes Project, August 13, 2009, p. 5, at <http://www.pewglobal.org/files/2009/08/Pew-Global-Attitudes-Pakistan-Report-August-13-2009.pdf>.

credo<sup>183</sup> which ought to be at the core of any governmental project that defines the national identity of Pakistan. Quoting Aitzaz Ahsan, a prominent Pakistani lawyer-politician, Robert D Kaplan wrote that Pakistan has enough geo-cultural distinctiveness to build its national identity on.<sup>184</sup>

## 5.5 Anxieties Remain

However, the essential features of Pakistan state and polity remain the same with the military continuing to determine the course of the state's policies in matters relating to centre-province relations, internal and external security and foreign policy. The civilian leadership has therefore found it difficult to recast the nature of Pakistani polity. A case in point is Zardari government's sincere attempt to accommodate Baloch demands and aspirations, which nearly ended up in smoke because of the inability of the political leadership to reverse the security paradigm imposed on Baloch people by the military of Pakistan. Similarly, despite Nawaz Sharif's vocal support of reconciliation with India, due to opposition from the military, he has not been able to confer the long-delayed MFN status on India since coming back to power in June 2013.

The main issue of accommodating the centrifugal identities within the state-national architecture is likely to remain unattended until there is a healthy transformation of the Pakistani polity in future. As long as the present power configuration continues along with the policy of

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<sup>183</sup> See, for example: Babar Ayaz, *What is Wrong with Pakistan?*, Hay House Publishers, New Delhi, 2013, pp. 327-330. Ayaz argues in the book that overemphasis on religion has been counterproductive. He disagrees with Alama Iqbal's view that if politics is divorced from *deen* or religion barbarism will rule and urges Pakistanis to look back on the last 67 years of history and see how the overuse of religion has only led to chaos and destruction.

<sup>184</sup> Kaplan writes: "The actual geographical fissure within the subcontinent as the 'Gurdaspur-Kathiawar salient', a line running from eastern Punjab southwest to the Arabian Sea in Gujarat. This is the watershed, and it matches up almost perfectly with the Pakistan-India border." See: Robert D Kaplan, "What Is Wrong with Pakistan", *Foreign Policy*, June 18, 2012, at [http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/06/18/whats\\_wrong\\_with\\_pakistan](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/06/18/whats_wrong_with_pakistan).

marginalising the ethnonational identities, Pakistan will labour, in spite of its strong military and the show of nuclear muscle, under the shadow of ethnic restlessness, as a nervous and fragile nation seeking unity in externally directed hatred rather than in any supra-ethnonational love that would characterise an as-yet-non-existent Pakistani nation.



The present monograph traces the origins of the Pakistani state and the processes that encouraged the state-sponsored efforts to build a Pakistani nation, and seeks to isolate various problems associated with such nation-building efforts. It introduces various conceptual categories of state, nation, nation-state and state-nation, and identifies the superfluity in the argument that state and nation must be coterminous for a state to survive—an argument which has been unquestioningly taken up by the leaders of the India and Pakistan in their nation-building endeavours. Based on such a proposition, the prolonged effort of the Pakistani state to impose an artificial identity, privileging certain markers of nationalism unacceptable to local identities, has resulted in demands of the latter for secession and self-determination. The monograph tries to identify and compare the separate markers of state-nationalism and the Sindhi, Baloch and Pakhtun identities, and argues that dissonances among the way these identities are projected and internalised would continue to make the process of nation-building difficult for the elite in Pakistan. It recognises the potential of the Pakistani state to evolve a neutral, and territory-based civic-nationalism as an antidote to the ongoing confrontation between the state and the 'nations', but concludes that the present power-elite in Pakistan may not be ready for such a transformational change in its outlook.



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