ETHNIC CONFLICTS IN PAKISTAN: A CASE STUDY OF SINDH (1980-99)
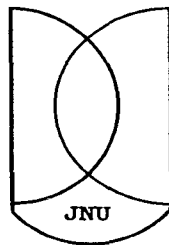
*Dissertation submitted to the Jawaharlal Nehru University
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the Degree of*

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

RAJESH KUMAR

Centre for South, Central, South East Asian
and South West Pacific Studies
School of International Studies
Jawaharlal Nehru University,
New Delhi-110067
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**CENTRE FOR SOUTH, CENTRAL, SOUTH EAST ASIAN
AND SOUTH WEST PACIFIC STUDIES
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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the M.Phil dissertation entitled "ETHNIC

CONFLICTS IN PAKISTAN : A CASE STUDY OF SINDH (1980-99)",

submitted by **RAJESH KUMAR** in partial fulfilment of the requirements

for the award of the degree of **MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY**, has not been

previously submitted for any degree of this or any other University and this

is his own work. He will solely be responsible for all inaccuracies.

We recommend that this dissertation may be placed before the

examiners for evaluation.

Prof. Uma Singh
Supervisor

Prof. K.Warikoo
Chairperson

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

PREFACE

Ethnic conflicts, have emerged as one of the most violent and potent conflicts of the present time. It has posed varied challenges for nation building, stability, peace and prosperity. So 'ethnicity', 'ethnic conflicts' and 'ethno-nationalism' have become very popular in the recent political discourse.

Ethnic conflicts are generally defined as violent conflicts between or among groups who are different from each other in term of culture, religion, physical features or languages. Ethnic mobilizations and assertions are based on group distinctiveness and separate identity formation. Inter-state wars have declined in the recent times while the number of intra-state conflicts have risen in the third world countries.

The ethnic-conflicts in Pakistan created tremendous problems since various ethno-nationalist movements questioned the 'official nationalism' and homogenizing process of the centre. Dominance of one particular group in the military and bureaucratic structure created relative deprivation and hostilities in other groups. So there emerged the accretion of ethnic identity which led to regional assertions being made by different ethnic groups from time to time. The conflicts among different ethnic groups and confrontation

between state and one or other ethnic group have created vicious cycle of violence and made the nation subject to serious crisis.

The period of 1980 to 1999 witnessed the beginning of a critical phase where, at first, Sindhi ethno–nationalist movements in the period of 1980s and Muhajir ethnic assertions in the late 1980s and 1990 made ethnic conflicts a recurring phenomena in the province of Sindh. The ethnic conflicts resulting from identity assertions of groups, which reflected in their demand for powersharing autonomy and decentralization of power etc. brought about the question of relationship between the state and minority ethnic groups.

So the present study will focus on the development that has taken place of ethnic conflicts in Sindh in the period of 1980 to 1999. At first, it will discuss what were the reasons which made the province of Sindh peculiar for ethnic conflicts. It will analyse why did ethnic mobilizations and assertions become a recurring feature in Sindh. Then it will analyse the various factors that led to the ethnic consciousness among the Sindhi and Muhajir groups. Then it will discuss the role played by the different regime to manipulate, advance and subordinate the particular ethnic groups. Finally, it will find out how the various socio-economic constraints put severe stress on ethnic equilibrium and brought competitive rivalry and conflict among ethnic group in Sindh.

The main objectives of this study are:

(1)   To conceptualize ethnicity and the process of identity formation and ethnic mobilization in recent time.

(2)   To analyse various ethnic groups in Pakistan which emerged and took the shape of ethno-nationalism movements.

(3)   To assess and critically analyse the role of various socio-economic politico factors on ethnic conflicts in Sindh.

(4)   To analyse the trends of violence in Sindh.

(5)   To analyse and probe the role of state in dealing with ethnic conflicts.

It's main hypothesis are:

(i)   The ethnic crisis of Sindh largely related to legacy of Pakistan.

(ii)   Successive central government has discriminated against the Sindhi's and Muhajirs.

(iii)   Non-representation in powersharing led to alienation and thereby ethnic assertions.

The present study is divided into five chapters.

Chapter-I discusses the theoretical framework of ethnicity and ethnic conflicts.

Chapter-II is devoted to the historical background of the province of Sindh. It also discusses how the demographic factor radically altered the ethnic composition in the urban areas of Sindh leading to ethnic conflict. It also deals with the socio-economic and linguistic policies which worsened the ethnic harmony.

Chapter-III discusses the various factors which led to the rise of aspirations of Sindhi-ethnic assertions in period of 1980s and how did this movement evolve in the decade under the military regime. It will analyse the factors which led to the rise of Muhajir assertions. It will critically analyse the rise of MQM and its politics in Sindh in the decade of 1980s.

Chapter-IV will analyse the Muhajir assertions in the period of 1990 to 1999. It will examine how the ethnic conflicts took very violent turn in the said period. It will also examine the state's response to the ethnic conflicts in Sindh.

Chapter-V will sum up the discussion and will try to suggest political solutions to establish peace and ethnic harmony in Sindh.

The study has adopted historical and analytical methods based on primary and secondary source material. The primary source material will include World Development Report, Election Commission of Pakistan's report. The secondary source material will include books, articles, periodicals and newspapers reports.

CHAPTER – I

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER-I

INTRODUCTION

In most civic societies, multi-ethnicities have posed varied challenges for nation building and there is marked increase in the inter-ethnic mobilization and conflicts in the recent years. Ethnic conflicts have taken more than eleven million lives since the Second World War, in which well over a million people have died from ethnic conflicts in two decades.[1] Inter-state wars have declined in the recent time while the number of intra-state conflicts have risen in the third world countries. 'Ethnicity', 'ethnic conflicts' and 'ethno-nationalism' have become very popular in the recent political discourse.

The term ethnic group is generally understood as a population which: (a) is largely biologically self-perpetuating; (b) shares fundamental cultural values, realized in overt unity in cultural forms; (c) makes up a field of communication and interaction; (d) has a membership which identifies itself, and is identified by others as constituting a category distinguishable from other categories of the same order.[2] So, Frederick Barth opines that ethnic identity is associated with a culturally specific set of value standards.

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[1]   Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner (ed.) *'Nationalism, Ethnic Conflict and Democracy'*, (London: Hopkins University Press, 1995), p. xvii.

[2]   Frederik Barth (ed.) *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference*, (London: Allen and Unwin, 1981), p. 200.

Ethnic movements make their claims in virtue of an alleged 'community of culture', in which the members are both united with each other by a shared culture and differentiated from others by the possession of that culture.[3]

Therefore, ethnic mobilizations and assertions are based on for group distinctiveness and separate identity formation.

There are various ideological streams of scholars who have written extensively on ethnicity, ethnic conflicts and their patterns of mobilization. Broadly speaking, there are three approaches towards the study of ethnic groups and its attributes. These are the following: (a) objective, (b) subjective and (c) syncretic or composite.[4]

According to objectivists, there are various determinants of cultural markers like race, language and descent. In contrast to this, subjectivists would maintain that ethnic identity manifests itself through cultural markers, they stress on the self as well as group related feeling of identity-distinctiveness and its recognition by others.[5]

According to Paul R. Brass, there are some problem in both the approaches. 'An objective definition assumes that though no specific attribute is invariably associated with all ethnic categories, there must be some

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[3] Anthony Smith, 'The Ethnic Revival in the Modern world'. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 13.

[4] Urmila Phadnis, Ethnicity and Nation Building in South Asia, (New Delhi: Sage Publication, 1990), p. 14.

[5] Ibid, p. 14.

distinguishing cultural feature. The problem with objective definitions is that it is usually extremely difficult to determine the boundaries of ethnic categories in this way. The difficulty with subjective definitions is that they make it impossible to answer the basic question of how a group of people arrives at subjective self-consciousness in the first place.[6]

Syncretists take balanced approach in which there is complementarity of both objective and subjective views which facilitate an understanding of the processes of evolution and growth of an ethnic group, characterized by continuity, adaptation and charge.

Therefore, an ethnic group can be defined 'as a historically formed aggregate of people having a real or imaginary association with a specified territory, a shared cluster of beliefs and values connoting its distinctiveness in relation to similar groups and recognized as such by others.[7]

Ethnic mobilization takes place when ethnic groups try to motivate itself for power and recognition and its leadership use ethnic symbols for socio-cultural and politico-economic objectives. Thus, ethnicity provides the group its own quality and character.

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[6]   Paul R. Brass, *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Theory and Comparison*, (New Delhi: Sage Publication, 1991), p. 18.

[7]   Urmila Phadnis, no. 5; p. 14.

The divergent explanatory approaches and perspectives on ethnicity are in the following categories – (i) primordialist; (ii) cultural pluralist; (iii) Marxist and Neo-Marxist; (iv) Modernization and development.[8]

For primordialist, culture is the basis on which they analyse the ethnicity. Ethnic identities are not chosen but are give. However, ethnic identity is a significant but not a sufficient prerequisite for creation of ethnicity. It does not explain why inter-ethnic group relationship has been harmonious at one time but not at another. Even the cultural core can vary from time to time.

The cultural pluralist approach is refined and extension form of the primordialist approach because it emphasis not merely on the ethnic distinctiveness but also on the dominant – subordinate patterns of relation among different ethnic groups thereby bringing ethnic conflicts. Even cultural pluralists provide no satisfactory explanation to harmonious relationship in multi-ethnic societies.

For Marxists, 'ethnicity is associated with pre-modern values, and ethnic mobilization is usually described in terms of class, as a class struggle in disguise.[9] For them, ethnic identity is viewed anti-thetical to the development of class consciousness and class solidarity. For Marxist, ethnic

[8] Urmila Phadnis, no. 5, p. 16.
[9] Bjorn Hettne Ethnicity and Development: An Elusive Relationship in *Contemporary South Asia* (Oxford), vol. 2, 1993, p. 123.

mobilization evokes 'false consciousness' and arrival of socialism would end the ethnic tensions and conflicts in the pre-modern society.

Neo-Marxist explains ethic conflict emerges when international division of labour and internal colonialism put one ethnic group subordinated to others.

The modernization and development considered ethnicity as traditional and premordial which presumably was bound to disappear with the coming of modernity. Deutsch believed that the process of modernization would eventually lead to global integration of the world. Modernization in the form of urbanization, industrialization, schooling, communication and transportation facilities etc would lead to assimilation.[10] But, in reality the modernization generally stimulates and combat ethnic consciousness. The increasing contacts between culturally diverse people might increase antagonism because ethnic consciousness has been definitely increasing, not decreasing, in recent years.[11]

Consequently, whatever the level of development of the state, ethnic conflicts need to be viewed as parts of an ongoing process which have to be coped with and managed, but cannot be resolved once for all.

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[10] K.W. Deutsch, *Nationalism and its Alternative,* (New York: Alfred A Knopf Press, 1966), p. 25.

[11] Walker Connor, 'The Politics of Ethnonationalism', *Journal of International Affairs*, 27(1), 1973, p. 23.

The modernization and development approach to certain extent analyses and explains clearly the genesis and cause of ethnic conflicts in the developing countries. Rodolfo Stavenhagen identifies the following different situations which results in ethnic conflicts:

(1) Ethnic groups within a state which identifies itself as being multi-ethnic or multinational. Such groups may base their identity on language, religion, nationality or race.

(2) Ethnic groups within a state which does not formally recognize its own multi-ethnic composition.... Here minorities may be regionally based.... or they may be racial, religious, linguistic or tribal; or a combination of several of these elements.

(3) National minorities which identify with their ethnic kin in a neighbouring state in which they may have majority status.

(4) Multiple ethnic groups within a state in which none enjoys a particularly dominant positions, specifically in recent independent, formerly colonial countries, in which the state itself is a relatively weak artificial construct....

(5) Ethnic minorities which straddle international boundaries and with minority status in each one of the countries.

(6) Ethnic immigrants and refugees resulting from extensive migrations, particularly from third world countries into other third world countries or into industrialized nations.

(7) Indigenous and tribal peoples constitute a special case of ethnic groups generally being regarded as minorities, because of the historical circumstances of their conquest and incorporation into new state structures as well as their attachment to their land and territory and their secular resistance to genocide, ethnocide and assimilation.[12]

Therefore, state has very important role to play in any of the ethnic conflicts. Many times ethnic groups are pitted against the state which is strongly interventionist in post-colonial societies in which the task of nation-building and state building are merged in the process of nation-building. So modern state penetrated almost every vital sphere of social life including education, culture and mass media. 'State appears to the non-dominant ethnic groups as revolution from above with which they cannot psychologically identity and which they cannot accept as legitimately their own. They feel strongly that they have their own ethnic identity capable of producing their own version of nationalism compatible with their ethnic interest. But state-nationalism

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[12]   Rodolfo Stavenhagen, 'Ethnic Conflicts and Their Impact on International Society'. *International Social Science Journal*, (Oxford), vol. 43. No. 127, February 1991, p. 119.

negates ethnic identities of minority groups, and ethno-nationalism is an assertive reaction to this negation.'[13]

Modern state in a polyethnic situation goes for 'nation-building', national reconstruction and national development thereby bringing political centralization and national unification which essentially means the establishment of direct control over minority ethnic groups.

In many of the post colonial states, anti-imperialist and anti-colonial ideologies were replaced by hegemonic assertions, providing an ideological impetus towards majority rule.

"When each community.....group interprets its insecurity as a result of the privileges of a competing group gained through 'favours' and 'patronage' from the state,.....new insecurities are generated in people's minds and new fears that the state is biased against them and for a contending faction or group.[14]

The nation-building process in itself becomes a violent and conflict-ridden phenomenon. This is because state and society have not complemented each other and there could not develop civil society which would have provided conflict resolution mechanism to tackle the conflicts and violence. The

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[13] Dawa Norbu, *Culture and the Politics of Third World Nationalism*, (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 197.

[14] Rajni Kothari, *'Rethinking Development'* (Delhi: Ajanta Publication, 1988), p. 198.

totalizing state or authoritarian regime in the third world contries do not give proper political and cultural spaces and that leads to conflictual relationship with other ethnic groups and dissenting voices. Resolution of this will come only through the acceptance of the idea of sharing political power among various social classes and ethnic groups on the basis of equality and democracy.

Many of the post colonial states were composed of groups with radically different political and cultural traditions, and even histories of mutual hatred for one another. Moreover, these states had virtually none of the financial, military, and technological resources of Bismarckian Germany or even Czarist Russia. Poor in resources, institutionally shallow, internationally dependent, politically insecure, and ethnically riven, the new states of Africa and much of Asia failed both at state building and at nation building. The result was not only chronic political instability and repression but also ethnic rioting, conflict and civil war.[15]

State's resort to use authoritarian structure to resolve ethnic conflicts lead more often to militarization of society as one or other ethnic groups become the disgruntled element who challenges the role of state as an arbiter, thereby making militarization of ethnic conflicts inevitable. The countries like Sri Lanka, Lebanon and Nigeria were destroyed or torn apart by ethnic

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[15]   Larry Diamond & Marc. F. Plattner (ed.), no. 3, p. xvi.

conflicts because state took the repressive measures to resolve the conflicts and that led to vicious cycles of violence and militarization. This further leads to reinforcement of existing ethnic boundaries and also, the state and its institutions get further ethnicized. These activities generally further deepen the divides in fractured societies.

The role of the state and the emergence of ethnicity has deep relationship. 'The culturally homogenizing, socially fragmenting and atomizing processes of modernization, induced largely through state intervention, thus create conditions of social and economic vulnerabilities and insecurities. In a period of apparent growth (benefiting a minority) but real shrinkage (which displaces millions from their homes and livelihoods), people compete for scarce resources and benefits, and to do this they must organize. 'Ethnic' groupings have been one way of bargaining with the state.'[16]

So, ethnic nationalism confronts a highly centralized, coercively empowered state structure with an impressive mandate of the dominant ethnic group. Dominant group-led state not only maintains the monopoly over the legitimate use of force within national boundaries but also ensures cultural and ideological hegemony that totally bans any politics of nationalism that runs contrary to state nationalism.

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[16]   Kothari, no. 15, p. 199.

The rise in the ethnic conflicts is a response to the homogenizing process of state's policies towards modernization and development. Inequal distribution of resources, subordination of minority's cultural and linguistic rights and political emancipation are some of the central issues which ethnic-nationalism and ethnic conflicts seek to address.

II

In a multi-ethnic state like Pakistan, ethnic conflicts between Punjabi dominated states and other ethnic groups (Sindhi, Muhajirs, Baluchis, Pakhtuns), offers itself as a case study to locate the socio-politico and economic roots of ethnic conflicts, and their relation to the process of development and modernization.

Pakistan is a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, and multi-lingual country. Comprising five ethnic divisions in four different geographical regions: Pubjab, Sindh, North West Frontier Province (NWFP) and Baluchistan. Accordingly to 1981 official census, the last census of Pakistan had a reported population of 84.2 million persons in which Punjab's share was 56 per cent, Sindh 23 per cent, NWFP 13 percent and Baluchistan 5 percent.[17]

Each of these province represented a distinct ethnic group which had a fully or quasi-sovereign state of its own before the British conquest. Furthermore,

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[17] Anita M. Weiss, 'Much Ado About Counting', *Asian Survey*, vol. XXXIX, No. 4, July/August 1999. p. 687.

they differed greatly in their size, population, resources, level of social development and proximity to power.[18]

The different ethnic groups in Pakistan do not have an identical class composition. Nor do they have an equal, or even proportional, representation in the higher echelons of military bureaucracy. Therefore, the various elements of Pakistan's ruling class have a disproportionate representation of the various ethnic groups in society. So when out of 101 Muslim members of the Indian civil service, 95 opted for Pakistan, among them one third were Punjabis. The Muhajirs represented only 3.5% of the population while they occupied 21% of civil services post.[19] In the armed forces, the Punjabis dominated by having 80% of the representation as they were considered to be martial race by the Britishers.[20]

The domination and skewed representation in the bureaucracy and the armed forces had very important role to play in creating the feelings of ethno-nationalism as the post-colonial state tried modernization and centralization to achieve its objective. But the state perpetuated the existing relations of production and distribution.[21]

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[18] Feroz Ahmed 'Pakistan's Problems of National Integration', *in* Asghar Khan (ed.) *Islam, Politics and the State, The Pakistan Experience*, (London: Zed Books, 1985) p. 233.

[19] K.B. Sayed, *The Political System of Pakistan*, (Boston: Houghton Miffin, 1996), p.32.

[20] S.P. Cohen, 'State Building in Pakistan', in A. Bannauzi and M. Weiner (eds.), *The State, Religion and Ethnic Politics: Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan*, (Lahore: Vanguard, 1987), p. 194.

[21] Feroz Ahmed, 'Ethnicity, Class and State in Pakistan', *Economic and Political Weekly*, November 23, 1996, p. 3052.

The moderization and development was intended to create conditions for modernizing the minds of the people but they hardened the linguistic and cultural identities and provoked ethnic conflicts and communal violence.

Therefore various ethnic movements like Bengali nationalism, Pakhtoon nationalism, Sindhi ethno-nationalism were like strong currents of anti-centre politics which demanded more autonomy and power to be given to the provinces.

Initially in their struggle for a separate homeland, Muslim league under the leadership of M.A. Jinnah went for 'two nation theory' which demanded an Islamic state which cater to the aspirations and needs of Muslim communities of the subcontinent. The Pakistan movement thus tried to build a movement which chose to subjugate other aspects of their identity, deriving from territory, language, culture etc in favour of their religion. 'So the movement did not have the depth and character to provide the substance of national memories. It had manifestly proved to be incapable of providing overarching national bonds for it tied too closely with the fortunes of a fragmented and discredited political party'.[22] 'The national identity or what Anderson speaks of as 'Official nationalism' was not spontaneously generated from below, but was imposed from above.'[23]

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[22]   Hamza Alavi, 'Nationhood and Communal Violence in Pakistan', Journal of Contemporary Asia, vol. 21, No. 2 (1991), p. 152.

[23]   Hamza Alavi, 'Nationhood and the Nationalities in Pakistan', Economic and Political Weekly, July 8th, 1989, p. 1527.

There were other weaknesses for the movement of Pakistan, because it was strong in the minority provinces where Muslims feared domination of Hindus. When Pakistan was carved out, it was majority province of Punjab, Sindh, NWFP, Baluchistan and Bengal, which became the part of Pakistan. Ethnically, linguistically and culturally they were very diverse and distinct. So they could not develop a similar and shared outlook which hindered later on, to build strong national political parties.

Apart from this, other historical factors like confrontation with India, the existence of the country's two wings-their socio-cultural differences and struggle for a share of power and the early death of Jinnah created 'emergency frame of mind'[24], which led to the continuation of viceregal system. Thus, the governance was devoid of popular awareness or involvement and was designed to rule over a subjected population.

Modernisation has been an inalienable part of the nation-building process. In a multi ethnic situation, nation building is synonymous to 'national integration' or 'national unification'. For this the establishment of the primacy of the state and the centralization of authority in the state is essential. Modernisation plays a critical role in this centralization process. The centralization of power in national political institutions and a radical restructuring of the life-styles of the different ethnic groups within the

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[24]   Robert La Porte Jr., 'Another Try at Democracy,' in J. Henry Korson, (ed.), *Contemporary Problems of Pakistan*, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993) p. 171.

national boundary, create in the process, an atmosphere for the rise of ethnic nationalism.

The centralization policies and inability to adopt the flexible federal framework led to the asymmetry and inequality in the power structure in Pakistan. Lack of political space at the centre and fear 'psyche' in the name of decentralization and powersharing mechanism compelled different regional elites towards ethnic mobilization and ethno-nationalism.

The inability to draft a constitution for Pakistan showed irreconciliable difference in the perception towards the future of the state and also immaturity in evolving of a participatory or egalitarian dimension of the institution-building.

So fragile civic institution gave way to the military rule which further created a jolt in any equitable distribution of the resources. The military rule only perpetuated the existing imbalances and inequities. Given this inequality of wealth, power and ethnicity, the state should have taken steps with caution and extreme sensitivity to prevent the alienation of less privileged nationalities.

But the military regime came up with more centralization policies and authoritarian diktat which ruthlessly tried to destroy the identities of various ethnic groups. 'All legitimate grievances of the less privileged or dominated

provinces were construed as acts of treason: Islam, integrity of Pakistan and the Urdu language because the code words for national domination.'[25]

The first resentment against this overbearing official nationalism came up from East Pakistan. The dominance of urdu was challenged by Bengali language movement (1948-52) which was an outcome of the counter hegemonic aspirations of the Bengali Salariat supported by the "Bengali Subaltern Classes."[26] Bengali had very rich literary traditions and was a medium of conversation in both parts of Bengal. East Pakistanis felt that since they had numerical majority, rich history of language, Bengali should have been the national language of Pakistan. Geographic isolation of East Pakistan from the rest of the country further complemented the feeling of separateness and alienation. Economic subordination, inter-regional inequality, unemployment, skewed development pattern further fuelled the antagonism and suspicion in the mind of the people of Eastern Pakistan. Bengalis were hardly represented in the armed forces and the upper echelons of the bureaucracy, so they were having no say in economic policy. The result of inequitable policies led to the transfer of Rs. 210,000,000 per annum by 1955.[27] So the ethno-nationalism in East Pakistan chose its identity-formation on the basis of language, it defied the commonness of

[25] Feroz Ahmed n. 21, p. 234.

[26] S.M. Shamsul Alam 'Language as Political Articulation: East Bengal in 1952', *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, vol. 24, no. 4, (1991) p. 471.

[27] Yunas Samad *Nation in Turmoil* New Delhi (Sage Publications), 1995, p. 180.

religion. It grew, evolved and in 1971, and led to the disintegration of Pakistan and formation of Bangladesh.

The Pushtunistan movement, the regional autonomy movement of the NWFP was the strongest on the eve of the formation of Pakistan. It had a well developed movement under the leadership of Abdul Ghaffar Khan. The movement had considerable degree of ambivalence in terms of an independent state or an autonomous unit within Pakistan. Oppressive policies like dismissal of Dr. Khan's cabinet soon after partition, monopolization of power by the military-bureaucratic elite and persecution of Pushtuns led to the growth of the ethnic movements against the centre policies.

The Pashtunistan movements professed for provincial autonomy within a socialist framework and tried to forge an alliance to support the regional autonomists. Ghaffar Khan formed people's organization in 1948, which consisted G.M. Sayed, Abdul Majid Sindhi from Sindh, Abdul Samad Khan from Baluchistan and Sheikh Husamuddin from the Punjab.[28] But very soon the frontier Government arrested Ghaffar Khan on Charges of sedition. So the persecution and fierce reaction from the Government or any dissent continued when the military-bureaucratic regime came up with one unit policy, the movement leaders worked for the dissolution of one unit.

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[28]   Yunas Samad n. 29, p. 129.

The Pushtunistan movement remained very popular in the traditional social base of rural areas due to organizational structure and traditional ethnic loyalty from the tribal customs. It was successful in exploiting ethnic symbols of Pushtun identity and created large following on the basis of discriminatory and oppressive policies of the centre.

But the good representation of the Pushtuns in the armed forces and in the bureaucracy, the movement could not grow in the urban and educated middle class.[29] Mobility of tribals in Karachi and other urban areas, Gulf money due to migration and picking up of modern profession took away the old charm of Pushtunistan.

Baluchistan is the province, which is larger than that of the provinces of Punjab, and Sind combined, but constitutes 4-3 million which is only 3% of the total population.[30] Baluchi nationalism which grew across the tribal divisions were fighting for regional autonomy within a radically restructured Pakistani constitutional framework. Their demands were more of decentralization and flexible federal structure where the centre would retain control over defence, foreign affairs, communications and currency. Baluchi demanded that the provinces would have the local authority over everything,

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[29] Tahir Amin, *Ethno-National Movements of Pakistan* (Islamabad: Institute of Policy Studies, 1988), p. 91.

[30] Arbab M. Jahangir 'National Integration and Ethnicity in Baluchistan, Pakistan' *Asian Profile*, vol. 19, no. 6, December 1991, p. 546.

including the exploitation of natural resources and the allocation of development funds.

The regional disparity and the neglect of development in Baluchistan despite its mineral resources created deprivation and alienation among the Baluchis which made them to continue their talk about marginalization in the bureaucracy and armed forces.

The Baluchis were comprising of a confederation, of about five hundred tribes and class organized on the lines of traditional semi-feudal Sardari system. These tribal groups were very possessive about their freedom and did not like any interference of the central government time to time. So when the Bhutto government played the politics of divide and rule by playing one Sardar against another, it created anger against the centre. The final confrontation started when Bhutto abolished the Sardari system in 1976.[31] The brutal confrontation between 80,000 or more Pakistani troops and 55,000 Baluchs led to the death of 3,300 Pakistani soldiers and 5,300 Baluchs between the period of 1973 to 1977.[32]

The dismissal of provincial Government by Bhutto and, continued economic backwardness led to accretion of Baluchi alienation and consciousness.

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[31]   Lawrence Ziring (ed.) 'The Subcontinent in World Affairs', (Prager and co.: New York, 1978), p. 106.

[32]   Selig S. Harrison 'Statement in Pakistan' in A. Banuazizi and Myron Weiner (ed.) 'The State, Religion and Ethnic Politics', (Vanguard: Lahore, 1987), p. – 276.

The arrival of Afghan refugees has made Baluchi fearful of being outnumbered by Pushtuns in certain areas of Baluchistan. Therefore, there was a marked increase in the inter-tribal and inter-sectarian tensions in the period of 1990s.

In Sindh, various factors like demographic, economic, political and cultural led to the rise of ethnic identity of Sindhi consciousness and Muhajir assertiveness. Modernization and development in the nation-building in the Third World country like Pakistan creates unevenness and inequality which ethnicity tries to exploit in its own advantage of the group. The 'salariat' competes for employment and has a tendency to divide and align along ethnic lines in order to draw wider support and solidarity in their struggle for a greater share of the available jobs as well as the limited places in institutions of higher education.[33]

For Sindhi regional assertion, the linguistic discrimination in the form of imposition of Urdu as a national language, centralization policies like one unit system and non-representation in the army and the bureaucracy created consciousness of being deprived and discriminated. Sindhi's search for identity and its articulation started with all these discriminations.

G.M. Syed was one of the father figures who provided leadership to Sindhi assertions. His cause for provincial autonomy meant decentralization and

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[33]   Hamza Alavi n. 24, p. 1529.

flexible federal structure. The other leader who contributed most was Rasool Bux Palizo who organized peasant under left radical populist programme and formed his Sindh Awami Tehrik.

The execution of Sindhi Prime Minister Bhutto and discriminatory policies of the military regime regarding dismissal of thousands of Sindhis from government services and public sector enterprises further antagonized the Sindhi under the Zia regime. Therefore ethnic aspirations and nationalism grew among the group which resulted in intense violence and manifested strong ethnic sentiments in the form of movement for the restoration of democracy (MRD) in 1983.

Muhajir's deprivation took concrete shape in 1980s and 1990s. It was the Muhajir leadership under the Indian Muslim league which founded Pakistan. So for the first two decades, Muhajirs identified themselves with the new nation and Islam became the binding force to unify all the diverse identities. But marginalization of Muhajirs in the country's power structure, inter-ethnic competition for the scarce resources and various discriminatory policies like quota and language created a psyche of insecurity and isolation. So 'Muhajir separatism was not a reflection of a subjective decision to maintain a separate identity but was due to ghettoziation of the Muhajirs over a period of time.'[34]

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[34] Feroz Ahmed, 'The Rise of Muhajir Separatism, '*ViewPoint'*, August 18, 1998, p. 28.

So the Muhajir assertions in the form of Muhajir Quami Movement (MQM) only channelized the dissatisfaction and hurt of the community. The rise and success of MQM in the various elections in 1988, 1990, 1993 and 1997 proved that ethnic identities have taken concrete shape.

Various ethnic assertions and consciousness have made ethnic conflicts in Sindh recurring phenomenon in the 1980s and 1990s. The frequent disturbances in Sindh became symptomatic of the political, social and ethnic tensions and strains that have deeply affected Sindh's social fabric.

The above discussion shows that the roots of ethnic conflicts and consciousness lay in the process of state formation and modernization. Inequal distribution of resources, subordination of other than 'official nationalism' and suppression of diverse cultural and plural linguistic rights creates problems for unitarian and central state which wants to wield more and more power. The following chapters will look into historical and political contexts in which ethnic conflicts took shape in the province of Sindh.

CHAPTER – II
THE PROVINCE OF SINDH-HISTORICAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS

CHAPTER-II

THE PROVINCE OF SINDH – HISTORICAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS

Sindh has been described by one notable historian as a backwater of Indian history.[1] The province of Sindh has a rich history, diverse culture and strong tradition, which evolved over thousands of years. It was very much the hub and the axis of its own history, which formed a distinctive stream of Indian History. So identities remained crucial factor for the development of ethnicities in Sindh.

Ethnic diversity, pluralism and evolving of heterogeneous community created many challenges for the state and thereby produced inter-ethnic rivalries and social tensions. Economic underdevelopment and stagnant growth created great imbalance in the structural system of administration where state-civil society could not properly develop and colonial patronage only made one group subservient to another. Ethnicities developed and flourished under only these deprivations and alienated conditions.

Since antiquity the history of Sindh has been characterized by the river Indus and cross-cultural influences. Indus valley civilization

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[1] Hamida Khuhro,(ed). *Sind Through The Centuries* (Karachi, Oxford University Press, 1981), p.x.

flourished in Sindh as the first sign of human settlement, which developed into well-planned city. The river Indus provided the life-line to the economy, transportation and cultural developments, the hospitable and peaceful inhabitants gave the world an extremely developed cultural heritage anchored on rural communities and small townships on both banks of the river.

After the decline of the Indus valley civilization, the indigenous Dravidians were overtaken by the Aryans who reorganized the society by pioneering various traditions in Hinduism.[2] Till the arrival of the Arab in Sindh in 711 A.D., Sindh pursued syncretic traditions of Hinduism and Buddhism under Rajput kings who were the ruling class at that time. Sindh started its independent history with the arrival of Mohammad Bin Qasim. The vice-regents of Ommayyeds Caliphs ruled the country for forty years when Abbasids ousted them in the same century.

In the next two hundred years independent feudal principalities came into existence and it spread over as far as Multan. The principle of equality in Islam and the sympathetic and the liberal character of the Sufis attracted the under privileged groups following Hinduism to the Islamic fold.

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[2]   V.Y. Gankovsky 'Sindhi Ethnic Community at the end of colonial era' in Hamida Khuro (ed.) *Sindh Through the Centuries* (Karachi, Oxford University Press, 1981), p.180.

Arabs also brought in their own language and administration. The rulers of Sindh gave land to military commanders, ulema and administrators. The political structure created a social hierarchy, which was feudal and graded. Islam acted as a binding force, which promoted the feudal society and gave stability and permanence to the emerging structure.

Sindh emerged as an independent entity with its own spiritual characteristic culture and society. By the end of eighth century A.D., the population of Sind was understood in other areas of the subcontinent as a united whole, possessing its own peculiar anthropological character, spiritual make-up and language.[3] The settled farming economy helped the entire Sindh community to flourish and provided the base for the consolidation of distinct administrative, economic and cultural centres. Therefore till 16th century Sindh continued with its own independent entity.

In 1591, Akbar annexed Sindh but the decline of Mughal power led Sindh to lose its shine. The internecine wars and disturbances created great stress in the social and economic structure. The agriculture economy collapsed and brought misery to the population

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[3]   V.Y. Gankovsky, n. 2, p. 180.

of Sindh. Sindh remained largely agrarian throughout its history with migratory, rural and semi-sedentary Muslim and Hindu communities.[4]

The rich and varied historical background helped to produce a unique civilization in Sindh. Its chief characteristics were a religious eclecticism and the strong sufi tradition of mysticism and tolerance. It also produced the glorious sufi poetry going back to the Mamui Fakirs of the Samma period (14th, 15th centuries). The golden age of sufi poetry in Sindh is the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries with Shah Abdul Latif's poetry as the high point of this period. Shah Latif's poetry also witnessed to the richness and beauty of the Sindhi language. The flexibility and comprehensiveness of Sindhi is a living proof of the rich pattern of Sindh's history. Although Sindhi is derived from the same roots as the other major Indian languages such as Prakrit, Sanskrit, Persian and Arabic, the influence of these languages is retained in a purer form than in the other Indian languages. The development of rich Sindhi language was manifestation of the search of an identity by Sindhi intellectuals. 'Lari' a dialect of the most developed section of the community constituted the basis of literary Sindhi.

In the Sindhi society, there emerged heterogeneous population as the Sindhi incorporated Baluch tribes who had come from the

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4.   H.T. Lambrick *Sind: A General Introduction* (Hyderabad, Sindhi Adabi, 1975), p.174.

Northwest, west and also from Punjab. This assimilation led to the emergence of clans system in Sindh. At the beginning of the 18th century, Sindhis consisted of about 200 clans.

By the eighteenth century, the modern pre-industrial age civilization of Sindh was in full flower. Sindh had a richly developed language, a distinct architectural style; the capital city of Hyderabad had replaced the medieval capital of Thatta, and Shikarpur in upper Sindh was a trading emporium of central and south Asia. The first independent Sindhi dynasty since the 16th century was then reigning. The end of the eighteenth century saw the Talpurs replacing the Kalhoras but its culture and prosperity remained undiminished through their reign. It was this halcyon age of culture, peace and isolation that was shattered by the British conquest with all the implications it had for the ancient ways of the country.

Sindh was annexed by Charles Napier in 1843 A.D. when the ruling Talpur Mirs in Sindh were defeated by the East India company in the wars of Miami and Dabo. The existence of Sindh as an independent political entity came to an end in 1847 when the company brought the region under the Bombay Presidency.

Sindh had a vibrant culture, and a distinct geographical identity at the time of annexation, so ethnic and unique identity persisted even

as subordination and deprivation led to the demand of distinct Sindhi regional nationalism. By the first decade of the twentieth century, the business establishment in Sindh was openly critical of the dominance of Bombay traders[5] and they demanded the re-establishment of Sindh as a separate province. The demand was also endorsed by the emerging Sindhi intelligentsia. This new social stratum was composed mostly of the families of landed aristocracy which had been impoverished b y the land policies of colonial regime.

The convergence of interests between the business class, landed aristocracy and intelligentsia produced a cross-class Sindhi nationalist alliance. The objective of the alliance was to create an autonomous Sindh administration composed largely of their representatives and therefore responsive to their needs.

There were movements like Khilafat Movement which mobilized the Muslim peasantry for the first time and was successful in Sindh. It led to the establishment of Sindh Mohammedan Association which vigorously pursued the goal of a separate Sindh province. In 1932 Sindhi Muslim landlords and its Sindh Azad Party convened the first Sindh Azad conference in Karachi. It adopted a resolution in favour of the separation of Sindhi from the Bombay Presidency. The objective was not only to ensure a reform of the

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[5]   Ibid, p.42.

revenue administration but also to insulate Sindhi peasants from the "corrupt" influences of Bombay's radical working class movement espousing socialist agenda.[6]

However it was only in 1936, that Sindh was made a separate province. Sindhi was declared by the British as the language to be used in local courts and local administration. A standard script had emerged. So there emerged a rich incipient nationalism which had identity and recognition of its own exclusiveness and distinctness.

DEMOGRAPHIC FACTOR

Sindh is the most ethnically diverse of Pakistan's four provinces due to international migration which took place just after partition in 1947 and internal migration since 1947. Sindh was inundated by Urdu-speaking (Muhajir) population between 1946 and 1950. The majority of Muhajir's settled in urban areas of Sindh. According to the census of 1951, 49 percent of the total population in Karachi were refugees; in Hyderabad, 71 percent; and in Lahore, the refugee population was 43 per cent of the total population.[7] So there were major change in the configuration of the population. As of 1981, 4.6 million Muhajirs resided in Sindh, over 3.3 million in Karachi.

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[6] Feroz Ahmad, 'Agrarian change and class formation in Sindh; *Economic and Political weekly* (Bombay), vol. 19, no. 34, 1984, p-A-162.

[7] A. Tayyab, '*Pakistan: A Political Geography*' (Oxford , Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 171.

The character of demography changed radically thereby bringing several social, economic and political problems. The province has witnessed acute polarization between ethnic groups since 1947.

Rapid population transformation led to the insecurity and fear among the population and brought to the fore competition and mobilization on the ethnic lines by diverse ethnic groups of Sindh. Ethnic politics in Sindh became a war of opposing numbers as limited job opportunities, economic stagnation and political empowerment created fissures and conflicts in the social relations among the groups.

The province of Sindh was unique because there was radical change in the configuration of population. According to the census of 1901, the total population of Sindh stood at 3071000 while 30 years later, in 1931, it was 3336000 – not a noticeable increase. By 1951, it had doubled totally 6128000 and 30 years later, in 1981, it had trebled to 18966000.[8]

The better educated Muhajirs, with a 23.4% literacy rate compared with 13.2% for Sindh as a whole, took up technical, bureaucratic and professional jobs in the province. It led to cultural complications which proved to be grave.

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[8]   Iftikar H. Malik 'State and Civil society in Pakistan: Politics of authority, ideology and ethnicity' (New York, St. Martin Press Inc., 1997), p.201.

Linguistically, culturally, politically, socially, economically, there was no comparison of these refugees with their Sindhi 'hosts'. Sindh was swamped by an alien culture which immediately began to dominate the rest of Sindh as well as the entire country.

Since independence there were also other factors which were also very crucial for demographic change and that was internal immigration or circular immigration which multiplied in recent years in the wake of rapid urbanization. Punjabis, Pathans, and Baluch have also settled in Sindh's urban areas. They have been attracted by economic opportunities, both the commercial lure of Karachi and the availability of relatively cheap land in newly irrigated areas bordering on Punjab and Baluchistan. Most domestic economic migrants have settled in Sindh since 1965, and by 1981, over 2 million Punjabis, 1.1 million Baluch, and 0.7 million Pathans lived in Sindh.

In Sindh since most of the migrants have settled in the urban areas of the province, the native Sindhis have become a minority in Sindh's two largest cities. In Karachi, Sindhis constitute only the fifth largest ethnic group in the city, outnumbered by Muhajirs, Punjabis, Pathans and Baluch. In Hyderabad, Sindhis are the second largest group, outnumbered by Muhajirs.

Over the years, Sindh has received more people than it sent elsewhere. In more recent times, 250000 inhabitants per annum have

been settling in Karachi alone.[9] There are more Baluchis in Sindh today than there are in Baluchistan which has a total population of 5 million over an area accounting for 43 percent of the country's territory; more Pashtuns than there are in Peshawar and undoubtedly a sizeable number of Punjabis, Afghans, Bangladeshis and other who have found their way into Sindh.

In Sindh, Karachi's elevation of national capital in 1947 and demarcation as an exclusive federal territory, besides its development as the country's financial centre continued to produce an unprecedented spatial mobility. In 1981, Sindh had a density rate of 134 people per square kilometer with Karachi at the staggering rate of 1538, followed by Hyderabad with 192 per square kilometer.[10]

Ethnic Composition of Sindh, 1981 (percentage)[11]

Sindh Province: Population 19.029 million; 8.24 million urban

	Total	Urban	Rural
Muhajir	24.1	54.5	2.2
Sindhi	55.7	20.0	81.5
Punjabi	10.6	14.0	8.2
Pathan	3.6	7.9	0.5
Baluch	6.0	3.7	7.6

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[9] Farhat Haq, 'Rise of MQM in Pakistan' *Asian Survey*, vol XXXV, Nov. 1995, p.994.
[10] 1981 Census Report of Sind Province (Islamabad: Population Census Organization, 1984).
[11] Ibid.

Unlike the urban concentration by population where only 20% of Sindhis resides out of 10.6 million population of indigenous Sindhis in Sindh, they constitute an overwhelming majority in Sindh's rural areas; 81.5% of the rural inhabitants of the province in 1981 were Sindhis. Therefore, there took place polarization in Sindh as distinction emerged in ethnic composition between rural and urban Sindh. The rural and urban distinction also served to politicize the issue of ethnic representation in the province.

Rural Urban Migration by Province of Origin and Destination(per cent of total Rural Urban Migratary Movement, 1972-79)[12]

Province of Origin	Province of Destination				Total
	NWFP	Baluchistan	Sindh	Punjab	
NWFP	7.0	0.3	10.4	4.7	22.4
Baluchistan	-·	1.3	0.6	-	1.9
Sindh	-	-	3.1	-	3.1
Punjab	5.1	1.8	13.7	52	72.6
Total	12.1	3.4	27.8	56.7	100

[12] M. Irfan. 'Migration and Development in Pakistan: Some Saelcted Issues', *Pakistan Development Review* vol. 25. no. 4, 1986, p. 747.

There were a number of important and interesting facts revealed due to above figures:

Between 1972-1979

1. About 20 per cent of the growth of the urban population resulted from rural–urban migration.

2. More than half of all rural-urban migrants came from rural Punjab and remained in this province moving mainly to the larger towns of the same province.

3. The migration rate in Baluchistan was very low and 68 per cent was within the province

4. In Sindh as well, there was a very moderate rate of rural to urban migration, all of which was within the province.

5. There was substantial immigration into Karachi, which received migrants from all over the country.

6. In the case of migration originating from NWFP, 31 per cent of the migrant moved from village to towns within the province while a staggering 69 per cent moved to other provinces, especially to the city of Karachi. The migration rate observed in this period for NWFP was much higher compared to its population.

Thus, essentially, the migration pattern in the Punjab, Sindh and Baluchistan was predominantly intra-provincial, while for the NWFP migrant, Karachi seemed to be the most obvious choice.

Therefore, there developed a huge concentration of population in the Urban part of Sindh.

The skewed economic development process where there was a wide disparity between rural and urban part of Sindh, economic statistics, like demographic figures, played a crucial role in generating a deep sense of alienation, ethnic redefinition and polarization.

Inequitable economic development and Sindh

The economy of Sindh was primarily based on agriculture at the time of independence. The society was feudal in nature and rural economy was of subsistence type. It was only urban centre like Karachi, Hyderabad, Sukkur, which had a better life. The economy was stagnant and underdeveloped and there was lopsided industrial development and oppressive agrarian relations. Sindh's economy was influenced and conditioned by the colonial experience of two hundred years. At that time, the land tenure relations in the province of Sindh were overwhelming of the sharecropping landlord-tenant feudal type. Over the years since 1947 and especially since Mid-1960's after the 'green revolution', there have been clear signs which indicate that the old feudal and pre-feudal land tenure system has been breaking up and capitalist relations of production are beginning to dominate agricultural production.

In the present time, in Sindh, 51 per cent of households in agriculture are sharecroppers, while 27 per cent are in the family form (middle or poor peasant) class and 21 percent of households are

capitalist farmers (rich peasants).[13] So the capitalist farmers in Sindh have begun to replace the landlords and their sharecroppers.

With increased mechanization and movement of the landed gentry into industry, unemployment increased and conditions of share croppers worsened. This led to the discontent and unrest among sharecroppers as poverty compelled then to migrate to the urban areas of Sindh.

In Sindh, with 27 percent of Pakistan's cultivated area, it was only 11 percent of tractors which were in use in 1980. In contrast to this Punjab had 56.4 percent of Pakistan's cultivated area, 84 percent of tractors in the country were being used. In Sindh 15 per cent of Pakistan's threshers and powerdriven blades were in operation as compared to Punjab's 82 percent.[14] Therefore in comparison with Punjab, the relations of production in agriculture is not much developed.

In the industrial development there is skewed developmental process in which there is wide chasm between urban area and rural area in terms of its contribution to industry in Sindh. Sindh especially the urban areas, accounts for more than half of Pakistan's industrial concerns. It contributes 30 per cent of the GDP and also accounts for 43 percent of the construction industry.[15] Urban Sindh is the financial

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[13]   S. Akbar Zaidi 'Regional Imbalances and National Question in Pakistan' *Economic and Political weekly,* Feb. 11, 1989, p.301

[14]   Ibid., p.302

[15]   Iftikar H. Malik, n. 7, p.202.

capital housing insurance companies, branches of international banks and headquarters of the country's national banks.

Large Scale Manufacturing Industry[16]

All Industry

	1970-71	1976-77	1980-81
Pakistan	3545	3373	3815
Punjab	1907	1795	2070
Karachi	1148	1245	1245
Rest of Sindh	386	141	312
NWFP	91	172	164
Baluchistan	17	20	24

Even in the urban area, it is Karachi which dominates the economic graph in Sindh. Karachi is the most industrialized region in the country. It has only 6 percent of the country's population but industrial value added worth five times of that amount and also has a per capita value added higher than all other regions. Karachi has more chemical, petroleum, and non-ferrous basic metal industries than does the Punjab.

Thirty-eight percent of Pakistan's industrial units with assets more than Rs. 2 million were situated in the Punjab, while 53 per cent were situated in Sindh, most of which are in Karachi.

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[16] Akbar S. Zaidi 'Regional Imbalances and National Question in Pakistan', Economic and Political weekly Feb. 11, 1989 pp-303.

The above table also shows that the contribution of rest of Sindh in large scale manufacturing industry is very insignificant.

So the under development and stagnant industrial growth in the rest of Sindh created Sindhi alienation and deprivation. Sindhi as a backward indigenous group felt under siege in their own home.[17]

Whatever there is little industry in the rest of Sindh is owned by either Muhajir or by Punjabi businessmen. The dying Sindhi feudal class has not been able to develop into a native industrial bourgeoisie. There was little possibility of development, due to the feudal mode of production in agriculture.

The rural-urban divide in terms of model of development, the concentration of ethic groups made Sindh a volatile place where relative depravities, economic inequality and political mobilization created various dissatisfied and demanding groups to assert in vigourous way.

Political Development in Pakistan and Growth of Ethnic assertions till 1980 in Sindh

Ethnic polarization in Sindh has been a fall-out of Pakistan's political fragility. The weak political structure, the failure of representative institutions and dominance of military in every facet of Pakistan's life put severe stress in the social equilibrium of the country. The absence of national parties could not steer its way to a

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[17]   David L. Horowitz, 'Ethnic Groups in Conflict (Berkely: University of California Press 1985), p. 214.

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stable, consensus-based political cultural leading to national harmony.[18] In the eyes of the articulate leadership of sub-national groups, the Pakistan 'nation' had been appropriated by Punjabis who dominated the ruling bureaucracy and the military that had effectively been in power since its inception; in partnership with Muhajir until the mid-seventies who were relatively well represented in the Punjabi dominated state apparatus.[19] Members of the under-privileged regions tended to see themselves as subject peoples who had not been given their rightful place in the nation.

The Pakistan movement was a congeries of forces galvanized by the league's rivalry with the congress.[20] League had little electoral base in the new country and its leadership was mostly Muhajir who had no root in the new region.

The All-India Muslim league, acutely aware of these handicaps, abandoned its position on a loose centre declared in the Lahore Resolution and pushed for the formation of a unitary structure before independence. Therefore the tendency for centralization in the new Pakistani state came up as a life-line for survival.

Sindhi Regional Assertions till 1980s

Sindh after becoming a separate state in 1936 with Karachi as its capital supported the league demand for Pakistan but

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[18]   Rafique, Afzal 'Political Parties in Pakistan, 1947-1958, (Islamabad: National Commission on Historical and Cultural Research, 1976), p.26.

[19]   Hamza Alavi 'Nationhood and Nationalities in Pakistan' Economic and Political weekly (July 1989), p.1527.

[20]   Yunas Samad Nation in Turmoil: Nationalism and Ethnicity in Pakistan, 1937-1958 (New Delhi: Sage Publication 1995), p.127.

administrative actions related to highly unitary and dictatorial policies made Sindhi elites disillusioned. Creation of Karachi as a separate administrative jurisdiction and turning it as a federal district led to immediate repercussions. It was felt that the Muhajirs, who had been given refuge by the Sindhis, were appropriating the soil of Sindh.

As a consequence of decision, the University of Sindh, which had been established in 1947 was forced to move to Hyderabad.[21] The influence of Sindhis in the city of Karachi decreased and even in jobs they were discriminated against Muhajirs. In 1957-58 the University of Karachi forbade students from answering examination question in sindhi. Sindhi's search for identity and its articulation started with all these discriminations.

The centralization policies and federal intervention created very inequal system where the dominance of centre was all pervasive. After the formation of Pakistan, within a year, chief minister of Sindh, Khusro was dismissed on the matter of Karachi's separation from Sindh. The dismissal of Pirzada Abdul Sattar on the issue of opposition to one unit system turned the Sindhis against the Central Government.

The agitation for national linguistic rights began almost simultaneously in Sindh and East Bengal. Against the imposition of Urdu as a compulsory subject in Sindh in 1948 language became a major symbol of

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[21] Tariq Rahman 'Language and Politics in a Pakistan Province' *Asian Survey*, vol. 25, Nov. 1995 p.1009.

cultural, educational, economic and political to deprivations both Sindhi leaders and the emerging middle class intelligentsia[22].

The deprivation also grew due to demographic and political reasons. Muhajirs who were Urdu-speaking Muslim Communities from northern, central, western provinces settled almost exclusively in urban areas thereby dominating the urban part of Sindh. For Sindhis, these refugees came with an 'occupier' mentality and treated the indigenous people with contempt.

The refugee represented a more advanced capitalist culture which they had brought with them from towns and cities of India. Not only did they have a relatively large entrepreneurial class along with an administrative and educated petty bourgeois service class, they also had a large and well trained working class. Since these refugees felt that they were the real creators of Pakistan and they had made all sacrifices in creating this country, and also because they were more adept at political maneuvering and had the skills which were necessary to form and run the state machinery, they took over economic and political power in Pakistan.

On account of important political offices between 1947-58 shows both the Punjabi speaking refugees and Urdu-speaking refugees holding 18 out of a total 27 offices of governor general / president prime minister,

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[22]   Ibid., p.1010.

provincial governors, and chief ministers.[23] At the officer level, Muhajirs

held 30.2 percent posts in 1974, Sindhi 4.3 percent in the same period; of the

senior posts, 46.8 percent were held by Muhajirs in 1974 and Sindhis held

3.6 percent of the comparable posts in 1974. In 1968, Muhajirs were

disproportionately over-represented in the military. They held 11 of the top

48 senior positions above the rank of brigadier, making their representation

23 percent of the total.[24]

Thus domination of Muhajir as an powerful elite created deprivations

and the feeling of powerlessness in Sindhi psyche which had a base in

complicating interest between Sindhis and Muhajirs over resources and jobs.

As Sindhis started coming up in Salariat they found that they had not only to

deal with Punjabi domination of the state apparatus but also had to compete

with the relatively more advanced Muhajirs.[25]

By 1970, the Punjabis, who constituted 56 per cent of west Pakistan,

accounted for about 85 per cent of the armed forces[26]. The representation of

Sindhis in the armed force was virtually non-existent. In 1970, out of 10,000

bank employees in the Sindh province only 250 or 2.5 per cent were Sindhis.

The proportion of Sindhis in the Sindh Government was less than 40 per

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[23]   Theodore P. Wright Jr., 'Indian Muslim Refugees in the Political of Pakistan', *Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, July 1974, p. 196.

[24]   Iftikar H. Malik, n. 8, p.68.

[25]   Hamza Alavi 'Nationhood and Communal violence in Pakistan' *Journal of contemporary Asia,* vol. 21 no. 2 (1991), p. 165.

[26]   Feroz Ahmed, "Pakistan's person in National Integration: The case of Sindh in S. Akhar Zaidi. Ed. *Regional Imbalances and the National Question in Pakistan* (Lahore Vanguard press 1992), p. 168.

cent, and in Sindh, the police force was manned almost exclusively by Punjabis.

There grew Sindhi ethno-nationalism to articulate Sindhi demands. G.M. Syed was one of the leading figures who gave directions to Sindhi assertions. He formed Sindhi Progressive party in 1947 and under his leadership in 1953 a coalition of four parties Sindh Awami Jamaat, Sindh Hari committee, Sindh Jinnah Awami League and Dastoor party was formed and named the Sindh Awami Mahaz. It took the cause for provincial autonomy. So the demand was mere for decentralization and flexible federal structure which opposed the unitary and centralization policies.

In 1967, Sindhi nationalism ranged to put up a common platform, the Sindh United Front (SUF), under the leadership of G.M. Syed to resist the martial law regime of General Ayub Khan. The peasants of Sindh were organized under left radical – populist programme of Rasool Bux Palijo who formed his Sindh Awami Tehrik.

Sindhi ethno-nationalism was out flanked in the 1970s by the newly-formed Pakistan People's Party (PPP). The party's leader Zulfikar Ali Bhutto created a party platform that meant all things to all people. In Sindh, he championed Sindhi linguistic rights. He sought to create an illusion that, by supporting the PPP, Sindhis could achieve political power in the Central

Government. Therefore, Bhutto argued that a separate Sindhi national movement was superfluous.

Sindhi nationalism possessed neither a political leader who could match Bhutto's charisma nor a political programme that construed PPP's populism. In June 1972, Jeeye Sindh Mahaz under the leadership of Syed demanded provincial autonomy, adoption of Sindhi as the national and official language, preparation of voters lists in Sindhi along with Urdu and 25% share in all civil and military services and repatriation of allotted land to the Sindhs.

The 'Sindhi only bill' adopted by the chief minister of Sindh Murtza Bhutto, PPP Government took wind out of Sindhi nationalism as PPP emerged as a party to take care of Sindhi grievances. The quota policy further corroborated that impression. This was a period when Sindhi ethno-nationalism declined as under the Bhutto regime the Sindhis were accommodated in the Government jobs and the development level in Sindh also increased.

Evidently G.M. Syed concluded that the Sindhi national movement could grow only on the ashes of PPP and promised autonomy under Bhutto was unlikely. He began a hard-line posture and started with the programme of formation of Sindhu desh. Syed also disapproved repatriation of Biharis from Bangladesh. It is therefore, not surprising that most Sindhi nationalists

who remained outside the PPP did nothing as Gen. Zial-ul-Haq, under his Martial Law Regime removed Bhutto from political scene in 1979 and attempted systematically to destroy the PPP.

From independence, various factors led to the accretion in the formation of Sindhi identity. Various discriminating policies and deprivations compelled Sindhi ethnic groups to mobilize and organize as a cohesive group. Various factors like demographic, linguistic, economic made Sindhi feel deprived and marginalised and as the 'salariat' groups emerged among Sindhis, there emerged the demand for regional assertion and cultural distinctiveness to get organized as a conscious political ethnic group. The policies of military regime and fractured state made ethnic assertions among Sindhis more intense.

MUHAJIR ETHNIC ASSERTIONS TILL 1980

Muhajirs, an Urdu-speaking 'Salariat' was forefront in the creation of a separate homeland for the Muslims. Muslim league, the political party championing the cause of Pakistan was largely dominated by Muhajirs. Muhajirs were active participants in laying the basis of state apparatus and the formulation of an official ideology of Islam when Pakistan was formed as a nation.

Muhajir leadership took over the bureaucracy under the guidance of Jinnah and Liaquat, while their entrepreneurs and their working class set to

work to build the industry necessary for survival. So they emerged as 'ruling Salariat' with Punjabi ethnic groups and their identity was quickly concretized within the new state.

For the first two decades, Muhajirs had vigorously stressed on nation-building as they identified themselves with the new nation. Their vision of Pakistan was based on the ideology of Islam and propagation of any other identity based on ethno-linguistic ingredients was anti-Islam. Thus, they propagated a unified Pakistan by underplaying other religious, linguistic and regional identities. By appealing for the religious unity, they could strengthen their hold on power.

But following the death of Liquat Ali Khan, the Muhajirs were left without a leader of the stature of either Jinnah or Liaquat. This was the beginning of the drift in power between ethnic groups in Pakistan which continued with greater intensity once the non-Muhajir military took over in 1958.

The major blow to Muhajir supremacy, however, came in the 1960s when the green revolution in the Punjab altered the economic, demographic and political situation in Pakistan significantly. The dominant position of Muhajirs were threatened as prosperity in Punjab brought education to the people and led migration towards cities. Government jobs became more

competitive and scarce thereby leading to ethnic competition and rivalry between. Muhajirs and other ethnic groups.

Capitalism under the Ayub era brought prosperity and rapid economic progress which seriously benefitted on the Punjabi ethnic groups. Thus, the domination of the Muhajirs over the state sector and over private enterprise in Sindh and in the rest of Pakistan came to an end. There was an absence of political negotiation under authoritarian rule, which heightened the sense of alienation and exclusion of the underprivileged regional groups, who are made to feel as outsiders in their own country[27] so there grew Muhajir alienation and deprivation which remained in its infancy stage.

During the December 1964 presidential election, the Muhajir population of Karachi experienced the wrath of a Pathan bachlash when Gohar Ayub Khan, son of President Ayub Khan, launched a series of attacks on Muhajir communities because of their support for Fatima Jinnah, the sister of Muhammad Jinnah against Ayub Khan. The electoral process launched by Ayub Khan under the framework of basic democracy was criticized by opposition parties as giving a fake legitimacy to the president's authoritarian rule. The Muhajir doubted the credibility of the elections and accused the Ayub regime of tampering with the results. They were also angry with Ayub Khan for shifting the Federal capital from Karachi to Rawalpindi, and anticipated further erosion of their power during his regime.

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[27]   Hamza Alavi, n. 18, p.1533.

The Muhajir Pathan clashes in late 1964 and early 1965 were the first ethnic riots in Karachi and determined the future course of ethnic politics in urban Sindh.

When the entire country rose in rebellion against Ayub in 1968-69 and forced him to resign, the city of Karachi became the centre of opposition activity. The political articulation of Muhajir became obvious as they opposed the military regime of Ayub Khan and had a faith in democratic system and an open process.

The Muhajirs grievances derive from numerous factors and deeply rooted in their psyche. Muhajirs separatism was not simply a reflection of a subjective decision to maintain a separate identity, but it is a consequence of the objective conditions, including the ghettoization of the Muhajirs over which Muhajirs had no control[28].

The Sindh politics after 1971 was characterized by marginalisation of Muhajirs and increase in inter-ethnic competition for power and resources among the groups. After the adoption of democratic framework, Muhajirs did not have the political constituency to fight elections and they lacked social roots for mass mobilization. Being partners of military regime they alienated underprivileged regional groups substantially thereby losing social linkages and political affiliation.

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[28]   Feroz Ahmed, 'The Rise of Muhajir Separatism' *viewpoint*, August 18, 1998, p. 28.

In 1972 the Sindh assembly, dominated by the Sindhi- speaking members of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) passed a language bill to promote Sindhi in the province[29]. The assertion of Sindhi nationalism in PPP was the result of a feeling that past Governments in Pakistan had followed a discriminatory policy to undermine the Sindhi language and it was now time to restore its importance by declaring it an official language of the province. The assembly action led to outbreak of anti-bill riots in Karachi and other Muhajir- dominated cities of Sindh.

The immediate cause of the language riots was that the recognition of Sindhi as official language of the province that would deny Muhajir their legitimate rights. For then it was irrational and illogical not to accept Urdu as an official language when three provinces had made it the official language and the National Assembly had already declared Urdu as a national Language of Pakistan[30].

Negotiation between the PPP Government and opposition leaders led by the Jamaat–i-Islami and other Urdu speaking members of the Sindh assembly led to a decision to modify the language bill to incorporate the interests of the urdu – speaking population[31]. This controversy led to the rise

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[29]   Feroz Ahmed 'Ethnicity and Politics: The rise of Muhajir Separatism' in *South Asian Bulletin*, vol. 8 (1988) p 39.

[30]   Feroz Ahmed, 'The National question in Sindhi' in *Pakistan Forum*, September, 1972, p. 10.

[31]   Tariq Rahman,n. 20, p.1014.

of enmity between the Sindhis and Muhajirs which continued for long period.

Not as immediately contentious but a more important to ethnic relations in Sindh was Bhutto's reintroduction of a regional quota system for recruitment to the federal bureaucracy. Introduced in 1971, the quota mandated that 10% of the vacancies in Government would be filed on the basis of all Pakistan merit, 50% allocated to Punjab, 11.5% to the North West Frontier Province (NWFP), 7.6% to "urban Sindh', 11.4% to 'rural Sindh' and 3.5% to Baluchistan.[32]

This quota was designed to increase the representation of Sindhis in the Federal bureaucracy by introducing a distinction between rural Sindhis and urban Sindhis (Muhajirs), a distinction that had not existed under the terms of the 1949 federal quota. The Sindh provincial Assembly later on passed an ordinance establishing stringent residency requirements for consideration of rural Sindhis. The Federal quota was further expanded to posts in 'attached departments', provincial Governments, educational institutions and public sector corporations.

The implementation of quota system had adverse effect on Muhajirs as their share in the bureaucracy dwindled. Urban Sindh share in the officer

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[32]   Charles H Kennedy, *Bureaucracy in Pakistan* (Karachi : Oxford University Press 1987), p.181.

level of Federal bureaucracy in 1973 was 33.5%, it declined to 28.8% in 1980 and further to 25.6% in 1983.

The programme of Nationalisation under Bhutto regime were also directed against some of Pakistan's largest industrial houses, which were disproportionately owned and managed by Karachi based Muhajirs[33].

All these policies were great setback to the Muhajirs. This led to the feeling of hurt and anger against the Bhutto regime, when the general election was announced in March 1977, Muhajir saw the opportunity to hit back at Bhutto regime. Under the banner of Pakistan National Alliance (PNA), Muhajirs launched a nation- wide campaign to bring down the regime as it alleged large- scale rigging in the election. The agitation had completely divided the Sindhi and Muhajir into two hostile camps.[34] So the alienation and minority syndrome was almost complete under the Bhutto regime among Muhajirs.

The fall of Bhutto regime by a military coup was a timely relief for Muhajirs. Zia's policies of reversing the various administrative orders of PPP also appeased the Muhajirs. But Zia maintained Bhutto's Federal quota system intact and added a new wrinkle of his own military preference[35].

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[33]   Feroz Ahmed, n. 28, p. 39.

[34]   Shahid Javed Burki, 'Pakistan Economy Under Zia'; in Shahid Javed Burki and Craig Baxter, *Pakistan Under the Military: Eleven years of Zia-ul-Haq* (Boulder, Colorado, Westview Press, 1997), p. 92.

[35]   Kennedy, n. 31, p. 121.

CHAPTER – III
SINDHI ETHNO-NATIONALIST ASSERTIONS

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SINDHI ETHNO-NATIONALIST ASSERTIONS

The ethnic assertions of Sindhis can be traced in the simmering discontent and deprivations found in the group due to various reasons over the period of time.

The extremely poor representation of Sindhis in the higher echelons of bureaucracy and the armed forces, the cultural deprivation in terms of imposition of Urdu as a national language and inter-province and intra-provincial migration which led to change in the demographic profile etc., all made Sindhis conscious of relative deprivation and insecurities which motivated it enough to engage itself in political protest and violence. So Sindhis emerged as one of the most active and conscious groups which were involved not only in conflict between Sindhis and Muhajirs but also with Punjabis, Pashtuns etc.

The economic stagnation in terms of growth, colonization of lands through the building of barrages which was allotted to senior civil and military bureaucrats and non-Sindhis, discrimination in terms of distribution of Indus-water between Punjab and Sindh and regional disparities due to lopsided investment and development models gave Sindhis enough reasons to feel discriminated and deprived by the Punjabi Muhajir elite.

Sindhi alienation increased in the decade of 1980s as the military regime under Zia-ul-Haq became more and more oppressive and discriminatory towards the Sindhis. Deprivations which were accumulated in the period of previous military regimes were alleviated under the period of Bhutto rule, when he initiated language bill and quota policy to address some of the major grievances of the Sindhis.

The feeling of hurt and profound sense of being denied opportunities and access to political power made Sindhis restless and conscious as an ethnic group.

The continuation of denial of job opportunities, economic subordination, regional disparities and centralized military regime created a background for the discontent and set of causes for the rise of Sindhi ethno-nationalism.

The domination of the army in each part of the structure of the state gave them tremendous power and autonomy to pursue its own interest.[1] Under Zia regime, 10% of the vacancies in the secretariat were reserved for retired military personnel, and many former officials were appointed in the vital parts of Pakistan's public enterprise.[2] Therefore, scarce employment avenues further shrinked as many vital bureaucratic posts were handed over to army officials.

[1] Feroz Ahmed, 'Ethnicity, class and state in Pakistan', *Economic and Political weekly*, November 23, 1996, p.3050
[2] Charles H. Kennedy 'Politics of Ethnicity in Sindh' *Asian Survey*, vol. XXXI, no. 10, October 1991, p. 945.

The Bhutto Government through clear demarcation of rural and urban quota tried to bring some justice to Sindhis as Sindhi's share in the Government sector increased. Bhutto's nationalisation policies further brought various private sectors under the domain of public sector where the recruitments were subjected to some kind of 'quota policy' by the Government.

So a sort of 'preferential structure' was created wherein both 'federal government' and 'provincial government' tried to bring some justice to Sindhi's participation in the bureaucracy.

But the ten years of military rule of Zia-ul-Haq changed the whole complexion of bureaucracy and its sympathetic attitude towards the Sindhis. Sindhis were made the main targets of military repression and their representation in the civil bureaucracy and military was reduced considerably.[3] Thousand of Sindhis were purged from public corporation and many more lost their jobs due to the privatization of certain nationalized processing units. General Zia proclaimed on the national television that the Muhajirs deserved special favours because they had given sacrifices for Pakistan. In reality, it led to the 'Punjabization' of whole bureaucratic and military structure. According to one study in 1987 in the federal government secretariat and related departments, Punjab had around 56 percent of the posts and rural Sindh had about 3 percent, NWFP 11 percent, and

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[3] Feroz Ahmed 'Ethnicity and Politics: The Rise of Muhajir Separatism', *South Asia Bulletin*, vol.-8, 1988 p.40.

Baluchistan around 2-5 percent of the posts. In the government sector corporation, Punjab had approximately 41 per cent of the middle and senior level posts, and rural Sindh had 3.5 percent of the posts. The army was reported to be of 85 per cent Punjabi origin, about 10-12 percent from the NWFP, about 2-3 percent from Baluchistan and about 1 percent, if any at all, from Sindh.[4]

So for the Sindhis, the state turned out to be the representative of Punjabi interest and chauvinism where any policy was seen as a 'caveat for Punjabi domination'. With an overly centralized state with both the civil and military bureaucracy playing an important role in the running of the country, the composition of bureaucracy according to ethnic groups also had important implications for regional growth.

So Punjab led in the growth due to public finance, in form of salaries, loans, grants which were provided by the federal government thereby creating a lopsided developmental structure where there were wide gaps and inequalities between the provinces. Apart from that, the state spent around 70% of the national budget on armed forces in the decade of 1980s and thereby generating large amount of investment surplus to be invested in Punjab. Given the ethnic specifity of the armed forces and the spending of the largest portion of the budget on defence, a more equitable distribution of

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[4]   S. Kardar *National Unity and Regional Imbalances: The Political Economy of Pakistan*, (Lahore, Progressive Publishers, 1987), p. 42

resources among ethnic communities is unthinkable without drastically altering the ethnic composition of the army.[5]

In the inter-provincial net flow of remittances in 1986, Punjab had inflow of 67.75 per cent, Sindh 8.97 per cent, NWFP 23.12 per cent etc., thereby making a skewed investment structure. In matters of outflow Punjab had mere 18.70 per cent, Sindh 64.92 per cent and NWFP 13.62 per cent. For Sindh, it was the negative net flow of 55.95 per cent which infact deteriorated the economic vitality of the province.[6]

Therefore, for the Sindhi consciousness the alienation and deprivation under the Zia rule augmented. State became oppressor and unjust instrument which treated various provinces inequally. A great deal of agricultural land in the province of Sindh has been allocated or sold to settlers from the Punjab. According to one estimate in 1984, highly productive agricultural land in the district of Thatta in Sind comprising 38000 acres were leased out at a rate of Rs. 7 for thirty years to 'high government officials' – mainly those belonging to the police and revenue departments, and to officers of the Pakistan works department and to those of the water and power development authority (WAPDA), all these departments having a very high percentage of Punjabis.[7] So there grew the perception that the regime of the General Zia

[5]   Ahmed, Feroz, no. 1, p. 3053.
[6]   M. Irfan 'Migration and Development in Pakistan: Some Selected Issues', *Pakistan Development Review*, vol. 25, n. 4, 1986, pp. 743-756.
[7]   S. Kardar, no. 4, p. 44.

was trying to push Sindhis off their lands, and Punjabi domination was also spreading its tentacles in the rural hinterland.

There was very little industry in the rest of Sind, and whatever there was, owned either by Muhajirs or Punjabi businessmen. The Sindhi feudal class had not been able to develop into a native industrial bourgeoisie and it was mainly filled by non-locals. So newly emerging educated youth were unemployed Sindhis youths who were mainly demanding jobs.

Sindhis had historically enjoyed cultural freedom and were able to develop a Sindhi consciousness and identity. But Zia regime tried to trample this plural and rich cultural ethos which resulted in anger and frustration among the Sindhis. Even 'Islamization' measures were mainly used as a façade to suppress the local and regional culture of Sindh and other minority provinces. So Sindhis were knowing that it was state power acting through Islamic ideology and so it had no legitimacy.

For the ethno-nationalist movement to emerge in Sindh, the decade of 1980s had an immediate cause and that was the execution of Bhutto. Z. A. Bhutto was identified by Sindhi emotions and sentiments because at least rhetorically, he tried to rectify some of the injustices which were done against the Sindhis. So Bhutto's execution by the military regime which represented Punjabi interest gave birth to a Sindhi martyr.

Sindhi ethno-nationalism proliferated in three directions in the period of 1980s. First, the 'separatists' which were led by G. M. Syed who advocated secession from the union and the formation of an independent Sindhudesh. The second, 'the autonomists' including the Sindh Awami Tehrik of Rasul Baksh Palejo and the Sindhi-Baluch-Pukhtun front of Mumtaz Bhutto, advocated significant devolution of authority to Sindh province. The third, the 'gradualists' led by the mainstream PPP under the nominal control of Benazir Butto, argued that the rights of Sindhi's could only be secured through an end to martial law and the restoration of the 1973 constitution.[8]

These were three kinds of ethno-nationalist assertions which played the crucial role in the decade of eighties for the emergence of Sindhi grievances.

Demand for 'Independent Sindhudesh'

The demand for a separate independent Sindhudesh was consistently made by Jeeye Sind Mahaz leader G.M.Syed. He was of the belief that any movement for the restoration of democracy (MRD) was a sham within the framework of united Pakistan. The believed that the continuation of martial rule would be good for the formation of Sindhu-desh and it would spell the death-knell for the present Pakistan. Syed also said that the agitation was having three objectives, all of which were in diametrical opposition to his own perception and goals.

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[8]   Charles H. Kennedy no. 2, p. 947.

Firstly, for any movement for the restoration of democracy, (MRD) G.M.Syed said that he was not interested in saving Pakistan. If the MRD agitation leadership were to support the break up of Pakistan then he would certainly support it. The second objective was the restoration of 1973 constitution which he found unacceptable because it did not give much autonomy to minority province. The third objective was the restoration of democracy, but in that case Sindhis would be reduced to a minority. Therefore about any decision on the movement, G.M. Syed approved of 'wait and see' approach because confrontation would be suicidal.

There was also a change of guard at the top when Dr. Hamida Khuro replaced G.M. Syed as the new chairman of the Jeeye Sind Mahaz. She pleaded for drafting a new constitution in which federal structure would be more in favour of province with the centre retaining only defence, currency, communication and foreign affairs. She called for principle of parity in the services and rightful share for the sindhis in the bureaucracy and the army.[9] Her position was also a bit moderate in comparison with G.M. Syed's position on independent 'Sindhudesh'. She had a view that the organization should take flexible approach because people could not wait for endless time for some distant hypothetical state. So she revised the position of Jeeye

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[9] Tahir Amin, *Ethno-National Movements of Pakistan*, (Islamabad, Institute of Policy Studies, 1988), p. 196.

Sindh Mahaz which would stand for a loosely federal United Pakistan where each province would enjoy maximum provincial autonomy.

For the sister organization of Jeeye Sindh Mahaz which played the crucial role in mobilizing and organizing popular Sindhi assertions in the decade of eighty was Sindh Graduate Association (SGA). The role of SGA became very important as the martial law regime banned any of the political activities in Pakistan. SGA as a non-political organization protected Sindhi officials interests in government and semi-government organizations and monitored the quotas fixed for the Sindhis and other welfare measures.[10] So very soon, it began to emerge as the principal organization for the Jeeye Sindh movement's objectives and programmes. The SGA had 42 branches all over the Sindh and had an estimated membership between 4000 and 6000. As it grew and also started participating in partial confrontational politics, the Zia regime banned SGA and instructed his officials to stay away from its membership.

The Jeeye Sindh Mahaz adopted a strategy of partial cooperation and partial confrontation with the Zia regime. It did not join any direct confrontation because Syed knew the strength of military regime and considered the action as 'suicidal'. Apart from this, Jeeye Sindh Mahaz had also the objective of weakening the strength of PPP in Sindh. So as a part of the strategy, Jeeye

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[10]   Ibid, p. 193.

Sindh Mahaz sought cooperation with Muhajir Qaumi Mahaz (MQM). But G.M. Syed also received special visits and treatment from the martial-law administrator because Zia was interested in building anti-PPP alliance which he feared the most. Moreover Syed was satisfied with Zia's policies which he believed would hasten the dismemberment of Pakistan and the advent of an independent Sindhudesh.[11] So Syed never backed out of his concept of independent Sindhudesh because he knew that the economic subordination of Sindhis could not end without throwing away the yoke of Punjabi-Muhajir dominance.

Demand for Autonomy

'Autonomists' like the Sindh Awami Tehrik of Rasul Baksh Palejo advocated significant devolution of authority to Sindh province. The party worked for a multinational socialist Pakistan. It differed with the Jeeye Sind Mahaz on the objective of Sindhu Desh and strictly placed its objectives within the framework of international socialist class struggle.[12] It also considered the liberation of the Sindhi nation from the oppression of other nations as its primary responsibility. Sindhi Awami Tehrik was active in successful moves to stop the auction of land in Sindh as well as the campaign to have voters' list in the Sindhi language.

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[11] The Herald, February 1992, p. 27.

[12] Mushahid Hussain, *Pakistan's Politics: The Zia Years* (Delhi, Konark Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1991), p. 49.

Sindh Awami Tehreek joined the movement for restoration of Democracy (MRD) and took the most active and enthusiastic part in the civil disobedience movements of 1983 and 1986. It had a track record of patient political work in the rural area of Sindh. It was a highly organized political group which had among its rank the most motivated and highly dedicated cadres.

The Sindh Awami Tehreek, representing ideologically very diverse social groups like peasants, workers, primary school teachers and students played the most important role in organizing the movement and coordinating its strategy in the medium sized rural towns. The cadres attacked the official buildings, disrupted the communication and had a violence engagement with the police and the army. The Sindh Awami Tehreek played their role with greater efficiency in the 1986 movement.

Agitation in Sindh had forged an efficient marriage between objective realities and subjective factors. The former being the feelings of deprivation among Sindhis and the latter being the superb organization of the Movement for restoration of democracy (MRD). This was in sharp contrast to the rest of Pakistan where the MRD remained a loose conglomeration of disparate political forces. In most parts of Sindh, the MRD was organized down to the town and Tehsil level. It was the Sindh Awami Tehreek which managed to give a political direction to the material grievances of Sindhis. 'At Sindh

level, it concentrated its efforts in consolidating its strength by establishing various affiliate suborganizations such as Sind Hari Committee, Sindhi Portrait Sangat, Sindhi Shagird Tehreek and Sindhiani women Tehreek, representing peasants, students, labourers and women respectively'.[13] The Sindh Awami Tehreek stood for class struggle and demanded for basic changes along socialist lines.

There was one interesting development which took place under Sindh Awami Tehreek and that was the participation of Wadheras in the movement for the restoration of democracy (MRD).

Wadheras who were the landlords usually supported the establishment but feeling of deprivation also extended to this section of Sindhi society. Wadheras was pushed into the movement due to pressure from below. The movement transcended the class barrier as the 'grand united front' consisted of almost all strata of Sindhi society: Wadheras and Haris, the leftist and the rightist, and the intellectual and pir.[14]

Mumtaz Bhutto, a former chief minister of Sindh under the first PPP regime was one of the co-founders of the Sindhi-Baluch-Pakhtun Front (SBPF) which came into existence in London when Altaullah Mengal, a former chiefminister of Baluchistan and tribal chief and Abdul Hafeez Pirzada

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[13]   Mushahid Hussain, no. 11, p. 51.
[14]   Mohammad Waseem, *Pakistan under the Martial Law 1977-85* (Lahore, Vanguard 1987), p. 140.

demanded a decentralized confederation in Pakistan – a redistribution of powers on the basis of nationalities under a very weak centre. According to the front's programme each state will have its own flag as a mark of sovereignty and the centre will retain only those powers voluntarily surrendered by the states.[15]

SBPF made little secret of the desire that if the proposed confederation would not materialize, the next logical step would be an outright secession from Pakistan. The strategy of SBPF was to prepare the people for the movement and people enthusiastically participated in the MRD. The other strategy of SBPF was to convince both Sindhi and Baluch people for an eventual independence and wait for opportune moment when the domestic and international circumstance favour it. Its leadership was very pessimistic about the prospects of democracy in the country as long as any centralized coercive institution like the army had the ability to engineer coups in the country.

Therefore both Sindh Awami Tehrik and Sindhi-Baluch-Pakhtun front advocated significant devolution of power and authority to the Sindh province. It had a belief that only federal structure with a weak centre and powerful province could save Pakistan.

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[15]   Arbab M. Jahangir, 'National Integration and Ethnicity in Baluchistan, Pakistan', *Asian Profile*, vol. 19, no. 6, December 1991, p. 545.

However, the SBPF proved abortive and since 1988-89 its leaders buried themselves in alliances.

With the induction of democracy, Mumtaz Bhutto became chairman of his Sindh National Front and a senior office-bearer in the SNA, whereas Mengal stayed on in London. In the early 1990s, Pirzada tried for a new constitutional consensus within Pakistan.

The Sindh Awami Tehreek led by Rasul Baksh Palejo remained at loggerhead with the Zia regime. Palejo spent several years in Zia's jails. In 1990, Palejo who had been with ANP left and aligned itself with Muslim league and Jama'at-i-Islami in the IDA (Islamic Democratic Alliance). However, he remained popular with Sindhi-speaking youths from middle-income groups and was well-known for his progressive, anti-feudal ideas.

Gradualist

The third direction, where the Sindhi nationalism moved in the eighties was led by 'gradualists'. The mainstream Pakistan people party (PPP) under the nominal control of Benazir Bhutto, who argued that the rights of Sindhis could only be achieved through the scrapping of martial law and the restoration of 1973 constitution. The Sindh PPP was projecting itself as an aggressive regionalist party and was trying to represent Sindhi's grievances which became serious due to vindictive policies of Zia regime. So in practice, the PPP had to maintain an ambivalent position that was to side

essentially with the regionalist position at the provincial level and to maintain the theoretical position at the national level.[16]

But there was one unanimity and that was the rule of Zia must end.

All these sentiments and dissatisfaction came to the fore when movement for the Restoration of Democracy (MRD) caused widespread support all over the Sindh and other places of the country.

When General Zia announced his regime's civilization plan in 1983, focusing on the holding of non-party polls, the MRD called for public demonstrations for withdrawal of martial law and elections under 1973 constitutions. This appeal led to an open defiance of military rule in Sindh, where alienation had reached new heights. The main issue which the Sindh PPP exploited was Bhutto's judicial murder by the martial law regime. The propaganda that a Sindhi prime minister was murdered because of Punjabi judicial injustice and conspiracy had a devastating effect on the legitimacy of Zia's rule.

At the provincial level, Sindh PPP assumed the role of the regional party. Its various factions competed with each other to with the Sindhi voters. It catered to the regional interests and loyalties. So Sindh PPP proposed and

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[16]   Hamza Alavi, 'Politics of Ethnicity in India and Pakistan' in Hamza Alavi, John Harris, eds. *Sociology of Developing Societies: South Asia* (London: Macmillan, 1988), p. 28.

supported the confederation in which centre would be having only (i) Defence, (ii) foreign affairs, (iii) currency, (iv) communication.

So PPP used diverse approaches to garner support out of Sindhi deprivation and discontent. It put in focus the set of grievances like virtual exclusion from the power sharing mechanism, the policy of overt oppression in Sindh by the Zia regime which resulted in popular participation in MRD in the 1983 and 1986.

The movements which were launched at the national level remained confined to Sindh province. The intensity of the 1983 movement in Sindh was the most extreme. Angry mobs attacked all the symbols of the central government-government offices, courts, colleges, post-offices, railway stations etc. According to official sources, 61 were killed, 200 were injured and 4691 people were arrested in the movement.[17]

The arrests made by the authority showed that the movement was mainly led by PPP. The largest component of those arrested in the 1983 movement came from the PPP (72.39%), followed by Sindh Awami Tehreek (13.45%) and Jeeye Sindh Mahaz and others (9.5%).[18]

So, well aware of the pro-PPP bias of the Sindhis, the Zia regime adopted deliberate pro-Muhajir and anti-Sindhi policies, manipulating ethnic

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[17]   Tahir Amin, n. p. 196.
[18]   Ibid, p. 197.

divisions in the province to weaken the political opposition. Hence the Muhajirs, who had proved their utility in helping to overthrow the PPP Government, were rewarded by a reversal of Bhutto's preferential employment policies for Sindhis.[19]

So repression and persecution of Sindhis continued with full force. It was the two divisions of the Pakistan army which launched anti-insurgency operations in Sindh. Although the military succeeded in quelling the uprising, the use of force by the Punjabi – dominated army provided a further impetus to Sindhi ethnic mobilization. The MRD movement also increased ethnic divisions in Sindh since the Muhajir controlled urban area chose not to participate.

Zia's Legitimacy and Sindhi Nationalism

Having broken the momentum of the uprising, Zia tried to legitimize his military rule through the creation of a civilian facade. His strategies included the holding of the national referendum in December 1984, which elected Zia as president for another five years; the holding of non-party elections to the central and provincial legislatures in 1985; and the passage of the eighth amendment to the 1973 constitution by a rubber-stamp parliament, which indemnified actions taken by the military government.

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[19]   Feroz Ahmed, n. 3, p. 39.

Yet the military regime failed to obtain its basic objective of securing legitimacy since even the weak political opposition, under the banner of the MRD, retained considerable popular support.[20]

When the MRD, which had boycolted the non-party elections, once again issued a call for the restoration of representative rule, opposition leaders including Benazir Bhutto were arrested leading to widespread rioting in Sindh. Continuing to follow parallel policies of repression and divide and rule, the Zia used force against Sindhi activists and extended its support to anti-PPP forces in Sindh like the Jeeye Sindh Party. One of the results of these developments when Sindhi nationalism was at its peak was the selection of Mohammed Khan Junejo, a Sindhi of no real consequence, as prime minister in 1985. Junejo tried to appease the Sindhis and continued to play a role somewhat similar in form to Bhutto's. He gave jobs to Sindhs in the province, a move when deflated the sails of the movement for national rights in Sindh since there was an absence of a strong bourgeois class and the Sindhi national question seemed to revolve around the employment of the petty bourgeoisie.[21]

Though the Sindhi movement erupted with great force in the 1983, drawing together all sections of the ethnic Sindhi People. It was not confined to the

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[20] Sreedhar, Kaniyalil, Savita Pande 'Pakistan After Zia', (New Delhi: ABC Publishing House, 1989), p. 29.

[21] Akbar S. Zaidi 'Regional Imbalances and the National Question in Pakistan: Some Indications', Economic And Political Weekly, vol. 24, no. 6, p.

Sindhi Salariat. But the Sindhi movement failed to build an united front with the working class in Sindh which isolated it in urban areas and made it ineffective.[22]

Therefore, there started a search to redefine Sindhi identity. Historically Sindhi identity had always been rather problematic in the multi-ethnic province of Sindh as various different linguistic groups are settled there. So they evolved the new criteria that 'ethnicity was not a matter of language or culture or of origin but, rather, it is a question of roots.[23]

They argued that the Baluch in Sindh were Sindhis because they had roots in Sindh, at the same way the principle extended to Muhajirs as they were uprooted by fate and the forces of history from their own soil in India and deposited in Sindh.

The new principle evolved was that the Muhajirs were not a nationality by themselves. They were only a subnationality within the larger Sindhi nationality, Sindhi speakers being the other subnational group. Together they constituted Sindhi nationality.

So there developed the complementarily between the two and when MQM came up with its charter, it expressed many of the long standing grievances

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[22] Hamza Alavi, 'Pakistan and Islam – Its Ethnicity and Ideology'. 'Strategic Digest', vol. XVII, no. 8, August, 1987, p. 1539.
[23] Ibid., p. 1539.

of Sindhi nationalists. This fact was recognized by both sets of actors and a cooperative arrangement of sorts was worked out between the MQM and various Sindhi nationalist parties during early 1988.[24] For both the subnationalities, 'outsiders' were the common enemy and the primary villain were Punjabis and Punjabi military.

The death of Zia and Sindhi Assertions

Political situation changed drastically as the death of Zia-ul-Haq led to the emergence of new political configuration in Sindh. As the election was announced in 1988, the competitive politics and opportunism led to the new alignments and new initiatives. The self-definition of Muhajirs as a subnationality was therefore shortlived. With the new re-alignments, they reverted to their claim to be fifth nationality of Pakistan.

Sindhi-realignment also took shape as Sindh National Alliance was founded in 1988. It decided to keep the door open for Muhajir to participate in the alliance. But the election led to four way contest between the MQM, the PPP, Sindhi nationalists (loosely aligned under the banner of the Pakistan National Party - PNP) and Jamaat-i-Islami which had chosen to contest the election allied with the Islami Jamhoori Ittehad (IJI).[25]

The Sindh National Alliance did not win ever a single seat in the election but PPP as the case has been in the past was able to co-opt most of the support

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[24]   Anwar Syed, 'Political Parties and the Nationality Question in Pakistan', *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies*, Fall 1988, p. 61.

[25]   Saeed Shafqat, 'Pakistan under Benazir Bhutto' *Asian Survey*, vol. XXXVI, no. 7, July 1996, p. 659.

of Sindhi nationalists. The reason behind success of the Sindh peoples party was that the candidates were as nationalists as their opponents. While campaigning, both raised similar slogans and demanded autonomy for Sindh, were against the repatriation of Biharis and were opposed to the construction of the Kalabagh Dam. What went in the favour of the peoples party candidates against the nationalists was not only the fact that the people party in Sindh was sufficiently nationalist, but it was also perceived to be federal enough and in the event of victory at the national level would be in a position to redress some of the grievances faced by Sindh and Sindhis.

The PPP had at least two other advantages which the nationalists did not; that was the revenge of Bhutto, and the fact that the nationalists were thoroughly disorganized and confused about the election issue altogether.

The Sindhi ethno-nationalism which was at peak in the first half of the decade of the 1980s, waned and declined towards the end of the decade. Various factors like democratization process, the strength of PPP and the confused and disorganized leadership with ambiguous and distant goal all played the crucial role in making Sindhi nationalism as a spent force. But the emergence of PPP as in the election of 1988, 1993 also proved that Sindhi grievances and deprivations had got the democratic outlet.

The Sindh National Alliance Coalition established in 1988 did not win any seat in the election of 1988, 1990 and 1993 and Syed's dream of establishing a separate Sindhudesh by ousting the non-Sindhis was dashed to the ground.

CHAPTER – IV
MUHAJIR'S ETHNIC ASSERTIONS (1980-99)

CHAPTER-IV

MUHAJIR'S ETHNIC ASSERTIONS (1980-99)

The approach to politics by Muhajirs changed in the decade of 1980s and 1990s. Muhajir's deprivation and discrimination reached its peak when General Zia's decade long rule solidified Punjabi dominance as changing demographic and political situation continued the relative decline in the Muhajir share of jobs, admissions to educational institutions and political influence. So, in ethnic terms the Pushtoons clearly emerged as the junior partners of the Punjabis in the military and bureaucracy. The share of the Muhajirs in the civil bureaucracy was further reduced under Zia.[1]

So, the rule of Zia further augmented Muhajirs search for an identity and mobilization of their ranks along ethnic lines was only a matter of time. Muhajir separation was not simply a reflection of subjective decisions to maintain a separate identity, but it was a consequence of the objective conditions, including the ghettoziation of the Muhajirs over which the Muhajirs had no control.[2]

Therefore, the economic and political deprivation created enough fertile ground to search for alternative political action which would be

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[1] Feroz, Ahmed, "Ethnicity and Politics: The Rise of Mujahir separation," *South Asian Bulletin*, vol (8), 1998 p-50.
[2] Ibid., p.50.

different from traditional identification with a unified Pakistan and the ideology of Islam. The mobilization was along ethnic lines where "Muhajir nationalism" and unity of Muhajirs under one leader and one party made it similar to other ethnic or regional Pakistan. Thus, ethnic identity and linguistic affinity were exploited to rouse a popular support base from the Mujahirs.

The Muhajirs realized this potential only after 1983, when the movement on the basis of identity started germinating in the form of the student organization and later evolved into a political party. The politicization of Muhajirs was slow and gradual. The All-Pakistan Muhajir Student Organization (APMSO) formed in June 1978, took on the task of mobilizing young Mohajirs in the country to demand their rights. The main demand of the APMSO was for revision of the federal quota in ways more favourable to the Muhajirs.[3] The APMSO was formed in reaction to the unilateral policies of the Islami Jamiat-i-Tulaba (IJT). The IJT, the student wing of the Jamiat-i-Islami, had been providing cadres to its parent organization for a long time and operated as a coercive force which did not hesitate to use violence to achieve its ends. The APMSO gradually succeeded in flushing out the fundamentalist student bodies from the Sindh province. With youthful energy the new organization which had acquired an

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[3]   Charles H. Kennedy, 'Politics of Ethnicity in Sindh' *Asian Survey,* vol. XXXI, no. 10, October 1991, p.947.

experience of militancy from the IJT, began challenging urban issues like the quota system, unemployment and emigration from up-country.[4]

The militancy and tone of aggressiveness for the first time were shown in the organization which was more mundane and secular in its approach towards dealing with the Muhajir grievances in urban Sindh. Finding their power eroding and without significant clout either in the provincial government of Sindh or the federal government in Islamabad, Muhajirs felt they had no choice but to think in terms of a separate political and administrative status in the urban areas of Sindh.

In 1984, the Muhajir Quami Movement (MQM) was formed for the political expression of Muhajir grievances. It championed the interest of the Muhajirs. The MQM mainly a student movement, emerged as an important political force and by 1988, it was the third largest political party in Pakistan.

The Muhajirs who had suffered from social and political alienation finally got a platform to get their aspirations and messages across. The MQM talked about discrimination and victimization, which were the state's policy towards Muhajirs.

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[4]   Anwar A. Syed, 'Political parties and the Nationality Question in Pakistan', *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies*, XII (i), Fall 1998, p 47.

There were few incidents which made the delicate ethnic relations to lose its balance. In April 1985 the death of a college student Bushra Zaidi who had been hit by a mini bus led to rioting of students against transporters in Karachi. The first Pathan-Muhajir riot began. More than 23 people were killed and 100 wounded in pitched battles on April 18 night and morning of April 19.[5] This ethnic conflict intensified over the next two years as various stresses and fissures developed between different ethnic groups.

In November-December 1986, the ethnic riots were more bloody in Karachi and Hyderabad. It started when the army raided a headquarter of Heroin processing and distribution centre, run by Pathan and Afghan smugglers, in Sohrab Goth. It led to very violent reactions as these criminals with the blessings of Punjabi security forces attacked the Muhajirs residents of Aligarh colony. Hundreds of Muhajirs were killed and Muhajir business establishments and property were destroyed. Muhajirs retaliated by attacking Pathan neighbourhood and fighting spread to other towns of Sindh.

The communal disturbances of 1985-86 proved that Muhajirs were vulnerable and the establishment were hand in glove with the criminal elements. These ethnic clashes came as a grim reminder of cauldron which Sindh was becoming due to rapid increase in the immigrant population of

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[5] *The Times of India*, 21 April 1985.

Karachi. Immigrants were not Muhajirs but war victims from Afghanistan or economic migrants from other provinces. Scarce jobs and limited economic opportunities brought tough competition between lower class Muhajirs who were mainly Bangladeshi Biharis and immigrants. It created highly flammable situation and the spark led to disaster.

The insecurity psyche and deprivation led to the popularity of MQM, which championed the cause of Muhajirs. On 9 August 1986 when more than one lakh people assembled to hear their leader Altaf Hussain, it gave MQM first glimpse of its mass base and support. Here they demanded that Muhajirs be recognized as the fifth nationality and their rights in the province be decided on the basis of their numerical strength.[6] Ethnic card and militant tone served as a catalyst for the growth in popularity of the MQM. MQM catered to the disaffections of Muhajirs who felt cheated and broken as they saw a wide gap between what they got and what they felt they were entitled to because of their parents generation's contributions to Pakistan movement, their deeply ingrained sense of cultural superiority and their educational achievements. MQM addressed this sense of deprivation very effectively and thus became an extremely successful example of collective mobilization of ethnic loyalties.

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[6]   Public Opinion Trends, vol. XIV, no. 147, 14 Aug, 1986.

There was no looking back for MQM, as it became a party unparalleled in terms of ethnic mobilization in the urban area of Sindh.

In early 1987, Altaf Hussain issued the MQM's Charter of Resolutions. The resolutions included the following points —

(i)   Only "real" Sindhis (Muhajirs and Sindhis) should have the right to vote in Sindh;

(ii)   Business licenses and permits should not be given to those who do not have the franchise to vote;

(iii)   "Stranded Pakistanis" (Pakistanis living in Bangladesh-Biharis) should be allowed to settle and become citizens of Pakistan;

(iv)   Afghans should be restricted to their official refugee camps in the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) and Baluchistan and not be allowed to buy property or reside in Sindh;

(v)   Local bus services should be taken over by the Karachi Municipal Corporation, and bus drivers must be literate before being given driver's licenses (directed against the Pathan domination of mass transportation);

(vi)   Non-Sindhis and non-Muhajirs should not be allowed to buy property in Sindh;

(vii) A fresh census should be held in Sindh provinces and the Muhajirs share of the Federal quota should be revised upward to reflect the true population of the Muhajirs;

(viii) The basis for Sindhi domicile, for purchases of the federal quota, should be 20 years continuous residence in the province; and

(ix) Police officers implicated in atrocities against Muhajirs should be tried before special tribunals (most such officers were Punjabis)[7].

All these resolutions were significant because there were many demands in the charter which were also similar to the demands of Sindhi nationalists. So, both sets of actors recognized the common grievances and decided to work out cooperative arrangement between MQM and various Sindhi nationalist parties. MQM had one difference with past Muhajir leadership as it aligned itself with pro-Sindhi policies, therefore, there grew a certain impression that MQM wants to work collectively and unitedly in the province of Sindh to demand genuine grievances.

For ethnic redefinition, it was a new initiative in which the confrontation of Sindhis and Muhajir gave way to a new accord in early 1988. To both Muhajirs and Sindhis, "outsiders" were the common enemies and primary villains were Punjabis and Punjabi military.

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[7] Theodore P. Wright, Jr., "Centre-Periphery relations and ethnic conflict in Pakistan" *Comparative Politics,* vol. 23(3) April, 1991, p. 305.

The socio-political identity of the Muhajirs now became subservient to the larger Sindhi identity. 'Now they declared that Muhajirs were not a nationality by themselves. They were only a sub-nationality within a larger Sindhi nationality, Sindhi speakers being the other sub-national group. Together, they constituted Sindhi nationality. Given Sindhi orientations too, for a time it looked not at all unlikely that two would move closer in the political arena towards some kind of a united front in order to win concessions from the centre.'[8]

In the course of fighting for the rights of Muhajirs, the MQM has confronted all major ethnic groups settled in urban Sindh. Some important events deepened the Muhajirs-Sindhi polarization. In September 1988, more than 250 people, mainly Muhajirs were killed when about a dozen gunmen, allegedly led by Jiye Sindh leaders Qadir Magsi and Janu Arain, opened fire on unarmed people in Hyderabad, the second largest city of Sindh.[9]

After that, there was an angry reaction and an equal number of people died through indiscriminate firing. Such actions and reactions made the inter-ethnic relations volatile in Sindh. Competition from other groups, the high rate of unemployment, urban congestion, violence and conspiracy

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[8] Hamza Alavi 'Nationhood and communal violence in Pakistan' *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, vol. 21 No. 2 (1991).

[9] Christina Lamb, *Waiting for Allah: Pakistan's struggle for Democracy* (New Delhi: Viking 1991); p. 138.

on the part of the state or Indian factor may have additional but peripheral factors fuelling ethnic consciousness.'[10]

So ethnic consciousness became all pervasive and loyalty to the MQM as a party reflected in the election which became a turning point for the party as deprivation and anger was translated into the victory of the MQM in the local bodies polls which were held on 30 November 1987. The MQM swept the seats in Karachi, Hyderabad and Mirpur Khas. It was new experience for the party as it grew in confidence and its belief in the agenda of the party. MQM and its 'supported candidates' captured half of the 204 seats in Karachi Municipal council and two thirds of the 60 seats in Hyderabad.[11] Even political analysts accepted that MQM emerged as a new force in the political scene of Pakistan which proved true in the future election results.

Elections and MQM

The assassination of President Zia-ul-Haq changed the whole political profile of Pakistan as elections took place in November 1988 based on parliamentary party system after the gap of more than one decade.

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[10]   Tahir Amin, Ethno-national movements of Pakistan: Domestic and International Factors, (Islamabad: Institute of Policy Studies, 1993), p. 281.
[11]   *The Times of India* (Delhi), 01 December 1987.

In Sindh, the election campaign developed into a four-way contest between the MQM, the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), Sindhi nationalists (loosely aligned under the banner of the Pakistan National Party – PNP), and the Jamaat-i-Islami which had chosen to contest the election allied with the Islami Jamhoori Ittehad (Islamic Democratic Alliance-IJI).[12]

For the ethnic party like the MQM, it was a very crucial point for its survival. The November 1988 general elections provided a clear victory in Sindh for the PPP and the MQM. 'Despite the powerful thrust of Sindhi nationalism, it was the PPP that got solid support from the part of Sindhi electorate. Those Sindhi nationalist candidates who insisted on standing in the elections were routed.'[13] The PPP was able to sweep most of the support of Sindhi nationalists. The PPP won almost every seat of rural Sindh (28), three of five seats in Hyderabad. The MQM, won 11 out of 13 constituencies in Karachi and two in Hyderabad. Again in November 19 in the provincial election, out of 100 seats of Sindh Assembly, the PPP swept rural area by winning 70 seats, while the MQM won 24 seats in urban Sindh. It was a major transformation for the MQM as it emerged as the third largest party. It also brought home the point that voting took place along ethnic lines and the MQM had given the expression to Muhajir's long

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[12] Charles H. Kennedy, n. 3, p. 950.
[13] Hamza Alavi, "Nationhood and communal violence in Pakistan", *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, vol. 21 No. 2 (1991), p. 174.

time grievances and deprivations. Similarly, the PPP got the support of

Sindhi ethnicities as Sindh identified themselves with that party.

Party position in the National elections of 1988[14]

Party	% of votes obtained	Seats won
PPP	38.70%	93
IJT	30.60%	55
Independent	13.40%	40 (including 13 MQM + 8 FATA)
MQM	5.25%	13
JUI	2.00%	8
ANP + PNP + BNA	2.80%	4
PPA	4.50%	5
Total		218

The PPP could not get the majority and performed poorly in other

provinces of Pakistan, so it sought the support of other parties to form a

coalition government. For the MQM, it was a bright opportunity and it also

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[14]   *Herald*, November, 1988 p. 9.

showed the willingness to join the PPP government but insisted on a formal agreement.

In December 1988, (PPP) and the MQM became coalition partners after signing a 59 point agreement, known as the Karachi Accord. It covered most of the points of MQMs charter of resolutions. Salient features of the accord were —

(a) Strict enforcement of the federal and provincial quotas for recruitment to posts in the civil bureaucracy and in educational institutions;

(b) Revision of Federal quota, replacing the rural Sindh/urban Sindh designation with Muhajir and Sindhi;

(c) Revision of the Federal quota, following the prospective 1991 census, to reflect the proportional populations of Pakistan's Five ethnic communities

(d) Repatriation of stranded Pakistanis (Biharis) to Pakistan.

(e) Disolution of all Placement Bureaus designed to recruit candidates to civil bureaucratic positions[15]

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[15]   *The Herald*, November 1989, p. 50.

The first 14 provisions of this agreement were devoted to general statements supporting a democratic system, protecting political rights, upholding the rights of all oppressed people, and so on. Other provisions were devoted to specific promises of better housing for the urban poor, better mass transportation, and more hospital beds for all Sindhis.

Nine points were devoted to education, including creating objective criteria for admissions to colleges and varsities. Other important and somewhat controversial points included: repatriation of Afghan refugees; the provision that only citizens could buy property in Pakistan, while Pakistan's living abroad would have all the privileges of citizenship, restrictions on arms licenses; review of the status of political prisoners who have been held since July 1977; and compensation to be considered for next of kin of persons massacred in September and October 1988 in Hyderabad and Karachi.

It was a sort of victory for the MQM as its resolutions are being forced to be taken care of by the PPP who showed inability and unwillingness to implement points any of the accord. At the same time, SNA outvoted by the PPP and the MQM, entered into confrontational road as it cynically attacked both parties. There was also skepticism towards the PPP-MQM accord- between a national party and an ethno-regionalist party, as it was an alliance of convenience. Indeed upon assuming office, the PPP

instituted polices that were interpreted by the Muhajir leadership as pro-Sindhi and anti-Muhajir. A federal placement bureau was established by PPP on 12 January, 1989 which was mainly manned by those who were personally loyal to Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto. The PPP discriminated in the matter of appointments and three fourth of the appointments were of Sindhis who were virtually the members of PPP.

Even prominent Muhajir civil servants were victimized as they had been consigned to inactivity with no official duties. The PPP appointed various Sindhis to important posts who were known to have pro-Sindhi feelings and anti-Muhajir views.

Given such provocations, MQM felt it was very difficult to have smooth relationship with the PPP. Within months of signing the accord, disagreements surfaced between the two parties. In May 1989 MQM ministers in the Sindh cabinet resigned in protest against what they termed non-implementation of the agreement. The resignations were not accepted. Another agreement, termed a memorandum of understanding was reached.

The MQM in 1989 remained a crucial power-broker confident of its role in provincial and national political life. So, MQM continued its

rapprochement with the PPP, therefore Altaf Hussain announced in a massive rally 'We are united on a platform and nobody can shake us'[16].

But continuing classes between the PPP and the MQM workers in Karachi and Hyderabad ended any possibility of a renewed PPP-MQM alliance. The ethnic fragility of Sindh became grim as violence became a tool to sort out differences between the groups and the parties. Issues such as the repatriation of the Biharis or emigration into Sindh continued to fan ethnic discontent[17].

In October 1989, the MQM formally ended the relationship and announced its support for a no confidence move against Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto in the National Assembly.

The end of the alliance ignited new tensions in Karachi and Hyderabad. MQM supporters viewed the PPP's provincial government as no longer representing the interests of urban Sindh and supporters of the government viewed the alliance made between the MQM and Nawaz Sharif's Islami Jamhoori Ittehad (IJI) as anti-Sindhi. The Sindhi interpreted the MQM 's action as betrayal of trust which simultaneously resulted in the deterioration of relationship between Muhajir and Sindhi.

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[16] *Dawn*, 16 May, 1989
[17] *The Herald*, November, p. 50.

Ethnic strife which started in February continued till May and it took hundreds of lives thereby making the ethnic relationship bloody and gory. Prominent in the 1990 disturbance was feud between PPP's student wing, People's Student Federation (PSF) and APMSO. Hundred were killed as heavily armed student groups rampaged in Karachi and Hyderabad. Reports of torture and kidnapping of student leaders became widespread. The administration became partisan as it helped the PSF and persecuted the APMSO. In April 1990, Altaf Hussain started a 'fast unto death' to protest the Government's anti-Muhajir policies[18].

The confrontation between the administration and MQM protestors produced numerous casualties. Some of the worst ethnic violence, in the history of Hyderabad, occurred in May 1990. On May 27 the police opened fire on a women's rally resulting in an estimated 60 death and about 250 injured, including many women and children.[19] The violence then spread to Karachi where over 130 people were killed in a five-day period. More than 40 Sindhis killed allegedly by MQM members. Since then, Sindhi-Muhajir relations have remained strained, and the tension has led to a large scale cross-migration of Muhajirs and Sindhis to their own predominantly ethnic areas. With the dismissal of Benazir Government by the president Ghulam Ishaq Khan in August 1990 on charges of corruption, inefficiency and

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[18] *Times of India*, 7 April, 1990.
[19] *Times of India*, 29 May, 1990.

misconduct of power,[20] the Sindhi-Muhajir clashes ended but the relationship remained tense.

Pakistan went to polls second times within the two years. The results largely reflected the ethnic sentiments which again showed the MQM dominating and improving its tally in the urban areas and the PPP prevailed in the rural areas. The Ninth National Assembly of Pakistan came into being after party based elections on 24 October 1990, which returned the IDA/IJI led by Nawaj Sharif with a clear majority.

Party Position in the National Elections of 1990[21]

Party	% of votes obtained	Seats won
PDA (PPP-led alliance)	36.65	45
IDA/IJI	37.27	105
MQM	5.6	15
ANP	1.68	6
Independent	10.61	13
Others	2.67	8
Total		198

For the PPP it was a great setback because the party was routed in the Punjab, NWFP and Baluchistan provincial polls. Even in Sindh a coalition of MQM, independent and IJI cobbled together to form the

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[20]   *The Hindustan Times*, 7 August 1990.

[21]   *The Herald*, November, 1990 p. 10.

government in the province under the leadership of Jam Sadiq Ali. The MQM performed very well even in the provincial assembly election as it won 28 seats in 1990, a surplus of 4 seats it won in 1988. The PPP could manage only 46 seats in 1990 in comparison with the 70 seats of 1988 election. So, the MQM consolidated its position both in National Assembly and in Sind provincial Assembly. Jam Sadiq Ali tried to keep pro-MQM trend. So, in the administration, the coalitional Government had strong MQM policies. Even the speaker in the provincial Assembly was from the MQM.

Jam Sadiq's coalition tried to target the PPP activists and followed the policies of repression and selective execution of PSF members. It made the ethnic situation more disastrous.

At the federal level the MQM's relationship with the IJI was fraught with contradictions. For Nawaz Sharif, it had never been easy to carry the mutually antagonistic forces of the Jamaat-i-Islami, MQM and the ANP. The JI had lost much of its constituency to the MQM and much of the violence in the mid-1980s was due to armed clashes between the MQM and the Jamaat. The continuing tension between MQM and the Punjabis and Pathans living in Karachi further strained the alliance.

The two main demands of MQM, to repatriate the Biharis and to revise the quota policy was also not met by the Nawaz Sharif Government.

Therefore, the accord between IJI and MQM proved to be short-lived. The courtship ended in June 1992 when the MQM withdrew its support from the Government and its members resigned from their Sindh provincial and National Assembly seats as a protest against Operation Clean Up.[22]

Operations Clean Up and MQM

The Operation Clean Up was started on May 27, 1992 and was designed to restore peace in Sindh. The ordinance of June 19, 1992 granted the army legal immunity from criminal persecution to army personnel during an operation. The operation led to a prolonged confrontation in which an urban guerrilla war was fought in the streets and lanes of Karachi.[23]

The army promised an 'even-handed policy' in restoring law and order in Sindh. It was reported that MQM torture cells were unearthed in line areas, Landhi and elsewhere.[24] But by June 19, when the dissident Haqiqi faction of the MQM took over the party's offices, it became clear that the MQM was one of the main targets of the army's operation.

The army wanted to get rid of Altaf Hussain group by patronizing the Haqiqi faction and for that it provided logistics and armaments to the

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22   *The Herald*, July 1992 p. 37.
23   *The Herald*, November 1992, p. 20.
24   Ibid., p.22

group. 'The intra-MQM fight turned out to be very bloody. In Karachi, the first three days of violence, beginning on 21 June, took the toll to 15 dead and over 700 injured. The operation against the Altaf faction was meticulously planned with over 300 dissidents, actively supported by the army, systematically demolishing the MQM myth of invisibility.[25]

Karachi was made a ghost city as it experienced one of the worst violence and instability and such of it was a result of vendetta killings by the two MQM factions. The army operation in which force and coercion were used indiscriminately against the Muhajirs soared the popularity of MQM. The use of army, paramilitary, and police to deal with a guerrilla war situation in Karachi and Hyderabad resulted in the further alienation of urban Sindh from Islamabad.

The army was deployed for 25 months. According to official figures whereas 304 people were murdered in 1991. 565 people were gunned down in 1994 up to November 30 – this figure applies only to Karachi, in contrast to the 1991 figure that includes the whole province.[26]

The sustained violence cost thousand of lives, and the army was accused of carrying out genocide against the Muhajir community. The army's action also delegitimized the Haqiqi faction among the majority of

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[25]   *Newsline*, July 1992 p.30.
[26]   *The Herald*, December 1994, p.32.

MQM supporters who regarded the dissidents as traitors. Continuous armed clashes with the Haqiqi groups, criminal charges brought by the government against Altaf Hussain and other members of the MQM, and greater critical coverage by the press has forced the party to fight for its survival.

Azeem Tariq, the MQM leader said that "state forces are being used against the MQM. It is regrettable and tantamount to weakening the security, sovereignty and national integrity of the country.[27] So there emerged the suspicion in the mind of Muhajirs that the army was using the age old tactics of divide and rule and they were being targeted by Punjabi dominated army. 'There could be no lasting peace under these circumstances. Had the armed operations been impartial and directed only towards criminal elements, its intervention would have advanced conciliation and compromise. Instead it did the opposites'.[28]

The MQM's break with the IJI also came in June 1992, and the military operation effectively ended the 'parliamentary phase' for the party as it came out of coalition and also boycotted the 1993 National Assembly elections.

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[27] Aabha Dixit, Sind's Delicate Balance Rudely Disturbed: MQM Comes Under Pressure in Operation Clean up, *Strategic Analysis*, November 1992, p. 788.

[28] Maya Chadda, 'Talibanization of Pakistan's Transitional Democracy', *World Affairs*, July-September 1999 vol.3 p.112.

Election 1993 and MQM

The dismissal of Nawaz Sharif's government by the president Ghulam Ishaq in the power struggle unfolding between the prime minister and the president brought Pakistan to another election in October 1993. Ishaq dissolved the National Assembly on April 18, dismissing Nawaz Sharif's government on charges of corruption, maladministration, nepotism, failure to work effectively with the provinces, and unleashing a 'reign of terror against the opponents of the Government'.[29]

The PPP and the PML emerged as the two leading parties, capturing 86 and 72 seats respectively. The MQM, which had been strongest party in urban Sindh in previous elections, boycotted the National Assembly elections.

But the MQM participated in the Sindh provincial Assembly and its popularity remained unscathed when it secured 27 seats. The MQM swept the polls in Karachi, winning 22 of the 28 seats from the city's constituencies. The PPP emerged as the largest party in the Sindh Provincial Assembly, capturing 56 of the 95 seats.

The MQM supported Benazir Bhutto in her bid for the premiership amidst a growing desire for cooperation to avoid the erstwhile

[29] Samina Yaseen, 'Democracy in Pakistan' *Asian Survey*, vol XXXIV, No. 6 June 1994, p.578.

confrontational politics. But custodial deaths and growing violence made the two parties again to involve in conflict rather than cooperation. The army operation continued till November 30, 1994 and so also the violence as the army found itself more and more in political quagmire. The army was deployed for 25 months. There were several reports which showed custodial deaths, disappearance of MQM activists and free run to rival groups of the MQM, the Punjabi Pakhtoon Ittehad and the Sindh Awami Tehrik. These groups were untouched by the operation. Vendetta against MQM was so much that there were many confessional statements which were recorded even prior to the lodging of FIRs.

The MQM accused the PPP of dithering in fulfilling its promises, especially in allocating ministerial portfolios, and continuously pressed the government to recall the army from the streets of Karachi. The MQM's rhetoric actions have become more militant since the beginning of 1994. Altaf Hussain accused the military of Muhajir genocide and compared the situation in urban Sindh to those in Bosnia and Indian Occupied Kashmir[30].

The MQM was enraged when the PPP provincial government suddenly announced taking over the Karachi Municipal Authority and made controversial decision such as carving a new Malir district out of Karachi East, which was vehemently protested by both factions of MQM and by

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[30]   *The Herald*, May 1994 p. 39.

non-MQM Muhajirs who see this as an extreme case of gerrymandering to create a Sindhi–dominated rated district and shrink the MQM's electoral base.[31]

In November 1994, when the military decided to wind up its 'Operation Clean-up' in Sindh, Bhutto was prompt in giving her approval. The military's withdrawal served her purposes because the MQM had been demanding its withdrawal from Karachi, and she could now confront the MQM by saying she had acceded to their demand. In return, the military encouraged the civilian government in Sindh to organize a paramilitary force.

But the PPP's action did not show any conciliation and pragmatism as the statements emanating from its parties termed Altaf Hussain as terrorist and denied any negotiation mechanism to break the dead lock.

There was cynical pessimism and alienation among the majority of Muhajirs as the demand for a separate Muhajir province had gained increasing currency. Aversion to state machinery and law were new under currents among the average Muhajirs.

The situation in Karachi took a very violent turn in early December 1994 when the army was withdrawn and it was replaced by paramilitary

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[31]   Farhat Haq, 'Rise of the MQM in Pakistan' *Asian Survey*, vol. XXXV No. 11, November 1995, p. 1002.

troops and police. The hostility between the MQM and the establishment deepened as a result of alleged extra-judicial killings of MQM members by the security forces. Since July 1995 to January 1996, as many as 70 police encounters have taken place in the city in which over 120 'terrorists' have been killed of these, 11 encounters took place in January 1996, resulting in the death of 23 MQM activists or sympathizers [32].

Human rights groups accused government forces, particularly the paramilitary rangers and the police, of endemic civil rights violations against suspected members and supporters of the MQM, including indiscriminate house-to-house searches in targeted areas, random firing in riot-torn neighborhoods, arbitrary arrests and detentions, tortures, custodial deaths, and extrajudicial executions[33]. So the violence became chronic and regular feature in urban Sindh.

Muhajirs reacted to violence perpetrated by the state of taking on the security agencies. The security forces were confronted with face-to-face clashes with MQM supporters in a type of civil war. In early June 1995, Karachi saw the first time use of car-bombs outside the provincial assembly building and a military post, underlining the inability of civil and military authorities to curb the violence. The use of rocket launchers against security forces and state installations became common.

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[32] *The Herald,* Feb 1996, p. 70.
[33] Human Rights Watch World Report, Washington D.C, 1997, p. 167.

In 1995 on average, 10 to 20 died daily as a result of terrorist activity, and in the past two years, over 6,000 have died in terrorist related acts, including about 200 security services personnel [34].

On July 11, 1995, the Government and the MQM entered into negotiations in Islamabad. With both sides bent on settling political scores, however, the talks appeared to deadlock from the start. Karachi, in the meantime, continued its slide towards rarely, with more than 200 deaths from torture, snipper fire and police sharp shooters in the month of July.

The so-called "kalashinikov culture' – greater availability of guns, increase in drug trafficking, kidnapping, robberies, extortion's- were all reflective of a weakening governmental structure that could no longer maintain public order. Karachi became ungovernable and it appeared that the Sindh government lost its writ over the provincial capital.

At the political level, the erosion of state power is evident in the demands made by hard-line MQM leaders for a separate province or an independent state's manifestation at all forms- security, judiciary, bureaucracy and parliament was looked with contempts by the Muhajir community. Their moderate elements are giving way to militant influence and they hold the state's institution responsible for their misery, ordeal and

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[34]   Saaeed Shafqat 'Pakistan under Benazir Bhutto', *Asian Survey*, vol. XXXVI, No. 7 July 1996, p. 671.

sufferings. The alienation of the Muhajirs has been allowed to worsen to a level that it has exploded into almost an armed insurgency. Younger generation of Muhajirs have been brought up in different circumstances as they have been termed as 'terrorists' and 'unpatriotic' and most of the time state acted with barbarism and impunity with them.

The militancy and organisation of the MQM has helped them to regroup and retaliate; so the younger generation of the MQM gained the political maturity with the party and their hopes and dreams were merged with the MQM. They regarded the future of the MQM as their own future. Even though MQM had so many features of fascist party since it had been operating torture cells and was using terrorist methods to suppress dissent outside and within its own rank and file but held its own due to persecutionary policies of the Federal Government. Muhajirs rallied around the MQM as it felt identity and fear of the party as their own and which were threatened due to state's violence and genocide against the Muhajirs.

The confrontationist character of PPP under Benazir Bhutto made the situation in Karachi very tense. The strike call after every incident devastated the civil life in Karachi. Whenever Altaf Hussain issued a strike call; the response was overwhelming and the city of Karachi and other urban centres of Sindh came to standstill. 'The frequent armed clashes and work stoppages in Karachi have caused massive damage to the

infrastructure of that city and to the economy of Pakistan. Karachi chamber of commerce and industry (KCCI) revealed that a working day lost by strike in Karachi costs 1-3 billion rupees ($ 38 million), and in 1995 a total of 34 working days were lost as a result of strikes called by the MQM[35]. The stand off between the Government and the MQM led to Karachi a "bleeding wound of Pakistan".

Benazir went on the offensive by calling the MQM unpatriotic and emphatically saying that the MQM was a terrorist organization, that, its leadership had been charged with the criminal acts by earlier government. She revealed that it must surrender weapons and accept judicial proceedings in the courts before any political dialogue might be initiated[36].

The strategy to contain and suppress the MQM could not yield desired results as it created further bitterness and animosity. The negative policy of Islamabad further found when the security forces allegedly killed the cousin and nephew of the MQM leader, Altaf Husain. The MQM hit back and sought to internationalize the issue by appealing to the Human Rights Commission and the United Nations.

The law and order situation had steadily deteriorated in all parts of the country. There was a rising strength of militant religious and sectarian

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[35] Moonis Ahmar 'Ethnicity and State Power in Pakistan' Karachi Crisis, *Asian Survey*, vol. XXXVI No. 10, October 1996, p. 1035.

[36] Saeed Shafaqat, n. 34, p. 672.

groups, which contributed to worst incidents of sectarian violence of the country. So when the decision on dismissal of Benazir Bhutto's Government came on charges of corruption, incompetence and lawlessness in November 1996, it did not evoke much protest and surprise. It seemed that the history is repeating itself with the monotonous regularity.

ELECTION OF 1997 AND MQM

The new election to the national and provincial assemblies were held on February 6, 1997. This was the fifth general election in 12 years and it did not evoke much popular enthusiasm. The PPP was wiped out everywhere except in Sindh, of the 207 Muslim seats in the National Assembly it won only 19, all except one from Sindh. The PPP votes fell by almost 10 percent. The PML (N) percentage of votes remained almost the same and it won with a massive parliamentary majority.

In the provincial assemblies, the PPP won 36 out of 109 seats in Sindh, one out 40 in Baluchistan, 4 out of 83 in NWFP and 3 out of 248 in Punjab. The party appeared to have lost its national character and became a regional political entity based in Sindh, Bhutto's home province[37]. The MQM retained its base in Sindh despite the bloody repression by the state for more than 3 years. MQM got 28 seats in the Sindh provincial assembly and formed the coalition government with the PML (N).

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[37]   Anwar A. Sayed 'Pakistan in 1997' *Asian Survey,* vol. XXXVIII. No. 2, Feb 1998, p.112.

When Nawaz Sharif won an unprecedented two-third majority in the National Assembly, there was great hope all around about creation of national consensus and less volatile social fabric. Nawaz Sharif put his first foot in the right direction, when the parliament passed constitutional amendments (The 13th and 14th) which removed the power of the president to dismiss the Government at his discretion and banned defections from political parties, two of the most frequently used methods of bringing down previous governments. These measures, which enjoyed opposition's support, were aimed at enhancing political stability at the national level. As a result, the government has greater power than any of its predecessors since the return of formal democracy in 1988.

But politically motivated violence remained a problem in Karachi, despite the presence of MQM within the ruling coalition in Sindh province. For much of the year, violence among rival MQM factions Altaf and Haqiqi continued in waves. The fighting intensified in June, resulting in more than 171 persons killed. Some of the attacks were believed to have been carried out either with police participation or acquiescence. Affected neighbourhoods were under the control of gunmen. The violence was exacerbated by the creation of a new MQM faction, the Basic Association of Citizens of Karachi (BACK), headed by a former bodyguard of the self-exiled MQM leader Altaf Hussein. The BACK was implicated in the torture

killings of members of the other two MQM factions. The violence slowed somewhat after the Sindh police increased their presence in Karachi in late June, and paramilitary rangers were allowed to enter houses without warrants to make arrests. By year's end, more than 1,000 persons had been killed in politically related violence.[38]

Karachi's small-time goons have transmuted into a formidable terrorist force because of the inefficiency of the law-enforcing agencies, aggravated by political interference and short-sighted policies of successive governments[39]. Scores of innocent people fell victims to the sectarian fanaticism of well-armed militant organizations. No initiative was taken by the government to curb the rising violence and bloodshed. Government failure was also visible in its inability in curbing the ethnic violence particularly in Karachi.

The Nawaz Sharif government's response was to engage the MQM in dialogue, so that its political frustration did not fuel the fires of Karachi's violence. To some extent this strategy worked. The various rounds of talks held between the two parties helped hold Karachi's fragile peace.

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[38]   U.S. Department of State Human Rights Report-Pakistan' Washington D.C., 1998, p. 4
[39]   The News, 28 January, 1998.

But, the partnership between the MQM and the PML was much more an opportunistic alliance which were formed to keep PPP out from forming a provincial Government in Sindh. Neither party could however overcome mutual suspicions, every attempt to patch up the alliance broke down, partly because the Sharif government was unable to deliver on the promises it had made, and partly because the violence made all negotiations useless.[40]

The PML-MQM accord of February 1997 needed implementation for having proper, fair mechanism to solve some grievances of Muhajirs. It was a promise to abolish the so-called no-go areas, to institute high level investigation of extra-judicial killings and to release MQM activists from custody. For the Government, it was not at all order but various factors like vicious cycle of violence, continuing numerous extra-judicial killings by the rangers and police and vindictive and distrustful actions of the intelligence agencies made the relationship tenuous and delicate.

The security and intelligence agencies were generally distrustful of the MQM and reluctant to share sensitive information with MQM ministers in the Sindh cabinet. The coalition went on, but it did not work as a team and was not able to provide effective

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[40]   Maya Chadha n.28. p. 112.

governance. Karachi, once the commercial and industrial capital of Pakistan turned to be a ruined city and a community.[41]

The fragile Sindh governing coalition between the ruling PML and the MQM-Altaf finally collapsed in August 1998 but the MQM (A) did not bring down the minority government of Sindh PML Chief Minister Liaqat Jatoi. The MQM was angered by the Government's inaction in clearing the 'no-go areas' occupied by the rival MQM-Haqiqi faction, where MQM-Altaf organizers were barred from entry. The MQM (A) also complained that paramilitary ranger and police operations were directed primarily against them, rather than their rivals. The MQM (A) accused security force of killings and torturing scores of its workers. Overall, police and security forces remained free from legal and judicial restraint.

On October 30, the Prime Minister invoked article 232 of the constitution to suspend the Sindh Assembly and impose Governor's Rule in the province after the October 17 killings of former Sindh governor Hakim Mohammad Sayeed. The Government took these steps to combat the growing violence in Karachi.

But, this was a reflection of weakness and desperation, not of strength. Ethnic compacts were merely expedient measures which

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[41]   Anwar A. Sayed n. 37, p. 113.

Pakistan's elected leaders had no intention of institutionalizing as permanent mechanisms for negotiated settlement. Infact, ethnic communities were easy targets for intimidation and exclusion.

So, the violence against the MQM continued. During the first week after the imposition of Governor's Rule in Sindh on October 30, the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) received nearly 100 complaints of illegal arrests, harassment of women by police and security forces, and torture in custody. Most of those detained after the imposition of Governor's Rule were MQM (A) members of their relatives.[42]

On November 20 1998, Nawaz Sharif announced the establishment of military courts in Karachi, which had been under Governor's Rule since October 30. These courts were to try cases involving heinous acts and terrorism. They were intended to bring swifter justice to the city, which had been plagued by terrorism, violence and a general breakdown in law and order.[43] Military courts began operating on December 6. By December 20, six persons had been convicted and sentenced to death, and four others had been sentenced to rigorous imprisonment.

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[42]   US Department of State Human Rights Report-Pakistan, Washington D.C., 1998 pp. 6.
[43]   *Nation*, 12 January 1999.

The ethnic cauldron in Sindh continued to be grim in 1999. Invoking of article 245 to establish military courts brought the memory of operation Clean Up to Muhajirs in Sindh. For Muhajir, these steps were undoubtedly aimed at intensifying the sustained crackdown and persecution against the MQM and Muhajirs.

Fake encounters and extra-judicial killings continued in 1999 and the state resorted to every means to terrorize Muhajirs. The Anti-terrorism court continued to award death sentences and therefore, Karachi was becoming the centre stage for urban warfare and sophisticated bombings.

The Sindh Assembly unanimously passed on July 20, 1999 a resolution condemning the extra-judicial killings in Karachi and demanded of the provincial government to desist from such inhuman actions.[44] So, violence and prosecution in Sindh remained endemic and the Muhajirs remained a community to be targetted by the security agencies. Violence, anarchy, strike, shootout became the regular features of urban Sindh and identities continued to be forged with ethnicities, common history and common suffering.

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[44]   *The News* (Karachi), 21 July 1990.

CHAPTER – V
CONCLUSIONS

CONCLUSIONS

The term 'Ethnicity' and 'ethnic conflicts' occupy a special place in the present political scenario. Ethnicity generally emanates out of contact between distinctively and culturally different ethnic groups.

In Pakistan, ethnic conflicts remained a major threat for political and social stability. There are various ethnic groups which remained at odds with each other and cycle of violence and conflicts made the nation subject to serious crisis. The regional assertions based on ethnic identities were made by different groups from time to time. The dominance of one particular ethnic group like Punjabi in the military and bureaucratic structure created relative deprivation and hostilities in other groups.

The centralization policies and inability to adopt the flexible federal framework led to the asymmetry and inequality in the power structure in Pakistan. The military takeover made the structural gap more permanent in the power sharing which worsened the ethnic conflicts.

In Sindh, government policies have resulted in a deep sense of alienation among the Sindhis, who have felt discriminated against and wronged since independence. The creation of Karachi as a separate administrative jurisdiction, colonization of land through the buildings of barrages which was allotted to senior civil and military bureaucrats and non-Sindhis,

abolition of Sindhi language as a medium of instruction in educational institution were the factors which led to the rise of deprivations and alienations among the Sindhis. The rapidly changing demographics of the urban areas of the province have made native Sindhis a minority in Sindh's two largest cities. It disturbed the ethnic equilibrium of Sindh and led to Sindh unrest.

The representation of the Sindhis in the armed forces and bureaucracy was non-existent and it led to the feeling of deprivation and being subordinated. The language policy further alienated them. The execution of Sindhi prime minister Bhutto and discriminatory policies of the military regime regarding terminating thousands of Sindhi from government service and public sector enterprises further antagonized the Sindhis, and ethnic aspirations and ethno-nationalism grew among the group.

The Sindhi ethno-nationalist assertions took very intense and violent turn in the decade of eighties as various factions within ethno-nationalism manifested strong ethnic sentiments in the movement for the restoration of democracy (MRD) in the summer of 1983. The ten years of military rule of Zia-ul-Haq brought repression and further subordination of Sindhis.

The chapter three has dealt in detail how Sindhi ethno-nationalism proliferated in three directions in the 1980s. First, the 'separatists' which were led by G.M. Syed, who advocated secession from the union and the

formation of an independent Sindhudesh. Secondly, 'the autonomists', including the Sindh Awami Tehrik of Rasul Baksh Palejo and the Sindhi-Baluch-Pakhtun front of Mumtaz Bhutto, advocated significant devolution of authority to Sindh province. Thirdly, the 'gradualist' led by the mainstream Pakistan People's Party (PPP) under the nominal control of Benazir Bhutto, argued that the rights of Sindhi's could only be secured through an end to martial law and restoration of the 1973 Constitution.

Though different in strategies and objectives, these three strands played crucial role in mobilizing and organizing the Sindhi discontent which reflected in the movement for the restoration of democracy (MRD) in 1983 and 1986. The movements which were launched at the national level remained primarily confined to Sindh province. The angry mobs attacked all the symbols of the central government offices; courts, colleges, post-offices, railway station etc. There was also one feature which had special character within the movement and that was the participation of rural Sindh in a huge way. The Sindh Awami Tehreek, representing ideologically very diverse social groups like peasants, workers, teachers, students played important role in organizing the movements in the medium sized rural town.

So, the movement got a very popular character as the government took repressive measures to quell the uprising in all parts of Sindh. It took two divisions of Pakistan army, hundred deaths and thousand arrests to bring

peace in the various parts of Sindh. But it brought further impetus to Sindhi ethnic mobilization as the state repressive machinery mainly consisted of Punjabi-dominated army.

In the later half of the decade of eighties, Sindhi nationalism grew weak due to co-option of some landed gentry in the central and provincial legislatures in 1985 and government policies of repression and divide and rule.

Therefore, there started the search to redefine Sindhi identity, as the Sindhi felt that they needed broader social class which can be part of the their movements in Sindh. Their alignment with Muhajir on the basis of 'roots' gave Sindhi wider and flexible base, and also new opportunities to complement each other in facing the complex problem of Sindh.

The death of Zia led to the emergence of new configuration in Sindh. The announcement of election in 1988 brought competitive politics and opportunism to the fore. The cooperative arrangement which was worked out between Muhajirs and Sindhis gave way to confrontational and rhetorical politics as both tried to generate fear and insecurity in the minds of the people.

The election saw the defeat of Sindhi nationalists, as Sindhi nationalists alliance could not win even a single seat in the election of 1988. As has been seen in the previous chapter, various factors led to the decline of Sindhi ethno-nationalism. The co-option of various issues and programmes of

Sindhi nationalists in the Pakistan People Party's agendas, the martyr image of Z.A. Bhutto and confused and disorganized position of Sindhi nationalists made Pakistan People's Party (PPP) a better alternative for the Sindhis to be voted for. Apart from this, the PPP organizational base all over the country gave it advantage to form the government at the centre and therefore rectify some of the imbalances which took place in terms of federal structure and overcentralization.

If the Sindhi ethno nationalism declined in the later part of eighties, there emerged the Muhajir assertions in the late eighties and the whole decade of nineties.

Muhajirs, an Urdu-speaking 'salariat' was forefront in the creation of Pakistan. For the first two decades, Muhajirs had vigorously stressed on nation-building as they identified themselves with Islam, Urdu and Pakistan. Muhajir leadership took over the bureaucracy under the guidance of Jinnah and Liaquat as they emerged as 'ruling salariat' with Punjabi ethnic groups.

But with the death of Liaquat Ali Khan, Muhajirs could not get the leader of the same stature, and once non-Muhajir military took over, there began the drift in the power structure.

Muhajirs felt marginalized after 1971 as there increased inter-ethnic competition for power and resources. The language bill and quota policy of Z.A. Bhutto regime further antagonized the Muhajirs. The deepening sense

of 'relative deprivation', the rapidly changing demographics of urban Sind and unresponsive political structure have all led to the rise of Muhajir ethnic identity.

The rise of the Muhajir Quami Movement (MQM) led to search for new alternative political action for the Muhajirs to combat the various inequalities and discrimination. It was radically different from traditional identification with a unified Pakistan and the ideology of Islam. The mobilization was along ethnic lines where 'Muhajir nationalism' and unity of Muhajirs under one leader and one party made it similar to other ethnic groups. Thus the MQM used both ethnic identity and linguistic affinity to rouse a popular support base among the Muhajirs.

It was an unique movement in the sense that the MQM represented an urban based movement which was very dynamic and powerful. It's constituency was mainly limited to urban Sindh group with no historical claim to the land they occupy. The Muhajir Quami Movement (MQM) was different from others, because there was generational shift in its leadership, and most of them were young. So, generally there was militancy and tone of aggressiveness in their approach and political action.

The Muhajir's assertion got a platform to air their set of grievances and aspirations. The MQM continued to maintain its popular support even if it

confronted the state. In the election results of 1988, 1990, 1993, 1997 the MQM managed to maintain a high level of legitimacy among the Muhajirs.

The federal government attempted many times to dismantle the organization of the MQM but it successfully weathered the hard times and proved its point about the vindictive and genocidal policies of government against Muhajirs.

The operation clean up, the splits in the MQM, the feud between the PPP's student wing, people's student Federation (PSF) and the APMSO all caused ethnic strife in Sindh. Thousands of people were killed in intra-ethnic and inter-ethnic violence. The confrontation between the administration and the MQM produced numerous casualties.

The role of state in dealing with ethnic problems did not remain impartial and evenhanded. The fake encounters, extra judicial killings, indiscriminate house to house searches, random fining in riot-torn neighborhood, arbitrary arrests and detention were the instruments which state used to suppress the political opponents which were mainly Muhajirs.

The ethnic strife in Sindh has taken a vicious cycle where various factors like unemployment, Kalashnikov Culture, increase in drug trafficking, charging demographics made violence endemic and ethnic identify a precious link to survive.

The MQM which started as a middle class movement confined to urban areas has been able to penetrate into almost entire Muhajir community. The deprivations and vindictive attitude of government, as we have discussed, led to the accretion of Muhajir identity and a search for fifth nationality. For Muhajir community, the change from integrity of Pakistan, Urdu, and Islam to search for fifth nationality was a major transformation. It also shows the weakness in the process of national integration. For a third world country like Pakistan, state-building has taken precedence over nation-building since the elite has not taken proper care of plural and multiple identities which are inalienable part of national ethos.

The dominance of state-building over nation-building created an official ideology' which was not shared by all the ethnic groups of Pakistan.

The scarce resources and underdeveloped economy have given ethnicity a base to manipulate and advance the interest of its group.

The solution to ethnic conflicts can only be founds through dialogue and discussions and not through the repressive measures, which can have disastrous consequences. For the long term peace, it is necessary that federal structure should be revamped. The domination of Punjabi has created fissures in the body-politik of Pakistan, so certain administrative mechanism be evolved which car take care of inequities and imbalances in the structural system. There was proposal under Zia regime suggested by Ansari

ommission which recommended that the federal system be abolished and replaced with one in which the current 21 administrative divisions would serve as newly constituted provinces. The rationale behind this argument was that such a structuring would dilute the perceived domination of Punjab and would lead to more balanced growth of federal politics.

Apart from that, what is needed is the growth of state structure which should be more tolerant and equal to various sections of the society. Ethnic conflicts car only be tamed with the negotiations, conciliations and better distribution of resources.

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