
Sindhi Ethno-national Movement: Question of Provincial Autonomy

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Abstract

Success or failure of negotiations between the ethnic groups and the state play a vital role in changing the demands of ethno-national groups, which oscillate between secession and autonomy. Ephraim Nimni has observed that in the present era the growing consciousness can be witnessed among multinational states for transfer of power to regional governments often formed by minority groups and increasing number of ethno-nationalist movements have been demanding their national rights within the jurisdiction of multinational states by devolution of powers. Monsterrat Guibernau has concluded that devolution in cultural, economic and political spheres had successfully deterred the secessionist movements in Canada, Spain and Britain though strengthened the sense of distinctive cultural identity in the regions benefited by devolution. According to Donald Horowitz some ethnic groups are constrained to demand outright secession because they co-habit the territory with other nations or ethnic groups and could not develop congruence of views with those groups regarding the goals to be pursued. Michel Seymour is of the opinion that geo-political reasons and mutually advantageous economic ties with other regions of the multinational states have also been causal factors for the debilitation of the separatist movements.¹ These factors have influenced the ideology of Sindhi nationalist movement which is presently striving for autonomous status within the federal structure of Pakistan. The article examines the developments that consolidated a sense of ethno-national identity amongst indigenous Sindhis and simultaneously debilitated the separatist movement often known as 'Sindhudesh'.

Introduction

The sense of identify among Sindhi community emerged before the establishment of Pakistan. British era brought fundamental and deep rooted changes in socio-politico as well as economic fabric of society, promoting consciousness of a distinct community amongst Sindhi Muslims. Despite development, the British era promoted a sense of deprivation among Sindhi Muslims driving them towards nationalist politics but at the time of partition, the Pakistani nationalism overwhelmed the feelings of separate identity. In the newly established state, Sindhis developed grievances against the Punjabi-Immigrants elite. They felt that outsiders had out-numbered them in their own homeland in the name of Muslim Pakistani nationalism. They feared that those outsiders would ruin them demographically, culturally and economically. A conflict of interests started between the ruling elite of centre and the politicians of Sindh over various issues. The Sindhi political elite started the struggle for the regional autonomy in the federation of Pakistan and pleaded their case on ethnic terms. The middle class Sindhis were mostly affected so they became the pioneers of nationalist movement and other segments of the society including feudal and peasants also joined them. Due to a weaker middle class, no vibrant movement could emerge. Feelings of separate identity and fear of Punjabi domination amongst Sindhis which existed even before partition got strengthened. It established the basis of a Sindhi ethno-national movement. In the early period a nationalist movement under the leadership of G. M. Syed struggled to attain the autonomous status for Sindh as a federating unit of Pakistan.²

All the provinces of West Pakistan were integrated into a single entity of One Unit in 1955. One Unit era witnessed a prolonged dictatorship in the country and ended at the time of political turmoil in the country. During One Unit era, a great sense of deprivation prevailed amongst Sindhis with regards to their meager share in the financial recourses as well as their status/ role in the administrative affairs of the state and the province. The feeling of derivation motivated the Sindhi nationalists to unite for the achievement of their rights. The era saw a strong movement for revival of Sindhi culture.³

After the dissolution of One Unit, nationalists could not retain the momentum as their marriage of convenience did not last long, some grave differences surfaced amongst capitalist and progressive groups. The feudal politicians, who had previously joined the Sindh United Front, then joined other political parties to contest the general elections of 1970. The Pakistan People's Party (PPP) adopted the stance to address the grievances of Sindhis like eradication of financial/social inequality, language issue and participation of masses in the political process. The PPP demanded a parliamentary democratic system of government where representatives of smaller provinces would have a role in the decision making

process. The PPP won the election in Sindh with overwhelming majority. During Bhutto rule, ethno-nationalist movement could not gain wide public support and Sindhis indulged themselves to take full benefit of new vistas of progress and prosperity opened for them. The accord between PPP and opposition regarding the provincial autonomy made possible the unanimous passage of 1973 constitution. Sindhi nationalists perceived Pakistan as loose federation of autonomous constituent units and demanded autonomous status for Sindh in loosely federated Pakistan. Contrary to nationalists demand the constitution of 1973 declared all Pakistanis as a one nation without giving any consideration to regional or ethnic identities. Dissatisfaction combined with fear of loss of prestige induced G. M. Syed to initiate struggle for secession. Nationalists under the leadership of G. M. Syed adopted more radical stances for the liberation of Sindh in the name of '*Sindhudesh*' instead of autonomous status for which they have been struggling since inception of Pakistan.

Ouster of Bhutto and his execution by military dictator General Zia-ul-Haq changed the whole scenario and nationalist sentiments got favorable climate to proliferate. There existed a wide gulf of distrust between Sindhis and General Zia. Sindhis considered Zia as the murderer of Z. A. Bhutto; a Sindhi premier executed through Punjabi generals and judges. General Zia considered Sindh as the hub of followers of PPP and Z.A. Bhutto. The phenomenon of mistrust combined with deprivations added fuel to the fire. Under the martial law of General Zia-ul-Haq, politicians had a nominal role in the affairs of the government. Military bureaucracy overwhelmed the government structure and military men appointed as the martial law administrators exercised most of the administrative powers. Sindhis felt deprived and their hatred against Punjabis further intensified. General Zia expelled a considerable number of government employees from federal and provincial services inducted under the policy of lateral entry during Bhutto government and Sindhis comprised majority of the expelled employees, intensifying the trend of Sindhis' lower representation in bureaucracy. Lack of participation in economic gains coupled with social changes in society due to urbanization and improved literacy, tilted the balance in favor of nationalist sentiments. The alienation of almost all classes of Sindhi society helped the Movement for Restoration of Democracy (MRD) in becoming a popular movement in almost all segments of society in Sindh; the movement took the shape of a Sindhi national movement. Progressive nationalist elements represented by SAT played major role in the demonstrations organized from the platform of the MRD against martial law government. Government used force brutally and tried to crush the movement. The punitive reaction by the government created hatred amongst Sindhis against federation. Nationalist sentiments and hatred against Punjab and center reached at peaks. Adoption of

political agenda by influential and popular federal political parties comprising MRD through announcement of declaration on provincial autonomy in August 1986 was the event of vital importance. The declaration envisaged the radical provincial autonomy with control of central government limited to four subjects to include defense, foreign affairs, currency and communication. Previously Benazir Bhutto favoured the restoration of 1973 constitution by deletion of amendments made during Zia era.⁴ Owing to his personal differences with Z.A. Bhutto; G. M. Syed did not support the movement. He manifestly distanced himself from the cause of democracy. That debilitated Syed's Jeay Sindh Mahaz political clout because it adopted stance diametrically opposite to the popular aspirations, many of its adherents left the party and joined the movement launched to oust military government.

Recent Situation: Accommodation within Federal System of Pakistan

Lack of participation in economic gains coupled with social changes in society due to urbanization and spread of education, tilted the balance in favor of nationalist sentiments during late 80s and early 90s. Other factors like encouragement by General Zia for nationalist politics in Sindh and ethnic violence sprouted in last few years were also consequential in the proliferation of nationalist sentiments but the subsequent period witnessed shifting of Sindhi nationalist movement's ideology from right of self-determination to accommodation within federation though demanding greater provincial autonomy. Following lines are an attempt to examine the puzzle that how Sindhi nationalist sentiments have remained strong but the separatist movement often known as '*Sindhudesh*' has not gained much attraction and over the years Sindhi separatists have lost ground. Answer to this puzzle is twofold, to analyse the forces that can fan the flame of ethno-nationalist sentiments like the feelings of being exploited by Punjab regarding distribution of water, apprehensions regarding construction of KBD, less than adequate share in the national financial resources distributed by NFC, under-representation in jobs, right of ownership of natural resources discovered in the province, denial of provincial autonomy and dispute with Muhajir community over various issues as well as mechanism used by the Pakistani state to accommodate alienated Sindhis.

i. Representation in government services

Sindhis always clamored for their under-representation in government jobs. Sense of deprivation in indigenous Sindhis due to unemployment had always been an important factor for the promotion of nationalist sentiments. Historically, Sindhis had lesser representation in bureaucracy. PPP's government in August 1973 through constitutional provisions allocated quota for rural Sindhis for induction in federal bureaucracy in accordance with their ratio of population. It

was applicable for ten year period. Later on it was extended for another term of the same period by General Zia but yet it isn't the permanent arrangement for recruitment in government services according to the constitution of Pakistan. Implementation of quota scheme had considerably increased native Sindhis' representation. It had proved as a significant remedial measure and helped to mitigate Sindhis' grievances regarding their lower representation in federal jobs. Despite introduction of quota system and efforts of political regimes especially headed by Sindhis PMs to rectify the situation in that vital field of socio-economic and political importance Sindhis remained under-represented as evidenced by figures presented in table (1) derived from the thirteenth triennial census report of government employees published by establishment division Government of Pakistan.⁵

Table 1
Percent representation of Sindh in federal government services
for all grades on 01-07-2003

Area	Grade 1-22	
	No. of employees	Percentage (%)
All Pakistan	234933	100
Sindh (excluding Karachi and Hyderabad)	178174	7.6
Karachi and Hyderabad	26541	11.29
Sindh Total	44415	18.9

Source: Thirteenth triennial census of federal government civil servants (Islamabad: Pakistan Public Administration Research Centre, 2006), p. 144

The lower representation has always remained a potent source of indigenous Sindhi grievances. It is resented by all section of the native population. Nationalists desire to rectify the imbalance by conscription of Sindhis in government services on preferential basis.⁶ Reservation of quota for rural Sindhis who are mostly indigenous have also strengthened the consciousness of ethno-national identity. It created feelings that they have to maintain their distinctive identity to secure jobs through reserved quota. Moreover threat of possible abolition of quota system in future further hardened nationalist sentiments. It is obvious for them that continuation of quota system is highly associated to their maintenance of ethnic identity.

i Immigration of outsiders in Sindh

Sindhis are perturbed over the delicate demographic balance between Sindhis and non-Sindhis. The situation is the result of the continuous migration and settlement of people from Punjab and provinces other than Sindh. It is causal

factor for declining percentage of indigenous Sindhis in Sindh. Their settlement in Sindh is threatening for the tenuous majority status of native Sindhis and it also put great pressure on Sindh resources and exacerbated the unhealthy trend of unemployment in province. It is threatening for Sindhis' right to rule in their historical homeland. Influx of outsiders received continuous censure from Sindhi forums considering it a well planned strategy to turn Sindhis in minority in their homeland. Though the pace of immigration in Sindh has declined considerably in recent past but large scale immigration in the last 60 years had noticeably changed the demographic balance negatively for native population.⁷ It is one of the major sources for accentuation of Sindhi grievances. Sindhis wished to curb the inflow of outsiders in Sindh. To achieve this they have to present their case on national basis claiming Sindh as historical homeland of Sindhi nation in which only indigenous population should be recognized as sole legitimate owner.

Endangered by the prospect of losing demographic majority and apprehended of outsiders' rule as consequence of this they demand legal sanctions to stop in migration from other areas. Nationalist demanded expulsion of those who came in Sindh after 1954. Extremist nationalist wanted eviction of outsiders by force if they failed to comply with the demand of Sindhis to leave their land voluntarily. In 2009, military operation in Malakand Division of NWFP forced many people to leave their homes. Those families were named as Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). Some of the IDPs headed towards Sindh. They were not welcomed by Sindhis and it created feelings that they might follow the precedence of their predecessors by permanent settlement in Sindh. Their entry in Sindh triggered protest demonstrations and vigorous campaign by nationalist elements. They demanded return of IDPs to their home province.⁸

ii Water distribution dispute

Distribution of water has been a source of misunderstanding among provinces of the country, especially between Sindh and Punjab because of their historical dispute over the sharing of water of Indus and its tributaries. The lack of trust over distribution of water played vital role in exacerbating the conflict. The overwhelming majority of Sindhis shared the perception that Punjab has been usurping Sindh's share of water regularly through the mechanism of link canals and dams constructed in area of Punjab. Sense of unjust treatment by Punjab over distribution of water and opposition to Kalabagh Dam (KBD) is wide spread in Sindh; even the main stream parties in Sindh like Jamat-i-Islami and PPP have been supporting nationalists' point of view regarding the issue.⁹

Sindhis contended that Punjab has always violated the water distribution accord of 1991 negotiated and signed during Nawaz Sharif Government for the distribution of water among provinces. The water accord apportioned water of

‘Indus River System’ among Provinces. It allocated 55.94% share for Punjab and 48.76% share for Sindh. The Sindhis argued that accord supposed to apportioned more water than actual availability and in situation of water shortage Sindh’s share is cut short drastically without any significant reduction in Punjab’s share. Government intention to construct large dam on River Indus at Kalabagh triggered popular protest campaign in Sindh. Sindhis perceived that Punjab had usurped the share of Sindh in the past and construction of KBD would be helpful in continuation of that practice. Opposition to construction of KBD has always been deep and wide spread in Sindh. Sindhis apprehended that construction of dam would cut short the downstream water. It would divert water to irrigate lands in Punjab. It would cause shortage of irrigation water in Sindh as well as water available to fall in sea would be less than required quantity. It would further decrease the delta of river Indus The brackish sea water would devastate the agricultural lands of Sindh coastal areas.¹⁰

The vigorous campaign against KBD and unity demonstrated by Sindhis forced the federal government to retreat from the project. Abandoning of the KBD project could not solve the Sindh-Punjab water dispute completely. The water distribution problem seemed to be intractable due to paucity of available water and increasing demand of its use. The water shortage in Sindh and perception that Punjab has been stealing share of Sindh is exploited by nationalist to again popular support in Sindh. Separatist have tried to buttress their argument for separation of Sindh on the premises that independent Sindh would be in better position by using control of sea route t as pressure lever effectively to obtain concession form Punjab on distribution of water.¹¹

iii NFC Award and ownership of natural resources

Most of the grievances of Sindhis are related to economic problems. Sindh province is rich in natural resources.¹² The Sindhis urged for ownership rights of natural resources. They resented the utilization of natural resources produced in the Sindh out of province. There is also prevalent impression in Sindhis that they are unjustly treated by federation in provision of funds and other facilities. Punjab usurps most of funds and resources due to its dominant position in federation and they consider it as main causal factor for native Sindhis’ poverty ridden conditions. Indigenous Sindhis alleged that they are also deprived in intra-province resource distribution; Muhajir dominated urban centers got bulk of the development funds.

Sindh contributed the largest share in national tax collection. Karachi sea port provides the gateway for Pakistan foreign trade, most of banks and commercial firms have their head offices in Karachi and in the recent past Sindh became the major oil and natural gas producing region in Pakistan. Those factors made Sindh

the greatest contributor in national tax collection. Federal government has the responsibility of the collection of most of taxes and National Finance Commission (NFC) established by federal government distributes financial resources collected by central government among federal government and provinces. The objections are raised against the vertical distribution of fiscal resources among center and provinces. It is argued that center retained more revenue at its disposal denying the desired fiscal autonomy to provinces. The provinces always found financial resources inadequate for their requirements. Instead of increasing the share of provinces in financial resources distributed through NFC award the federal government as remedial measures provided deficit grants to provincial governments. The provision of deficit grants to the provinces had negative implications for the provincial autonomy as those were discretionary and federal government at certain occasions used the mechanism for political manipulation. NFC has adopted the population as sole criterion for distribution of revenue among provinces. The criterion benefited Punjab and negatively affected other provinces. It failed to satisfy Sindhis. They perceived it as irrational arrangements benefitting Punjab and negatively affecting Sindh. They contended that distribution through NFC Award has been unjust, which by more collection and less return transferred the wealth of the province to other parts of country because Sindh contributed almost 70% of the national taxes and in return received about 24%. Discontented Sindhis regarding distribution of financial resources had always been raising their voice vociferously in protest. Sindhis argued that despite major contribution in the economic development of the country government of Sindh and its people remained poor. Sindhis had been clamoring to adopt multiple criteria for distribution of resources. Sindhis wanted that NFC award should be based on tax collection and generation besides population ratio which had been sole criteria of NFC award for distribution among provinces.

Federal government had also encroached on tax bases of provincial governments. The octroi duty collected by local bodies was abolished by Nawaz Sharif government in 1997. Sindh share in the collection of octroi was 60%. Sindhis contended that the implementation of scheme divested Sindh of Rs. 5 billion annually and that GST on services is provincial subject; federal government had been collecting it in contravention of constitutional provisions. Sindh had to bear a great financial loss due to that because Sindh contributed 46% of its total national collection. It deprived Sindh billions of rupees annually. Nationalists resented NFC award formula and desired for Sindh's share in resource distribution proportionate to the amount of tax collected from the province. They consider the distribution of resources as looting of Sindh's resources for the benefit of the other regions especially Punjab. They viewed the

provincial autonomy as meaningless exercise without acknowledgement of right of Sindh on its own resources. The Sindhis aspired for the revision of distribution formula and had congruence of views regarding return of sales tax on services to provinces, believing that it would provide great relief to economy of province.¹³ Presently federal government has tried to rectify the distribution mechanism in a bid to placate the aggrieved provinces. To enhance fiscal autonomy of provinces the 7th NFC award increased the share of provinces to 56% of the divisible pool it was 47% vide previous award, adopted multiple criteria for horizontal distribution among provinces, accorded 82 per cent weightage to population, 10.3 per cent to poverty, 2.5 per cent to revenue generation, 2.5 per cent to revenue collection and 2.7 per cent to area and handed over sales tax on services to provinces which significantly benefited Sindh.¹⁴

iv Issue of provincial autonomy

The nationalists consider the provincial autonomy provided by 1973 and further curtailed by amendments introduced by military dictators as unsatisfactory. It had been potent source of resentment in Sindh. Sindhi didn't like the inclusion of extensive concurrent list and federal list in the constitution of Pakistan and clamor for change. PM Benazir Bhutto's governments were dismissed twice in 1990 and 1996 by implementation of 8th amendment incorporated in constitution by Zia. Likewise Governor Sindh on the advice of President of Pakistan dismissed provincial assemblies and governments headed by PPP. There were wide spread rumors of rigging in the following elections on the behest of president's appointed caretaker federal as well as provincial governments which deprived PPP to gain majority in Sindh Assembly though the party was able to get overwhelming majority from rural areas.¹⁵ The successor provincial governments despite rigging enjoyed a very limited electoral support in rural Sind and were dependant on as well as dominated by MQM. That had created apprehension and lack of confidence in native Sindhis regarding federal government's role.

The quantum of autonomy provided by passage of 18th amendment in the constitution of Pakistan is the most significant event in terms of provincial autonomy. It accommodated most of the demands of smaller provinces. The salient features of the 18th amendment are the abolition of concurrent list as well as number of related federal ministries, joint ownership rights of provinces and federation over natural resources, sole right of the permanent residents for appointment as provincial governor of their province, restrictions on the powers of federal government regarding imposition of emergency in provinces, transfer of sales tax on services to provincial domain, enhancement of the role of 'Council of Common Interests' (CCI) and transfer of some items from Part 1st of the

federal legislative to Part 2nd.¹⁶ Despite these nationalists aren't fully satisfied with the passage of 18th amendment and abolition of concurrent list. The nationalist forces desired provincial autonomy according to Lahore Resolution of 1940 which can provide right of self rule for provinces without any intervention of central government. To counter the seemingly intractable problem of Punjab's unassailable authoritative dominance in the state structure due to its absolute demographic majority and likewise presence in all the decision making and administrative organs of the state, the federation formed at the basis of parity among component national units is proposed as best viable option. They desire for transfer of number of subjects included in federal legislative list to provincial domain and are perturbed over the inclusion of some items of abolished concurrent list in the federal legislative list. They want abolition of federal ministries except three, the defense, finance & foreign affairs. Complete provincial control on natural resources is the most vital point of their agenda.¹⁷

ii. Relationship with Urdu Speaking

The period of the martial law enhanced the Punjabi and Pukhtoon dominance of state apparatus due to better representation of these communities in army. Various Punjabi military generals/ civil bureaucrats and relatives of them benefited by their patronage established industries in Karachi and Sindh. Interests of Muhajir industrialists got affected. That also created problems for the middle class of Muhajir community in seeking employments. Despite being over represented in bureaucracy and administrative positions of public sector organizations as compared to their population ratio, Immigrants community developed a sense of relative deprivation as compared to Punjabis and Pukhtoon. In the changed circumstances Muhajirs left the ideology of Pakistani Nationalism adopted on the basis of Islam and chose the concept of nationalism on the basis of language. In 1984, to look after the interests and pursue the demands of Muhajir community a new political party, Muhajir Qaumi Movement (MQM) was formed. The party demanded the status of nationality for the Muhajirs. Frustrated Muhajirs attracted to the newly formed party MQM. In the following period it got significant role in Sindh politics due to its, popularity among Muhajir community, organization and strategic importance of its urban enclave. During the initial period of MQM politics, they had a close coordination with G. M. Syed's Jeay Sindh group. Both groups demanded for the rights of Sindh and joined hands in their efforts for expulsion of Punjabis from Sindh. More than half of the 26 points charter of demands of Muhajir Qaumi Movement was meant to curtail the migration of Punjabis to Karachi. Sindhi nationalists and MQM agreed to launch a struggle against hegemony of Punjabi bureaucracy, center and Punjabi & Pukhtoon settlers in urban & rural Sindh. They wished to stop net flow of money to up-country.¹⁸

Sindhi-Muhajir understanding was based on tenuous ground because there was still lot of bilateral misconceptions. Over some of the issues like quota system in government jobs, settlement of Biharis and language controversy; MQM and native Sindhis could not develop congruence of thoughts. The quota system for jobs had been a constant source of tension between two communities. Both communities have contradictory views on the issue. Though immigrants had reconciled with the principle of quota system they desired changes in the proportion of allocated quota. Muhajir population is conceived by them as 50% of the province. Whereas Sindhis considered Muhajirs a better represented community as compared to Sindhis in government and private services. Sindhis apprehended that MQM has been trying to turn delicate demographic balance especially of southern Sindh in favour of Urdu speakers by issuance of 'National Identity Cards' to illegal Behari Immigrants, construction of new residential colonies for them in the area and the demolition of old Goths in suburbs of Karachi inhabited by native population. MQM wants the complete control of the important cities of Hyderabad and Karachi whereas Sindhis opposed it vehemently. MQM favour the retention of 'Local Government System' introduced by General Musharaf's government and strongly opposes its abolition because it caused to establish autonomous city governments in urban centers of Hyderabad and Karachi dominated & controlled by Urdu speaking Muhajirs. Sindhi nationalists, attributed all those measures to prepare ground for formation of separate province of southern Sindh, controlled by Urdu speaking Immigrants as the MQM had solicited views of party's supporters about that.¹⁹ Sindhi nationalist are striving for revival of "1979 Local Government Ordinance and commissioner system in Sindh because it enable provincial government to exercise considerable control over local government institutions. The intense tussle between native population and Urdu speaking Muhajirs over issue of system of local government is reflective of mutually contradictory vested interests of the two communities. MQM had acquired the political leverage owing to its street power and ability to create serious law and order situation in Urban Sindh because no government could even think of stability in urban centers without MQM's cooperation. Whenever central establishment maneuvered for the formation of non-PPP governments in Sindh, MQM assumed the decisive role. On those occasions the parties trying to form provincial government of Sindh had to rely on MQM's support. Position of dominating partner in coalition government enhanced the prestige of MQM. The party has been able to bestow lot of benefits for its constituency, the Urdu speaking Muhajirs. Sindhi had reservations regarding MQM's role. It created impression in interior Sindh that MQM had dominated the policies and decisions of non-PPP Sindh provincial governments.²⁰

Despite these controversial issues there had been positive signals of reconciliation between two major communities of province. It seemed that both communities have accepted the reality that they had to live together and none of them possessed the ability to annihilate other. There is growing realization that both sides required each other cooperation in their fight against centre and dominant Punjab. Jeay Sindh faction of Sindhi national movement intended to accept the Immigrants as Sindhis. It extended the definition of Sindhi from the confines of history, culture and language. Muhajirs are embraced as Sindhis because they had their roots in Sindh. All the permanent settlers, who settled in Sindh before 1954, are accepted as part of Sindhi nation. JSQM the most influential group amongst the 'Jeay Sindh' separatist faction looked to forge alliance with MQM for attainments of rights of Sindh and to compete the common opponent, the dominating Punjab. The MQM had raised its voice and has congruence of views with native Sindhis on certain issues which are vital for both communities, like provincial autonomy, distribution of financial resources and distribution of water and eviction of up-country population settled in Sindh.

Autonomy a better option as compared to separation

Majority of adherents of separatist faction of Sindhi ethno-national movement (Jeay Sindh Wing) had abandoned the ideology of Independent '*Sindhudesh*'. The critical point in their ideology is the formation of autonomous and sovereign units of the constituent nationalities of Pakistan instead of provincial autonomy. They favoured a federation providing representation to all constituent units in administrative and legislative organs, on parity basis without any consideration of demographic strength. They demanded for Sindh, the status of autonomous and sovereign unit of Sindhi-nation in the federation of Pakistan and consider the constitutional struggle as appropriate strategy for the attainment of their rights. There are certain factors that can explain why Sindhis nationalist movement has shifted its stance towards accommodation with in federation of Pakistan without forsaking ethno-national identity. There are wide spread perceptions amongst Sindhis that Punjab usurp their share of water. They are also threatened by the prospects of construction of Kala Bagh Dam in future. Sindhis aren't satisfied regarding distribution of the financial resources through NFC. Issue of share in federal services is another causal factor for presence of nationalistic sentiments amongst Sindhis. Despite introduction of quota system, Sindhis are still under-represented in federal services as compare to their ratio of population. More over introduction of quota system also cause to strengthen the feelings of ethno-nationalist identity. It created feelings that they have to maintain their distinctive identity to secure jobs through reserved quota. Moreover threat of possible abolition of quota system in future further hardened nationalist sentiments. It is

obvious for them that continuation of quota system is highly associated to their maintenance of ethnic identity. Over some of the issues like settlement of Beharis, language controversy and quota system in government jobs, Muhajir community and Sindhis could not develop congruence of thoughts. The quota system for jobs had been a constant source of tension between two communities. Both communities have contradictory views on the issue. Moreover, Sindhis are perturbed over further decline of their population's ratio in the province especially in southern Sindh. They attribute it MQM's intended efforts by demolition of old Sindhi *Goths* in suburb of Karachi and settlement of more Bihari immigrants in the city. They also felt that MQM had dominated the policies and decisions of coalition governments formed in recent past and has been successful in implementation of policies inimical to the interests of indigenous population. Right of ownership of natural resources discovered in the province and denial of desired provincial autonomy are also important sources of grievances.

The failure to evolve mechanism for the permanent solution of all these issues caused to sustain the nationalist sentiments. Dissatisfaction combined with threat of further negative development in future created lack of trust and feeling of insecurity amongst native population and provided strong sources to strengthen nationalist feelings amongst native Sindhis. Nationalist parties have always tried to highlight these issues and by launching mass protest campaigns on certain occasions have successfully prevented implementation of some of the measures which they perceived could injure the interests of indigenous Sindhis. That also strengthens the consciousness of distinctive identity. Gains of certain benefits on the basis of specific identity strengthen identity consciousness as incumbents feel that achievements have been possible due to their struggle on the basis of their distinctive identity. The nationalist's successful campaign on certain issues had forced the federalist parties to follow their stance.

Owing to organizational weaknesses and lack of proper political program, nationalist parties don't possess the ability to transform the ideological support into organizational shape. The nationalist parties have not been able to unite on one platform or formed effective alliance. Nationalist movement is bifurcated on ideological lines between progressive faction and Jeay Sindh faction of G. M. Syed. Besides ideological differences the vested interests and financial benefits associated with leadership of party, combined with lack of earnestness had stopped the leaders to allow any merger or meaningful alliance. The internal feuds and disunity amongst nationalists has greatly disappointed the people. There are also widespread rumors of involvement of some of the leaders/ cadres of nationalist parties in malpractices like extortion money. Involvement in violence is another source of public alienation. People are disgruntled at the involvement of some nationalist groups in violent political activities in

educational institutions and consider them responsible for destruction of education in Sindh.

Over all, PPP always reaped the fruit of public tempo created by nationalists. Nationalist movement has its main strength in Sindhi middle class. Adopting the more pragmatic approach middle class personnel supported the idea of attainment of rights within Pakistan rather than secession and supported the PPP deeming it as appropriate platform for that purpose as they desire for more effective channel for the solution of their problems through their better participation in central and provincial governments. Political governments especially formed by PPP provided Sindhis a viable channel for meaningful presence in higher administration of state. PPP always won election with overwhelming majority. Nationalists have never been able to win the popular electoral support. PPP in Sindh proved an effective deterrent for mitigation of nationalists' separatist sentiments. Majority of the middle class intelligentsia which supports nationalist organizations also favor to struggle for provincial autonomy under constitution of Pakistan. Most of the nationalist parties favor to struggle for provincial autonomy under the constitution of Pakistan. These organizations don't support the ideology of '*Sindhudesh*' and considered it inimical to Sindhis' interests. Nationalist organizations are looking to achieve their rights through constitutional means. Popularity of PPP in Sindh and fragile electoral position of nationalist organizations have influenced the ideological shift of nationalist organizations from secession to autonomy as they wished to pose themselves as alternative of PPP.²¹

The native population has lost demographic majority in urban areas of Southern Sindh and main community of these cities the Urdu speaking Muhajirs has been organized in the form of political party Mutahida Qaumi Movement (MQM). The party though purports itself as representative of lower middle class of whole Pakistani society and denies espousal of ethnic agenda but the focus of its political program is the protection of the rights of Muhajir community. Support by majority of Muhajirs' population for MQM has greater implications for the nationalist movement of Sindh. Indigenous population feels handicapped to initiate the struggle for independence of Sindh without the effective participation of Urdu speakers the dominant community of the urban centers of Sindh province. It doesn't look likely that in near future Sindhi nationalists would be able to get the support of Muhajirs in their struggle for independence of Sindh. Contradictory interests on various issues and political exigencies to form joint front for the attainments of common rights has placed both the communities in an eccentric situation of mutual antagonism and interdependence. In this situation only viable option on which both groups

can cooperate is the enhanced provincial autonomy within federation of Pakistan.

In contrast to earlier era, the ruling elite of central government do not consider demand for provincial autonomy detrimental for country. Main stream political parties are in favor of enhanced provincial autonomy. This ideological shift is supplemented by certain administrative policies. The successive governments in recent past have tried to increase the representation of rural Sindhis in government services. Recently, the majority of local administration working in interior Sindh belonged to native Sindhi stock. Government abandoned some projects opposed by Sindhis like construction of KBD. Federal government had handed over the control of Thar coal project to Sindh Provincial Government. The adoption of multi-national character by Pakistani state has proved effective deterrent for separatist sentiments among indigenous Sindhis. It has resulted in decline of support for secession.

Notes and References

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- 2 Anwar H. Syed, *Pakistan, Islam, politics and national solidarity*, (Lahore: Vanguard Books, 1984), p. 110.
- 3 Tahir Amin, *Ethno-national movements of Pakistan: Domestic and international factors*, (Islamabad: Institute of Policies Studies, 1988), p. 94.
- 4 C. G. P. Rakisits, "Centre-Province Relations in Pakistan under President Zia: The Government's and the Oppositions Approaches", *Pacific Affairs*, 61:1, (spring, 1988), pp. 93-95.
- 5 As the cities of Karachi and Hyderabad are predominantly non-Sindhi populated and for rest of Sindh, native Sindhis are in overwhelming majority except Sukhar city.

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- 6 In a debate in the Sindh Assembly, members belonging to almost all political parties criticized the low representation of Sindhis in federal bureaucracy, *News International*, March, 13, 2009; Meeting of ‘Servants of Sindh Society’ demanded 40% jobs for native Sindhis to rectify the imbalance created due to meager representation of Sindhis in government as well as private sector jobs, *Dawn*, April 20, 2007; According to amended Article 38 of the constitution any omission in the allocation of the share of the provinces in federal services including autonomous bodies in the past shall be rectified. Members of Sindhi Assembly demanded implementation of Article 38, *Dawn*, February 25, 2011.
 - 7 Though held after seventeen years the 1998 census shows little change in the distribution of population amongst provinces since 1981 which indicates declining trend of emigration from other areas of the country to Sindh. Athar Hussain, “Peregrination of Pakistani Nationalism” in Michael Leifer (Ed.), *Asian Nationalism*, (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 126-151; According to population census of 1998, only 59.73% of the Province’s total population and 25.79% of the population of urban areas of Sindh had Sindhi as their mother tongue, *Population Census Report*, (Islamabad: Government Printing Press, 1999), p. 144
 - 8 In a seminar “Sindh is our homeland: Outsiders leave Sindh” organized by militant nationalist party Jeay Sindh Muttahida Mahaz (JSSM), speakers threatened outsiders of eviction by force if they failed to comply with their demand to leave Sindh voluntarily, *Dawn*, February 12, 2009; Sindhi nationalist parties protesting against the influx of IDPs in Sindh, blocked national highway at Kamoon Shaheed near Sindh-Punjab border reported by *Dawn*, June 08, 2009.
 - 9 In an ‘All Pakistan Water Conference’ organized by nationalists and opposition parties at Karachi speakers belonging to PPP, opposed the construction of Kalabagh, *Dawn*, June 24, 2005; similar views were expressed by provincial president of Jamat-i-Islami Sindh in a seminar at Karachi, *Dawn*, January 03, 2006.
 - 10 Ayaz Latif Palijo, “Kalabagh Dam Political, Environmental & Humanitarian Disaster in Pakistan”, *Dawn*, July 08, 1998; Ayaz Amir, “A Fever Called Kalabagh Dam”, *Ibid*, December 9, 2005;
 - 11 Selig S. Harrison, “Ethnicity and Political Stalemate in Pakistan”, in S. Akbar Zaidi (Ed.), *Regional Imbalance & the National Question in Pakistan*, (Lahore: Vanguard Books, 1992), pp. 126-160.
 - 12 During 2005-2006, Sindh contributed 70.14% of natural gas, 55.56% of crude oil and 27.48% of coal produced in Pakistan. *Census of Mining and*

Quarrying Industries 2005-06, (Islamabad: Federal Bureau of Statistic, 3009), pp. 01-11.

- 13 Sindhi nationalists consider the distribution of resources as looting of Sindh for the benefit of the other regions especially Punjab. They viewed the provincial autonomy without acknowledgement of right of Sindh over its own resources as meaningless exercise. See *Dawn*, November, 28, 2006, *ibid*, February, 02, 2009, *ibid*, July, 16, 2009, *ibid*, August 24, 2009
- 14 Announcement of 7th NFC award, *Dawn*, 31 December, 2009
- 15 John Bray, "Pakistan at 50: A State in Decline?", *International Affairs*, 73:2,(1997), p. 318
- 16 Major ports, national planning and national economic coordination including planning and coordination of scientific and technological research, census and extension of the powers and jurisdiction of members of a police force belonging to any province to any area in another province of Part 1st of the federal legislative list are transferred to Part 2nd, whereas Council of Common Interest is authorized to form and regulate the policies in related matters. "Text of 18th Amendment Bill 2010", Retrieved (July 08, 2010), from www.na.gov.pk/.../report_constitutional_18th_amend_bill2010_020410.pdf
- 17 See article of 'Jeay Sindh Mahaz' chairman Abdul Khalique Junejo, "Concurrent List: Too little too late", *Dawn* December 09, 2006; Four prominent nationalists' parties, Sindh United Party, Sindh Taraqi Pasand Party, Save Sindh Movement and Awami Tahreek, have formed the Sindh Progressive National Alliance(SPNA). SPNA's leadership wanted autonomy for Sindh according to Lahore Resolution of 1940 and to reconstitute the Pakistani federation in such a manner that all the nationalities have parity representation in all the institutions of federal government, see *Dawn*, March 24, 2010, *ibid*, April 19, 2010, *ibid*, March 23, 2011
- 18 Farhat Haq, "Rise of the MQM in Pakistan: Politics of Ethnic Mobilization", *Asian Survey*, 35:11. (November, 1995), P. 994.
- 19 MQM in past has solicited the opinion of its supporters about creation of separate province see, Moonis Ahmar, "Ethnicity and State Power in Pakistan: Karachi Crises", *Asian Survey*, 36:10, (October 1996), p. 1043; John Bray, "Pakistan at 50: A State in Decline?", *International Affairs*, 73:2, (1997), p. 328; MQM has presented a bill in NA for creation of new province by amendment or abolition of article 239 which stipulate passing of resolution by provincial assembly of the concerned province with two

third majority for any alteration in provincial boundaries. Nationalists considered it a deliberate ploy to divide Sindh. A 'MPA' of 'NPP' tabled resolution in Sindh Assembly against it and in protest a strike was being observed in Sindh on the appeal of nationalist parties. *Dawn*, January 26, 2012, *Ibid*, January 29, 2012.

- 20 Those governments were criticized for favouring Immigrants against native Sindhis in matters of admission in educational institutions, induction in government's services and allocation of development funds. For the bitter resentment of nationalists, during Arbab Rahim's era, MQM managed to pass the resolution in Sindh assembly for the preferential rights of employment in Karachi for inmates of the city.
- 21 SPNA's leadership contended that the ruling party (PPP) has failed to deliver and they were a 'better option' to safeguard the interests of indigenous population through electoral politics, Jan Khaskheli, "Nationalist Parties form Alliance to Safeguard Sindh's Natural Resources", *The News International*, July 27, 2010.