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Political Polarization and Challenges of National Integration in Pakistan

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ARTICLE DETAILS	ABSTRACT
<p>History:</p> <p>Received: May 20,2022 Accepted: June 21,2022</p> <p>Keywords:</p> <p>Political Polarization National Harmony National Identity National Integration</p> <p>DOI:</p> <p>10.52700/assap.v3i1.185</p>	<p>National integration and national identity have engulfed Pakistani society since its establishment. Traditionally, the society has remained divided along religious, ethnic, linguistic, and provincial lines. However, political developments of the last decade have added a new dimension, which has divided society into political lines. The disturbing aspect of evolving trends in the injection of violence in our political behavior and culture is weakening the very foundations of the Pakistani nation and the state alike. I want to argue that the rhetoric of eliminating the opponents by violent means and propagating the blood revolution across the streets of Pakistan is easier said than done, has degenerated our society already overwhelmed by a lack of basic amenities like education, health, and employment, etc. Lust for power at all costs has dented our national values and identity. This article investigates the rising trends of political intolerance and suggests a course of action for strengthening national integration.</p> <p>© 2021 The Authors, Published by WUM. This is an Open Access Article under the Creative Common Attribution Non Commercial 4.0</p>

1. Introduction

Deleterious polarization has made our society a mutually mistrustful of 'us and them' groups (Saleem, 2021), which is harming social cohesion, creating fissures and intolerance as well as destroying our societal bonds. Political party affiliations are determining our social identity. Hate and bizarre language are new norms for addressing opponents. The tinge of political exploitation by using religion has added another fuel to the fire. The mantra of leveling self-

satisfying allegations, accusations and indictments without fair trials or no trials and awarding subjugating punishments without even referring to courts are very dangerous and disturbing trends, which have created anxiety among the writers of national integration in Pakistan. Founded as an independent country for the Muslims living in the united sub-continent, where they are free to practice religious obligations and guarantee equal rights for the minorities enshrined in the constitution of Pakistan (Niazi, 2012, p. 1).

Pakistan since its creation on 14th August 1947, has worked a lot towards achieving prosperity, state and nation building. It has an unfathomable defense and fairly developed infrastructure, but a struggling economy engulfed with a host of challenges. The nation is concerned and worried about societal division and diminishing opportunities, which have been exacerbating over some time. Over the last 75 years, the country has seen many forms of governments, and numerous slogans to win electoral support while paying little attention to fostering cohesion, integration, equal opportunities, and social justice. The biggest challenge today is that Pakistani people stand shattered and separated along political affiliations adding a new dimension to the already fragile divide along religious, tribal, feudal, linguistic, and ethnic lines, which is negatively affecting the complex national integration matrix across Pakistan (Hippler, 2012, p. 1). Public sentiments are exploited for winning the so called popular mandate while doing little to alleviate their sufferings when assuming power. “Haves and have nots”, is a very dangerous new trend, which not only violates the spirit of democracy but also infringes the fundamental rights enshrined by the constitution of Pakistan.

The culture nurtured by political elites and parties cannot be termed democratic by any simple definition. It is more autocratic, uncompromising, intolerant, and non-democratic. The egoistic interpretation of the constitution, without considering any legal logic to satisfy self-fulfilling prophecy and derogatory attitude towards state institutions, propagating anarchy and bloody revolution has reached unbearable limits. The writ of state and supreme institutions is being challenged by hypocritic political stalwarts on one pretext or the other demonstrating them as above any law and untouchables “threatening of dire consequences if their version is not accepted” are new norms of our political discourse.

Repeated calls and predictions of civil war to defame the state institutions and cause national embarrassment to serve their political ends are going on at an unprecedented level. It is high time that we realize the damage we have already caused to national harmony. While the economy and state building are relative terms that can be handled over a period of time, nation building is very delicate, fragile and painstaking, and takes enormous time, effort and focus. But if such a state of affairs, which is already dented, fractured, and further divided along intolerant political affiliations, would be a mammoth task requiring enormous resources and a “whole of nation” and “whole of government” approach to healing the wounds of political division. Another disturbing factor is the discrediting of the political institutions of the state. Such disrespectful attitude is eroding the legitimacy and viability of the country’s highest policy and decision-making institutions, which if not addressed immediately will seriously impact the implementation of the constitution.

National integration is steadfast development of providing equal opportunities and rights without any prejudice, to its citizens (Mukhtar et al., 2019, p. 189). It also provides the sense of belonging that binds every segment of society in a well-knit and cohesive manner for serving and developing the nation state. Therefore, national purpose needs to be prioritized over politicking (Lodhi, 2020). The diversity of language, creed, religion, race, or ethnic background adds to the value of nationhood, therefore, needs to be pragmatically harmonized

and capitalized in the form of a social contract between the state and the society. It is an established fact that when relationships of the social contract are strong and progressive, both the state and society are compelled and incentivized to work for each other. However, it is sad to express that in Pakistan, this social contract has been largely ignored and society feels ostracized due to a multitude of factors related to governance, underdevelopment, rampant corruption and lack of development and equal opportunities, to name a few.

The gulf between society and the ruling class is widening and the demonstration of political immaturity and bizarre language for discrediting opponents and state institutions are negatively impacting national cohesion and harmony. The strong foundations of national integration demand apt governance that should rejuvenate the national purpose of the state of Pakistan and reinvigorate national pride by strengthening the bond of social contract directed towards the development of the country and provision of equal opportunities across the length and breadth of the country (Shah & Ishaque, 2017, p. 42).

The social stratification in Pakistan should capitalize on the diversity of federating units and energize unity instead of dissent. Adding on to my previous three publications on national integration and the national security paradigm of Pakistan, this research article dwells on the rising trends of political polarization, intolerance and discrediting of state institutions in Pakistan and its impact on national integration. The study suggests viable recommendations for enhancing national harmony and accommodation aimed at strengthening national integration in Pakistan.

2. Theoretical Construct

The challenges of national integration in Pakistan have been examined by applying the theoretical framework of complementary approaches, nation-building, state building and national development, which define the conceptual underpinnings of national integration as highlighted in the undermentioned diagram.

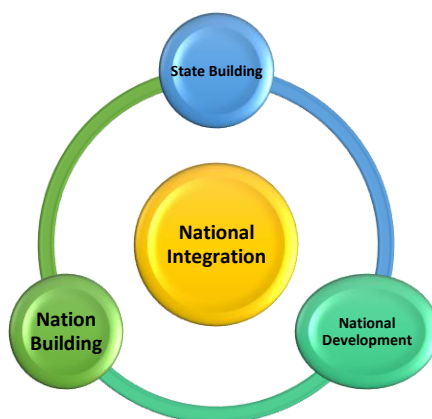


Figure 1: Theoretical construct of national integration

Goldsmith, explains nation-building as ‘the creation of a shared national identity in a particular geographic area, which is founded on the common language and shared culture’ (Brinkerhoff, 2007, p. 37)

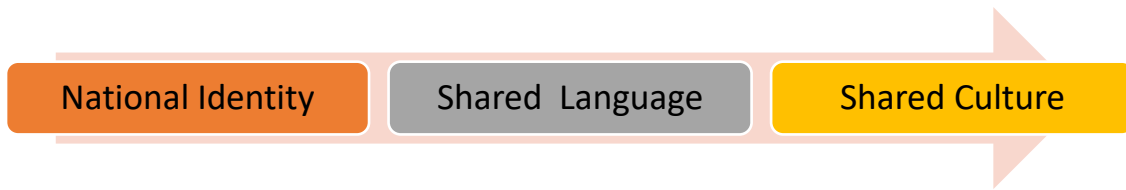


Figure 2: Goldsmith's Description Of Nation Building

The Hopp and Kloke-Lesche underscore the process of nation building, that establishes the strong and effective institutions, unfathomable infrastructure development, impartial distribution of resources and equitable development without prejudice to any political affiliations (Hopp & Kloke-Lesch, 2005, p. 13).

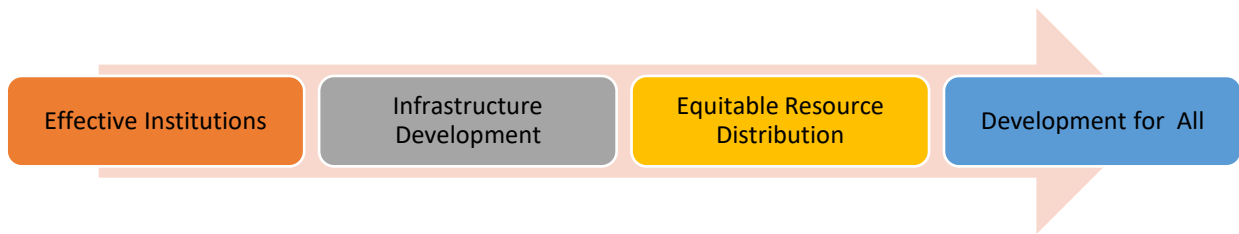


Figure 3: Hopp And Kloke Description Of Nation Building

Another important facet of nation building is state building, which creates the core of all developmental realms. It is “a course of action to foster institutions, along with their capacity and legitimacy, which is established by a strong sense of belonging between the state and society (Grotenhuis, 2016, p. 11). Therefore, the state-building is primarily about bolstering the relationship between the state and society, along with creating effective ways to handle such a relationship’.



Figure 4: Process Of State Building

The process of state-building is ‘founded on the political processes to negotiate state-society relations as well as the power relationships among the social groups and the elites’. The characteristic of state building is the methodology of commitment between the state and citizens, and the degree to which the state can efficiently accomplish its obligations.

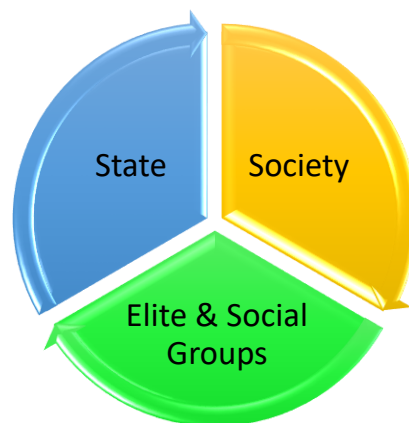


Figure 5: Balancing Relations In State Building

The cornerstone of this argument stands on the fundamental argument that, whenever, a mismatch occurs between the expectations of society and the functioning of state institutions, it can lead to political polarization and conflict, which inevitably trigger instability and rivalry. Pakistan's national security and political mosaic discussed in the latter part of this article provides a thorough understanding of prevailing internal and external challenges affecting the foundations of the Pakistani state and society. The gravity of the situation has been compounded by the rising trends of political intolerance, polarization, discrediting of state institutions and dismal economic outlook, which has affected every segment of society, especially the youth bulge due to dimmed prospects of employment and development.

3. Research Methodology

Qualitative research has been applied using primary and secondary data. Additionally, the content analysis has been performed by investigating press conferences, speeches and policy statements of Pakistani political elites, government institutions and society. The field visits were conducted to Balochistan, interior Sindh and agencies of former FATA for observing the prevailing situation of poverty, under development and people's concerns on development and mainstreaming have been analyzed in great detail. The last part of the study contains policy recommendations for relevant government institutions for enhancing national integration.

4. Literature Review

The question of the challenges of national integration is as old as the creation of Pakistan when the first controversy started with language riots in Dhaka University after the proclamation of Urdu as an official language. While the basic philosophy underpinning the establishment of Pakistan was based on the "Two Nation Theory" (Karmani, 2017a), which provided a unified cause, however, the polarization consequent to the violent language uprisings and later on, the painful disintegration of East Pakistan in 1971. Even after the loss of half of the country, mainly due to intolerance and political polarization some five decades ago, we have hardly learned any lessons from our past mistakes. The country is facing enormous internal and external challenges, and the only binding force of the federation is the constitution of Pakistan, which is being violated quite often to serve petty political egos and new norms of discrediting state institutions are rising.

Dr. Moonis Ahmer illustrates the national integration as a "sense of belonging and develops as a process by providing justice by the state to the society" and it "cannot be created artificially" (Ahmer, 2019a). It is the chief responsibility of political leadership to "capitalize

on the diversity of language, culture, religion and ethnicity” and permeate the sense of participation by undertaking inclusive development and delivering equal opportunities for the citizens (Ahmer, 2019b). Therefore, creating strong bonds of the social contract between the state and society to make them stakeholders in the national development, which generates a sense of pride has been regrettably missed out several times in the last seven decades. Dr. Waseem Ishaque highlights that “religious extremism, regional identities, sub-nationalism and culture of political intolerance” are grave challenges affecting our national pride. Sub nationalism in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan and Sindh though controlled to a large extent, the reigniting of sleeper cells and targeting of innocent civilians are happening to create strategic effects, which are detrimental to national integration. (Shah & Ishaque, 2017, p. 37).

Declining HDI due to multiple factors is corroding our pride and identity (Shah & Ishaque, 2017, p. 43). Ahmed Rashid underscores factors creating disharmony in the society are; “ethnicity, obscured concept of national security and varying perceptions of national identity” that is also affecting the power equilibrium in Pakistan, therefore, producing a “gulf between state and society” (Rashid, 2010, p. 371). Zaid Haider emphasizes that since its foundation, Pakistan is confronting substantial challenges on the internal front, where “Islamic ideology, civil-military interactions and ethnic leanings” have had considerable influence on the national assimilation matrix (Z. Haider, April 2010, p. 8). The two separate wings of Pakistan created two different characteristics, complemented by language related uprisings, which culminated in the dismemberment of Pakistan (Ziring, 1974, p. 311).

While the above examined fault lines are persisting in our society with more gravity even today, however, a new dimension of polarization based on political party affiliation demonstrating intolerance demonizing other parties, their leadership and followers with dire consequences of bloody revolution is a new development, which is disturbing the researchers and readers of national integration alike. Dr. Rasul Bux highlights that the political elites in Pakistan have been “polarizing and dividing people along ethnic, religious, ideological and narrow political lines”(Rais, 2022). He adds “Pakistan has been a polarized polity and consequently, a divided society for the past half century and even more”(Rais, 2022).

The literature review has amply covered the challenges confronting national integration in Pakistan and a new dimension of political polarization has been added, which is dividing the society and the nation along with political affiliations and making them vulnerable to the violent rhetoric of opposing political camps. Some irresponsible political leaders are chanting slogans of bloody revolution and looming civil war, aimed at terrorizing the masses and frustrating state institutions to satisfy their political egos. The rising trends of Balkanization of Pakistani politics if not seriously addressed can have devastating consequences on the national integration of Pakistan. Pakistani society today is fractured and polarized and needs a comprehensive response for enhancing national integration in a befitting manner (Ishaque et al., 2021).

5. Examining Pakistan’s Evolving National Security Paradigm

It is gratifying to note that Pakistan has promulgated its first ever national security policy re-prioritizing human security, economic security and the traditional concept of security (Jaspal, 2022). While much is being debated on its contents, human security and improvement in Human Development Index (HDI) assume greater significance. While on the other hand instability in Afghanistan, hostile India and a host of nontraditional security issues will continue to occupy center stage in our national security calculus, therefore, significant allocation of resources will continue towards the traditional security apparatus. The intense

political polarization and overcommitment of law enforcement agencies have created space for violent Non-State Actors, who are conducting suicide attacks at will and there is growing evidence, that nexus of religious and sub-nationalist terrorists are converging. The recent bomb blasts in Peshawar and Karachi are cases to be pondered. The analyses of significant factors affecting the national integration in Pakistan are described in the ensuing paragraphs.

5.1. Pakistan's National Security Paradigm

Today Pakistan is confronting serious existential threats (both internal and external) to its national security. The enemies are exploiting the existing fissures and polarized political environments by hitting below the threshold of conventional warfare, using a combination of tools blending radicalized militants and ethnic separatists. "The transnational terrorist organizations and their local associates did devastating terrorist activities in the entire country"(Jaspal, 2020), which is going on unabated.

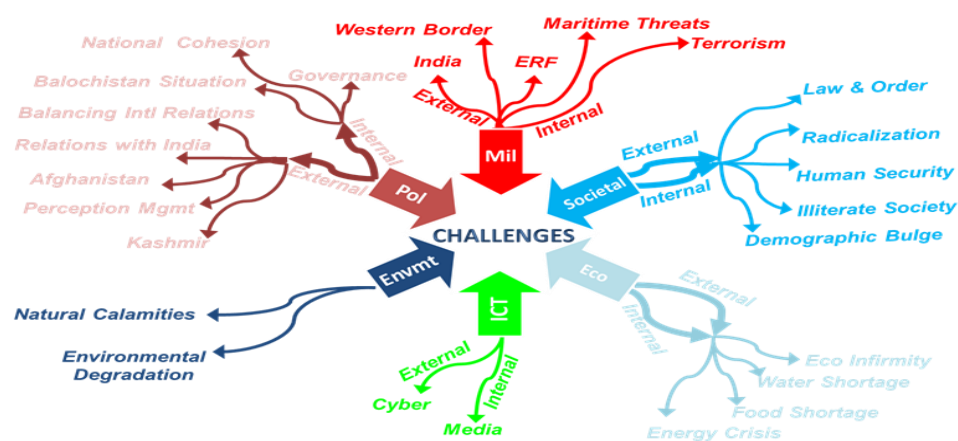


Figure 6: Evolving paradigm of national security in Pakistan (Mukhtar et al., 2019, p. 193)

The brutal killing of Chinese engineers in Balochistan in 2018 (Gul, n.d.), the suicide attack on a Chinese engineers bus at the Dasu Dam Project in July 2021 (Buneri, 2021), and the female student suicide bomber killing Chinese teachers at Karachi University (Saifi, 2022) and later claimed by Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) are reminders of our vulnerabilities and high stakes in protecting foreign national inside mainland Pakistan. Additionally, the deadly suicide attack in Shaiate Mosque in Peshawar by ISS-K in March 2022 (I. Khan & Masood, 2022) has added new dimensions to rising terrorism in Pakistan. The cross-border attacks from Afghanistan in border areas on Khyber Pakhtunkhwa also become a routine occurrence. The evolving regional and global dynamics, therefore, present serious challenges to the national security of Pakistan as given in figure 6 and figure 7. The situation demands strong leadership, internal consolidation, and peaceful co-existence and harmony to provide a befitting response to the evolving challenges. Pakistani society today is very concerned about prevailing socio-political and socio-economic challenges (Anis, 2021, p. 3), especially those from peripheral areas, which are not even developed. The political tug of war and inefficient dispensation coupled with rampant corruption has created many socio-economic problems, especially for the young, educated population as no efforts have been made in creating job opportunities and incentives for them. Similarly, the unskilled large segments of society have been hit hard by rising inflation, tax and squeezing purchasing capacity. The abysmal economic outlook and politics of hopelessness have fractured our society and the country, with serious implications for national integration. Many unaddressed problems have created

anxiety among the populace (Ali, 2021, p. 3), warranting immediate redressal for building a harmonious and prosperous society. The internal assortment also presents a ominous illustration of Pakistani people.

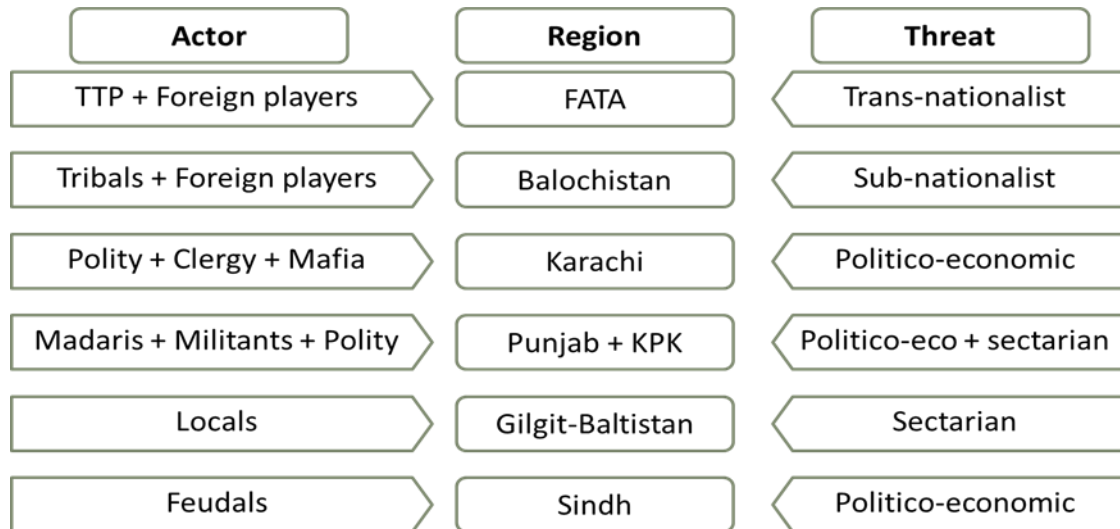


Figure 7: Internal Security Dynamics Of Pakistan (Mukhtar Et Al., 2019, P. 191)

Feelings of deprivation, marginalization and inter-provincial disharmony resulted in armed struggle in former FATA and Balochistan with seething effects in Sindh as well. The counter insurgency operations aimed at restoring the government writ have resulted in huge losses in men and material on both sides. The armed groups hiding in “NO GO” areas in Balochistan and border regions of Afghanistan are presenting existential threats to the internal security of Pakistan (Gattani, 2021), and especially the ones directed against Chinese nationals have created foreign policy challenges as well. The national identity has now been replaced by sub nationalist and political party affiliations and unfortunately, the leadership is found guilty of inciting violence, creating hatred and disrespect, propagating intolerance and discrediting the leadership of other political parties and religiopolitical parties. The division of population based on ethnicity, language, province, and tribe is gain gaining currency in underdeveloped regions of Pakistan (D. M. A. Khan, 2021), which is indeed a worrisome development for national integration in Pakistan. The perception of deprivation and ostracism are breaking our society instead of uniting them. Terrorism and extremism coupled with economic downturn are also critical variables, affecting the internal cohesion thus presenting severe threats to national integration (Mezzera & Aftab, 2009, p. 33). Extremism has generated negative of Pakistan (S. F. e Haider, 2021, p. 1), which is multiplied by chanting slogans against political opponents and even resorting to violence within and outside Pakistan. The inequitable socio-economic growth has provided dissatisfied elements and their foreign masters a framework of exploitation through protracted low intensity conflict (LIC). Political intolerance, growing polarization, and diminishing respect and accommodation to others’ sensitivities have added vulnerability to the integration matrix and societal harmony.

6. Challenges of National Integration in Pakistan

Despite over seven decades of independence, we could not blend ourselves as a harmonious society living together with national pride and a strong sense of belonging. The social contract between state and society is weakening, which is impacting our national identity and pride. The successive governments in Pakistan despite loud slogans of serving the masses

and uplifting their quality of life did little to tangibly address the serious issues of national integration and building of a harmonious society. The evolving political polarization is dividing the nation along with trivial political affiliations, instead of blending them. Arrogance, violence, and intolerance are new norms now threatening the very foundations of Pakistan. The diagram below summarizes the existing integration quandaries, which are examined in great detail in the later sections.

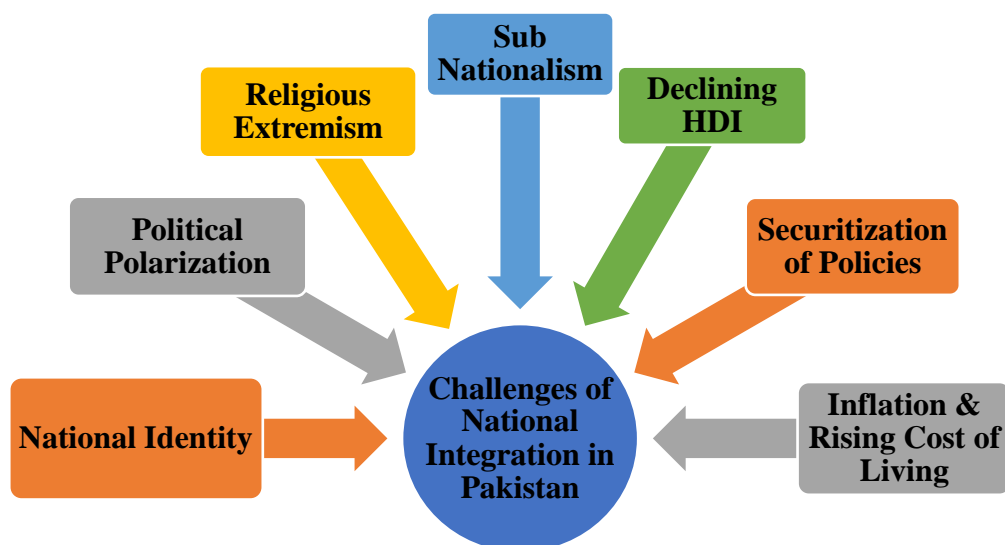


Figure: 8 Mosaic Of Challenges To Integration In Pakistan

6.1. Political Intolerance and Polarization

Political dispensation in Pakistan has experienced many forms of governance and our democratic institutions are still evolving. The political landscape is presenting disturbing images today, as abusive language, accusations, impatience, intolerance and chanting of arrogant slogans on the opposition are new norms of political discourse generating the atmosphere of detestation, extremism, provincialism, and tribalism which is producing disunity and violence. Ideally speaking, the behavior of political parties determines national unity, as they have roots in the masses across the length and breadth of the country, but regrettably, they have now modified their role, which is confined to their electoral aspirations within their local constituencies. The void at the national level was firstly exploited by the religious parties and later, by those advocating regionalism and provincialism, and resorting to violence for achieving their political ends. The ongoing trends of hate-based violence, intolerance, and lack of respect for others' views, have shattered our society. The ruling elites have generally the least interaction with the masses when in power, and their mindset depicts one "colonial" character, intended to control the people (Z. S. Ahmed, 2019, p. 402). The culture of long marches, chanting slogans against political parties and their leaders, agitating masses against state institutions and threatening bloody revolution if their political demands are not met, are creating anxiety, unrest and shattering the foundations of Pakistan. The evolving pattern represents a very bleak image of the national integration matrix as the point scoring on the opponents to subdue them, are the new norms of our political discourse. The hate-based politics has created divisions, which are eroding national identity, pride, and integration.

6.2. National Identity

Even after seven decades of the creation of Pakistan, the ideological paradigm is still being contested, which often creates fissures in society. Unfortunately, religious intolerance and

non-accommodative discourse are sensitive topics affecting societal harmony (Karmani, 2017b). Additionally, it has distracted the policymakers and state institutions from socio-economic development and mainstreaming of society. Stephen P Cohen opines that “the most important struggle in Pakistan today is that how Pakistan should execute the Islamic identity and character in State’s outlook” (Cohen, 2011, p. 13). The preference for regional, tribal, ethnic and political affiliations-based identity has overwhelmed the national identity, creating very dangerous trends toward national integration and harmony.

6.3. Religion Based Extremist Tendencies

Out of the most complicated challenges facing Pakistan today, sectarianism and extremism figure out prominently. The unwanted desire to impose their interpretation and version of Islam has generated disharmony and has a fractured society based on religious affinity. The current political environment in Pakistan is gathering momentum in portraying explosive culture where the religious card is being used to advance political agendas and motivations and garner public support. Instead of uniting the nation, the prejudiced debate has caused societal divisions, and hatred resulting in disharmony. The writ of the government is seriously challenged and quite often the governments have conceded to the pressures of protesters (Hussain, 2021). Society is gradually losing confidence in the government’s ability to handle such crises whenever they occur, due to extraordinary sensitivities attached to such religious enthusiasts. The evolving situation is polarizing society even further and generating hatred against fellow citizens, which is a very dangerous trend.

6.4. Sub-nationalist Tendencies

Despite strenuous endeavors, the ongoing polarization and charged political atmosphere have created space for non-state actors, claiming to be marginalized segments of society and regions to take arms and create disharmony. Pakistan since its establishment inherited the affiliations of regional identities due to federating units voluntarily deciding to join Pakistan. However, such diversity could have added color to our national outlook, which unfortunately remains a challenge even after 74 years of independence. The persistent grievances of underdeveloped regions have alienated the masses, therefore, warrant immediate redressal and focus on development by the federal government. The relegated sections of society have resorted to violent struggle, especially in former FATA areas and Baluchistan to the extent of challenging the writ of state at frequent intervals. Continued neglect, weak governance, and narrow political interests have been exploited by the anti-state elements, which have offered the alternative of sub nationalism, that blooms on vandalism and brutality, thus corroding the national integration in Pakistan.

6.5. Declining Human Development Index (HDI)

As per the latest data from UNHD, Pakistan ranks 154 out of 189 countries (M. Haider, 2020). Insufficient allocation in the yearly budget for health and education combined by COVID 19, inefficient governance and increased security related expenditure requirements have created serious human security issues in Pakistan. Additionally, the imbalanced budgetary grants, declining employment opportunities and increasing prices of commodity items, have created uneasiness in society. The youth bulge has become a source of liability, compounded by indifferent priorities by past governments that have alienated the masses. The exploding security environments can be exploited by militants and their foreign handlers thus complicating the integration matrix in Pakistan.

6.6. Development and Security; Balancing the State Policies

Pakistan since its establishment has inherited a unique threat environment, which shaped the state policies for the last seven decades. The vulnerability of Afghanistan and India kept us

occupied in security centric state policies, while lesser focus on developing other elements of national power (EONP) created an imbalance in overall power equilibrium in Pakistan. The soaring inflation has produced hopelessness as about 39% of Pakistanis are forced to live lower than the accepted poverty line (D. V. Ahmed, 2021), while in 2015 this figure was around 24% (Redaelli, 2015, p. 1). The declining capacity of government in creating employment opportunities is negatively impacting human security and weakening the social contract between the state and society. It is well debated phrase that “Pakistan can only grow stronger when all EONP will grow proportionately”(Ishaque et al., 2021, p. 23). There is a dire need to review the current state of affairs and reprioritize the allocation of resources for education, health, industrialization and infrastructure development, as these will significantly improve HDI and contribute to societal integration.

6.7. Implications of Escalating Inflation

The unimpeded price hike, decreasing purchasing power, over-taxation of different brands (Aftab, 2021), have generated despondency and discomfort in the wider society. Despite imposing several types of indirect taxes, the ruling elite still propagates against fellow citizens that they don't pay taxes, perverse to ground realities. In my analyses, it is in fact the elite class, who rarely pay taxes, and their burden is also distributed over commoners by way of indirect taxes. The fabrics of society are on the verge of disintegration, as they bear the brunt of the ruler's extravagant living at cost of their taxes. This situation of despondency and glumness is producing anti-state feelings and generating a breeding ground for exploitation by our enemies.

7. Recommendations for Advancing National Morale and Integration

After having examined the prevailing internal security matrix, national security paradigm, and the factors affecting the national integration in Pakistan, the policy recommendations are presented for permeating national integration in Pakistan.

7.1. Grand Reconciliation

It is high time now that all political parties should do serious introspection and come up with a policy of accommodation. All the political grudges should be set aside for the sake of national interest. The politics of vendetta, hatred and revenge should be replaced by respect, reconciliation, and accommodation. There's a dire need to create an environment of homogeneity, respect, and trust. All the political parties should immediately devise a code of conduct, whereby hate speech discrimination and use of abusive language should stop forthwith.

7.2. Charter of Stability

Pakistan has suffered a lot due to instability and political polarization in the last decade there's a requirement that all political parties must join hands together and agree on one formula that no party should take any action which would destabilize the country and pollute the political environment as these have a direct bearing on wellbeing off masses. While each party can pursue its respective political agenda and manifesto, however, it should not lead to disharmony polarization and overall stability of the country.

7.3. Charter of Economy

As the charter of democracy between major political parties, it is about time that all political parties should join hands together & a charter of the economy. The economic condition of the country today is probably the most challenging in its history. Economic development is directly related to political stability as both are complementary to each other. All the political

parties for the sake of larger national interests must forget their political differences and help the country out of the current economic quagmire.

7.4. Infusing Tolerance in Political Discourse

It is an established fact that political stability is the biggest prerequisite for the economic development of the country. The atmosphere of polarization and intolerance has increased in the last decade, which is directly impacting the validity of our institutions. This tendency needs to be reversed, as the supreme national obligation. Unnecessary finger pointing to gain political leverage is undesired as state institutions are working within constitutional boundaries. The devolution and empowering of the federating units must be expedited which would eventually strengthen the national integration. The ethos of hate based political discourse must be substituted by sagacity, patience, and accommodation.

7.5. Revitalizing National Pride

Dedicated and focused energies are needed for the restoration of national pride and realizing the genesis of the establishment of Pakistan and the value of independence to society. The obligation lies on the political leadership to convey the message of love, a sense of belonging and trust to the masses. An inclusive approach is proposed in developmental projects so that citizens should be made stakeholders in planning and implementation. Every individual should be thrilled for love with Pakistan, which must be generated through national songs and highlighting the sacrifices for the Pakistan movement. The education institutions should also prepare comprehensive schemes to invigorate the youth with national pride by arranging different academic activities. The government is recommended to prepare a long-term strategy in which the educated youth is absorbed in the job market upon graduation. Similarly, the unskilled should be provided relevant vocational training to enable them to open some workshops with little financial support. Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) is vital for job creation, therefore, enabling environments should be created and friendly countries should be invited for long term investment projects. Media should be harnessed to create a sense of belonging through strategic communication.

7.6. Religious Harmony

The scholars should convey the true spirit of Islam, discourage hate and sectarianism and help build a tolerant society through strong messaging of love and affection. The exploitation of religion for any kind of political leverage should be discouraged.

7.7. Improving Governance

The government must consult previous research and input conducted by academia and think tanks on improving governance in Pakistan. A strong monitoring mechanism is suggested to keep the prices of daily commodity items under control and regulation utility bills, the dispensation of speedy justice. Infrastructure development is key to prosperity and job creation, therefore, should be completed as an esteemed obligation and priority.

7.8. Economic Security

The stagflation in our economy, declining HDI and devaluation of the Pak rupee has created severe human security problems in Pakistan. The masses are suffering from the price hikes, inflation, rising cost of utility bills and unemployment with shrinking purchasing power. The skilled and educated youth bulge is in despondency due to the government's failure to create enough employment opportunities. This is creating considerable crevices among society and the federating units. It is therefore important that the government should take immediate steps, create enormous employment opportunities and strengthen the social contract between state and society.

8. Conclusion

National Integration is a long drawn, hectic and continuous process, which should be accorded priority by every incumbent government. Strong and focused efforts are required for ensuring economic security, and prosperity, and inculcating national pride which would contribute to enhancing national integration. On an optimistic note, it is reassuring to convey that, despite immense challenges, the rejuvenation of the Pakistani nation is being accorded a priority consideration by the government and other elements of national power. With the strengthening of federating units through devolution of power and grant of provincial autonomy would lead to economic development and shared responsibilities by all the stakeholders. However, we need to guard against complacency, and take proper stock of the situation and solve the trivial and teething problems affecting national harmony and create a vibrant, prosperous and progressive Pakistan.

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