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Horizontal inequalities and identity conflicts: A study of Pakistan

Abstract

Pakistan is a multi-ethnic state. All the provinces of Pakistan though identified with majority ethnic groups are homes of more than one ethnic group who are followers of different cultural traditions. These minority ethnic groups are not uniformly scattered in their home provinces but are concentrated in certain specific regions where they form majority of the population. These regions are considered by their inhabitants as deprived and neglected in socio-economic development due to dominance of majority ethnic groups identified with core regions of the provinces. Bulks of developmental funds are utilized in areas inhabited by dominant/privileged ethnic groups and situation is not different in terms of job opportunities especially in public sector. That has created a sense of deprivation in these regions and produced intra-provincial conflicts between privileged and deprived regions. Populations of deprived regions are not satisfied on inclusion of their areas in existing provinces and demand separation. This study examines the causes that generate the demands for creation of new provinces.

Key Words: conflict, inequality, identity, ethnicity, culture, demand, province

Introduction:

The paper examines the relevancy of the two paradigms of conflict emergence; one considers invigoration of cultural identities by leadership for political purposes as the prime explanation behind conflict (instrumentalists view) while the other focuses on horizontal inequalities as motives of conflict. The basic argument of the paper is that whether existing political horizontal inequalities and socio-economic regional disparities are causal factors of conflicts or the exploitation of cultural differences by elite of ethnic elite rare causing emergence of conflicts and demands for creation of new provinces.

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This research article contains three sections. The introductory section is credited to explain the theoretical debate of conflict genesis, ethnicity and horizontal inequalities. The proceeding section explains the outcome and consequences of conflict and elaborates that how the conflicts between deprived and privileged groups have transformed into the demands for creation of new provinces in Pakistan. It also explains the relationship between the demand of new provinces and horizontal inequalities. The concluding section of the article is comprised of two sub parts. The first part highlights conflict preventive strategies to avoid the worse consequences of conflict and the second part concludes the findings logically.

The term “conflict” is referred as a state of disharmony, disagreement, strife or friction found among the divergent groups. This happens due to the incompatibility of goals and the difference of opinion, perceptions and beliefs (Cordell & Wolff, 2009). It is a multi-dimensional natural phenomenon and is often regarded an important social paradox which ranges religious, social, cultural, economic and political confrontations and rivalries (Stewart & Fitzgerald, 2000). It gradually leads to revolts, extremisms, wars, revolutions, ethno-nationalist sentiments and separatist tendencies if it remains prevalent over a long span of time. Abner Cohen argued that conflicts are not the product of ethnic distinctiveness but of ethnic strife found in multi-ethnic and multi-national societies. He further elaborated that ethnic distinctiveness exists almost in all the societies but there are many multi-ethnic societies which are living peacefully in coexistence since decades (Cohen, 1976). However, in some societies, ethnicity leads towards the development of conflict and violence in very short span of time (Zadeh, 2016).

The instrumentalists believe that the political elite of socio-cultural groups politicize the ethnicity, language and culture to get the support of the general masses for the achievement of their own socio-political and economic objectives. This paradigm considers ethnicity as an instrument in the hands of elite classes to achieve their own personal interests (Brass, 1991). Instrumentalists attribute the ethnic conflicts to the actions of community leaders. *“Who use their cultural groups as sites of mass mobilization and as constituencies in their competition for power and resources, because they found them more effective than social classes”* (Smith, 2010). Accordingly, it is argued that these are the group motives and the personal interests of the elite that cause conflict development in heterogeneous societies.

Frances Stewart considered horizontal inequalities as cause of conflicts. She argued that disparities and inequalities were the actual propelling forces which triggered all types of conflicts. She classified those in following four categories, the social, the cultural, the economic and the political horizontal inequalities (Stewart, 2009). This quadruplet encompasses all the factors that might play any significant role in conflict formation and conflict escalation. The existence of any of these inequalities can result in the emergence of conflict but its escalation is more likely when economic and political differences between groups overlap with cultural differences. That creates a feeling of hatred and envious amongst member of under-privileged groups for members of advantageous groups which can even consequent in form of violence (Stewart, 2002). Social horizontal inequalities

(SHIs) include a very broader range of services such like; education facilities, the outcomes of education, health care institutions and housings. Cultural horizontal inequalities (CHIs) range recognition of language, cultural rituals, values, norms and all cultural and religious practices. Economic horizontal inequalities (EHIs) entail the inequalities like; ownership and access to financial sources, employment opportunities, income levels and other human and natural resources distribution. Political horizontal inequalities (PHIs) embodies the unequal distribution of political opportunities and power arrangement among the diverse groups, including control over presidency, cabinet, parliamentary assemblies, bureaucracy, local and provincial governments, the armed forces and the police. They also beset the inequalities in people's capabilities to participate politically and to express their needs (Stewart, 2013).

Horizontal inequalities seem to be more infuriated and provocative in cases where they coincide with economic and political disparities. Cultural and social horizontal inequalities initially spawn the situations that later lead towards the development of sense of marginalization and dissatisfaction. Consequently, such situations culminate in the form of political mobilization of general masses. That helps the group leaders to get the masses' support in their favor (Brown & Stewart, 2015). In this way horizontal inequalities play an important role in conflict development and in the formation of ethno nationalist movements. The peaceful political movements for achievements of demands may transform into violent struggles if they do not get sufficient attention of government functionaries and national leaders. Political exclusion is considered as the biggest triggering factor in conflict development. It must be avoided by adopting strategy of political inclusion. There are many states on the globe such as Bolivia, Brazil and Ghana etc., where severe economic horizontal inequalities exist but those states have successfully deterred emergence of any serious conflict just because of inclusion of major ethnic groups in power structure (Gurr, 1993). It means that political inclusiveness and participation of all the major ethnic groups in the power structure is the primary reason behind the aversion of conflict in such societies. Conflicts are most likely to erupt when political and economic horizontal inequalities coexist (Stewart & Fitzgerald, 2000).

The case of Pakistan is quintessential of a state which had witnessed several identity-based conflicts due to its population's diversity and attendant inequalities. Disparity issues and ethnic divide disintegrated Pakistan within just twenty-four years of its inception. The perception of political domination, economic exploitation and cultural alienation by ruling elites from West Pakistan was so deep and widespread among the people of East Pakistan that they stood up against the state that ultimately led to a revolt in 1971. Post 1971 Pakistan comprises of four constituent units that are named as provinces; Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and Balochistan. All the four provinces are multi-lingual; multi-ethnic and multi-cultural in their societal composition and each province had witnessed multi-nature conflicts at various levels (Ahmar, 2013). The ethnic composition of each province demonstrates a significant number of minorities besides the majority ethnic group of the province (Mushtaq & Shaheen, 2017). Punjabi, Sindhi, Baloch and Pashtun are designated as the majority ethnic groups of Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan and KP, respectively (Mushtaq, 2016). The provincial lingual or ethnic minorities are territorially concentrated in certain

specific regions of all the provinces and constitute majority of those regions' population. The Siraiki speaking minority group resides in southern part of Punjab. Hindko speaking group forms the majority of population in Hazara division of KP. Northern Balochistan is predominantly populated by the Pashto speaking group. Urdu speaking group is concentrated in urban center of Southern Sindh, particularly in the cities of Karachi, and Hyderabad (Mushtaq, 2017). Besides Punjabi, Pashto, Sindhi and Balochi languages, about sixty other languages and dialects are spoken and more than twelve other identity groups dwell in the these provinces (Singh, Zhang, & Besmel, 2012). These four constituent units of contemporary Pakistan were established by the foreign rulers in pre-partition era in order to meet their colonial needs and fulfill imperialistic designs or by the dictator Yahya Khan when he abolished one-unit in 1970 to overcome administrative problems. The demarcation of the existing boundaries of four provinces neither corresponds to the ethnic realities and nor reflect the aspirations of the minority peopong living therein. There is general (mis)perception or impression that Punjab province appertains to Punjabis, Sindh to Sindhis, Balochistan to Balochis and KP to Pakhtun. The speakers of other languages in these provinces consider themselves as minorities and a sense of alienation and inferiority has developed among them.

Societal Composition of Pakistan in Terms of Ethno-Linguistic Identity

Lingual Identity	Punjab	Sindh	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	Balochistan	Pakistan
Urdu	4.51	21.05	0.78	0.97	7.57
Punjabi	75.23	6.99	0.97	2.52	44.15
Pashto	1.16	4.19	73.9	29.64	15.42
Sindhi	0.13	59.73	0.04	5.58	14.1
Siraiki	17.36	1.0	3.86	2.42	10.53
Balochi	0.66	2.11	0.01	54.76	3.57
Others	0.95	4.93	20.43	4.11	4.66
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Source: (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics; 6th Population and Housing Sensus, 2017)

The provincial minority groups demand provincial status for their respective regions. Ethno linguistic movement activated by *Siraikis* has been transformed into a separate province movement whose ultimate objective is the demarcation of a separate Siraiki province. Similarly, *Hazaravals* (inhabitants of Hazara division in KP) demand creation of Hazara province comprising of six districts of Hazara division. Likewise, Mohajirs or Urdu speaking community of urban Sindh aspires for the inception of separate Mohajir province consisting of Karachi and Hyderabad.. The demands for creation of new provinces by these ethnic minorities have successfully gained sufficient amount of attention both at regional (local) as well as at national level. However, the Siraiki and Hazara separate province movements seem to be more vivid and vibrant as compared to others, such as those in in Sindh and Balochistan. Siraiki and Hazara nationalists justify their demands for separate provinces on the basis of social, cultural, economic and

political horizontal inequalities which exist between members of majority ethnic groups and minority ethnic groups (Shaheen, 2015).

Conflict and Horizontal Inequalities in Pakistan: An Assessment

Punjab is the most populous province constituting 52.94% and 25.79% of total population and mass of Pakistan respectively (Pakistan, 2017). It is comprised of nine administrative divisions (1. Sargodha, 2. Multan, 3. Bahawalpur, 4. Dera Ghazi Khan, 5. Faisalabad, 6. Lahore, 7. Gujranwala, 8. Sahiwal, 9. Rawalpindi) and thirty-six districts. Its societal composition is very heterogeneous and diverse. Punjabi speaking population constitutes the predominant majority in all areas of the province except South Punjab region comprised of Multan, Dera Ghazi Khan and Bahawalpur Divisions. Siraiki speakers form majority of the region's population (Hashmi & Majeed, 2014). Historically, the region of South Punjab had always been a fertile and resource abundant area. Region's peculiar culture bestows it with a unique identity which differentiates it from other areas of Punjab. During Mughal rule most of the territories of southern Punjab formed a separate province named as Multan but during Sikh rule its provincial status was abolished as it was annexed with Punjab (Shaheen, 2015). In past 'Bahawalpur Division' of the present Punjab province was a princely state that was merged with West Pakistan as a consequence of One Unit Scheme in 1955. However, later when one-unit scheme was dissolved in July 1970, Bahawalpur's earlier status was not restored, and it was made a division (with three districts) of Punjab province and still it is an administrative division of Punjab. In addition, Dera Ghazi Khan was a part of Balochistan province before its merger with Punjab (Mushtaq, 2016).

Currently, South Punjab (Multan, Bahawalpur and Dera Ghazi Khan) constitutes 48.5% and 32.61% of the total land mass and population of province, respectively. This region is relatively impoverished and less developed (Butt & Ahmed, 2016). Social, cultural, economic and political horizontal inequalities are very much explicit here. It is evident from the report published by National Assembly of Pakistan that the people of South Punjab are actually deprived in terms of resources' allocation, job opportunities, educational facilities and other development projects. Civil bureaucrats for federal services of Pakistan are selected on the basis of quota allocated for all the provinces and federal capital area. Share of Punjab province is about 50% of the total bureaucratic jobs according to allocation scheme. Principally, South Punjab should get nearly 33% of Punjab's quota on the basis of its ratio of population but it is receiving very minimal share. Twelve to fifteen percent of the candidates selected from Punjab belong to southern regions of the province. In 2013 the number of Punjabi officers serving in the three important civil service groups; DMG, OMG and Police were 1086 but those recruited from the southern region were only 157 (Baber, et al., 2013). The quota for civil services is further distributed amongst different zones in all provinces except Punjab. KP is divided in five, Balochistan in six and Sindh in two zones. The intra-provincial division in zones secures the share of different regions within a province in civil services of Pakistan. It is an effective safeguard to prevent the over-representation of more advanced areas and under-representation of backward areas in elite services of Pakistan. This safeguard is missing in Punjab. Candidates from central and northern areas of Punjab are in

advantageous position in open merit competitive examinations for CSP as compared to inmates of South Punjab because of the better educational facilities available in their areas. The allocated quota of CSP jobs for the province of Punjab has been mostly utilized by northern and central Punjab. It has created a sense of deprivation in South Punjab. The educated youth belonging to southern region consider it a grave injustice which is being incessantly perpetrated due to dominance of central Punjab. Aggrieved sentiments of marginalization are further aggravated due to the existence of zoning system in all provinces of Pakistan except Punjab.

Financial resources between center and all provinces are distributed on the basis of National Finance Commission (NFC) award. The fundamental criterion for distribution of financial resources through NFC is population. Punjab receives the large share in NFC award because it is most populous province. Lion share of Punjab in NFC award is attributed to the inclusion of large population of Saraiki speaking southern region in the province because South Punjab constitutes thirty-three percent of the total provincial population. Punjab got 51.7% share in 7th NFC Award. At least one third of development funds must have been allocated for the developmental projects of South Punjab but the amount of funds spent there was too less. In 1970s Multan and Rahim Yar Khan got fourth and sixth position respectively in ranking of districts on the basis of achieved developmental level but in 2011 Multan dropped down to 13th position in ranking and Rahim Yar Khan was placed at 16th number as per the development index of the Punjab province (Burki, et al., 2012). The educational institutions established in South Punjab for primary, elementary, secondary and degree level education are 36.05%, 32.83%, 25.90% and 24.23% respectively. This is less than satisfactory. Twenty-two public sector universities were operating in Punjab Province but only four universities were located in South Punjab and the remaining eighteen universities were located in Northern and Central Punjab. The eleven districts of southern region of Punjab hosted only five medical colleges and same number of engineering institutions (Shaheen, 2015).

The health facilities in Siraiki speaking region of Punjab province were also not sufficient. Only 95 health providing locations were available in the region that shares the 48.5 % of total area of Punjab. The rest of Punjab had 245 health care centers. This shows prevalence of extensive disparity among the Siraiki speaking region and North-Central Punjab. Industrial infrastructure was not satisfactory in Siraiki speaking region as there were only 2105 factories in the region which were just 17% of the total number of factories in Punjab. The districts of Siraiki speaking region fell in “Poor”, “Very Poor” and “Extremely Poor” category in classification of districts on the basis of financial status (Burki, et al., 2012). In addition, ten out of eleven districts of the region fell in the category of bottom line districts according to ranking of districts based on socio-economic development. Economy of Siraiki speaking region is agricultural based as the region produced 39% to 41 % wheat, 36% to 38% sugar, 30% rice and 85% cotton of the total production of these crops in Punjab (Baber, et al., 2013).

In 1970s, separate province movement was initiated by Siraiki nationalists on the basis of distinctive identity of the region and the pervasive sense of deprivation amongst population of the region due to existence of cultural, social, economic

and political inequalities. The claim of separate identity is based on the distinctness of Siraiki language and culture. Initially, Siraiki was considered a variant of Punjabi language by state authorities but Siraiki speakers never acknowledged that opinion about their native language. They considered their mother tongue as a distinctive historical language and a basis of their distinct identity. They demanded that region of the Siraiki ethnic group should be accorded provincial status like the regions of four other major ethnic groups, the Punjabis, Balochs, Pukhtoons and Sindhis. National census of Pakistan conducted in 1981, officially recognized Siraiki as a separate independent language. Official recognition of linguistic status for Siraiki language was construed as tacit acknowledgement of separate identity of Siraiki speaking region. The inmates of the South Punjab intensified their efforts for redrawing of provincial boundaries with the passage of time though at initial stages the substantial evidences of popular support for the leadership of separation movement seemed lacking. The sense of deprivation in the region due to hegemonic position of northern and central region in administrative structure of province fueled the sentiments of separation from Punjab. Gradually movement gained momentum and the voices for creation of separate province became more vociferous. A part of the regional political elite associated with mainstream political parties also joined the chorus. In 2010, while participating in parliamentary debates for the passage of 18th amendment in constitution, several parliamentarians from South Punjab raised the issue of Siraiki province (Mushtaq, 2018). In 2012, Punjab provincial assembly passed resolution for the creation of Siraiki and Bahawalpur provinces, respectively (Asgar, 2012). A national parliamentary commission comprising of twelve members from Senate and National Assembly was also appointed for the creation of new province (s) in Punjab by the then Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Government (Baber, et al., 2013). Parliamentary commission very clearly indicated the existence of economic and political horizontal inequalities and evidenced that the region was being deprived of its due share in socio-economic development and political opportunities.

The province of Sindh is in the western part of Indian subcontinent, which was annexed by British government with Bombay presidency in 1843 and this annexation remain intact for about ninety-two years. It was again separated from Bombay and was granted separate provincial status in 1936 (Khan, 2010). Sindh joined Pakistan as a separate province at the time of partition. About seven million Muslims migrated to new-born Pakistan because of partition of subcontinent. Punjab and Sindh became the largest immigrant recipient provinces. The issue of refugees' assimilation and adjustment was quite complex as well as difficult in Sindh as compared to Punjab. The immigrant influx in Punjab mainly consisted of Punjabis and a minor portion of non-Punjabis. Punjabi refugees assimilated in the new area immediately as they shared common language, culture, customs and traditions. In Sindh, the distinctive cultural characteristics of immigrant population which were different from the native Sindhis' culture created difficulties for the process of assimilation (Ahmed, 1999). The province also had to face internal migration (Punjabi and Pakthun) at large scale due to great economic opportunities beside huge influx of external migrants.

The contemporary Sindh province constitutes 23.04% and 17.70% of total population and land mass of country respectively (Pakistan, 2017). It is the second

largest province of country in terms of population. It consists of six administrative divisions (1. Larkana, 2. Sukkur, 3. Hyderabad, 4. Karachi, 5. Mirpur Khas, 6. Shaheed Benazirabad) and twenty-nine districts. Majority of Sindhi population is located in rural areas while in Hyderabad, Karachi, Sukkur and Mirpur Khas there is an overwhelming majority of Mohajirs (immigrants/Urdu speakers). According to 1951 census, Mohajir community constituted 55% of total population of Karachi. They had migrated from India at the time of partition or after that and settled in urban areas (Siddiqi, 2010). Majority of them was educated and professionally skilled and had been enjoying privileged positions in undivided India before partition. So very soon they started to dominate the power structure of the newly established central government. They enjoyed a privileged position in political power structure, civil and military bureaucratic and business and commercial arena, thereupon they felt pride for Pakistani nationalism and loathed to the ideology of sub nationalist or ethnic identity (Ahmed, March, 1998). In 1959, Mohajirs' representation was 23% in top military posts while native Sindhis' ratio was very minimal. Gen Ayub's government decision to shift the federal capital from Karachi to Islamabad was perceived by immigrant community as the first deliberate attempt to undermine their hegemonic position in the country. They construed it as a deliberate ploy to facilitate the shifting of bureaucratic control from immigrants to Punjabis and Pakhtun who were emerging as the new power contenders although immigrants still enjoyed dominant position in higher civilian bureaucracy (Haq, 1995). Despite the presence of political governments formed by native Sindhi elite, immigrants continued to dominate the bureaucracy as well as economic and trade activities in urban centers of Sindh. In 1955, all the areas located in western part of the country were merged in a single province named as West Pakistan. It was also called as one-unit scheme (Malik, 1962). Sindh lost its provincial status because of that decision. The immigrants had to wrestle with the ever-growing power of Punjabi and Pukhtoon ethnic groups to protect their privileged position. The focal points of competition were central government stationed at Islamabad and provincial government of one-unit at Lahore. The political-executive especially of the one-unit was dominated by more numerous Punjabis. Punjabi and Pukhtoon were also better represented in top echelon of military. Military by then had replaced the civilian bureaucracy as the most powerful institution of state. That situation created a sense of relative deprivation amongst Urdu speaking immigrant community because despite privileged position they felt being marginalized. One unit was dissolved in 1970 and all the provinces of West Pakistan regained their provincial status. Karachi, being a federal capital, was separated from Sindh province after creation of Pakistan. When one unit was abolished, Karachi was again merged with Sindh province. However, a section of Urdu speaking political leadership from Karachi opposed the decision. It demanded that either Karachi should be given the status of a separate province or should be declared as federally administered autonomous entity. Even some Sindhi nationalist toyed with the idea to support the separation of Karachi from Sindh (Tahir, 2010).

Sindh was restored as a province with Karachi as its capital. General elections were held in 1970 and PPP under leadership of a Sindhi politician Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto got the majority seats in West Pakistan. PPP formed government in the center as well as in the province of Sindh, besides Punjab. PPP government

amended the quota system for induction in federal and provincial bureaucracy that marginalized Mohajir community. Sind's share in federal jobs was divided in urban and rural categories. Rural and urban Sindh were allocated 60% and 40%, respectively, of bureaucratic jobs in the central government allocated for Sindh province. Same formula was applicable for provincial public-sector jobs. Mohajirs representation started to decline relatively and indigenous Sindhis' representation started to rise as at that time Muhajir vs Sindhi representation was about 30.29% and 2.5% respectively. In 1972, Sindh provincial assembly passed a bill declaring Sindhi as official language and medium of instruction in Sindh and that Sindhi language must be taught as second language to all those who are non – Sindhis. It was also called mandatory for all government officials to learn Sindhi within a prescribed time limit. All such legislations born sense of alienation among Mohajir community and they became concerned to their distinct Mohajir identity and started conscious efforts for its preservation (Akhtar, 2013). In 1980s a Sindhi intellectual Qadir Magsi suggested that non-Sindhis (Mohajir) must be expelled from their native land. A political organization Mohajir Qaumi Movement (MQM) was formed by young Urdu speaking students under the leadership of Altaf Hussain claiming that Mohajir community is the fifth nationality of Paksiatn and it should be constitutionally recognized. Later it was renamed as Mutihhida Qaumi Movement (MQM) in 1997. Majority of the Urdu-speaking Muhajirs see a wide gap between what they get and what they feel they are entitled to because of their parents' generation's contributions to the Pakistan movement, their deeply ingrained sense of cultural superiority, and their educational achievements. Ted Gur termed this situation as “relative deprivation.” MQM addressed or exploited this sense of “relative deprivation” effectively, and thus became an example of extremely successful political party capable of collective mobilization of ethnic loyalties. During the period of 1973 to 1986, Mohajirs' representation started to decline in military and federal bureaucratic services. In 1974 Gazetted post (grade 16 to 22) occupied by Mohajirs vs Sindhis' representation was 30.20% and 4.30% respectively but in 1989 it was as 14.80% to 6.10%, correspondingly. Ratio of senior gazetted posts between Mohajirs and Sindhis in 1974 was 46.08% and 3.60%, respectively, while in 1983 the ratio was 31.50% and 6.80%,

According to 13th triennial census of federal government employee's published on 01-07-2003, share of the Sindh province in federal bureaucracy was 18.9% whereas representation of all districts of Sindh excluding Karachi and Hyderabad was 7.6%. It means two main urban centers of southern Sindh predominantly populated by Immigrant community had 11.3% representation in federal services of Pakistan (Khan, 2018). This reflects a gradual decline in immigrants' representation for federal bureaucratic jobs. Recently, the demand for separate Mohajir province is being raised by MQM. They justify their demand on the basis of their grievances, such as those related to denial of recognition of their separate identity and because of discrimination in jobs under quota system, and provision of insufficient civic amenities in urban centers of southern Sindh.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is ranked on third number in terms of population by constituting 14.69 % of total population (Pakistan, 2017). On the other hand, it is the smallest province representing only 9.36% of total land mass of the country. It is comprised of seven administrative divisions (1. Bannu, 2. Dera Ismail Khan, 3. Hazara, 4. Kohat, 5. Malakand, 6. Mardan, 7. Peshawar) and twenty-five districts.

Out of which, Hazara division has a substantial number of Hindko speakers besides Pashtun community. Initially Hazara division was comprised of five districts (1. Abbottabad, Haripur, Mansehra, Batagram and Kohistan) but later in 2011 Torghar, formerly designated as a tribal area, was annexed with it as district. Presently, Hazara division includes six districts and has 17.44% of total population of KP province. Nearly 87% population of the division is Hindkowan (Hinku speaking). Various tribes / clans living in Hazara Division include Sayyad, Mishwani, Tarin, Jadoon, Swati, Abbassi, Karlal, Awan, Gujjar, Kohistani etc. These groups include both pakhtun and non-pakhtun people. Hindko, Pashtho, Kohistani, Gujri, and Potohari are the major languages of Hazara.

It is the rich region in minerals and natural resources. The three main dams of Pakistan, Tarbela, Khanpur and Ghazi Barotha are located in Hazara division. Tarbela Dam contributes 39% of the total electricity in the total production of country (Hassan, 2015). Tourism is another big source of revenue generation of the region. The lakes of Lulusar, Dudipatsar and Saiful Muluk are located here. Tobacco and tea are the major crops of the region. KP' share in Pakistan's total GDP has been 10.5%, although the province accounts for 14.69% of Pakistan's total population. The part of the economy that KP province leads is forestry, the bigger part of which comes from Hazara division. Hattar Industrial Estate also lies on a strategic location along the route of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) in Haripur (district of Hazara division) and it can go a long way in promoting exports from the region to Afghanistan, China and Central Asian countries. According to a latest survey, Abbottabad (district of Hazara division) has the highest Human Development Index (HDI) after Islamabad in Pakistan and the highest in the KP. HDI is a composite statistic used to rank areas by level of "human development". These values are provided by the Social Development in Pakistan Annual Review 2014-15. Other cities of the KP following Abbottabad are Haripur, Mansehra and Peshawar (Three districts are of Hazara division out of four).

People of Hazara division perceive themselves politically marginalized and economically deprived. Their perception of being marginalized politically reinforced after renaming of the province in 2010 (Ahmar 2016). Their economic deprivation did not end even after substantial increase in transfer of funds from central to provincial government after announcement of 7th National Finance Commission (NFC) Award in 2009. For instance, it was reported that Hazara division, that formed about 17% of province area and population, was given merely Rs.5.6 billion, i.e. just 8.08 percent of the total Rs.69.3 billion Annual Development Programme (ADP) allocated in the annual budget of 2010-11. It was not only far below the proportion of the Hazara division in terms of its size of area and population in that of the province but also to former's contribution to provincial revenue generation through tourism, forest exploitation and electricity generation etc. (Tahir, 2016). In the budget of 2011-12, Hazara division was allocated only 6.1 percent of the ADP which triggered serious concerns among the local people as well as members of civil society. An observer commented that if the NFC formula was applied, Hazara province would have received 19 percent of the provincial allocation for ADP. The flood hit areas of Hazara division particularly Kohistan district was also badly neglected by the provincial government. Kohistan district constituted for 12 percent of the flood affected

people in the province, but it was allocated only Rs.25 million, i.e. less than 3 percent of total Rs.8.46 billion reserved for the flood affected people of the province. It reinforced the impression that developed areas of Peshawar valley were further developed at the expense of backward areas of Hazara who were lagging far behind in many respects than the former (Equal allocation sought for KP districts, 2012). This trend continued even after change of provincial government post general elections in 2013. People of Hazara division complained that they were being deprived of their share in the allocation of funds in annual budget. The budgetary allocation for districts in Hazara division were decreased while those for Nowshera, home district of chief minister Pervez Khattak, were increased in the budget on 206-17. Even the budget allocated for the Hazara division was not fully utilized and it also slow down the process of reconstruction of school buildings and other infrastructure destroyed in the devastating earthquake of 2005 (KP's new budget unclear priorities, unfair allocations, 2016). Even those reserved for the region had been diverted to other areas mainly to the constituencies of chief minister and key ministers of the provincial government. The local leaders, thus, strongly believed that these injustices, inequalities and widespread discrimination against the people of Hazara division would continue until a separate province of their own is created (Sadaqat, 2014).

The movement for a separate Hazara province was initiated by a young advocate Mufti Idrees in 1957, however, it could not get impetus due to the implementation of one unit that was formed in 1955. Later, people of Hazara raised a voice for Hazara Province through "Hazara Qaumi Mahaz" (HQM) founded by late Malik Asif Advocate in 1987. The movement got set-back by the untimely death of Asif Malik and could not get worth mentioning success. However, the renaming process of province from North West Frontier Province (NWFP) to KP in 2010 through 18th constitutional amendment again fostered the sense of identity consciousness among Hazara nationalists who protested against the Parliament's decision (Asghar, 2012). The protest became widespread throughout Hazara after killing of 19 people in police firing incident that also injured hundreds of others in Aboottabad on 12th of April 2010. Later on, the protestors organized them under the platform of Tehreek-e-Soba Hazara (TSH) or Hazara Province Movement led by Baba Haider Zaman (Shaheen, 2010). Soon after this renaming process, Hazarawalls started to demand a separate province for Hindko community. In 2014 KP national assembly passed a resolution to carve out Hazara province on administrative grounds. Besides, all the national political parties including Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), PPP, Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) and Mutihidda Qaumi Movement (MQM) have shown explicit support for the creation of Hazara province but no practical steps have been taken yet to proceed in the matter.

Rationale of the Demands for Creation of New Provinces

The demands of creation of new provinces in different parts of the country are rooted back in the past for various reasons but they got new impetus since people of Pakistan saw a new democratic era after being sacked by a decade long dictatorial rule in 2008. Three developments are worth mentioning: First, for the first time in the history of Pakistan, country witnessed a peaceful and democratic transition to a civilian rule from a military dictatorship. The military dictator had

to first hand over power to democratically elected representatives because of mounting political pressure and mass movement for restoration of judiciary. Ultimately, he had to resign fearing an impeachment in the parliament that was imminent because of consensus among the main political parties represented in the National Assembly. Later on, deposed judges, who had been unconstitutionally and unlawfully removed from their offices (positions) by Musharraf in order to prolong his dictatorial rule, had been restored after a long march organized by lawyers and opposition political parties. It strengthened people's confidence on democratic traditions and their own capabilities to get their rights through peaceful means. It encouraged the supporters of creation of new provinces to put forward their demands. The perception that political objectives, including those of creation of more provinces could be attained through democratic process was fostered by two other but related developments. Second important development was the fiscal decentralization as a consequence of 7th NFC Award announced in 2009. The award provided to earmark more resources, i.e. 57.5 % (as compared to 46.25 % in the past) for the provinces with the constitutional guarantee that this share would not be reduced in the future. Third, important development was the passage of 18th constitutional amendment from the parliament in April 2010. The amendment abolished the concurrent list as provided in the 1973 constitution and transferred scores of subjects to the provinces. The amendment met the demand of more provincial autonomy as propounded by the nationalist political parties of smaller provinces such as Sindh, KP and Balochistan (Rabbani, 2011). The 7th NFC award and 18th constitutional amendment financially and politically empowered the provinces and thus, strove to bring an end to the long debate and issues of federalism in Pakistan previously burdened with charges of over centralization by critics. These developments were the fruits of the sustained struggle of the people and parties that championed the cause of provincial autonomy since inception of Pakistan (Aziz, 2010). It was an incentive for others that they can also get their rights and demands met through political struggle.

There also existed yet another dimension of these developments. Political and financial empowerment of provinces sent a negative message to the ethnic minorities living in the provinces. The latter construed these developments as further empowerment of the already powerful or dominant communities in their respective provinces. For them, centralization of powers with the federal government and less provincial autonomy meant less powers enjoyed by their opponents, i.e. dominant ethnic groups. The transfer of more powers and financial resources to provinces would mean further consolidation of domination by dominant groups or community. In other words, it aggravated the "sense of deprivation" and perception of exploitation in the hands of others, among minority groups living in all provinces, more so in Punjab, Sindh and KP. This perception was reinforced as the provincial governments arbitrarily used newly gained more political and financial powers to the disadvantage of the already neglected and deprived areas, such as South Punjab and Hazara in Punjab and Sindh, respectively. Thus, the measures taken by the government to give more provincial autonomy and financial decentralization triggered the demands of creation of new provinces. The proponents of the demand believe that creation of new provinces would politically and financially empower their respective areas / regions and help bridge political exclusion, economic disparities and social estrangement.

The demands of creation of new provinces have not received serious consideration by the ruling elites and political leadership. Different political parties strove to use the issue for their political interests. PPP supported the demand of creation of Saraiki or South Punjab province apparently for two reasons: to increase its vote bank in South Punjab and undermine the influence of PML-N that rules Punjab for about 10 years (2008-2018). In order to undermine PPP's stance, PML-N supported the idea of creation of two provinces instead of one in South Punjab. Enjoying majority in the provincial assembly of Punjab, it successfully got passed a resolution demanding creation of provinces of Bahawalpur and South Punjab. PPP stance has been ambiguous with regard to its support to demand of Hazara province because of its alliance with ANP which bitterly opposed creation of another province in KP though it support creation of a province in Punjab. MQM aspires to create a province comprising urban areas of Karachi and Hyderabad in Sindh and in order to create a suitable ground for that it supported creation of new provinces in Punjab and KP. PPP is bitterly opposed to it while other mainstream political parties including PML-N and PTI are cautious in their support to MQM's demand for a new province in Sindh. Both PML-N and PTI pretend to support the demand of Hazara province but their members in provincial assembly of KP did not provide enough support to pass resolution with two-third majority, as required in constitution, to pave the way from creation of a new province. Both parties want to protect their political support base in Hazara as well as Pakhtun majority areas of the province due to which their stance remained ambivalent. Though both of these parties express their apparent support to the cause of Hazara province to appease their voters in the region but practically took no steps to realize this goal.

The ambivalence, indecisiveness and duplicity on the part of some of the political leaders and ruling elites create distrust among the people of politically marginalized, socially neglected and economically deprived areas of Pakistan. Gurr has pointed out that grievances of communal groups generally rooted in their concerns over cultural identity, political and social exclusion, economic disparities and lack of political empowerment generate conflicts. Sometimes, such conflicts arose due to deliberate efforts of the political elites to use identity politics in their bid for power. However, state power, democracy and institutional changes determine if such conflicts result in protest or rebellion (Gurr, 1993-b). The grievances arising out of inequality and injustice, such as political exclusion and repression, economic inequalities, and sociocultural discrimination that create a sense of relative deprivation and frustration can generate conflicts. In such cases, rebellion is deemed as a means to redress grievances. The stronger the repression and discrimination, the higher would be the likelihood of revolt. The rebel groups fearing that they do not have sufficient power to match the capabilities of the state seek outside help. An external power motivated by interests of diverse nature may be induced to intervene and support the rebels (Carment and James, 2000). Pakistan's own history is sufficient to substantiate this point. The sense of relative deprivation that had grown in East Pakistan due to imprudent policies of country's ruling elites, ultimately triggered revolt that provided India an opportunity to intervene and disintegrate the country. Meanwhile, sense of injustice and alienation among the educated youth of Urdu speaking community in Karachi gave rise to ethnic politics and political violence that, according to Global Security Organization, took lives of over 10,000 people between 1986 and 1996. Many

thousands more were killed in the next two decades. Meanwhile, Zaman leader of TSH in an interview with a news channel had once threatened to launch civil disobedience movement to attain his goal of the province. It suggests that growing discontent and sense of relative deprivation among the people of politically neglected and economically deprived areas of Pakistan can generate new conflicts with the potential to become violent if not addressed adequately. Political leadership and ruling elites need to pursue preventive strategies for conflict avoidance.

Conclusion

The present research work reveals that conflict is not an unavoidable phenomenon at all. Ethnic diversity doesn't necessarily lead to conflict in all the societies. Political exclusion; economic disparities and the denial of identity cause to ignite conflicts. Early resolutions of the problems which originate due to cultural, social, political and economic inequalities avoid escalation of conflicts and eruption of violence. Creation of small size constituent units in a federation makes the prospects of secession less feasible. It becomes relatively more difficult for smaller units to launch successful separatist movements and convert themselves in to self-sustainable sovereign units. The larger political units harboring the separatist's design could pose more potent threat for the existing states. Pakistan would be in better position to mitigate or diffuse the intensity of ethno-regional conflicts by creation of smaller units on administrative grounds.

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