

Problems of National Integration in Pakistan

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Abstract

The problem of national integration has a direct bearing on national unity. Almost, all the developing nations of Asia and Africa are facing this twin problem of national integration and national identity. Pakistan is also no exception in this regard. Presence of opprobrious ethnic schism in these plural societies is a major obstacle in the way of growth of a nation. Social cleavages are very dominant feature of politics of these states. The various factors causing inconsistencies and dissensions may be related to major social changes which are taking place in different developing countries. National integration is a quest for wholeness and unity within the geographical form of the country. Many of the new states of Asia and Africa as Rupert Emerson has pointed out " are not yet nations in being but only nations in hope". Common language and culture are considered key elements, which gave birth to the concept of nation state in European countries. The feelings of nationalism in Asian and African countries developed on the basis of different variables not on the basis of just common language and culture. The immediate task faced by the leaders of post independent states of Asia and Africa is to transform primordial sentiments into civil sentiments, to create a national identity out of diverse regional linguistic and cultural identities. This paper explains the concept of national integration and focuses on various problems which Pakistan has been facing since its inception in the way of national integration and to highlight various techniques to resolve the issues of national integration.

Key Words: Cultural plurality, Social Cleavages, Feelings of Nationalism, National identity, Integrative behavior, National loyalty.

Introduction

National integration is considered a common problem for most of the newly independent states of Asia and Africa. Different segments of the society of these states for pursuing their goals do not hesitate to use even violent means. Conflicting situation can take place under such circumstances, which can weaken the centripetal forces. Horizontal i.e. ethnic, religious, linguistic

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and tribal and vertical i.e. class, caste and sectarian, social cleavages are very dominant feature of politics of these states. The leaders of various sub-national groups wanted to dominate political scenario of newly independent states of Asia and Africa. These leaders gave birth to the feelings of regionalism for achieving their specific objectives. These feelings later on, started to prove destructive for the integrity of these states. Individuals of these countries under subjugation of foreign rulers became successful to develop strong sense of nationalism, but after independence rulers of these countries remained unable to convert these specific feelings into coherent national identity. Rulers adopted coercive methods for creating unity among various segments of society, but it did not prove fruitful strategy because different ethnic identities started to give more importance to their core ethnic identity than the national identity.

Concept of National Integration

The important task faced by the leaders of post independent states of Asia and Africa is to create a national identity out of diverse regional, linguistic and cultural identities (Jahan, 1974:4). Both developing and developed states of the world have been facing the problem of national integration in one way or the other way. Developed states of the world with their well established political system become successful to initiate those policies which provide satisfaction to people and they participate positively in the development of state while on the other hand most of the developing states do not have well organized political structures and remain unable to formulate policies in the best interests of various cultural pluralities of the society. Deprived segments of state start to resist against the system and create serious threats to the integration of state. It is very difficult to measure that the process of national integration has been secured by the states.

Before going into detail it would not be out of context to define the concept of national integration. The term national integration is comprised of two words such as;

- a. Nation
- b. Integration.

It is deemed necessary first to explain the term "Nation".

Nation is a stable historically evolved community of a territory, common economic life and a common psychological make-up either independent or struggling to be independent (Khan, 1983:2). Individuals who reside in a specific territory for a long time having common economic objectives and

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shared values become successful to evolve a strong feeling of affiliation with each other. They initiate common efforts for achieving their common objectives. Psyche of individuals is very much crucial for creating sense of oneness because this factor is related to emotions and emotions can be positive when demands of the individuals are going to be met and in case of rejection of their demands, the negativity of the attitude will prove destructive for the stability of the system.

The nation refers to an entity that has social and cultural, rather than legalistic, overtone (Paddison, 1983:60). Cultural peculiarities are also a major source to give birth sense of oneness. Individuals always try to flourish their cultural identity and whenever there would be a threat for their cultural identity they will not hesitate to use even unfair means to preserve their identity. Sometimes it also has been observed that distress group gives more preference to sub-identity over national identity.

A nation is a group that desires self-government through an independent state (Neil, 2007:47). If a group is in majority, but does not have authority to decide its destination itself, then this group under the feelings of nationalism will develop a feeling of oneness and for preserving its specific identity it can demand for an independent status. A nation is a large group, whose members believe they belong together on the basis of a shared identity as a people (J.Sodaro, 2001:145). Shared identity is also an important factor, which gives birth to the sense of oneness.

Nation simply can be defined a group of people, who share values, traditions, common feelings and have some common objectives, who have secured an independent status or struggling for getting this status. They have common problems and evolve a mechanism of understanding to resolve their problems. Their common feelings regarding various issues give strength to their position. They do not show flexibility in their attitude regarding their specific identity. They are not destructive for the integrity of state but when they will be deprived then their negative attitude can be harmful for the integrity of state.

It is deemed necessary now to define term "Integration"

According to Dictionary of Political thought, "Integration means different groups within a jurisdiction may have the same rights in law that nevertheless enjoy unequal privileges and desperate social, educational and recreational institutions, integration is the process, where by all such institutions are made available to all members of the state regardless of creed, race and origin with the intention of forming a unified civil society within the jurisdiction of a unified state" (Scruton, 1982:227). Integration is a process by which different

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segments of society have equal opportunities to enjoy different facilities without any kind of discrimination. They have opportunities to flourish their specific cultural identity.

For strengthening the process of national integration, it is necessary to develop a system at national level, which has potential to provide a sense of satisfaction to all regional sub- systems. All the segments of society should be given an opportunity to participate in the national political system. So they can feel they are part of main stream and have share in policy making process to satisfy their needs. Integration means the amalgamation of different social, cultural and ideological group loyalties into a single compact community, representing a national outlook. A consensus on ends, values and myths among participating groups is necessary for the establishment of a lasting organization aiming at the eventual formation of a national community (A.K.Rai, Malick, 1989:339) A stable national community can only be developed when different segments of society positively participate in the policy making process and eliminate their minor differences for playing an important role at the main stream.

Fred M. Hayward states, "Integration as system cohesion, adaptation to structures, a bridging of elite-mass gap, the establishment of common norms and commitment to pattern of political behaviour" (Lindberg, Hayward, 1970:316). A cohesive system has potential to minimize differences among different blocs of society. Individuals with common norms can evolve integrative behaviour regarding different issues. National integration can be measured through extent of individual's identification with the national entity and to what extent masses of a state show their compliance with government directives. Individuals with common objectives can initiate a common policy to acquire these objectives. This commonality will enhance the process of national integration.

Simply one can state that integration is a process through which culturally and socially discrete groups are brought together into a specific territory and to develop a sense of oneness among different groups through inducting them into main stream. Different groups are given opportunities to decide their destiny themselves. These groups with positive participation can become a major source to increase the process of national integration. The role of different ethnic groups of Pakistan can be constructive when ruling authority do not formulate discriminatory policies to serve the interests of one dominant ethnic group. Sense of deprivation among different ethnic groups can prove harmful to the process of national integration. Before 1947 Muslims of Sub-Continent united to protect their specific Islamic identity. This unity was on the basis of one very important factor "religion". They felt a serious threat

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regarding their survival in the presence of British colonial masters and dominant Hindu majority in Sub-Continent. They initiated efforts to get a separate homeland for preserving their identity and they got it in 1947. Since 1947 rulers of Pakistan have been facing different problems to adopt a balanced approach towards different ethnic groups.

Impediments In the Way of National Integration

There are different problems in the way of national integration of Pakistan such as:

- Colonial legacy
- Role of leadership
- Ethnocentricity and tribalism
- The dilemma of federalism

Pakistan has been facing identity crisis since 1947 like many other developing countries. Pakistan was a bifurcated state at the time of creation. Rulers of Pakistan remained unable to formulate those policies which could satisfy different ethnic identities of Pakistan and particularly the people of East Pakistan were not happy with socio-political and economic policies of federal government. Soon after creation of Pakistan the people of Eastern wing of Pakistan started to feel that they have not been given their due share in policy making process. Rulers from West Pakistan did not realize the intensity of the situation. Appropriate policies could not be initiated by the various governments to address the actual grievances of the people of East Pakistan. Bengalis started to think as they are outsiders or they are a colony of West Pakistan. Because of ill conceived policies of federal government Pakistan faced disintegration in 1971.

Colonial Legacy

Most of the newly independent states have been facing bitter consequences of colonial legacy. Colonial masters did not create national unity because their interest was not to create unity but to protect their economic interests through winning the loyalty of few segments of society. Colonial masters in various colonies for their economic interests used to select specific regions for investment, while the other regions of the same colony used to become the victim of negligence. Because of this policy of colonial rulers some regions of different colonies became developed while the others remained backward. This policy of colonial masters gave birth to regional rivalries in many developing states. This regional rivalry became more tense in these regions after independence because rulers of these states could not create a balance

among these regions. Deprived regions became more vocal and agitated against the system. Instable political system could not accommodate these regional forces. Rulers of Pakistan could not create a balance among different regional identities and the regions which were economically, politically and socially backward started resistance against federal government. Weak political system remained unable to respond these regional identities positively and these identities through their resistance started to pose a serious threat to the integration of Pakistan.

Samir Amin states,

“The culmination of colonial trade system was balkanization, in which recipient micro region had no interest in sharing the crumbs of the colonial cake with their labour reserves”(ALI, 1979:12) .Colonial masters did not want to create national identity in a colony. It was not the interest of colonial rulers to see people united. They just wanted to secure their own specific interests through various policies. For example in case of Indian Sub-Continent British colonial rulers introduced policies not for the well being of people of Sub-Continent but for securing the interests of British government. Nationalism which was a workable force during freedom movement of Pakistan, started to prove very dangerous for the integrity of newly independent state of Pakistan. Muslims of Sub-Continent united at one plat form on the name of religion for securing their specific Islamic identity. After the death of Quaid-e-Azam and Khan Liaquat Ali Khan rulers of Pakistan could not fix priorities to create harmony among different cultural identities of Pakistan. Nationalist leaders of Pakistan for playing a dominant role in the politics of state gave birth to the feelings of regionalism. Under these feelings masses of various regions opted negative attitude regarding policies of central ruling elite. Federal government could not address the grievances of various regional identities. Border disputes are another colonial legacy. Colonial masters intentionally drew lines for dividing ethnic groups and tribes. This division was in the best interests of colonial rulers but this proved later on very harmful for the integrity of newly independent states. Such kind of policies later on created serious threat for the integrity of newly born states, for example, East Pakistan comprised those areas, which were deliberately neglected by the colonial masters. After independence due to different reasons Bengalis remained unable to get their due share in military and bureaucratic institution. This situation created a sense of deprivation in the minds of Bengalis and they demanded for parity between two wings of Pakistan, which could not be happened. Though federal government through One Unit Formula tried to create a parity between East and West Pakistan. Bengalis started to perceive themselves as a colony of West Pakistan. This level of deprivation was highest at that time. Central

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ruling authority remained unable to make a positive response to the demands of Bengalis. Ultimately Pakistan faced the process of disintegration.

Role of Leadership

To unify fragmented elements of society is not an easy task, particularly in plural societies, where various cultural and ethnic identities interact with each other for achieving their specific objectives. In plural societies leaders are considered more important to create sense of oneness among different ethnic or cultural identities. Charismatic leadership is perceived very crucial for controlling crisis situation. But mostly, it has been observed that charismatic leader loses his influence with the end of crisis situation. Common values and objectives can become an important source to create unity among various segments of society. This commonality will create awareness among people for protecting their interests from internal as well as external threats. The leadership of Pakistan especially after the death of father of nation and Kahan Liaquat Ali Khan, had to face many problems to formulate policies to create sense of oneness among different segments of the society of Pakistan. According to Robert Scott, constructive nationalism emerges, when external threats have been reduced and internal strifes have been contained to bare minimum (Ali,1979:23). For determining solidity of national identity psychological factor plays a significant role, because psychology relates with emotions and feelings of individuals. Individual's constructive role during political and economic upheavals can stabilize system. During various periods of history of Pakistan the policy makers of Pakistan through hasty planning try to remove different problems. They do not try to take into confidence common individuals regarding various policies and decisions. That is why individuals do not show their consent regarding these policies and policies remain unacceptable for the general masses. Leaders of third world states have to face centrifugal tendencies because it was very difficult for leaders to transform negative feelings into positive which masses used to hold against colonial masters before independence. Individuals remained with same feelings and could not succeed to transform their parochial loyalty into national loyalty. Leaders of Pakistan should try to create national identity out of diverse regional identities This is one of the major responsibilities upon the shoulders of political leaders of Pakistan to evolve policies to highlight the importance of national loyalty to face internal as well as external threats.

Ethnocentricity and Tribalism

Ethnic and tribal affiliation in plural societies of third world have potential to play a significant role in shaping and reshaping political system of these societies. Antagonistic attitude of ethnic identities regarding various policies

become a major source to create violence in society. Economic policies of government of developing polities open a way for development of major ethnic identities, while problems of minorities remain unaddressed. This thing led them to adopt extreme activities. Ethnic identities on the basis of various variables perceive themselves as one and assert themselves (Ahmad,1984:268). Tribalism is perceived another impediment in the way of national integration of Pakistan because of their semi autonomous existence. Most of the tribal areas were backward educationally and economically, because colonial masters did not pay any attention for the development of these areas. Colonial rulers used to rule these areas indirectly through tribal chiefs. They used to satisfy tribal chiefs through various rewards and awards for achieving their specific objectives. Affiliation with central ruling authority did not exist in these areas. Same attitude remained even after independence. Soon after creation of Pakistan different ethnic identities started to show their dissatisfaction towards central ruling authority. Central government could not evolve those policies which provide equal opportunities to various ethnic identities in different walks of life. Different ethnic groups started to feel they have been marginalized intentionally by the central government. Ethnic identities no doubt have potential to contribute constructively in the progress of state but only when they feel they have their due share in policy making process. If they feel there is threat for their security and survival then they use all types of means of leverages at their disposal to protect them. Under such kind of circumstances these ethnic identities can prove very destructive for stability of system and sometimes disintegrate a state. The case of Bengali ethnic identity of Pakistan before 1971 is important in this regard.

The Dilemma of Federalism

Territorially and ethnically divided societies (pluralistic societies) can be best represented under federal form of government, because this form of government provides constitutional guarantees for preserving the rights of federating units. These units with their various cultural specifications or speciality will be able to flourish their culture. These units will feel sense of belonging with the main stream of political system. This feeling will enhance process of national integration. Developing polities have dire need to create this sense of belonging among federating units. So that centrifugal tendencies can be minimized if not eliminated. Pakistani society is also a plural society. There are four federating units (Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan, and Khyber Pakhtun Khwa, (previously known as NWFP (North West Frontier Province) which, constitute the state of Pakistan after 1971. Since, 1947 federal form of government was adopted in Pakistan, because it was a bifurcated state. Eastern and Western wing with numerous cultural variations remained unable to evolve a sense of oneness. Religion which was a motivating factor during

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struggle for independence by the Muslims of Sub-Continent could not be implemented in the true sense by the various governments of Pakistan. Religion was a common variable between East and West Pakistan but this variable could not bridge the gap between East and West Pakistan. Economic disparities at a widened scale between two wings created a gulf, which could not be bridged up by the central ruling authority. Policy makers did not try to take into confidence Bengalis regarding various policies. Their grievances could not be addressed in the real sense. Intentionally or unintentionally they were marginalized and Pakistan had to face disintegration. (Ali, 1996:69) Lessons could not be learnt by the bitter realities of history. Central ruling authority continued with same attitude. Sindhis, Baloch and Pathan demanded for provincial autonomy in line with the Constitution of 1973. Balochistan is the largest province of Pakistan with abundant natural resources. Baloch perceive that they have been neglected by the central government since 1947.

After discussing impediments in the way of national integration, it is not out of context to explain federalist theory which can be an effective tool in strengthening the process of national integration of Pakistan. Federation is the existence of two sets of government within the same territory, each enjoying independent powers within their exclusive sphere and for ensuring this independence, there is hard need to evolve some constitutional arrangements under which federal government and federating units will be able to perform different functions constructively and effectively. According to K.C Wheare, "Federalism is the method of dividing powers between central and regional governments" (Pentlend, 1973: 150). Federal structure has potential to create integration among different regions of a state. Central government is considered responsible to manage defense and foreign affairs and regional governments have some specific areas of action in which these governments are considered autonomous and this autonomy continues according to constitution. Central government provides guide line to provincial governments for managing their affairs in an organized way. Fragmentation of power plays an efficient role for strengthening federal structure. Centralization of power affects negatively system's capabilities for example, administrative capability, distributive capability and responsive capability. Poor performance of these capabilities will undermine the process of integration. Since 1947 Pakistan has been working under federal structure and this system has potential to create harmony among federal government and federating units. But throughout history of Pakistan one can observe that provincial governments of Pakistan showed their dissatisfaction towards federal government. In the year of 2010 the then Pakistan Peoples Party government through 18th amendment in the constitution of 1973 provided provincial autonomy to provinces in the true sense. For a strong federation it is necessary that a smooth and balanced relationship should be there between federal government and federating units.

In the original 1973 constitution provincial autonomy was given to provinces but could not be implemented in the actual sense.

Techniques of National Integration

There are different techniques through which process of national integration can be enhanced such as value integration, elite-mass integration, political integration and integrative behavior. Integration of values is very much important to strengthen the process of national integration. This is the responsibility of policy makers to make strategy to create uniformity among different ethnic identities of Pakistan through evolving mutual consensus regarding different developmental projects and issues which are common in state. Different social work agencies can be used to mitigate differences among ethnic groups and highlight their common interests. The existing gap between rulers and masses in Pakistan has been creating diversification instead of unity. Rulers do not feel any hesitation to use coercive methods to establish their authority. Legitimacy crisis can also be observed in Pakistan. In the presence of this crisis masses do not support different internal as well as external policies of ruling authority. Role of masses is very much important to manage the affairs of state in an organized way. There must be strong communication between ruling authority and masses. Government should try to take into confidence masses regarding economic and political policies. By doing this ruling authority would get support of masses and this support will give strength to government to resolve issues successfully. Political integration is another very important technique to create unity in Pakistan. The development of national loyalty is significant to seek unity of different ethnic groups. The major and minor ethnic groups should be given opportunities to participate in policy making process. They should feel sense of belonging with political system. The presence of one major ethnic group at the helm of the affairs will disturb existing balance in political system and this imbalance will give space to minor ethnic groups to assert their position by all means either right or wrong to preserve their specific identity and secure their survival. Government with comprehensive policies both political and economic can assimilate different ethnic or cultural groups into sense of oneness. Different ethnic groups should be given their due share in main stream politics so they can feel they are part of state. Feelings of cohesiveness among people can serve the objectives of national integration. Integrative behavior is one very important variable of national integration. Common interests of individuals have potential to give birth sense of unity. Individuals with common interests can evolve a strategy to work together. This conducive environment will give birth positivity in their attitude and will create mutual understanding among them. Pakistan disintegrated in 1971 because ruling elite remained unable to create mutual understanding among people of East and West Pakistan.

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Bengalis of East Pakistan started to perceive themselves as outsiders and West Pakistanis as insiders. Bengalis felt a threat regarding their identity and survival being a part of West Pakistan. Under this threat perception they started to resist against the political system. Federal government could not accommodate their economic and political demands through well devised policies. Crisis prevailed between two wings of Pakistan namely East and West wing. Internally Pakistan became instable and this instability opened a door for external interference. Both internal and external factors played their negative role and Pakistan disintegrated.

Conclusion

Pakistan emerged on the basis of Islam, but no observer could deny the fact that under the veneer of religious unity there was a bewildering heterogeneity of customs, regional cultures, language and ethnicity. In Pakistan, there are different blocs that exist on the basis of territory, language, caste, and culture. The Baloch, Pakhtuns, Sindhis, Siraikis, Mohajirs, Punjabis and host of other smaller identities have strained with the borders of Pakistan to assert themselves versus one another and federal government often in the face of frequent oppression and violence.

Pakistan, a truncated country has remained caught in the whirlpool of conflicting ethnic or regional identities since its inception, because of certain inherent short comings, which the creation of Pakistan carried with itself. Pakistan has been divided into some macro level ethnic identities and each identity is further composed of many micro-level ethnic identities. These identities were to be set in such a way, that the political edifice of country should have been founded out consolidated and cemented structure. It has been tragic that the ruling political parties and military-bureaucratic oligarchy ignored the importance of different cultural identities, which were not only imbalanced but eroded in such a way that country encountered shocks and break down in the form of separation of East Pakistan. Pakistan faced a lot of problems due to its unique geographical location. It divided into two parts, separated from each other by more than one thousand miles. The Bengalis were not only the largest ethno- cultural bloc in Pakistan but actually constituted a majority of country's population. They were not only linguistically and culturally different but racially too. It was expected that Muslim League, being, the founder party of Pakistan, could weld the divergent ethnic blocs together and was in a position to bring home a unified national structure. But due to having some inherent weaknesses party could not convert itself into a national stature. Muslim League could not form a national government through a parliamentary election, which ensures a degree of mass participation in the political structure. Civil and military bureaucracy was dominated by Mohajir

and Punjabi population. The death of Quaid-i-Azam and Khan Liaquat Ali Khan put the bureaucracy and military in an unassailable position, who acquired absolute and exclusive authority in decision making. They mostly made decisions, keeping in view their own interests and ignoring the other social blocs like, Bengalis, Sindhis, Pathans and Baloch. It further accelerated the ethnic polarization. It naturally created ill will and pushed the disgruntled blocs away from the national main stream. The members of central ruling elite from Bengal, Sindh, Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtun Khwa (previously known as NWFP (North West Frontier Province) were obtrusively excluded from the power structure of the country. A political structure incapable of accommodating four of the five provincial elite could not have been expected to provide a stable government. Pakistan took nine years in producing its first workable constitution in 1956. One of the reasons for this inordinate delay in constitution making was the reluctance on the part of power bloc at the center to share power with different cultural identities in general and particularly with Bengalis. Central government did not realize the sensitivity of the matter and did not try to take into confidence the Bengalis regarding various policies. Sense of deprivation emerged in the hearts of Bengalis due to less representation in all sphere of life. In spite having numerical strength, they were unable to decide their destiny themselves. Bengalis were not happy with economic, political and social policies of ruling elite from West wing of Pakistan. They did not hesitate to take up arms for achieving their specific objectives. Central ruling elite adopted coercive methods to suppress Bengalis, but remained unable to control situation. Bengalis became successful to get an independent state namely Bangladesh as a result of war of 1971. Both military and civilian leaders must try to learn lesson from bitter realities of history of Pakistan. So things start to move towards right direction and a stable political system can be evolved.

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