

Responsible for national disharmony politics essay



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In this study, an attempt has been made to identify the important problems, which have been responsible for national disharmony and have negative impacts on the society. While carrying out my research, I read lot of books and articles on ' National Integration', and found that this issue has not been looked into by academicians and researchers, wholesomely. One finds very few books by Pakistani writers on the subject in which they have tried to focus selectively on one or two issues and ignored other factors, which are shaking the very foundations of the state. While on other hand, in this study, the issue has been analysed in a wholesome manner and each and every thread that has impacted on the disharmonies in our society, has been discussed. Therefore, this study will be a stepping-stone, suggesting some concrete proposals, in order to achieve the objective of national integration. In the wake of the current situation prevailing in the country, where the nation is in despair and gradually loosing hope and optimism, the research is very significant to find out the way forward for coming out of the current crisis.

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This research effort is dedicated to all those people of Pakistan who are endeavouring to find answer to a basic question with reference to the national integration i. e. “ Why we are what we are and why we aren’t what we aren’t?”

NATIONAL INTEGRATION

ABSTRACT

Pakistan is a pluralistic though somewhat homogeneous society, having a variety of ethnic, linguistic and socio-cultural groups living in various provinces but having common religious, socio-political and historical background with common aspirations for the future. All they need is freedom, socio-economic justice, peace and prosperity. These goals can be achieved through national integration, but question to achieve national integration, remains unresolved. An effort has been made to address this question in present study.

Pakistan’s failure in national integration, to emerge as a nation-state, is due to political instability, vast economic disparities and exploitation of ethno-cultural diversities. In the 62 years history of Pakistan, we have experienced virtually a variety of internal strife, political chaos and disunity, ethnic and sectarian clashes, racial cleavages, secession and wars that ultimately resulted in disintegration of the country. Notwithstanding, the critical internal dynamics, the external forces sponsored by our archrival have also nurtured the disintegrating forces in the country. Though we have passed through the crisis, we still seem to be enshrined in the cobweb of problems resulting from a mixture of internal conflicts and external machinations. We have made

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substantial progress in many spheres, however, there is a dire need to examine the deteriorating integration fabric and take concrete measures to enhance the strength of the federation and foster national integration.

Pakistan's ideological base, geographical contiguity, pluralistic social structure and abundant resources call for sincere and visionary leadership for management of its development, which will expedite the process of national integration. The development of human capital, enhanced national spirit, sectarian tolerance and regard for ethnicity will gradually lead to fostering national and religious unity, making integration a viable option.

NATIONAL INTEGRATION

THEME

In the prevailing environments, inner fronts are more susceptible to intrusions and incursions than the outer, impinging upon the contours of National Security Strategy and, therefore, 'National Integration' forms its very foundation. Pakistan has variety of linguistic, ethnic, religious and socio-cultural groups, necessitating the need for unity and belonging together in a pluralistic participative system. Ever since its creation, Pakistan has been beleaguered with the formidable problems of national integration within the context of a "Nation State", that we proudly claim being one of the few existing in the world. It is an irony that within a long span of over six decades, successive political and military regimes have miserably failed to device a consensus amongst various communities to achieve the objective of National Integration.

The present study aims to identify the important problems, which have been responsible for national disharmony and the negative impacts. The study is a stepping-stone, suggesting some concrete proposals, in order to achieve the objective of national integration.

INTRODUCTION

National Integration remains a crucial issue in Pakistan. There are various forces, which accentuate divisive factors like geography and culture of our country. Religious fundamentalism is one such force while linguistic diversities constitute another. Despite a shared culture for a long period, regionalism has remained a major force, which generates tension because of inequitable development amongst different provinces/regions of the Country. The FATA/FANA and Baluchistan are the best examples in this case, where people have been deprived of economic, political and social justice. All the above forces and factors pose a serious challenge for Pakistan's integrity and unity. It is, therefore, necessary to make concerted efforts to strengthen the national integration.

The word " National Integration" in a federated state like Pakistan has complex meaning and scope. It is to build a " nation", integrating various groups into the national system[1]. It is broadly defined as the creation of a national political system, which supersedes or incorporates all the regional subsystems. More specifically national integration is incorporation of disparate ethnic or religious elements of the population into a unified society, providing equality of opportunity for all members of that society[2]. It is a process, whereby the people of a nation arrive at a consensus on basic

economic, political and social issues, which confront a nation state. However, national integration has remained Pakistan's Achilles Heel since its very birth. In the formative years, serious efforts were not made by political elite to weld plural-cultural social order to lay the foundation of national integration. The more shocking was the emergence of Bangladesh in 1971, as the problems of a plural society like Pakistan could not be sorted out over a span of two and a half decades. Even, post 1971 Pakistan, with logical and more cohesive borders, has been unable to resolve the problems arising from a variety of ethnic, regional and other divisive challenges.

Quaid-e-Azam had envisioned that Pakistan would be a state, where all citizens would enjoy equal rights irrespective of caste, creed, sect, or place of birth[3], but it could never become a reality. In a polarized and fragmented society like Pakistan, it is necessary to have the consent of all groups with regards to resolution of their genuine problems. This important aspect was never given a serious thought by political and military rulers. Despite all domestic odds, Pakistan has demonstrated genuine ability to survive as a viable ' Nation State'. Considering the prevailing circumstances, the process of national integration has gained more significance and importance than ever. There is a need of following a correct and pragmatic approach with dispassionate analysis of all the issues jeopardizing the process of national integration.

Statement of Problem. The task of national integration in a plural society like Pakistan is although arduous, yet it can be achieved by bringing in diverging forces together through a political system based on justice, equality and fair

play. In order to find out a viable solution for achieving this objective, the following important questions need to be addressed:-

Question 1. What are the disintegrating forces in Pakistan and how they can be brought together?

Question 2. What are the pillars of national integration and how they can be strengthened?

Question 3. What mechanism is needed to be devised to bring all the segments at par economically and politically?

Question 4. Where lays our survival as a nation?

These questions, if answered properly, can definitely come up with a viable solution for national integration in the Country.

Review of Literature

It has been noted that this issue of national importance has not been looked into by academicians and researchers in sufficient detail and one finds only few books by Pakistani writers on the subject of national integration. Asif Haroon in his book title “ Muhammad Bin Qasim to General Pervez Musharraf” published in 2004, provides genesis of nation making, which now forms part of the Pakistan[4]. It covers the kaleidoscope of Pakistan’s history linking it from the origin of Islam and its effects in the sub-continent. However, it does not address the problems being confronted by Pakistan today.

Rounaq Jahan in her book “ Pakistan: Failure in National Integration” covers the period upto late sixties[5]. Although, the book is not written in the contemporary environments, nevertheless, one can still draw useful lessons as how the process of national integration can be strengthened. Rounaq Jahan has carried out an analysis of political-make up of the Country introduced by Ayub Khan, which could not contribute positively for nation building and cohesion. The book draws the linkage of political and economic transformation on the national make-up of the Bengalis vis-à-vis West Wing populace and reveals many important issues, which led to the emergence of Bangladesh in 1971. The qualitative analysis through lot of tabulated facts, supports author’s arguments.

“ Pakistan’s Security and National Integration” by Ikram Azam is an attempt to find out the answers for the polarization and confrontation in the society since its creation. The author’s view point treating “ Punjab” as one of the pillars of Pakistan, in line with ‘ Islamic Ideology’, ‘ Democracy’ and ‘ Armed Forces’, does not seem pragmatic and is illogical[6]. Since the book has been written in the environments of 70s during post East Pakistan debacle, therefore, it does not include the current contemporary challenges to the national integration.

Qadeeruddin Ahmed’s book “ Pakistan: Facts and Fallacies”, is the reflections of his thoughts over the historical make-up of Pakistan. In this book, the author has tried to express certain facts in the light of the interpretation as he sees them and discount certain publicised fallacies concerning the creation of Pakistan[7]. His ideas about the very basis for creation of Pakistan (Two Nation Theory) are thought provoking[8]. His concept of ‘

Integration' as given in Chapter X of the book, outlines philosophical contours of the subject but are short of the contemporary challenges that we face today as a nation[9].

M. Nazrul Islam's book "Pakistan: A Study in National Integration", is case study in national integration for Pakistan and Malaysia. The author has analysed demographic, economic and political architecture of the two countries, which impinge upon enhancing national integration and aggravate disintegrative tendencies. The qualitative analysis through lot of tabulated facts, supports author's arguments. However, his analysis is mostly confined to finding reasons for dismemberment of Pakistan because of demographic, economic and political fallouts on national integration. One has to read in between the line to find semblance to our present day challenges to national integration, which were so during 60s and 70s.[10]

"Nationalism, Regionalism and Philosophy of National Integration" by N. Malla was compiled on the eve of 50th year of India's independence. Since I found few interesting semblances of Indian integration challenges to those of Pakistan, therefore, I read this book. The book is the compilation of various articles by different Indian scholars on the subject of National Integration. It highlights the contours of the pluralistic society of India, which requires a very burdensome intellectual discourse to find common grounds for co-existence and continue being a Nation. However, despite semblance of challenges that it has with Pakistan, one has to draw own conclusions to relate these to our National Integration mosaic.[11]

During middle of 1962, Jolly Mohan Kaul compiled the book “ Problems of National Integration” in the Indian perspective. The book adequately investigates the problems like British legacy, communalism, caste system, regionalism and tribal disharmonies, which were those time tactical challenges of India of 1950s and 60s[12]. In this book again, I found few interesting semblances of Indian integration challenges to those of Pakistan, therefore, I read this book. However, despite these semblances, one has to draw own conclusions to relate these to our National Integration mosaic.

“ Ethnic Insurgency and National Integration” by Mahfuzul Haque (Bangladesh) is based on the author’s doctoral thesis on the subject. Author has carried out the analysis of various ethnic movements in South Asia, particularly in India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. For me, its Chapter 2 was of particular interest clearing lot of my doubts about academic explanation of theoretical concept related to “ ethnicity”. However, being only ‘ ethnic insurgency’ centric, the book is short of all the answers for my inquiries to the present days challenges of the Pakistan for national integration.[13]

“ National Integration; Its Meaning and Relevance” by M. Rafiq Khan” is the compiled report of the Indian National Seminar on the “ Meaning and Relevance of National Integration”, held in Assam from 25-28 February 1970. Focus of articles is on concept of nationhood, problems associated with secularism, linguistic issues, untouchable, caste system, regional imbalances and nature and pattern of politics. At best, the book is good enough for preparing a sound base for academic understanding of various issue of national integration.[14]

Saima Qayyum Qureshi, in her article “ Ethnicity and National Integration in Pakistan”, published in Monthly Current Affair Digest, September 2003 issue, has basically focused on the ethnicity with reference to Pakistan’s Case Study[15]. Nevertheless, her recommendations to overcome the ethnicity are thought provoking.

Plamen Tonchev in his article “ Pakistan at Fifty-Five: From Jinnah to Musharraf,” published in European Institute for Asian Studies has analysed the ideological roots of the Country. He has given some interesting conclusions regarding place of Islam in ideological make up of Pakistan with reference to more moderate vision of Quaid-e-Azam[16].

Prof. Kh Zahid Parwaiz, in his article, “ Ethnicity and Problems of Integration in Pakistan”, published in Monthly Current Affair Digest, July 2004 issue, has analysed the genesis of ethnicity in Pakistan, with special reference to sectarian ethnicity[17]. However, his analysis has stopped short of any suggested way forward for Pakistan.

Significance of Study. The literature review indicates that important forces, which are responsible for disunity and disharmony, have not been studied seriously. Authors have tried to focus on one or two issues and ignored totally those factors, which are shaking the very foundation of the State. The period of the present study as well as focus has not attracted the attention of any researcher. Therefore, the importance of present study lies in the fact that it is going to address those factors, which if cured with care and caution, can result in bringing national integration. The study will also fill in gap and prove a stepping stone for further research on the issue.

Methodology. The descriptive and an analytical method have been adopted to study the issue of national integration. Qualitative Method has also been followed where appropriate. Findings of the already published literature like books, research articles, official documents and newspapers, form the main stay of the Study.

Organization of Study

This study has been compiled in four chapters. Chapter 1 deals with the conceptual framework of national integration, in which academic aspects of the subject have been discussed. ' Nation' and ' Integration' have been defined while discussing various contours of national integration. Some of the determinants have also been listed, which have a direct bearing on the inculcation of national integration in a nation.

In Chapter - 2, national integration mosaic of Pakistan has been discussed. An historical analysis of Pakistan's formative years has been carried out, which should have been a period of nation building and consolidation, but turned out to be a traumatic experience in political failures and nation making. While carrying out analysis of national integration mosaic of Pakistan, all the ' pull' and ' push' forces, responsible for the current disharmonies of Pakistan, to include religious, social, ethnic, regional, lingual, political, constitutional and economic factors, have been discussed. The analysis identifies the unifying factors and the fault lines that have created opportunities and problems of national integration for Pakistan through its brief history. It highlights how Islam; the basis of Pakistan's Ideology, and

various other social, cultural, political and economic aspects, have factored into national integration.

Chapter - 3 discusses the present irritants to national integration of Pakistan.

Main discussion points of this chapter are current political structure, FATA/Swat situation, Baluchistan issue, current economic turmoil, present state of the institutions, law and order situation, judicial crisis, religious militancy, state of current education system and inter provincial issues.

Chapter - 4 is a proposed ' way forward'. For the purpose of clarity, this chapter has been divided in four sub parts in which ideological issues, political issues, governance issues and other miscellaneous issues have been discussed separately. The discussion sets out a way ahead to meet the challenges, convert them into opportunities and thus achieve national integration, to put Pakistan on the road to peace and prosperity and help it achieve the long-cherished goal of coherence, cohesion and unity.

CHAPTER - 1

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK - NATIONAL INTEGRATION

Nation and National Integration

Nation. A nation is generally defined as a community knit together by common experience over reasonably long past, shaping a common religion, culture and tradition[18]. However, different societies have defined it differently according to their own environment. The word " Nation" comes from a Latin expression " Natio", meaning birth or race[19]. It implies, " A body of persons having a common origin and language: possessing a

distinctive culture and social way of life.”[20]As per Qadeeruddin Ahmed, common (i) territory (ii) history (iii) language (iv) colour and race (v) religion and culture (vi) danger and hazards (vii) benefits and expectations of benefit, create and sustain the sentiments of nations.[21]The Islamic concept of nation defines it as Ummah;[22]regardless of colour, caste, creed and race, the Believers (Muslims) are one community. Unlike the concept of nation state, Islamic Ummah has no loyalty towards territorial or geographical divisions. While Pakistani concept defines nation as “ Millat”[23]; a group of people who have a common attitude towards life and feel that they have a common destiny.

Integration. The word in its literal sense means fitting together parts to make one whole or incorporation of disparate ethnic or religious elements of the population into a unified society, providing equality of opportunity for all members of that society[24]. A former professor of Kalyani University, Prof. Chakraborty, during a Seminar on National Integration held at Ali Garh Muslim University, pointed out that, “ In the language of functional politics, the term ‘ national integration’ means cohesion but not fusion, unity but not uniformity, reconciliation but not merger, accommodation but not elimination, assimilation but not extinction, synthesis but not non-existence, solidarity but not regimentation of the many segments of the people in a territorial sovereignty”[25]. It is also usually employed in figurative sense in relation to social systems. In its figurative sense, The ‘ International encyclopaedia of Social Sciences’ justifies it to be an assumption that societies are self-sufficient entities with compatible components of social, cultural political and economic structures, held together by the cementing

force of loyalty[26]. Most of the third world countries, old and new, in their striving to become a modern nation, are faced with the task of nation building, because in many cases they have the form but not the substance of nationhood[27].

Keeping in view the definition, “ Integration” can be categorized in two ways[28]:-

Functional Integration. It is a much simpler phenomenon because it depends on needs, technology, efficiency and availability of resources. If the required quantities are inadequate, the functional quality suffers and the deficiency may cause dissatisfaction. An example of such discontent was East Pakistan and opposite example is prospering Western countries.

Psychological Integration. It is more complex and vital as compared to functional integration. It is controlled only by the deepest loyalties, emotional bonds and spiritual cause; because when we speak of integrated societies we mean that their functional and psychological parts conform to the identity or spirit of a society. Common belief and dominant perspective of life are the psychological aspects of such integration. German concept of racial superiority during Nazi regime is an example of psychological integration in modern time.

Contours of National Integration

Nationalism Vs National Integration. According to Peter Marris, nationalism is “ the process whereby a group or community that shares or at least is convinced that it shares, a common history, culture, language and territory is

persuaded to assert its own affairs, usually through the creation of an independent state.”[29]Nationalism, in modern history, is movement in which the nation-state is regarded as paramount for the realization of social, economic, and cultural aspirations of a people[30]. The concept of nationalism is related to the specific environment (religious, social, cultural etc) in which national self-assertion of group of people merges. Although nationalism is the most successful political ideology in human history, its achievement in getting the world’s entire land surface divided between nation-states has led to considerable problems in integrating the ethnic and cultural minorities within these states. Nationalist theories are still controversial, while the process and frequent failures of national integration are issues of central importance in the contemporary world[31]. The process of national integration, on other hand, holds a system together. National Integration is not only a perpetually on going process, it is multi-dimensional and many directional. Its variables input cover all important sectoral avenues i. e. socio-cultural, politico-economic and religio-ideological[32].

Strategies for National Integrations. Ethnic groups do not necessarily threaten the national integration in a state. These ethnic groups can live without any conflict until and unless they are triggered to do so. Only when they entered in to struggle of power, they come to conflict with each other[33]. The integration process requires certain strategies for achievement. Weiner suggested two public policy strategies for achieving national integration: the ‘ Assimilation Process’, which eliminates the distinctive cultural traits of minorities and submerges them into a national culture, and the “ Unity-in-

diversity” process, which attempts to establish national loyalties without eliminating the subordinate cultures[34].

Ethnicity.[35]A school of thought delineates ethnic identities that are natural growth in a society. They do create difficulties but with stable and balanced functioning of a political system, they are assimilated in the mainstream of the society. Keeping in view the assimilation process, some social scientists believe that when ethnic identities are assimilated, they play a constructive role in the society. The most powerful states could not bridle the functioning of ethnic identities.

Determinants of National Integration

National Objective. National goals are determined from time to time depending upon the national needs. Whereas national interests define the basic nonnegotiable needs of a nation, national objectives spell out what a country is trying to do to maintain those national interests. National objectives are the specific Ends that a nation seeks in order to advance, support or defend its national interests.[36]

Ideology. Ideology means the science or study of ideas. In general sense it refers to the specific manner in which a group of persons thinks[37]. The group may have a set of beliefs, whether abstract or in the form of traditions, religion or philosophy. Nationalism can develop into a uniting and sufficiently aggressive force, only if the requisite emotional and ideological base exists; but ordinarily, this sentiment takes centuries to mature.[38]

Religion. Religion is one of the strongest bonds in an ideological state and an essential element of national integration being a sanction of unity. It provides an additional source of pride to the nation and affects national character and habits. In Islam, the loyalty of the Muslims to one another has been institutionalized by the concept of Ummah.[39]The classic Islamic scholar Ibn Khaldun defined three pillars on which the Islamic state should be erected: (i) group feeling (asabiyah), (ii) a ruling structure with leaders, and (iii) a large community that is based on the common religion (ummah). There is no mention of ' ethnic groups', territory, or boundaries.[40]

Language. Language as a hall-mark of any group of people, underscores the most valuable possession for dealing with changes in man's environment. Language is also a manifestation of culture and tradition. It is the means of communication and takes ages to develop. Hence, it serves as one of the strongest bonds. Language is also one of the most enduring artefacts of a people's culture, and unless people are forced by any system of dominance or conquest, their language can always determine the people's social physics and history.[Share this: Facebook Twitter Reddit LinkedIn WhatsApp