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Politics of Identity and Marginalization of Minorities in Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

This study examines how identity politics has permeated contemporary cultures and frequently resulted in minority groups being marginalized. This study investigates the intricate dynamics of identity politics and how it affects marginalized groups, looking at how dominant groups establish and uphold power dynamics that sustain marginalization. A qualitative methodology was used in this study, which included discourse analysis of political speeches and policy texts as well as in-depth interviews with members of minority groups. According to the study, identity politics is frequently used by dominant groups to hold onto their privilege and power while marginalizing minority groups through discriminatory rhetoric and laws. The results also show how minority groups establish their identities and demands for justice by opposing and challenging these prevailing narratives. This study suggests that politicians and policymakers give inclusive and participatory governance practices top priority in order to overcome the marginalization of minority groups. This study recommends that should also acknowledge and value the diversity of identities and experiences that exist within society. Initiatives for education and awareness-raising should also be put into place in order to subvert prevailing narratives and foster intergroup empathy and understanding.

Keywords: Political Parties, Marginalization, Minority Groups, Politics of Identity

INTRODUCTION

Safeguarding Minority rights is essential for building an inclusive society, which in turn leads to positive development in the country. It is necessary to understand the divergent groups of minorities in our society to identify the social consequences of minority rights claims. These variant groups face different challenges according to their needs and place they hold within the state. One of the biggest and most concerning gaps in past research is that it often emphasizes the demands of similar rights across different multicultural minorities. For instance, in Pakistan, the Baloch ethnic group often seeks to maximize its control over provincial resources and governance, while the Christian minorities seek to attain measures that facilitate their inclusion in central and provincial institutions of the state. Even if the demands are similar, in case of recognition and equal representation, it may be done under different motives. Thus, to understand the consequences of the claims of minority rights, it is essential to understand the diverse groups of minorities within states.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The context of Pakistan – in terms of rich diversity and socio-political context to accept it, is unique and sometimes makes it complicated to define. As accord to Rasul Bux Rais, the existing system either socio-political or socio-economic is imperative to consider in the context of social inclusion of vulnerable groups. Additionally, the reserved seats for religious minorities are further a domain that has spawned several new debates around the representation of minorities. With respect to it, Naeem Shakir – a political activist of left-wing politics and advocate supreme court, afforded a narrative of democracy that is based on pluralism in his article ‘why the reservation of seats for minorities in Pakistan’s assembly is ridiculous.

As a nation, it is self-evident to have questions about our identity or identities because we cannot speak for very long with any exactness. As one's experience and identity, without acknowledging its other side—the ruptures, and discontinuities. These ruptures and discontinuities are as important an ingredient of history as are the success and victories. Such honest accounts then become the fundamental basis of the cultural identity of a nation. None can define their identity if one's history is effaced as identity. Whether religious or ethnic, it is linked to history and culture (Brydon, 2000).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research used a qualitative approach and social science research technique. All the data given in this study are composed of released papers in print media, books, and journals, and official reports of the organizations for instance secondary methods for the research which included discourse analysis of political speeches and policy texts as well as in-depth interviews with members of minority groups.

Diverse groups of minorities

The following list of different ethnocultural minorities clarifies our

understanding of political identity and marginalization of minorities in culturally diverse states.

National Minorities

The term 'nation' is used in correspondence with a state. However, contemporary scholars refer to it as a specific group of people united by linguistic, cultural or ethnic traits who may or may not be closely affiliated with the state. Thus, a state is different from a nation that is administered by the government. Furthermore, in political science, the concept of nation state refers to a vast majority of the population united as a nation and recognizing the state as sovereign power. However, many states around the world claim to be a nation state but do not fulfill the requirements of this concept. For instance, considering Turkey as a nation state one might neglect the presence of Armani, Kurdish and other national minorities (Harrison & Boyd, 2018). In addition to this, many nations do not meet all the conditions of nationhood. For instance, language is one of the traits that distinguish one nation from the other, however, Germans and Austrians have similar language but are distinct nations and Swiss speak four different languages despite sharing similar national identity. According to Friedrich Meinecke in *Cosmopolitanism and the Nation State* (1907), there are two types of nations: cultural and political. Cultural nations are built up on the basis of linguistic, historical and ethnic ties, irrespective of political demands. Whereas, the political culture comprises the political principles of liberty and rule of law. Thus, following the philosophy of Max Weber, nations are communities of sentiments who tend to be historically united and institutionally enjoined under a specific territory sharing distinct language and cultural traits. It is to be noted that the nations around the world surpass the number of states and a single state incorporates more than one national community referred to as national minorities. These national minorities can be further classified into stateless nations and indigenous people.

Immigrant Minorities

Immigrants are those individuals and families who leave their homeland and migrate to another society due to economic and political reasons, thus, forming an ethnocultural diversity. Immigrants are divided into two categories i.e. those having the right to become citizens and those without the right to become citizens. Sometimes, refugees are also considered a third category.

Those individuals get the right to become citizens of another country who follow the immigration policies of the host country, such as the United States, Canada and Australia, that grants them permanent citizenship within a short span of time, under few conditions. In addition to this, the former colonial powers, including Britain and France, provided access to citizenship to the former colonial subjects of these states.

Contrary to this, individuals who arrive illegally, as well as students and guestworkers who overstay their visas, are not given the right to become citizens. Even though they may settle permanently, they do not meet the criteria for future citizenship and face threats of deportation. They form their own communities, put on the payroll and develop a family. Micheal Walzer refers to them as 'metrics', who

raise different challenges and face several issues legally, economically and politically. They exist on the margins of a larger society posing a danger of bringing into existence alienated and racially bounded marginalized communities.

Third form of immigrants are the refugees who seek asylum in other states instead of voluntary immigration. They are admitted under no immigration policy which raises concern about multicultural integration. In western democracies, refugees are welcomed and treated as if they were immigrants. Governments and the general public accept them because they arrive in small numbers from faraway areas unable to go back which makes it easy for them to integrate. However, in Central Asian and African regions, the influx of refugees is huge making it difficult for them to blend.

Religious groups

Religious minorities consist of communities that demand the safeguard of their rights under the umbrella of minority rights standards. These communities can be either traditional or non-traditional religious communities that may or may not be recognized by states (United Nations Human Rights Office of High Commissioner, 2014). Religious groups can be divided into isolationist and non-isolationist religious communities for enhanced clarification of special rights. The isolationist religious group seeks to distance themselves from the larger society. These groups voluntarily avoid civil and political participation. Such voluntary isolation from the modern world is practiced by some religious sects, including Hutterites in Canada and Amish in the United States, who escaped persecution in Europe. These groups remain unconcerned with their marginalization and endeavor to follow their homeland traditions. Spinner Halev refers to them as 'partial citizens' due to their renunciation of the democratic rights and citizenship. These groups are organized in undemocratic and conservative ways, which leads some to call for government intervention to ensure the safeguard of the children's rights.

Sui Generis Groups

There exist a number of ethnocultural groups that do not fit neatly into either of the previously mentioned categories. These include the Roma, Russian settlers, and African Americans, who don't have a homeland and never voluntarily left for one they could call a homeland. African Americans, for instance, were brought involuntarily to America and were restrained from participating in the institutions of the majority community leading to racial segregation. In addition to this, they do not fall under the category of a national minority, as they do not unite under traditional homeland or common language in America. This is because they came from different cultures and no effort was made to unite individuals with common ethnic backgrounds. Furthermore, people belonging to one family were set apart after reaching America and no rights of association were granted to them, thus, they were unable to form their own cultural structures. As a result of this, the African American category is unique, however, it is common to define the subordinate groups by race.

Ethno-Religious Diversity and Cultural Identity

Cultural Identity is a matter of 'becoming' and 'being.' It belongs to the future

as much as to the past. It is not something that already exists, transcending place, time, history, and culture. Cultural identities come from somewhere and have histories. But like everything being externally fixed in some essential past, they are subject to the continuous 'play' of history, culture, and power. Far from being grounded, mere past recovery is waiting to be established. Which, when established, will secure our sense of ourselves into eternity. Identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned and position ourselves within past narratives (Patrick Williams, 1994).

It [cultural identity] is always constructed through memory, fantasy, narrative, and myth. Cultural identities are the points of identification. Cultural identity is a platform where a nation can collectively congregate. Indeed it connects it to an imagined community, and our belongingness to it (cultural identity) constitutes imagined community'. Imagined communities are forged by delineating shared interests amongst the people of different classes who are geographically bound.

Thus, people of different classes are bounded geographically. Thus, a community is created among people who have never seen or met each other and whose outlooks and interests are not necessarily common. To consolidate the fragile ties and knot of a Pakistani nation torn apart by ethnic violence and racial discrimination, several writers pick up on the points of identification and shared interests of the people of the country and endeavor to construct a formidable and invincible cultural identity. They thus attempt at assembling the split nation into one imagined but durable and reliable community. Plenty of literature, available during the review, is full of pride and love for the culture and cuisine, and delicacies and describes Pakistani society, its people, and its mores. Culture must play its role in developing certain values, and certain patterns of behavior. During the research study, the researcher consulted the material of the Mughal dynasty, the horrors of partition, and back to the present era of trans-cultural identities thus highlighting the role history and culture play in shaping identity.

Ethno-Religious Diversity and Cultural Pluralism

Cultural pluralism signifies owning, respecting, and enabling the cultural practices of other social groups living in a given jurisdiction. It is a social attitude that sees all cultures as worthy and valuable, without necessarily rejecting the hierarchy of cultures.

Cultural pluralists see culture as fluid rather than fixed, and are confrontable with the enlargement, modification and evolution of their cultural forms. This has a tangible effect of widening the range of arts, literature, rituals and festivals practiced in a society.

In multi-lingual, multi-ethnic societies, cultural pluralism is a need rather than a choice and is very closely tied to the concerns of national harmony and internal security. The urgency of adopting cultural pluralism stems from the very structure of the nation-state that tends to give one culture the status of "national culture", thus marginalizing all other cultural forms.

The idea of cultural pluralism is understood to encompass both religious and

linguistic pluralism within its folds. With mass migrations into Europe, the discourse on cultural pluralism has once again become central as conservative elements feel threatened by Islamic cultural symbols like the Hijab and the mosque minarets. In the case of Pakistan, the Urdu language, which is a native language of a very small minority, is patronized by the state while the development of other languages and literature is given scant attention.

Political Parties in Pakistan

The history of Pakistan with democracy has been very rocky since the independence of the country in August 1947. In this duration, it has experienced four military coups, signed three constitutions, used presidential and parliamentary systems and conducted ten general elections in the country. Besides a direct overthrow of elected governments, the military has used other tactics of soft coup including supporting new political players to crack down on vote banks of parties that had lost popular appeal.

The 2013 general elections marked the peaceful hand over of a civilian government to another. This was the first in the sixty six-year history of the country that a civilian government was able to serve out a full five-year term. The use to kick out elected governments ceremonially in the past was there especially coupled with the fact that the military had been in cahoots with opposition parties that are always interested in short term gain. The elections in the year 2018 marked another successful transition of the power that inspired some observers to think that the country is heading towards the transition and consolidation of democracy.

Tenured Pakistani pundits are however optimistic albeit apprehensively of this trend. Since the 2 succeeding parliaments have served the full term of office, non of the prime ministers has successfully served a full term of five years in office. Former Prime Minister of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N)) Nawaz Sharif was disqualified by the Supreme Court in June 2017 on misdeclaration of wealth, just before completing a term, the third occasion Sharif was removed out of term.

The voting held especially in 2018 was conducted under claims of pre-election and post-election anomalies. Polls were marred by corruption and criminal cases against the leaders/members of PML-N, a lopsided implementation of the Sadiq aur Ameen (truthful and righteous) clause of the constitution, military pressure on the Party members to shift to join Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Party (PTI) or pressure on the media to reduce coverage about PML-N. Moreover, the organized attack launched by the army to reduce the influence of Karachi-based Muntaajida Qaumi Movement (Mqm) worked well to limit the political future of the party.

Role of Political Parties to Address Political Issues

Despite these hurdles- and in some ways because of them the role of political parties in Pakistan is more significant than ever before. Until now, the central preoccupation of scholars has been to explain the country's lack of democracy by focusing on the undemocratic institution of the military, which has served to limit the range of options available to civilian actors. The political parties are a long-lived pillar of the democratization in the Western world and ones directly outlined by G.

W. Jones in his famous statement: Political parties invented democracy and democracy is inconceivable without parties. The epithet that Coffman presents parties with is Political parties are a part and parcel of democracy which proves their necessity in the future democratic inside-track of the Pakistan nation (Scarrow, 2006).

Party System in Pakistan

A party system is the “set of parties that interact in patterned ways” implying “continuity” in the way political parties interact with each other and the regulations and norms to which they abide. The most commonly used variables to classify party systems are the number of political parties and the ideological distance between them. In 2018 there were 120 political parties registered with the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP, 2018). However, only 12 parties won at least one seat. Thus, while Pakistan is clearly a multiparty system, the number of effective parties is lower than the number of registered parties might suggest.

Pakistan’s electoral system has gone through many manifestations over the years since its independence. Elections have been held through an electoral college structure comprising members of local bodies; through nonparty means, only at the provincial level; and on the one person-one vote basis of today. It should not, therefore, be surprising that parties in Pakistan have sought to keep up with these changes, adjusting their tactics and policies in order to achieve the greatest electoral success. For example, nonparty local elections introduced under General Zia-ul-Haq disadvantaged the popular PPP by privileging local and patronage politics over national politics. Concerning this period, representing personal and constituent interests became more important for legislators than representing national interests. A senior PPP leader admitted in an interview that the party has been forced to make a number of compromises since its founding, including relying on local elites and notables despite the party's ostensibly leftist ideology.

Given these circumstances, how can we categorize political parties in Pakistan and across which cleavages and platforms? Parties in Pakistan are often informally grouped into three categories: mainstream, ethnic, and religious. Mainstream parties, appeal to voters across a number of different social and ethnic groups and across different regions. Ethnic parties appeal primarily to voters belonging to a specific ethnic group or in a geographically defined area, while Islamist or religious parties contest elections on the basis of support of sharia (Islamic law) and other markers of cultural conservatism (Brasher,2020).

These categories have proved to be instructional, as the remainder of this introduction demonstrates, but they should nonetheless be analyzed with caution as they undervalue many of the similarities across types of parties and obfuscate important differences within groups. For example, even mainstream parties in Pakistan tend to have geographically and sometimes ethnically defined support bases, and many ethnic parties have made efforts at expanding their support bases beyond their ethnic communities. Additionally, many prominent mainstream, ethnic, and Islamist parties have originated from social movements. For example, the PPP emerged out of protest movements galvanized by the Left against Field Marshal

Ayub Khan, while the MQM, which grew out of a student movement, drew enormous crowds of disgruntled Muhajirs in search of representation.

The line between the electoral and legislative priorities of political parties and their "street politics" continues to remain blurred. For example, between 2013 and 2018 the PTI orchestrated large-scale protests against corruption and alleged electoral rigging at the same time as it formed the provincial government in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Similarly, Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) emerged in 2017 directly out of protests around the blasphemy law, and, despite contesting and winning seats in 2018, it continued its tactics rather than seeking to instill change solely through legislative politics.

Mainstream Political Parties

From 1988 until approximately 2013, two political parties—the PPP and the PML-N-dominated political competition in Pakistan. More recently, the PTL, which received the largest number of votes in 2018, has proved to be a viable third-party option. Together, these parties can be thought of as the primary "mainstream" parties in Pakistan's political system, distinct from those parties that appeal primarily to one ethnic group or region or those that are avowedly Islamist in nature. All three of these parties have in common a weak organizational structure and an overreliance on local notables or elites in lieu of party workers.⁴ While the PML-N and the PTI are considered right-of-center, particularly in comparison to the left-leaning PPP, this ideological positioning has not prevented electoral candidates and party members from switching across the three parties.

The PML-N inherited its legacy from the All-India Muslim League, whose struggle led to the establishment of a separate homeland for Muslims in 1947. But, rather than seeking to institutionalize a democratic party system with itself at the helm, the PMLN was initially vulnerable to factionalism and co-optation by the military. Indeed, the PML-N, led by former prime minister Mian Nawaz Sharif, is made up of politicians who began their careers during General Zia-ul-Haq's tenure (Shafqat et al, 2020).

The PPP has much in common with the PML-N, even while it remains its erstwhile enemy. It is a matter of concern, how the party has been shaped by political events dominated by a powerful military-bureaucratic establishment. Furthermore, the evolution of the PPP following the historic 1970 election when it successfully campaigned to win a landslide victory on the populist mantra of roti, kapra, aur makaan (food, clothing, and shelter) and its heavy reliance on the Bhutto family and the land-owning elite to its current electoral decline. It is quite obvious that the PPP's decline is due to the personalistic leadership of the Bhutto family, which compromised its organizational ability in order to counter the challenges posed by the military establishment (Jones, 2020).

Ethno-Religio Political Parties

Horowitz (1985) defines an ethnic party as an organization whose electoral constituency is comprised of a discernible ethnic group (or groups of ethnicities) and whose politics is devoted to the interests of that ethnic group (or groups). The type: is determined in two reciprocally complementary criteria: firstly, as an electoral

organization which publicly identifies itself as representing that which is single in the categorical sense, authenticates the advocacy of this particular category in its orientation to mobilization and publicly presents itself, led in its executive council and in its mass membership, by representatives of that which is non-dominant; and, secondly, as an entity entitled to contest elections, the greater part of whose leadership and following is affiliated to a nondominant ethnic group and whose electoral platform contains the higher claims to ethnic or cultural goals. Thus, a party can be ethnic at one contest but not necessarily in later ones. Furthermore, ethnic appeals could be important in particular regions or constituencies but may also be quiet in other areas.

Using these parameters, the MQM and the ANP are ethnic parties. Both of these organizations have been influential in coalition governments but they have also been provincial opposition leaders. Each has had its electoral fortunes waxing and waning, even though they have retained their fundamental support within the same ethnic constituency.

Albeit its Karachi-based foundation, the MQM has been voicing out the interests of the Muhajir community since the inscrutable early 1980s. Its strong developed internal hierarchy and city-wide organization have drawn scholarly interest. The two things that make the MQM unique are (1) the extraordinary power held by Altaf Hussain, founder of the party who lives in London, and (2) its complex decentralized organization with city-wide structures. Recent events, especially the poor results of the party at the 2018 parliamentary elections and the legal troubles faced by Hussain in the United Kingdom, impose new tremendous organizational strains. However, commentators argue that the pursuit of a politically unified Muhajir grouping is not going to subsist.

Based in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, the ANP has been representing the Pashtun minority since the 1970s. It owes its stature to its longevity and experience within the organization and to its traditional role as a Pashtun complaints shop. Though the ANP has frequently run in coalitions with non-ethnic parties, ethnic identity has long been central to its agendas in state politics (Naqvi, 2020).

Religio-Political Parties

Islamist parties, with varying degrees of loyalty to the democratic process and variable affiliations to particular sects, have had a central, parliamentary, role in the Pakistan political system. Nobody can deny the primacy of the strength of Islamist parties that consist mainly of mobilizing people to the street to protest and lobby in favor of particular policies. This is surely not an exaggeration. Protests have been able to push Islamic agendas on national and religious identity issues within the Pakistani state, as well as on foreign policy affairs. As an instance, protestors since 1953 pressured, and to a large degree were carried out by state governments, the gradual stripping of Ahmadi rights, including the insertion of a 1974 constitutional clause that Ahmadis are non-Muslim (Nellis & Siddiqui, 2018). Since 1973, the Ahmadis proclaimed a non-Muslim community of the state and some actions have been undertaken by the regime of Zia to repress their social prominence. The laws which were only biased against the Ahmadi community slowly spread to all of the other

religious minorities and separated the country into Muslims and Non-Muslims that promoted discriminatory nature against the non-Muslims (Tahir & Tahira, 2016).

Despite their significant lobbying role, however, the Islamist parties have also been significant in the electoral politics. In the 2002-8 unstable period under Musharraf, a mixture of the religious parties who referred to themselves as Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA) were elected into the KP ruling (White 2008). The alliance comprised of 6 parties representing different sub-sects of the Sunni Islamic religion with the two largest parties being Jamaat-e-Islami and Jamiat-e-Ulema Islam (Fazlur Rehman faction parties). PTI also entered into an alliance with Jamaat-e-Islami in KP, releasing three ministries under the religious party after the 2013 elections. Two other new religious entrants the Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan Party (TLP) and the Milli Muslim League (MML) have also registered numerous electoral candidates in the 2018 elections. Although the Barelvi TLP had only officially existed since November 2017, the party had risen to the surprise of analysts and observers to obtain the fifth-highest amount of votes in the nation. Ethnically-based or religiosity-based such parties thus linked with violent movements or those that are hatemongers and intolerant are growing in importance as electoral options and partners of mainstream party political forces. This disturbing trend artificially reflects two aspects of phenomena. It is first of all an indication that District character of local elite is shifting and poorly structured parties that formerly depended on the largest feudal landlord in the district to mobilize votes now have to turn to this local authority figure who is also religious and frequently violent. Second, Islamist parties as such are changing in nature with the mainstream religious parties that have, in the end, come to terms with the democratic process to become those who seek only to confront it even as they take part in elections. The spectrum of those parties belonging to ethno-religious and ethno-linguistic category, on the one hand, how much they contribute to the government as coalition partners, on the other hand, how much they can do as pressure groups outside of the government (Mushtaq, 2018).

Socio-Political and Socio-Cultural aspect of Minorities rights in Pakistan

During the time of independence, a considerable number of non-Muslims lived in Pakistan, especially in Sindh and East Bengal. The rampant violence in Punjab caused thousands of minorities to migrate from the west Punjab region to India. Similarly, the whole Muslim community was forced out of Indian Punjab and Haryana into Pakistan that resulted in the minimal presence of minorities in West Punjab. It is to be noted that until the breakup of Pakistan in 1971, the minorities were treated properly and enjoyed constitutional rights, as the joint electorate system allowed them to participate in national and political life with reserved seats in the National and Provincial Assemblies. In addition to this, during the Ahmadiyya Movement of 1953, martial law was imposed to counter agitation against minorities. However, things started to change after the 1971 war.

The provisions in the Constitutions of 1956, 1963 and 1971 of Pakistan provide for the safeguard of minority rights. These included the right to profess their religion freely, to protect them from any form of discrimination and their

representation in the legislative bodies at national and provincial level.

Constitutional Background

The rights of minorities were first recognized in the basic principle committee interim report to the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan in 1950. In addition to the fundamental rights applicable to the Muslims and non-Muslims alike, a special provision was made for the safeguard of the minorities in the constitution. The fundamental rights committee set up a sub committee for the matters concerning the minorities of Pakistan in 1948, in which all minority groups were represented. Questions related to the political, economic, religious and cultural safeguards were raised including the effective methodology to be implemented for these safeguards. It was clear from the beginning that under the Islamic constitution of Pakistan, it was necessary to incorporate the provisions for the safeguard of minorities. In one of the directives presented by the minorities committee, it was demanded that the Hindus should be given weightage for representation in the legislature. For example, the 23 percent Hindus in East Bengal should be given 41 percent seats in the legislature. In addition to this, other safeguards included the protection of minorities from physical persecution, freedom of conscience and freedom for the establishment of their own schools under the regulations of the government. In the final report, further safeguards were included which stated that the minorities should not be prevented from conserving their culture, no discrimination shall be made for granting aid to educational institutions and the formation of the Ministry of Minorities at federal and provincial level.

The Anti-Ahmadiyya Movement was started by the Majlis-e-Ahrar, a political party, which resulted in the violent riots throughout Punjab in March 1953. The sentiments had material and political overtones where the prominent influential members of the government, such as Foreign Minister Zafarullah Khan, were targeted. Owing to the unrest in Lahore and actions taken by the Nazimuddin government, the bureaucratic- military coup was declared to restore law and order.

In the Constitution of 1956, provisions were made for the safeguard of minorities rights as Pakistan had religious minorities and it was necessary to protect the rights of individuals irrespective of caste, creed and religion. Thus, the fundamental rights were assured without any discrimination to the Muslims and non-Muslims alike. In addition to this, all citizens were declared eligible for appointment to the state services without any discrimination based on religion, caste, race and sex and the protection of legitimate rights and interests of non-Muslims communities were specified in the directive principles of the state policy.

In the constitution of 1962, similar provisions were made as declared in the Constitution of 1956. Any law passed by the legislature that breached the fundamental rights and provisions of the Constitution would be declared void. It further favored the retention of the directive principles provided in the last Constitution. Similarly, the last and active Constitution of 1973 laid down the provisions of fundamental rights as described in the previous constitutions of 1956 and 1962. In addition to this, parochial, tribal and racial feelings were discouraged among Muslims and protection of legitimate rights of minorities were guaranteed.

Under the second Amendment to the Constitution in 1974, the Ahmadi community were declared non-Muslims and were marked outside the definition of Muslims. Later, the definition of non-Muslim was introduced within the Constitution and clearly added Ahmadiyya community within the premises of the definition. Furthermore, in 1984, the enforcement of the Ordinance XX of Anti-Islamic Activities of Qadiani Group, Lahori Group, and Ahmadis (Prohibition and Punishment) Ordinance caused a real difficulty for the Ahmadis for using epithets, descriptions and titles reserved for holy places or figures of Muslims and were forbidden from reciting the 'Azan'. The Ahmadis were thus prevented from practicing their faith and were made eligible for prosecution and harassment for their religious practices. The following table indicates the early minority office holders in Pakistan.

| Name | Designation held | Community | Tenure/Year |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Jogendra Nath Mandal | First Law Minister of Pakistan | Hindu | 1947-1950 |
| Cecil Edward Gibbon | Deputy Speaker, National Assembly | Christian | 1947-1949 |
| Fazal Elahi | Deputy Speaker, Punjab Assembly | Christian | 1947-1949 |
| Chaudhary Lal | Deputy Speaker, Punjab Assembly | Hindu | 1947-1949 |

Source : Parliamentary history of Pakistan-National Assembly of Pakistan

MLR 118 Controversy

According to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics religious data of Pakistan Census 2017 on 19 May 2021, there are 3.52 % non-muslims living in Pakistan. The Constitution of Pakistan guarantees minorities rights to profess and practice their religion and are assured the right to establish their religious institutions. Likewise, in the Objective Resolution of 1949 similar provisions are made to develop their culture and to protect their legitimate interests. There exists a comparatively large population of christian community in Pakistan who were hit by the nationalization of private educational institutions in 1972, established by Christian missions in Punjab. This nationalization took place under Martial Law Regulation No. 118. However, the Christians started to occupy the property under such institutions as they were not touched by the government for six to seven years. The government started to seize the properties under Martial Law Regulation 118 and Christians were ordered to vacate them as the properties were given to the revenue records under provincial government. Nevertheless, the Supreme Court took notice of the issue by declaring the ineffectiveness of MLR 118 to make the government owner of the properties. Despite the promise made by Junejo, the then prime minister, and the Supreme Court ruling, no measures were taken to return them back to Christians

due to the influence of certain religious parties. It is to be noted that the fear of discrimination and insecurity made the Christians to name their children Muslim names with the suffix “Masih”. This indicates the insecure environment for Christian minorities living in Pakistan.

Protection of Religious Minorities

Our diverse society comprises religious pluralism and multi-ethnic communities which are often compromised by the influence of the majority over the minority groups that seek to impose their own religious beliefs and cultural identities on them. In Pakistan, with the rise of hostility and extremism, this issue poses a threat to the Development Agenda of post-2015. Such hostility is demonstrated in terms of intolerance that escalates to sectarian violence and systematic persecution against vulnerable populations, especially religious minorities. Misuse of religion by extremists driven by hostility towards religious minorities is conspicuous in Pakistan. In addition to this, the restrictions imposed on religious beliefs and practices of minorities at the state level nurture the conflict-ridden environment in Pakistan.

CONCLUSION

The discrimination and marginalization faced by religious minorities compromises the strength of the nations and their relations with the general population resulting in the breaking of social unity. Negative sentiments activate among general public due to the revocation of socio-political and economic opportunities that creates social segregation and isolation within the community. Such process of segregation converts the social fabric of the society into conflict ridden environment where major religious conflicts emerge. Due to the minimal representation in the governance structure, the religious minorities often remain neglected owing to the exclusionary laws and policies formulated by the government that hinders the social inclusion within the Pakistani society. The non-availability of inclusive practices within the society leads towards the reduction of social strength that obstructs the achievement of democratic diversity within the state.

Recommendations

- Organizations in civil society should unite with educational institutions and political parties to develop leadership programs supporting religious minorities who plan to enter political roles. The initiatives must combine political understanding development with leadership skill education and public speaking abilities and political campaign skills to equip minority community members for political leadership positions.
- Young minority candidates require established political leaders including racial and ethnic minority leaders to mentor them through politics and electoral systems and governance. New networking venues together with platforms must be established to link upcoming leaders with major political officials along with policy researchers and political activists in order to improve their exposure and potential development.

- Political parties need to establish mechanisms which support religious minorities to take positions of leadership within their organizational structure. Political parties could achieve minority representation by developing dedicated wings directly aimed at minorities and through proper representation of religious groups in their leadership cadre. Minorities should receive active support from political parties through party nominations at both reserved and general seats during electoral contests.

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