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Analysis of Identity Politics and Ethnic Conflicts in Pakistan Under the Theoretical Frameworks of ‘Thymus’ and ‘Relative Deprivation’: A Case of Ethnic Uprising of ‘Hazarawal’ In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

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ABSTRACT

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As in federation constitutional units possess maximum autonomy. Often federation is associated with plural societies. Being plural society, Pakistan suited absolute federation and constitutionally, Pakistan is a federal state. Eighteenth constitutional amendment ensured federation in Pakistan through which actual provincial autonomy was endowed. One of the major changes in eighteenth constitutional amendment taken was the renaming of NWFP as Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, which signifies the dilemma of identity politics. The remarking provincial identity stimulated another debate of relative deprivation of Hazarawal ethnic identity, this paper is focused on: the identity crisis and politics of ethnicity have been reawakened after the 18th constitutional amendment. This paper poses that Hazara ethnic uprising is due a constitutional development which is a kind of social contract, by exclusion of a group from such a social contract would result in a big ethnic conflict, what was seen in 1971 in the country. According to the scenario, in this paper I am trying to explore that how relative deprivation of a group in society stimulates a struggle for recognition of their identity? If a disequilibrium created constitutionally not resolved, ultimately would results in failure of federation and disintegration.



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1. Introduction

Pakistan is a multi-ethnic society and politically loosely knitted federal polity constituted by the provinces, in return provinces claims their equal autonomy as what exists in true federation. Federal polity of Pakistan could not accommodate its multiplicity of identities on an equal basis which can be gauged in the current scenario. In such socio-political atmosphere sense of marginalization and relative deprivation is usual dilemma. Whereas, megalothymic and isothymic two confronted desires may exist because as human thymos, under Plato's framework of thymos, there are two desires in human being one is isothymic, which represents excellence or goodness, it is human tendency to have an equal position in a society with other groups. The second is megalothymic which is seeking dominance over other groups or individuals, so, this framework would be suited to apply into identity politics in Pakistan and particularly in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.

Pakistan is a best empirical example of such an ethnic diverse society which is undergoing identity crisis, cross ethnic conflict and ethnic terrorism. The problem in Pakistani polity is whenever you reward an ethnic group with resources and titles, it causes an actual or a threat of relative deprivation and marginalization to another group living in same space in condition of relative equilibrium. There is no such a province in the federation of Pakistan which has homogeneity in its ethnic demography. The study in hand is specially focused upon Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's post 18th amendment scenario and Hazara ethnic uprising against the nomenclature of the province which has threaten the recognition of Hazarawal's ethnic identity. Therefore, the study is conducting to explore the problem in academic and policy making ground.

In order to get a better understanding of the current tribulations of the Pakistani ethnic problem widespread in all provinces, it is required to have a retrospective glimpse of these ethnic identities. According to Sayed, "Pakistan is also a multi-ethnic, multi-lingual and multi-religious state with the social configuration of diverse identities and cultures. As a result of independence in 1947, multiple ethnic identities with lingual and racial

differences settled into a federal state of the South Asian region. [1]"

Epistemologically, the diversity of Pakistani society has been united on the name of Islam, which can be a cohesive force for unification of Pakistani ethnicities. But ontologically, after partition situations reveals that elite's desires for power were involved on multiple levels as on the pre-partition core level as well as post-partition on peripheral level. Here, the megalothymic desires in elite individuals could be justified for the problem of identity politics in Pakistan. For decentralization of central power central elites were not prepared and on peripheral level the local elites were not prepared to surrender their traditional status without a big gain. Therefore, a social contact in the form of constitution was delayed up to 1956.

Eighteenth constitutional amendment created a new debate about the formation of new provinces. The issue of Hazarawal is considered the most viable issue. The creation of constitutional units on ethnic line making potential and actual clash among ethnicities, the minor ethnic groups struggle for recognition of their identities in Pakistan since long ago. Before 18th amendment it was largely in Punjab, Sindh and Baluchistan. When the name of ex- North West Frontier Province changed into Khyber Pakhtunkhwa thus, the sense of deprivation rose in Hazarawal (Hinko speaking population in KP). The sentiments and cries for separate province for Hazarawal were not new but it was accelerated with new constitutional development. They argue that the division of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is required in order to overcome the socio-cultural and politico-economic deprivation of the people of the Hazara region. Their demand for the separate Hazara province sought great importance due to the existence of the Hinkko speaker around 30% of the total population of the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. It is therefore the people of the Hazara region are demanding for the territorial division of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. This demand in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has pursued larger significance when the eighteenth constitutional amendment has been proclaimed into the state constitution[2].

2. Research Methodology

This research work is a qualitative and descriptive approach to the problem. The qualitative research method is best suited with the case as it further broadly followed by an interpretive or post-positivist approach. Data for the study collected from secondary sources. It was required a strict scrutiny. Therefore, documents were selected thematically and were thematically analyzed. The sources for data collection were public libraries, e-libraries, prominent research journals and shorthanded data was collected from newspapers and magazines. Moreover, this study has an exploratory purpose and having non-experimental research design. Furthermore, this study used purposive sampling during documents analysis. Besides it, I derived two sophisticated theoretical models for the problem one is theory of relative deprivation which is largely a handicraft of Davis and Huntington and second is thymos a model popularized by Francis Fukuyama in his landmark work on Identity politics, the application of these models aims to properly address the problem. Both theoretical models have significantly shaped the current identity politics.

3. Theoretical Frameworks

This research paper is conducting under the lights of two theoretical models. One is thymos, this concept has been derived by Francis Fukuyama in his book "Identity: Contemporary Identity politics and struggle for recognition" from Plato's work 'The Republic' he discusses about it in term of human nature. He says that thymos is a part of human personality in English it could be translated as a 'spiritedness' according to Hegel it is a primary driver of entire human history. Fukuyama distinguished two manifestations of thymos, which are isothymia and magalothymia. The former desires equal recognition and the later desires superiority and dominance. Both are designing modern identity politics. In Pakistan marginalized groups desiring equal recognition. Contrary the elites and dominant groups struggle to hold maximum superiority[3].

The second theoretical model which is best suited with the study is 'relative deprivation theory' this theory mainly assumes that the feelings of relative deprivation feed the revolutionary potential of groups and makes them starts a social movement.

The main proponents of this theory are James Davis and Samuel P. Huntington. The former says that successful revolution was neither the work of poor nor of the satisfied but of those who are marginalized or deprived. The later says that the disequilibrium in society created by rigid institutions is the stuff of revolution is made. I am taking this model for the purpose to address the problem of disequilibrium created by allocation of resources and titles to one group in similar space and relatively deprived another group. The deprived group struggles to improve its positions that are why launching a revolutionary movement, the specific revolutionary movement started by Hazarawal demanding separate province aims to preserve their identity. It was accelerated when under 18th amendment was enacted they perceived a threat of relative deprivation against Pashtuns.

4. Historical Analysis of Ethnic Conflicts in Pakistan with Review of the Literature

Unlike India Pakistan is religiously homogeneous state, demographically consisting of 98% Muslims. When the issue of sectarianism takes aside then religious identity would work as a strong cohesive force for national integration. Disregarding the fact that during the struggle for independence had used separate Muslim identity which was a most effective card played by All India Muslim League for achieving its goals, but the threat of ethnic chauvinism was also felt by Jinnah from very begging after independence, that is why he told in his presidential address to constitutional assembly that "you may belong to any religion or caste or creed-that has nothing to do with the business of the state [4]." Here in the statement it is debatable that had Jinnah wants to convey the message of secular state what is contradictory to Pakistan movement and alike tone with congress secular narrative or he wants to shun ethnic and sectarian differences for the state integrity and religious differences with Hindus for integral peace?

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However, bulk of literature is available which address the identity politics and ethnic conflict in Pakistan, almost the bed of literature covering history of Pakistan so, it was needed to explore the

recent past as well therefore paper in hand is undergone to conduct on the current issue of Hazarawal ethnic uprising in reaction to eighteenth constitutional amendment Pakistan. It is necessary to get insight from other historical researches without that it may be difficult to have a solid research ground to stand upon.

Answer to the aforementioned question is derived from the views of Adeel Khan in his book: “politics of identity: ethnic nationalism and the state of Pakistan” he emphasizes that: the Pakistan movement was an elite’s projection to ride on power corridor and replace their colonial master with their nationalist program. The nature of coercion was just transferred to indigenous, and the nationalist elites used it in the name of state building [5]. It could be inferred from the point of views that in the statement given by Jinnah in his first presidential speech is dominantly centered on rather to shun religious differences but to shun ethnic differences. Because in his life the ever first initiative he taken was the purge of ethnic nationalism in the scenario he dissolved two ethnic nationalist provincials; governments one was Ayub Khuro’s in Sind (h) and second was an ethnic nationalist secular provincial government of Khan Abdul Jabar Khan in NWFP consequently, it further sparked ethnic nationalism and provincialism might unexpected by Jinnah.

Similarly, in book: “Language and Politics in Pakistan” written by Tariq Rahman, he mainly keeping views that the identity politics and ethnic conflict took roots in Pakistan when the Bengali’s movement for recognition of Bengali language as a national language was suppressed largely from 1948 to 1952, and their leaders were imprisoned and blamed as traitors to Islam and national integration[6]. Historically, further blow got by identity politics and ethnic conflict with Ayub Khan’s coup d’état in 1958, when he abrogated 1956 constitution and parliamentary form of government and introduced new constitution and presidential form of government in 1962. Wherein he concentrated all power in his hands, whereas, majority Bengali was deprived [5]. So, the institutionalization process of Ayub khan in pursuit to state building failed in national integration. His state building program failed in structural and functional integration of largest ethnic population of Bengalis into the social

contract. The exclusion of Bengali from the system exacerbated their identity politics which was originally shaped the first Basic Committee’s interim report in 1950 and repeated up till eighteenth constitutional amendment in Pakistan.

A Bangladeshi political author Rounaq Jahan says in her landmark work “Pakistan: failure in national integration” that the failure of structural and functional integration of Bengalis specifically, in Ayub’s dictatorial regime led to the delegitimation of institutions and state as a whole[7]. The volcano heated up by structural violence against Bengalis, their exclusivity from state institution and immediately by disparity in the result of 1970 general election erupted in 1971. Thus the episode of ethnic conflict in Pakistan started from very begging ended in 1971 with the complete disintegration of the state.

Pashtun, Bloch, Sindhi and Muhajir ethnic uprising has been discussed by the number of writers in their works but Christophe Jaffrelot’s book “Pakistan nationalism without a nation?” covers the origin and further dynamics of Pashtun, Baloch and other form of ethnic uprising in the country. It discusses post 1973 ethnic nationalism and separatist movements, and he predicted that though Pakistan lacks democratic culture unlike India but it still has capability to successfully dissipate separatist and centrifugal tendencies[8]. Contrary to Jaffrelot Stephen Philip Cohen in his book “The idea of Pakistan” he says that the ethnic group poses a biggest threat to Pakistan is Pashtun[9]. Khan Abdul Ghafar khan has indoctrinated the Pashtun nationalism and provincialism. From very begging Pakhtunistan movement was the existential threat to the state integrity. Later on, Abdul Wali Khan (son of Ghaffar Khan) changed his party’s narrative. In 1990s ANP decided nonviolent ethnic politics and folded back ‘Pakhtunistan movement.’

Ethnic uprising against states central authority in Pakistan has multiple reasons behind and multiple actors are involved in to exacerbate this conflict. Particularly, ethnic conflicts, anarchist and separatist movements in western frontier region of Pakistan largely in KP and in Baluchistan are due to global and regional politics and specifically it is a product of ‘Great Game’ rather a constitutional deadlock at large, though its constitutional remedies cannot be denied. Although, Baloch

insurgency has multiple factors in its ground, it was started on the question of forceful accession of Baloch princely states predominantly exacerbated due military action by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's regime. The Baloch insurgency in late 1990s was largely on resource based and later it was further radicalized by Pervaiz Musharraf's arrogant attitudes towards Baloch. Similarly, going to past again Pashtun nationalism in 1970s was not more constitutional rather it was stimulated by the arrogant attitudes of Z.A Butto towards provincial government in NWFP.

By coming down to the point on which the paper is centered is constitutional cause of relative deprivation of a particular group in region by awarding the opposite group with constitutional titles. This dilemma is very common in Pakistan by naming provinces with particular ethnic identity it cause ethnic uprising because of keeping relatively minor identities in crisis. The current ethnic uprising is due major constitutional development what eighteenth amendment is.

5. Hazarawal Ethnic Uprising: An Analytical View

5.1 Hazara Terrain

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Hazara is a sub-division of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province, it is located in north east of the province. By area it is consist on eight districts. Demographically, it is dominantly consisted of Hindko speaking population. The total population in Hazara region is 7.8 million. Among 7.8 million population 87 percent of which are Hinko speakers and the remaining 13 percent are belong to other ethnic groups. Historically, this region was not always a part of NWFP. During British rule it was a part of Punjab. When NWFP was formed a province in early twentieth century it becomes a part of NFWP. Initially, even post partition the region was part of Peshawar division. When West province unite was dissolved in 1970 it becomes separate Hazara division. This north eastern part of the province is rich of forest and mineral. It has greatest attraction for tourism across Pakistan[10].

The people of Hazara region are different from Pashtun by language, culture, emotions and by

their sentiments. They have different political affiliation than rest of province. Even during Pakistan movement, they supported the idea of Pakistan unlike Pushtun nationalist. Conclusively they have ever sought to preserve their distinct identity.

5.2. The Origin of Hazara Issue

Pakistan is ethnically heterogeneous society; the problem was perceived during pre-independence era by some intellectuals like Molana Abu Al-kalam and so on. I think provincial segmentation of Pakistan on lingual lines is bad luck for Pakistan and for 98 percent a religiously homogeneous population. As we have ethnic diversity in Punjab but the province name is a cultural mark for Punjabi ethnicity as it is cleared that it undermines and relatively deprived the minor identities in the province like mainly Saraiki. Same is the case of Baluchistan and Sindh, the former is concern for Muhajirs and the later is concern for Pashtuns. So, therefore ethnic nationalist movements are seemed as it struggles for recognition [10].

Similarly, when the name of the former NWFP changed to Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa the issue of Hazara province raised. Historically, rivalry and socio-political differences between Pashtun and Hazarawal are traced back to Pakistan movement and specifically 1945-46 election in British India. Hazarawal were the staunch supporters of Pakistan movement and All India Muslim League whereas, Pashtun were largely supporters of All India National Congress under the influence of Khan Abdul Ghafar Khan (a secular Pashtun nationalist leader). As for their stance, it was empirically proved in 1945-46 election. Where Pashtun majorly, voted in favor of Congress, under the election campaign launched by Khudai e Khidmatgar headed by Ghaffar Khan. Whereas, Hazarawal voted in favor of AIML[11].

Feeling of relative deprivation started in Hazarawal due to prejudice attitudes of Khudai Khidmatgar movement and ethnic nationalism and hatred attitudes of Pashtun towards other ethnic groups in the province. Whenever, National Awami Party and then Awami National Party came into power, it never made a sincere effort to accommodate Hazarawal rather to push them to ebb of marginalization. First movement for separate province started in 1948, it was an

intellectual movement mainly led by lawyers and journalist. It was chaired by Mohammad Iqbal. The movement took another dimension in 1957,

when it was again started by Mufti Mohammad Idrees, it demanded Kohistan province including it Haz.

Conflict of Interest

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- On Fri, Nov 28, 2025, 11:20 AM bismillah jan <bismillahjan1266@gmail.com> wrote: