Pakistan’s Internal Security Threats in the age of Globalization

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Pakistan is a consociational society where different religious groups are always in conflict with each other on petty issues. There are many horizontal and vertical cleavages in Pakistan that keep people divided on the basis of religion, caste, creed, status and language along with ever lasting lacuna between haves and have nots. These cleavages are not only undermining Pakistan’s economic system but also causing socio-political instability. In this age of globalization media has exacerbated the crises and made Pakistan more vulnerable by disseminating disinformation, besides fabricated and manipulated stories that present a gloomy picture of the country and stop the foreign investment. Like other so called political parties and leadership, media is also working against the national interest of Pakistan. Religious sectarianism is not a new phenomenon but it is an old saga. In ancient times, in Greece dichotomy was found between state and the church and then catholic and protestant sects were very popular in the West. In the same way subcontinent was also teemed with different sects and ethnic groups. This paper is going to give details about Pakistan’s internal security threats regarding weak institutions, inefficient system capabilities, overlapping of political elite by non-political elite, media fabrications and non availability of honest leadership that make the system dysfunctional. Today all extremist elements are just showing their hatred against one man that is Pervaiz Musharraf and leading the country towards annihilation. This paper is based on optimism as I believe that we are sacrificing a lot after 9/11 and these sacrifices are taking Pakistan towards a destination that will make our next generations prosperous and happy.
In ancient Greece, there were conflicts between state and the church. In the West, controversies between Catholic and Protestant sects are found still today. Writing in the 19th century, William Carleton summed up what he thought was the essence of sectarianism:

“If you hate a man for an obvious and palpable injury, it is likely that when he cancels the injury by an act of subsequent kindness, accompanied by an exhibition of sincere sorrow, you will cease to look upon him as your enemy; but when the hatred is such that while feeling it, you cannot on a sober examination of your heart, account for it, there is little hope that you will ever be able to stifle the enmity which you entertain against him.”

Pakistan is a plural society. A number of peoples have been living in the country since independence (1947). Pakistan was attained on the basis of religion. Therefore, religion is considered important for ethnic groups, residing in Pakistan. Though Quaid-i-Azam believed that every individual in Pakistan would be free to live and worship according to the norms and values of his own religion. Untimely demise of the architect of Pakistan and assassination of the first premier pushed Pakistan into quagmire of crisis. It includes religious, linguistic, regional, provincial and cultural conflicts.

After independence, in 1947, different types of communities came to Pakistan. The government of Pakistan did its best to accommodate them according to the available resources. Unfortunately, few people took the advantages of initial crisis and grabbed over economic and other land resources. They became the influential class of the country. This class wanted to keep its influence over other masses of the country. So, they decided to bifurcate the people into different clans, castes, linguistic and religious groups. Among these groups religion became the effective element to mobilize the people to have influence over the government and other institutions.

Therefore, so-called landlords exploited people in the name of religion. Later on, religion became a source of livelihood for some so-called ulemas. They decided to go on and exploited the name of religion for their multifarious objectives. In this way certain ethnic groups came into existence. Shia and Sunni are two major ethnic groups on the basis of religion, which have
been conflicting with each other for last three decades of twentieth century.

The ethnic groups in Pakistan give rise to religious literature in which differences between Sunni sects have been mentioned.\(^3\) This religious literature causes conflicts in the country on sectarian basis.

In lieu of such crisis, provincial governments were directed to stop mosque sermons “against the faith of one sector or the other.”\(^4\) Religious sectarianism emerged in Pakistan in Zia regime. In mid eighties a number of killings of Shias and Sunni groups were seen.

“Pakistani Sunni Muslims distinguish themselves into sects according to their school: Deobandi, Brelvi, Wahabi, Ahl-al-Hadith and so forth.”\(^5\)

In this age of globalization Pakistan is facing certain internal security threats. These threats are found at two levels:

1- national level

2- international level

In this paper we will only talk about national level security threats as such threats exposed Pakistan towards international threats. Present government assumed power in 1999 after throwing out Nawaz Sharief government and ruled the country with an iron hand. After 9/11 Pakistan considered as a front line state against terrorism. Perwaiz Musharaf became blue eyed boy for America. It transforms his defacto rule into dejure to an extent.

Contrary to this Pervaiz Musharaf became very much unpopular at home after his authoritative policies regarding ousting chief justice of Pakistan Supreme Court, Lal Masjid Massacre and worst ever energy crises along with rising dearness of consumer goods. On February 18, 2008, people of Pakistan showed hatred against president policies in general elections and did not cast vote in favour of Pakistan Muslim League (Q) group, a president’s favourite party.

Therefore, today Pakistan is facing crises in legitimacy of rule. President considers himself the chief exponent of all
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powers. Parliament urges to have its say in these prevailing crises. Judiciary is totally helpless. Hence, internal security threats in Pakistan are not merely based on terrorism, extremism or any other religious ethnicity but it comprised of weak institutions, inefficient system capabilities, overlapping of political elite by non-political elite, media fabrications and non availability of honest leadership that make the system dysfunctional. Horse trading and floor crossing are such political upheavals that undermine a political system silently and make it futile in no time.

Security threats always increase when political system becomes dysfunctional. At present, Pakistan’s political system is facing the worst phase of its history. Its system capabilities are at the state of abeyance and making it vulnerable.

Politically, Pakistan is very much unstable owing to its weak political institutions, and low profile system capabilities. Jean Blondel defines them as: extractive, regulative, distributive, symbolic, and responsive. According to Blondel, extractive capability means that a political system should have the ability to extract its economic and natural resources at domestic and international levels. For example, collection of taxes at home and to bring more investments from abroad depicts that extractive capability is active. Regulative capability stands for the regulation of resources extracted both at home and abroad. Whereas distributive capability denotes the equitable distribution of the resources in the society obtained through extraction and regulation. First three capabilities directly relate to input function.

In the ‘global village’ environment this aspect of distribution resources is more attractive for direct investments from abroad and the quantum of exports, which indicate the effectiveness of distributive capability, symbolic capability, likewise, exposes the integration of a state through symbols, monuments, slogans, words and achievements. Whereas, responsive capability relates to the output function and demonstrates the system’s response to the influx of demand coming from the public sector. This responsiveness is always subject to the first four capabilities. If those capabilities are utilized timely and effectively, the response to the incoming demands will be adequately positive. But since all the capabilities relates to ever-changing domestic and global
environments, they have their own implications making them variable.

Globalization pierces into Pakistan’s social, political and economic systems. Luxury hotels; restaurants with power generators can be seen in different developed cities. Shops of personal computers, mobile phones, fax machines and Kodak colors with high speed one hour developing and printing service exist everywhere in Pakistan. It shows that western consumers have captured a lucrative market here and their ever available products have more value and credibility in this country. The country however, by itself though rich in computers and agriculture, lacks in electricity and water sources. A densely populated Pakistan, with heterogeneous culture and ethnic strife, seems to be another Yugoslavia of future.\(^7\)

Inefficient system capabilities are making Pakistan very much vulnerable at home. Alienation among common man is increasing owing to use of power against innocent and unarmed people by armed and uniformed men of the country. It created sentiments of hatred among people of the North and South Waziristan especially. Peoples living in other parts of Pakistan are also feeling insecure at home and aiming at men in uniform. It is very painful that people of the same country are killing their fellow people.

Media is another big reason of this security threat. Media is run by media conglomerates that have only one point agenda based on profit maximization. Its fabricated and manipulated stories are helping extremist elements. It is causing migration of dreams and relative deprivation\(^8\) among common people also. Luxurious life styles in their dramas, films and catchy advertisements attract people but their meager resources deny buying all that stuff, therefore they feel deprived and cause disturbance in the system. All three major institutions (Parliament, Judiciary and military) are unable to be professional in their approach. Media is also lacking the same element, so lack of professionalism, lack of stratified structures and lack of peoples’ participation in Pakistan are reasons of increasing internal security threats.

Unfortunately, Pakistan lack professional politicians, we only have political demagogues who always convince people with their glib of tongue. Empirical study exposes that in our
country both candidate and voter are selfish. Candidate always works for its election in the parliament by hook or crook and voter always casts the vote to the candidate who can go with him to police station at the time of his ordeal or could arrange a job for him or for his kins. This selfish attitude makes our system selfish that does not run for the welfare of the whole. It enhances individuality at local level and then at national level. It boosts provincialism that leads to extremism.

Religious ethnicity in Pakistan became at front in mid-eighties, when hardly a day went without the news of Sunni-Shia sectarian killings. The genesis of religious ethnicity in Pakistan can be found in different domestic and external perspectives and factors.

First, a heterogeneous character of Pakistani society, where Muslims are predominant along with other minority groups like Christians, Sikhs, Hindus, Parsis, and Ahmedis. All these communities are considered as religious ethnic groups in the country. Anti-Ahmedi riots in Pakistan in 1953 caused a serious threat to economic and political development of Pakistan. Zafarullah Khan and Mirza Ghulam Muhammad both were Qadianis and held higher official positions in government. In 1970s, Bhutto government declared the Ahmedis as minority ethnic group. It deprived them of certain rights. In the same way Hindus, Sikhs and Parsis are deprived of their rights. Parsis and Hindus are mostly found in Karachi. Ahmedis are mostly found in Rabwa. The structure of Pakistani society is divided among the different races and ethnic groups. The unbridled sectarianism, religious intolerance and ethnicity gave birth to non political actors to act irrationally and in chauvinistic manners who also had very much influence in the peripheral areas of Pakistan. “At times, they seem to even challenge the authority of state and successive governments could not curb their activities.”

Second, legacy of partition is an important and classical factor to understand the phenomenon of religious ethnicity in Pakistan. Pakistan came into existence in the name of Islam. After the making of Pakistan, role of religion and Ulemas in the governance of the state remain unanswered. The successors like Liaquat Ali Khan, Mohammad Ali Bogra, Ghulam Mohammad etc. were all progressive and liberal personalities.
They never gave any importance to Ulemas and religion. The religious parties thus started demonstrations against the government.

Third, over emphasis on the Islamic character of state, also give rise to the religious ethnicity in Pakistan; from Quaid-i-Azam to present, every head of the state and head of government employed the name of religion for sustaining the rule. In the 1956 constitution, “the state was to be called Islamic Republic of Pakistan.” In 1960s, sectarian conflicts emerged but were confined to the Punjab. In 1961, Shia-Sunni riots circumscribed to a village, Tharhi, in the Khairpur, Mirs District of Sindh. The rest of the country remained intact of such conflicts.

Four, dichotomy between the educated elites and conservative ulemas is another reason. Since, both belong to the same socio-economic and political conditions. Both are unable to create a unanimous solution for the development of the country because they are unaware about the real essence of religion and want to impose their own kind of religion which may be acceptable to one community but not to others.

Five, illiteracy among masses has compelled them to be exploited by the so-called ulemas who are exploiting religion for their bread and butter. Innocent and ignorant masses are unaware about the reality of religion and easily start following the beliefs given to them by Ulemas and scholars. Ultimately their blind faith in ulemas led them to ethnic conflicts that cause a heavy toll to their lives and belongings.

Six, Ijtehad is extinct in the present society that is the real source to appreciate the essence of Islam. Ijtehad is the source of Islamic laws, in which an individual does interpretation of certain problems in the light of laws of sharia according to his own reason. In Pakistan, the idea of Ijtehad is defunct. The so-called ulemas do not accept any effort of Ijtehad in a real sense. Therefore, in the absence of any Mujtahid, the religion Islam can go hardly with the changing conditions.

“They instinctively rely upon the medieval Fiqah (law) manuals rather than understanding a fresh interpretation in the light of revealed sources. This attitude can be seen in a host of disputes regarding which items are subject to zakat and usher at which specific bodily point should be amputated, what the status
and role of women should be in the Muslim society or how an Islamic economic system can be implemented.”

Seven, human rights are not fully given to ethnic minorities in Pakistan. Christians, Parsis, Sikhs and Hindus are not given their due share in economic resources. It creates a sense of deprivation among the religious ethnic groups. Quota system has been introduced at provincial levels but religious ethnic groups have not been given a proper representation in the different departments of the government.

Eight, misinterpretation of religion is a major element that causes conflict among the religious ethnic groups which intentionally misinterpret the religious norms and values to keep them at daggers drawn.

Nine, foreign intelligence agencies cause religious ethnic conflicts in rival states like India, Afghanistan and Israel bribe certain religious ethnic groups in rival states and cause disintegration in those states. The Indian intelligence agency Research Analytical Wing (RAW) always indulges in performing destructive activities in Pakistan.

Ten, Pakistan’s geopolitical contiguity has also caused religious ethnic conflicts. “The Zia regime (1977-88) coincided with the advent of the Islamic Revolution in Iran (1977 and onwards) and the soviet military intervention in Afghanistan. For the first time in the history of Islam, Shia ulemas took the reign of power in Iran.” Pakistan’s contiguity with Afghanistan, Russia, India and China has made the situation more complex for the religious ethnic groups. “The ulemas had an access to the weapons and money after the soviet intervention in Afghanistan.” Pakistan is teemed with sectarian and ethnic conflicts which are being created by religious scholars and their followers patronized by foreign powers like Iran on one hand and Saudi Arabia and Iraq on the other. Pakistan government also guesses the Indian hand in supporting Sipah-e-Sahaba against Shias and creating troubles in the country.

Sipah-e-Sahaba and Sipah-e-Muhamad were two ethnic militant groups, who had been conflicting with each other on the instance of foreign powers. One factor is much considerable that the Sunni school of thought is taught in academic institutions but Shia and other schools of thoughts are not allowed to be
imparted in academic institutions so here conflict starts on the basis of sects.

In the pretext of such factors which cause rift among religiously united groups, certain implications can be observed which may cause threat to Pakistan’s national security. Some observers consider Pakistan a vulnerable and meager state encompassed by the forces of religious ethnicity and sectarianism.22

Ethnic conflicts are posing serious threats to our national security. Undoubtedly, threats were confined to Karachi. Sectarianism, which is the corollary of ethnic conflict, "poses horizontal threats to Pakistan’s national security. The hot spots of sectarianism are not confined to a particular geographical region of the country. Shias and Sunnis all over the country feel threatened by fanatics of other sect whose number is on rise and have deadly weapons."23

Religious ethnic conflicts can lead to the disintegration of the state and undermine the political and economic development of the country at a large scale. Religious ethnic groups run their own foreign and security policy agenda that is often does not correspond with the national security of Pakistan.24

In the Indian held Kashmir, Jamait-e-Islami publicly supports Al Umer Mujahdeen and Hizb-ul-Mujahdeen.25 In 1988, Islami Ittehad of Nawaz Sharif and Jamait-e-Islami were supporting Sikh’s right of self-determination in India.26 Russia also puts an allegation upon Pakistan’s religious ethnic group Jamait-e-Islami, being involved in training Chechen rebels, striving for succession from Russian federation.27 China, fifty years old friend of Pakistan, scares about rebellion in Xinjan region as Uighur Muslims have good relations with Jamait-e-Islami since 1960s. In this context China has denied to open the second route to Central Asia through Kirgysistan.28

Another classical example can be seen in this respect; Chinese Presidents Jing Zemain and Hu Jintao visited India and Pakistan in 199629 and 2006 respectively, suggested that both India and Pakistan should resolve Kashmir dispute through bilateral negotiations. It shows the changed attitude of China in the backdrop of Jamait-e-Islami’s support to Muslims in Xinjian province.
Therefore, above-mentioned examples categorically reveal that internal security threats along with religious ethnicity is pushing Pakistan towards the diplomatic isolation and increasing the crisis more rapidly. Not only the national security is endangered by the religious ethnicity but political and economic developments are also being marred by their activities inside and outside the country. Foreign investment never comes to a country where fundamental groups seem active in the country. Therefore unemployment rises on one hand and industrialization and modernization stop on the other that are sine qua non for sustainable human development.

Religious elements flourish when state stop performing its duties. The incidents like Lal Masjid and Maulana Fazlullah started preaching Islam through an illegal establishment of an FM radio. Why the authorities remain silent at the time of launching that radio? In the same way why Lal Masjid extremists allowed to established? All these examples prove that government remains dormant and unable to perform its functions in time. Therefore we have to face the music.

In this age of globalization people are very much aware of each and every thing. It is almost impossible for the people to keep them ignorant from facts. It is an open secret today that Pakistan has been indulged in taking dictation from America and its allies that made the Musharraf regime unpopular among the people and lost general elections in February 2008. This is the positive side of media that articulates the public opinion but when it sensationalizes the facts and distorts reality, it becomes a crime.

Media did well in exposing dictatorial activities of the Perwaiz Musharraf regime and kept them at heals during judicial crises. Government became aware that authoritarianism and concentration of power can not win hearts of the people. Flour crises, energy crises, no rule of law, no social justice, unemployment, dearness have made our system dysfunction. The status of system capabilities is at the lowest ebb.
Recommendations to curb internal security threats in Pakistan

Pakistan is a country where different types of people have been living together for a long time. Government of Pakistan should try to understand the basic needs of different religious ethnic groups and should provide them opportunities accordingly. The economic resources of the country should also be shared equally as to satisfy the demands of all, lead them to assimilate themselves in the main stream of the country. These majority groups are not ready to amalgamate with other ethnic groups.

In Pakistan, Ahmedis are never welcomed by Sunni Muslims therefore; rift between them can hardly be eliminated but minimized by fulfilling their needs and demands in time.

President of Pakistan is very much concerned with the ethnic concerns in Pakistan that is why he has given much liberty to the press and media to hold debates and open discussions for maximum information and awareness to the people.

Pakistan is a consociational society where different religions are found on different life styles. Undoubtedly, Musharraf government is doing its best to curb religious sectarianism in Pakistan. The reforms include ban on different extremist religious parties, supervision of Mudrassas, and change in curriculum and syllabus in different grades. The U.S. government is still unsatisfied with the reforms and consistently forcing the government to have check on extremist elements in Pakistan and its surroundings. The executive summary of the U.S. also talks about Hudood Ordinances and government efforts to create a moderate environment in the country.\textsuperscript{31}

Matter of the fact is that Pakistan has done much better reforms to curb ethnicity. Pervaiz Musharraf himself at stake owing to his reforms for religious tolerance and enlighten moderation. He is really “in the line of fire” after his policies for mudrassas, change of syllabus in text books, women protection bill, Lal Masjid massacre, Waziristan dilemma, rift with judiciary and many other that all based on pursuing U.S interests. As Musharraf himself accepted in a private TV Channel
programme that “yes he had been under pressure,” that pressure definitely put upon by the U.S.

Conclusion

In Pakistan, religion is always politicized to legitimize the rule of the ruler. That is why religion can never become binding force in Pakistan. It is not the fault on the part of the religion but wrong doers are those who have indulged in worldly affairs unable to work for the welfare of the whole. They always have their own axe to grind and exploit the unevenness in the country for attaining their nefarious objectives. Allah says in Quran, “*Do not call names who call others as their omnipotent except Me.*” Allah is himself saying no religious ethnic group should be allowed to abuse any other religious ethnic group of the country. So we are not supposed to abuse anyone’s religion, as this is the real essence of Islam in which tolerance is preferred. Equality, fraternity and justice are other pristine canons of Islam, which unite the society for good. No religion in the world preaches killing and destruction. It is high time for us to consider that panacea of all our ills lie in developing democratic institutions, specialization of functions, sustainable human development that are only possible in good governance that can only be achieved through independence of judiciary and rule of law.

Tolerance towards other communities is sine qua non for all individuals. It will boost national consensus and enhance solidarity among peoples. On the part of the state it is indispensable to perform its duties efficiently without any biased and egoistic approach. Until or unless rule of law is not observed in Pakistan internal security threats will remain even in this age of globalization.
Notes and References


2 http://www.community-relations.org.uk/resources/what_is_sectarianism/. Website visited on 18-12-06.


4 *Dawn Overseas*, 3 February 1983.


11 Ibid., 16

12 Ibid.

14 Ibid., 117.

15 Ibid.

16 Aziz & Weiner (eds), The State, 364.

17 Ibid, 365.

18 Ibid,119.

19 Ibid. p.120.


21 Ibid.

22 Barry Buzan, People, States and Fear (Brighton: Wheatsheaf, 1982), 45.

23 Aziz & Weiner (eds), The State, 121.

24 Ibid.


27 Aziz & Weiner (eds), The State, 122.


29 The Daily Dawn, December 2, 1996.
30 Ibid.

31 http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2006/71284.htm, website visited on 08-12-2006.