

Challenges of Diversity and Democratic Opportunities for Pakistani Federalism[†]

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First a word of acknowledgement. I am most grateful to Mr. Zafarullah Khan, Executive Director, Centre for Civic Education Pakistan, Islamabad, and Dr. Syed Jaffar Ahmed, the coordinator of the present workshop, for having asked me to present the key note address at this august gathering. As a Pakistani, I found the topic extremely interesting and challenging. Especially because Pakistan it self is organically linked to the end-result of the phenomenon of deep diversity, not only when it was born in 1947 but also when it was dismembered in 1971. Yet, inextricably though, Pakistan does not figure in the list of participants on the 'Diversity and Unity in Federal Countries' theme at the international level.¹ In tandem only three or four Muslims figure in the list although this problem plagues not marginally, but substantially most of the OIC Muslim countries (e.g., Indonesia, Malaysia, Iraq, Turkey, Egypt, Sudan, Somalia, Nigeria, and many others), besides Pakistan. And that indicates our dismal measure of interest and concern with problems that have a significant bearing on the politics, administration and overall development of a large segment of the Muslim states including Pakistan.

The inherent tension between diversity and unity is not something peculiar or particular to Pakistan, though indeed, it has posed a traumatic problem to several federal polities in the world in recent decades. The Soviet Union ended up in disintegration in 1991, washing its hand off its dissident border states and getting itself shrunk to head the FIS. Czechoslovakia got bifurcated and ended up in two states. Former Yugoslavia descended into an orgy of a long drawn-out civil war

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¹ See Rufak Chattopadhyay and Abigail Ostient Karos (eds.), *Dialogues on Diversity and Unity in Federal Countries* (Canada: Forum of Federations and International Association of Centers for Federal Studies, 2008).

between three claimants and majoritarian identities in their respective regions, ending up finally in three states, according to the Dayton Accord, in 1995. The residue Serbian Republic was subsequently confronted with the Albanian-oriented Kosovan problem in its western region, with Kosovo declaring its independence unilaterally but with UN blessings, three years ago. The Caucasian problem haunts the Soviet Union as an unending nightmare for the past seventeen years, with even Moscow being within the stretch of the Caucasian rebels' outreach, even to this day. India has, in large part, addressed the diversity by crafting 22 states in the 1960s, and 28 states and four Union territories in 2000s out of the original eight provinces and a conglomeration of some 500 princely states and principalities, but still, besides the Telangana separatist movement in Andhara Pradesh, the ongoing anarchic Maoist movement and the separatist splinter groups in Assam claim large swathes of territories which are virtually beyond New Delhi's writ.

Not to speak of federal politics, even the so-called unitary states have not been altogether bereft of this tension. Cyprus presents a classical example of a 20% (Turkish) minority (in Northern Cyprus) holding itself against the Cypriot majority and crystallizing the Green Line between the two combatant components for the past thirty-eight years, and that with no viable solution in sight, despite continuous UN and international efforts. Spain is rocked off and on by a separatist Basque movement.

Likewise, several of the OIC Muslim states are as well plagued by this problem – the failure to balance unity with diversity. Indonesia, the largest Muslim state, had to cede willy nilly the Christian-dominated Aceh region under UN pressure some years ago. Malaysia, though demographically a nominal Muslim country, faces the problem of some 40% Chinese and 6% Indian minorities, with the Indian component having become exceedingly activist, vocal and demanding in recent years with their litany of grievances. Iraq and Turkey are beset with the endemic Kurdish problem, and Lebanon, albeit having a nominally democratic structure, is still sharply divided into three identities. Tribalism rules the roost in Libya, and sectarian diversity is becoming articulate, activist and confrontationist in some other Arab countries.

Although the unity-diversity tension is a global phenomena, nibbling at a large number of polities all over the world, Pakistan should have been more concerned in resolving the challenge of this tension, and the fall out of the outworking of diversity – especially for the reasons given below.

At its best, I feel, the present paper may principally serve as a backgrounder, seeking to put into sharp focus how disastrously

consequential is the dismal failure to balance unity with diversity. Being a student of history, I will attempt to dilate upon the historical dimension in the first three sections. And that in the firm hope that we do learn from history since those who do not heed or learn from history are bound to repeat the mistakes of the past, as George Santayana has said.

United India

As noted above, Pakistan is the end-product of the phenomena of deep diversity in colonial India during the last seven decades of the Raj. It came about because of the monumental failure of the dominant Congress leadership in undivided India to meet the challenges of diversity during the freedom movement. For some thirteen years beginning with 1927, the acerbic issue on the constitutional plane was Muslim federalism vs Congress 'unitarianism' or a highly centralized state. The Nehru Report (1928), which presented the Congress' blue print for the future Indian dispensation argued for an almost unitary state, which was ingeniously flaunted as a federal one – a federal one but only in name. The Muslim leaders presented several formulae to get a viable and workable federation for the entire subcontinent established on the ground, but to no avail. In particular mention may be made of the schemes put forward by Muhammad Iqbal and Mohammad Ali Jinnah.

In adumbrating a consolidated North Western Muslim majority state in his Allahabad (1930) address, Iqbal, as he put it, was seeking to overcome or nullify the diversity in India's body politic, represented by the Muslim penchant for a distinct identity and individuality, and that in a bid to offer a democratic solution. He sought to salvage 'the life of Islam as a cultural force in the country', the major thrust and source of diversity, by 'its centralization in a specified territory'. He felt that 'this centralization of the most living portion of the Muslims of India . . . will eventually solve the problem of India', arguing that 'without the fullest cultural autonomy, and communalism in its better aspect as culture, it will be difficult to create a harmonious nation'.² That is, the Islamic diversity should be afforded full opportunities for development along its own lines without being thwarted or checkmated by the majoritarian culture and ethos in the rest of the subcontinent. Thus Iqbal stood for an integrated cultural mosaic or an inclusive salad plate solution as against the Congress' assimilative melting pot approach, which shunned recognition and accommodation of non-Congress and non-Hindu

² Muhammad Iqbal, *Presidential Address* (Delhi: All India Muslim League, 1945). See also Sharif al Mujahid, 'Iqbal's Allahabad address revisited', *Dawn*, 13 December 2003.

identities. But this Iqbal's viable panacea for meeting the monumental challenge of Muslim diversity and creating a harmonious and integrated Indian nation, with unity at the top and diversity at the bottom of India's politico-cultural pyramid, was rejected out of hand on outrageously flimsy grounds.

Likewise, in his 07 February 1935 address, Jinnah had asserted that 'the combination of all these various elements – [viz.,] religion, culture, race, language, arts, music, and so forth – makes the minority a separate entity in the State, and . . . [that] separate entity as an entity wants safeguards'.³ Since the Muslims were distributed unevenly in the subcontinent, yielding to two demographically dominant Muslim regions in the northwest and the northeast, Jinnah suggested a territorial solution within an Indian federation. This he did in his Delhi Muslim Proposals of 1927 and his Fourteen Points of 1929. Therein he had demanded proportional representation and substance of power to Muslims in the Punjab and Bengal, separation of Sindh, and reforms in the NWFP and Balochistan.⁴ And the outright rejection of these proposals designed to meet the challenges of Muslim diversity, while meeting the dictates of balance on the unity-diversity continuum, at the Congress-sponsored All Parties National Convention (1928), at Calcutta, was by far the most serious setback to efforts at crafting a balance on that continuum.

This was followed by Congress' assertions to equate India with the Congress alone and the denial of any group, party or entity outside the Congress, which alone and by itself claimed to represent Indian nationalism. This, in essence, tantamounted to disclaiming, disowning and disdaining any alternative or competing stream in the Indian freedom movement. The climax was reached in 1937, when the Congress sought to implement its concept of equating India with it to the exclusion of all others. It established one-party governments in the Hindu majority provinces, thus offering only the Hobson's choice of absorption into the Congress or political wilderness. This meant an assimilative melting pot solution with a vengeance, controverting the political realities on the ground. What made it so shattering was that it was in sharp contrast to the Muslim majority provinces which had all opted for coalition governments, under the 1935 Act. No wonder, all this had finally led Jinnah and the Muslim League to raise the antenna a little higher, three years later, and demand outright partition in 1940. Still, they were

³ Khurshid Ahmad Khan Yusufi (ed.), *Speeches, Statements and Messages of the Quaid-i-Azam* (Lahore: Bazm-i-Iqbal, 1996), II:70.

⁴ For details, see Sharif al Mujahid, *Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah: Studies in Interpretation* (Karachi: Quaid-i-Azam Academy, 1981), ch.IV.

agreeable to accepting the Cabinet Mission Plan (1946) which adroitly addressed Muslim majoritarian claims in the northwest and northeast by providing for compulsory grouping of provinces in these regions and the rest of India, and a limited centre. But Congress' thoughtless nibbling at these provisions, climaxed by Pandit Nehru's press conference statement of 10 July 1946, finally led Jinnah to rescind his earlier decision, and reaffirm his quest for a sovereign Pakistan.⁵ Thus, Pakistan came into being out of a welter of conflicting circumstances and bizarre developments, spawned by the non-recognition and non-accommodation of diversity in India's body politic.

United Pakistan

Normally speaking, the Pakistani rulers should have learned a lesson from the denouement spawned by the failure of Congress leadership to meet the challenge of diversity in undivided India. But they did not. In consequence, they failed to craft a viable federal structure, to meet the dictates of the two discontinuous wings of Pakistan. To start with, the Government of India Act, 1935, the basis for the Pakistani constitutional edifice in the formative years, was tilted towards a centralized structure. Apart from cultural, linguistic and socioeconomic factors, geographical discontinuity between East and West Pakistan should have prompted the leadership to work out a *modus vivendi*, enabling the two regions to develop along their own lines and providing opportunities for development and self sufficiency in each region. But they failed to learn from history. No wonder, dissenting voices from the East, beginning with their reaction to the Basic Principles Committee Report (1950) and their demand for accommodating Bengali as a second national language (1952), rose high and almost deafening during the early 1950s, culminating finally in the watershed rout of the ruling Muslim League party in the March 1954 provincial elections.

The East Pakistani electorate had finally spoken, and that for the time being brought the rulers in Karachi to some sense. Thus, a compromise came to be affected during the next two years, and the major East Pakistani demands accepted. The 1956 constitution, which was agreed upon or countersigned by all the East Pakistani parties, represented a high water mark of aggregative and integrative effort, and represented a shift from an immobilist regime to a crisis liquidation one. Meantime, the accommodation of popular East Pakistani regional elites such as Fazlul Haq (d. 1961) and Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy (d. 1963) in the power structure at the Centre gave a sense of participation to the

⁵ *Ibid.*

eastern relevant political strata in the central decision-making process during 1955 and 1958. Especially during Suhrawardy's regime during 1956-57 when political power, though not economic resources, seemed to be more or less equitably shared.⁶ And if democracy and democratic principles and practices had been upheld during the subsequent years, the efforts to finding a genuine and more viable federal structure could have as well succeeded, and the democratic process could have met the challenges of eastern diversity, resulting in a balance between unity and diversity.

But even that would have been only so far as the East was concerned. Since the East-West tussle was chiefly perceived as a Bengal-Punjab tussle, little heed was paid to intra-wing diversity in West Pakistan itself. The imposition of One Unit on 14 October 1955 and the East-West parity formula, incorporated in the various constitutional formulae and retained in the 1956 constitution, which were obviously designed to strengthen Punjab against Bengal's demographic clout, had, of course, papered the East-West cleavages, though only for the time being. But, on the other hand, the One Unit had caused greater havoc to intra wing solidarity in the West itself. Since the One Unit had been imposed through manoeuvrings and machinations and without the willing consent and consensus of West Pakistan's three smaller provinces and the regional elites, it tended to fuel discontent and disillusionment, leading to alienation of the ethnic entities in these provinces. Instead of banishing regionalism and curbing parochial proclivities, its imposition had actually spawned provincial fears and ethnic jealousies, chiefly because it was perceived as a subtle Punjabi move by the smaller regions (Sindh, NWFP and Balochistan) to extend its hegemony over the entire West wing. Worse still, the residue of the quantum of antipathy towards Punjabi dominance built up during 1955-70, persisted even after the disbandment of One Unit on 01 July 1970. Indeed, it seems to have aggravated several fold over the decades, chiefly due to the gross violation of democratic norms during the Bhutto era (1971-77) and the total decimation of the democratic process during the Zia years (1977-88).

That apart, even the East-West balance between unity and diversity came to be totally nullified later, if only because of the 7 October 1958 coup. The imposition of martial law, the abandonment of the constitution, the dissolution of assemblies and parties, the banning of political activities, the suspension of fundamental rights, and the

⁶ Sharif al Mujahid, 'Pakistan's Political Culture During Ayub Era', *Scrutiny* (Islamabad), I:1 (Jan.-June, 1974).

establishment of a highly centralized state under the martial law (1958-62) regime frittered away the residual goodwill between the two wings generated during 1955-58. The subsequent 1962 constitution was, in turn, designed to institutionalize Ayub's personal hegemony while softening the martial law regulations, the intention being to convert the martial law 'into a document which will form the basis for running the country', to quote President Ayub Khan himself.⁷ And as Wayne Wilcox avers, coherence and political discipline were thus achieved – 'but by narrowing popular participation in government at the cost of popular support and control over administration'.⁸ No wonder, Chaudhri Muhammad Ali, a former Prime Minister (1955-56), had described the government, as it emerged under the 1962 constitution, as a Government of the President, by the President and for the President.⁹

One major outcome of the Ayub decade's political developments was the downgrading and disempowerment of political elites, both in the East and the West – elites who had dominated the political landscape for the previous eleven years. This, buttressed by the draconian EBDO laws, disqualifying hitherto outstanding national leaders from doing politics, denuded them of commanding national stature, standing and clout. Under the Basic Democracy (BD) system, local issues, regional politics and rural 'notables' with an extremely limited focus gained ascendancy, and most parties got morphed off into more or less regional parties, albeit laying claim to a national status and retaining a nominal veneer of national orientation. Most parties during the 1950s, had emerged out of the bosom of the pre-partition nationalist coalition, the Muslim League, but no one was able to build an enduring organizational structure, and the capability and clout to aggregate diverse groups, process and articulate their interests, and channel their demands and grievances. Ayub's 'stable' system, which precluded the emergence of alternate, competing, national political parties and leaders led to the provincialization of politics, with the once comprehensive parties getting split, and the splintered factions becoming largely identified with this or that province or region.

Thus the Awami (Muslim) League, founded by Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy, as a national all-Pakistan party in 1950, had coalesced with

⁷ Field Marshal Mohammad Ayub Khan, *Speeches and Statements* (Karachi: Pakistan Publications, n.d.) I:58. See also Mohammad Ayub Khan, 'Pakistan Perspective', *Foreign Affairs*, 88: 4 (July 1960), p.58.

⁸ Wayne Wilcox, 'New Elites of India and Pakistan', *Transaction*, September 1967, p.43.

⁹ *Dawn*, 02 April 1963.

Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani's East Pakistan Awami Muslim League, Pir of Manki Sharif's Frontier Awami Muslim League and Nawab of Mamdot's Punjab-based Awami Muslim League, to transform itself into an all-Pakistan national party in the early 1950s, and as a viable alternative to the Pakistan Muslim League. Having also acquired increasing clout in the Punjab (1951), the Frontier (1952) and East Bengal (1954) elections, it had played a national role all through the 1950s. But it nevertheless became increasingly regionalized with the years, especially after Suhrawardy's demise (1963), and finally got transformed into a regional, inward-looking, ethnocentrist body in 1966 under Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Maulana Bhashani's National Awami Party (NAP) came out of dissidence within the Awami League at the Kagmari Conference in 1957 and aspired to be a national party till it got splintered four fold during the mid-1960s – with NAP (Bhashani) identified with the East, NAP (Wali) with the Frontier and Balochistan, NAP (Pakhtoonkhwa) with Balochistan, and the Sindh United Front (SUF), an erstwhile NAP component, with Sindh. The Republican Party (f. 1956), born out of dissidence within the Pakistan Muslim League in 1956 on the issue of lending support to President Iskander Mirza and his protégé, West Pakistan premier, Dr. Khan Sahib, never really took off. It frantically attempted in 1963 to drape itself in the Conventionist Muslim League garb, with President Ayub Khan himself joining it on 22 May 1963. Its sole agenda was to sustain Ayub as President and get him re-elected, and in this it did succeed beyond measure: it secured 129 out of 152 seats in the March 1965 elections under the BD system. But Ayub's exit in March 1969 sealed its fate, and it could secure only one seat in the December 1970 general elections.

The only party that could have played the role that the Congress did in post-1947 India was the Pakistan Muslim League, but it miserably failed to assimilate oppositional tendencies within its organizational structure and orientation in the early years. Thus, it failed to aggregate, articulate and process diverse interests and demands, and get them converted into policy options. No wonder, this dismal failure spelled its doom as a comprehensive national party within seven years of Pakistan's birth. It was, however, on its way to rejuvenation during 1956-58 when Sardar Abdur Rab Nishtar (d. 1958) and, later, Khan Abdul Qayyum Khan (d.1981) became President, but the 7 October coup subverted the on-going process. In 1962, it got split into an anti-Ayub Council Muslim League and a pro-Ayub Conventionist Muslim League, and by 1970 another splintered group, called Qayyum Muslim League, raised its factious head, this one confined largely to the NWFP and obsessed with a one-point agenda to decimate the NAP (Wali) at the hustings. The

Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), founded by Zulfikar Aki Bhutto (1928-1979) in November 1967, after his exit from the Ayub's cabinet in 1966, albeit founded as a national party, severely confined itself to West Pakistan, acquiring its clout from its electoral strength in the Punjab more than in Sindh. (It had won 62 out of 82 seats in the Punjab and only 18 out of 27 in Sindh in 1970). Thus, the various parties that came to contest the first general elections December 1970 were all essentially regional/ provincial parties, despite their claims to the contrary. The prospects of first national, direct elections obviously led the number of parties to rise to 25. But only some 15 parties nominated candidates, and only 10, besides a host of independents, won any seats. And, except for two, all of them had a regional tilt.¹⁰

The rest of the 'decade of development' story need not detain us here for long. Briefly stated, during the Ayub regime (1958-69), Pakistan was to be only 'a form of federation with the Provinces enjoying such autonomy as is consistent with the unity and interest of Pakistan as a whole'.¹¹ Its *raison d'être* was by no means a federal state, but a unitary one, with a highly centralized structure. And an unitary state is an antithesis to the very concept, physical structure and taxonomy of Pakistan.

Of course, the two provinces, as under the 1956 constitution, remained intact. So did the provincial assemblies, but they were elected indirectly, by the 40,000 BDs (Basic Democrats). Moreover, the quantum of autonomy conceded in the 1956 constitution had been disturbed, since under the 1962 constitution the provincial executives became directly responsible to the president rather than to the provincial legislatures. And because of this and the reduction in the powers and autonomy of legislatures (both at the national and provincial levels), the East Pakistan Assembly, unlike the situation during 1955-58, could not independently process, channel, regulate and convert the regional demands into policy outputs or responses at the provincial level; this (inability) denoting a relationship of subordination rather than of coordination between the federal and provincial levels of decision-making. All this obviously caused increasing frustration, and disenchantment with the constitutional division of powers between the

¹⁰ See Sharif al Mujahid, 'Pakistan's First Presidential Election', *Asian Survey*, V:6 (June 1965); 'The Assembly Elections in Pakistan', *ibid.*, V: II (Nov. 1965); and 'Pakistan: The First General Election', *ibid.*, XI:2 (Feb. 1972).

¹¹ See the Preamble to *The Constitution of the Republic of Pakistan* (Karachi: Government of Pakistan Press, 1962).

centre (the national political system) and the provinces – in this case, especially East Pakistan. Thus, the consequent lack of a sense of participation on the one hand and a grievous sense of political underweightage on the other were chiefly responsible for augmenting alienation and crystallizing Bengali regionalism which, in its most extreme form, finally emerged in Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's Six-Point 'Charter of Survival' for East Pakistan.¹²

Moreover, for now, to the durable factors such as geography, culture and language, the transient explosive factor of a 30% inter-wing economic disparity was added, if only to finally disenchant the East from the West. A 30% disparity could not be wiped out overnight, although Ayub had made its liquidation a constitutional obligation. Although East Pakistan had as well complained of gross discrimination in resource allocation over the years, 'no government has less adequately reflected Bengali political demands, nor more fully accepted Bengali economic demands, than the regime of Ayub Khan', to quote Wayne Wilcox.¹³ In any case, the grievances, whether perceived or real, culminated in the demand for the 'Six-Point Charter for Survival', which the Awami League officially unfolded at the opposition conference on Tashkent in Lahore, in February 1966. What followed during the next five years is recent history and rather well known. Thus a continuing failure to meet the challenges of the Eastern wing's diversity over the years had resulted in the dismemberment of Pakistan and the hoisting of Bangladesh on the world's map.

That event represented a defining watershed in Pakistan's existential career. She became the first country since World War II to become dismembered by internal revolt, backed by external intervention, even aggression by India with the tacit support of the Soviet Union whose Defence Minister stayed put in New Delhi till the fall of Dhaka on 16 December 1971.¹⁴ Equally important, Pakistan had been disowned

¹² Mujibur Rahman, *Our Charter for Survival: Six Point Programme* (Dacca: Pioneer Press, 1966) and *6-Point Formula: Our Right to Live* (Dacca: East Pakistan Awami League, 1966).

¹³ Wayne Wilcox, 'Political Modernization in South Asia', mimeographed (Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation, May 1968), p.43.

¹⁴ See M. S. Rajan, 'Bangladesh and After', *Pacific Affairs*, 45:2 (Summer 1972), pp.191–205; Imtiaz H. Bokhari, 'Playing with a Weak Hand: Kissinger's Management of the 1971 Indo-Pakistan Crisis', *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Affairs*, xxii:1 (Fall 1998), pp.1–23; and Hasan-Askari Rizvi, *Internal Strife and External Intervention: India's Role in the Civil War in East Pakistan [Bangladesh]* (Lahore: Progressive Publishers, 1981). For internal evidence, see the report by the Indian CIA,

and abandoned by the demographically dominant Eastern wing in an emotional fit of sheer rage, revenge and euphoria, although it could as well have claimed Pakistan's nomenclature, legacy, assets and international linkages, standing and clout. The residue West Pakistan became the successor to all this and much more, especially the nomenclature.

Bhuttos's role and contribution

Equally fortuitous was Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's coming to the helm of affairs at this moment of truth, in post-Bangladesh Pakistan on 20 December 1971. At this traumatic hour, having won 81 out of 138 seats in the erstwhile West Pakistan in the 1970 elections, he had a democratic mandate to occupy the presidency in residue Pakistan as well. And he proved himself to be the man of the moment. Bold, energetic, pragmatic and visionary, he was a born leader, endowed with great qualities of head and heart. Patiently, indeed very patiently and methodically, he sought to pick up the pieces and tried to build up a 'New Pakistan', piece by piece, brick by brick. He took a series of measures to put the house in order internally and address the problems and pressures externally.

And all the while, he was engaged in morale-boosting, facilitating and inducing Pakistanis to shed their slough of defeat and despondency, rise above the day-to-day rough and tumble to acquire a new pride, dream a new destiny and craft a new future, and in the process become active, vibrant, almost euphoric. The crafting of a new constitution by consensus in 1973 seemed to ensure the strengthening and streamlining of the extant polity with a democratic structure, appurtenances and ethos. And all this was the handiwork of one man – Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. That's why I regard Bhutto as the man of the hour at that moment – the man who saved (West) Pakistan in that traumatic hour. But for him, with Wali Khan, Ghaus Bux Bizenjo and G. M. Syed sniping all the time from their ambushes ensconced in the three smaller provinces and the success of the Bangladesh revolt serving as an incentive and inspiration, the still nebulous campaign for four Pakistans

the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW): Asok Raina, *Inside RAW* (New Delhi: Vikas, 1980). It acknowledges RAW's involvement in the 'Agartala conspiracy' (middle 1960s) to separate East from West Pakistan; it claims establishing 'RAW sanctuaries all along the Indo-East Pakistan border' and training and guiding the 'Mukti Bahini' (the Bengali freedom fighters). In private conversation, Mujib had reportedly acknowledged his active involvement in the 'Agartala conspiracy', at the Round Table Conference in Rawalpindi, in March 1969.

in the West would surely have gathered force and momentum, with none in a position to forecast the denouement. It's high time that Bhutto's singular contribution in saving (residue) Pakistan be recognized, and that the myth of his being in part responsible for the dismemberment of Pakistan be laid to rest.

Despite all these achievements, Bhutto could not avoid coming to a sticky end. That, in the ultimate analysis, should be put down to his own penchant for an *animus dominandi* role. Despite his rhetoric, despite tall claims, despite the crafting of the 1973 constitution, Bhutto was not inherently democracy oriented. His claims and the constitution proved to be a mere trapping, a mere façade without any solid democratic structure behind it except for the 1973 constitution, which Bhutto used to build himself up adroitly as an absolute ruler, the master of black and white. Otherwise, he would not have created the FSF as a private army owing allegiance to him alone, imposed minority PPP governments in the NAP-JUI dominated NWFP and Balochistan, initiated military action in the latter, banned the NAP and instituted the Hyderabad trial of the NAP leaders, downgraded, marginalized and persecuted the opposition groups and suppressed opposition newspapers and journals off and on, imposed emergency and Section 144 throughout his rule, rigged almost every by-election during the period and rigged massively the March 1997 general elections which proved itself as the last straw on the camel's back.

Of course, he was a democratically elected leader and the greatest leader that Pakistan had spawned during its sixty years' existential career. He also had great opportunities and a fortuitous climate to put Pakistan on the road to a democratic destiny. But he failed to exploit those opportunities to establish a genuine democracy on the ground, if only because of his unquenchable penchant for absolute power. His high disdain for the sanctity of the ballot box finally proved to be his undoing. But for the massive rigging, the PNA movement would never have taken off and gathered momentum to sustain itself for over three months, and but for the PNA movement, the ground would not have been prepared for a Gen. Zia to step in. Bhutto's sticking end is a tragedy of monumental proportions, but his exit represents a greater tragedy for Pakistan. For no one knows when Pakistan would be blessed with a leader with a vision, who approximates Bhutto.

Of course, Bhutto did take a series of measures and established institutions to strengthen the forces of unity and commonalities among citizens and groups, yet he failed to address the problems of diversity, especially in the NAP-JUI strongholds of NWFP and Balochistan, and to balance diversity with unity. No doubt, his stress was on Pakistani identity but unless the inherent tension between unity and diversity is

addressed, that identity fails to develop muscles and sinews to become an impregnable political reality. A good many commonalities in the Pakistani federal polity that exist today were initiated or strengthened during the Bhutto era. So also the diversities that threaten the very existence of Pakistan today as the paramount political unit.¹⁵

Commonalities: the thrust towards strengthening a federal polity

Having explicated the historical dimension in order to alert you how monumentally consequential the non-recognition and non-accommodation of diversity could be, I now come to present day Pakistan.

First, the commonalities in the Pakistani federal polity which provide a common space for one and all, whether it leaves enough room for diverse cultural practices, and for ethnic identities to exist and develop or not. Briefly indicted, these are:

1973 constitution: An agreed 1973 constitution which has stood the test during the past 38 years, despite political upheavals, military takeovers, inter and intra provincial discordance and dissidence, and low-intensity rebellions. Especially after the 18th amendment, which provides for devolution of power to the provinces and more equitable opportunities to the various provincial units.

NFC Award: The 2009 NFC Award which has been arrived at by consensus and which provides for considerable fiscal autonomy to the provincial units. The extant share of Rs. 550 billion has been raised to a total of Rs. 1,250 billion of financial resource (57.5% of the national pool) by the end of the fifth year of the Award's announcement. The inclusion of other factors, besides population, has been finally recognized as the basis for allocations to various units and their share stands as follows: Punjab 51.74%; Sindh 24.55%; Khyber Pakhtunkhwa 14.62%, and Balochistan 9.09% of the national pool. Population was given 82%, poverty 10.3%, revenue collection 2.5% and area 2.7% weightage. Except for the Punjab, the whipping boy in inter provincial discourse, all the provinces have gained an increase, with Balochistan topping the list. All this obviously makes the Award more equitable, and leaves room for further consensus.

¹⁵ See Sharif al Mujahid, 'Balancing unity with diversity', *Dawn*, Pakistan Day Supplement, 23 March 2011.

National language/link language: Although Urdu is recognized as the national language, a lingua franca represented by English for the elite, business and entrepreneur classes has been in vogue. In tandem, Urdu has served as the link language for the masses, and it has been immensely popularized by, especially, the electronic media. True: the nationalists have, often demanded the raising of the various languages in the various regions to a national language status, but that is no solution to the problem, if any, posed by Urdu as a national language – except for boosting the ego of the nationalists. For even when all the languages are designated as national languages, we would still need a link language for the masses across the regions – just as Hindi serves in India, although it is dominant only in two states: Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. Equally important: Urdu’s claim and clout are buttressed not only by Jinnah’s patronage – after all, he had no earthly reason to do it except for national interest since he didn’t speak it at home, nor during his professional and political engagements – but, more important, by its ubiquity and universality: it is understood, if not spoken, throughout Pakistan. One major indicator is that the two most outstanding Urdu poets during the past six decades belonged to non-Urdu mother tongued regions – Faiz Ahmad Faiz and Ahmad Faraz. And it is the Pakistani symbolism represented by Urdu that had induced Zulfikar Ali Bhutto to speak in Urdu in his state banquet address in Dhaka, on 30 June 1974 during his official visit to Bangladesh.¹⁶

Of course, the Sindhis are extremely sensitive about their language, and have put in a strident demand for a national language status. But such recognition may well be catastrophic even from the Sindhi viewpoint in the long term. It may encourage interior Sindh to shy away from English and Urdu all the more, and demand opportunities and jobs on the basis of their expertise in Sindhi alone, leading ultimately to turning interior Sindh as a ghetto language-wise. Since no language bereft of increasing opportunities for employment and power has any future in the present globalized village, it is bound to fail to meet the basic utilitarian criteria for sheer survival. Ground realities rather than mere emotions should guide the Sindhi nationalists.

National & regional parties: The emergence of two major, though dynastically oriented, political parties – the PPP and the PML – on a national level which have alternated ruling Pakistan since 1988, besides strong sub-national parties within the constituent units (as in Belgium and Switzerland) – parties such as the MQM, ANP, JUI, BNP, JWP and

¹⁶ Dawn, 01 July 1974.

other Baloch parties. PPP's condescension to tolerate the PML-N government in the Punjab, although without abandoning its machinations and manoeuvres to rock the PML-N boat since Salman Taseer's appointment as Governor in April 2008, is yet a vast improvement over the 1971-77 and 1988-99 approach when a split mandate in any province was seldom tolerated. But Taseer (d. 2011) and his successor, Sardar Latif Khosa, opting out for a PPP Jiyala role, turning the Governor House into a PPP den, indulging in rhetoric against the PML (N) and the Punjab government, of which the governor is the constitutional head, violate the sanctity and neutrality of that office as well as basic democratic norms.

Likewise, MQM's endeavour to shed its linguistic and urban Sindh origins, getting itself transformed incrementally into a Muttahida Qaumi Movement avatar and inducting itself into the mainstream politics, though generally unappreciated and misconstrued, is still a positive development. So is its sponsoring non-Urdu speaking candidates against Urdu speaking ones in some dominant Mohajir constituencies – such as against Javed Jabbar in the Federal 'B' Area cum North Karachi constituency in Karachi for a NA seat during the 2002 elections. (One wishes that the PPP takes a leaf out of it, and nominates a non-Sindhi to its traditional Lyari seat, if only to further buttress its claim as a truly federal party.) The MQM's 30 January 2011 public rally at the Jinnah grounds, in Karachi, where it gathered speakers from various nationalities was a huge success, and may, hopefully, set a further positive trend for the future. Likewise, its 12 March 2011 public rally at Ranipur (near Sukkar), participated in by a large number of rural folks from neighbouring areas, and its second major rally at the Punjab Football Stadium at Lahore on 10 April 2011, whether it was a mammoth one or not. (The Punjab government's denial of the Minar-i-Pakistan venue available to the MQM, while permitting it to be used by the sectarian Sunni Tehrik for its 17 April meeting, is by no means a positive development from a Pakistan perspective. If the MQM wishes to get out of its urban Sindh cocoon, its venture must be helped, not hindered.) The MQM had a token participation in the Gilgit–Baltistan (GB) elections two years ago, had two seats in the outgoing AJK assembly and was also all set to participate fully in the 26 June 2011 Kashmir elections. But the uncalled for postponement of elections on two Karachi-based refugee seats because of the MQM's refusal to withdraw on one seat in PPP's favour led to an unexpected MQM's knee-jerk reaction: it decided to boycott the elections, walk out of the coalition at the centre and in Sindh, and put in the resignations of its ministers and of the MQM-nominated Sindh governor. Ofcourse, this tantamounts to sheer blackmail at which

the MQM has proved itself to be an adept. But Karachi, having been so volatile, it should be more responsible for the sake of urban peace. But more important to note here is that despite MQM's quirks and manipulations, the big picture over the past decade reveals a gradual shedding off of its erstwhile ethnocentric approach.

So also MQM featuring a string of Pakistan flags at its recent rallies, affirming its Pakistani roots, besides its party loyalties and affiliation. Since the PPPs rise to power in the 1970s party flags have increasingly replaced Pakistan flags at public rallies, with other parties following suit – so that in recent years seldom does the Pakistan flag feature in most political rallies. The most basic, all inclusive identity has been sought to be shed in favour of a narrow particularist affiliation. At the height of his campaign to launch the PPP in treacherous circumstances, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto had told Muzaffargarh's Bar Association in January 1968 that 'he had embarked on the formation of a new party', which was a 'progressive party', yet 'purely Pakistani in inspiration and direction'.¹⁷ It's high time that his self professed legatees kept their covenant with their leader and mentor, not only by words but also through visual demonstration at their public rallies. If the foremost federal party like the PPP fails on that score what to expect of parochial, particularist and ethnocentric parties?

The trouble with the MQM is that it has been a bit criminality-tainted¹⁸ (just as the PPP has been corruption tainted since the early 1970s).¹⁹ People outside urban Sindh are a little suspicious of MQM, although it has also tried to aggregate, articulate and process grievances and demands of other areas outside urban Sindh. Its contribution during the 2005 earthquake, its dynamism, discipline, and, above all, its middle class background are, however, widely acknowledged. If the PPP and the PML (N) and the ANP are downright dynastic, the MQM is severely monolithic and the 'Quaid' oriented (and dominated). Indeed, it is extremely difficult to get out of it once you are in formally. In the result, all three of them are bereft of internal democracy and that is bound to severely de-limit the chances for the eventual rise of a full fledged democratic order in Pakistan. Democracy, like charity, must begin at

¹⁷ Stanley Wolpert, *Zulfi Bhutto of Pakistan: His Life and Times* (New York; Oxford University Press, 1993), p.116.

¹⁸ Abid Hussain, 'Altafatism galore', *The Friday Times*, 15-21 April 2011, p.9.

¹⁹ In 1977, the most telling PNA's slogan was: *Gali gali shore hai/Peoples Party chore hai* (Street after street resonates with the outcry: that the Peoples Party is a highway robber).

home; otherwise, you can't expect to conform to democratic norms on the national landscape. Ironically and inexplicably, the 18th Amendment, despite public uproar, did away with intra-party elections. As against these three parties, the ANP, also dynastic, has not been able to shed its Pakhtun origin and orientation. It claims 13 seats in the NA, a sizeable in the Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa (KP) assembly, and two seats in Karachi, and heads the coalition alongwith the PPP in the KP. But it is yet stuck with a Pakhtun mindset all the way. Likewise, the JUI-F, though commanding some presence in other areas, is basically confined to PK and Balochistan.

Representation of various groups at the centre and in Administration: Although Punjab constitutes the largest province with about 56% population, the Pakistan polity has conceded more or less equal opportunities for parties from various provinces to stake their claim for power at the federal level. Otherwise, an originally Sindh based party like the PPP would have not ruled five times, totalling some 13 out of 18 years of civilian rule since 1970. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was President and Prime Minister for some 5 ½ years, Benazir Bhutto ruled twice for a total of five years and Asif Ali Zardari for over 3 years. And since 2008 the three top offices – that of the President, Senate Chairman and National Assembly Speaker – are occupied by three Sindhis: Zardari, Farook Naek and Fahmida Mirza. In tandem all the major nationalities except for the Baloch have occupied the presidential office since 1970. The rotation between the various provinces, though not by design, has also occurred at the apex in the judiciary.

The polity provides a mechanism to guarantee various groups a place in the national decision making bodies. And this by the representation of most, if not all, groups and/or territories in the federal cabinets, and a separation and exclusivity of powers to own sources of revenue for the constituent units as per the 2009 NFC Award (as in Switzerland). The inclusion of some other factors, besides population, in the allocation of funds under the award makes it more equitable, but a complete consensus is still a long way off. The provincial quota in the services ensures representation of backward or less developed areas in the services. So does the rural-urban quota system in Sindh. However, the misuse of the quota system by the urban-based Sindhi middle class has conspired to make Sindhi urban-based candidates **masque daring** as 'rural' candidates – and thereby denuding the genuinely rural candidates of their legitimate share in jobs and opportunities under the rural quota mechanism. And because the newly educated Sindhi youth have tended to avail of this mechanism to get their educational degrees and plum jobs

in various sectors with little competition to face, they have been generally found to shirk competition and be less competitive, professionwise, in the private sector and on an all-Pakistan landscape. Otherwise, Sindhi doctors would not generally opt for routine and soft government jobs instead of competing for prestigious positions in private medical institutions, which are professionally demanding but carry a much higher pay package.

At another level, women have been accorded 33% representation in the national and provincial assemblies, and a fair representation in the central and provincial cabinets.

Minorities' participation: Despite the occasional inequities perpetrated on, especially, the Christian minority, the minorities have been more or less normally accommodated at various levels and in the electoral system. For the present, their seats are reserved, but they are nominated by the political parties as in the case of women's quota of seats. However, it's high time that the minorities' demand for double voting and direct elections are conceded. At another level they have also been accommodated in the federal and Sindh cabinets. At another level, they have been conceded four seats in the Senate, one each for every province, and 5% quota in the Services. They have also had some representation in the judiciary cadre, with some of them being illustrious and high profiled – such as Justices Cornelius, Dorab Patel and Bhagwandas.

These, in essence, are the positive indicators towards finding a right mix and balance between unity and diversity. For now, a look at the other side of the picture.

Diversity: the thrust against a viable federal polity

Balochistan: Today Balochistan cries out for full jurisdiction over powers relevant to their ethnic survival, economic upliftment and nation building projects, and demands control over its resources. Indeed, Balochistan represents a classic case of the sharp divergence in economic development among the constituent units of Pakistan, and their cognitive, affective and evaluative orientations towards the national political system and the federal polity.²⁰ This should not have happened in the first place – but for the tragic dearth of vision, political will and management capabilities on the leadership's part, both federal and

²⁰ On the criticality of these orientations, see Gabriel A. Almond and B. Gingham A Powell Jr., *Comparative Politics: A Developmental Approach* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1966), p.50.

provincial. Zardari's public apology coupled with the much publicised 'Aghaz-i-Huqooq-i-Balochistan' package has failed to make a dent in the province's orientations towards the federal polity.

On the other hand, the singular failure on the economic front is well illustrated by the Reko Diq copper-and-gold mines saga. These mines in Balochistan have reportedly the third largest reserves of world's gold and copper, and under the raw material agreement Pakistan will get some 40 billion in 30 years. The Saindak mining project has been assigned to a Chile-Canadian consortium, which will give Pakistan only 50 per cent in royalties. Out of this the provincial government will receive only two per cent, which is obviously unfair. But if Pakistan itself is to mine and refine gold and bronze from Reko Diq, it will receive two billion dollars a year as against merely \$160 million in royalties.²¹ Islamabad has put in a Rs. 29 billion claim before handing over the project to the province after the expiry of mining contract with the MCC, a Chinese company, in October 2012. Whereas the Reko Diq project encompasses gold and copper reserves worth 13 trillion, the mining company proposes to offer only five billion profits to the province in 56 years.²²

Likewise, the Duddar Zinc and lead project tells the same tale. The province holds a miniscule share of 12.5 percent in the total return, Pakistan Mineral Development Corporation an equal share, and the rest going to the company.²³ All this is grossly unfair and has obviously led to brewing discontent and increasing alienation. One wonders as to why the concerned institutions responsible for planning and development could have entered into such suicidal agreements – except for the kickbacks for the high and the mighty.

Punjab: The Punjab is often singled out as having 'overrepresentation' in the institutions of the federation's public administrative, military, and judicial institutions, and in business and academic enterprises. But this complaint grossly ignores the ground reality that being a preponderant majority and the capability to build up capital formation, the Punjabis are bound to be more than visible in the various institutions. On the other hand, it is generally ignored that the Pathans almost command a monopoly over the transport system all the way from Khyber to Karachi, and the fruit and vegetable markets in Karachi and Hyderabad. The Mohajirs are considerably dominant in business enterprises, financial

²¹ *Dawn*, 15 January 2011.

²² *Business Recorder* (Karachi), 8 April 2011.

²³ *Dawn*, 17 January 2011.

institutions, executive jobs and white collar cadres, if only because of their higher expertise, higher technical know-how, and their owning up the *laissez-faire* ethos – initiative, hard work, and a penchant for competition and a survival of the fittest approach. Generally speaking, they are the only ones willing to compete with the equally qualified but more resourceful Punjabis. However, for obvious reasons, they don't find the turf even.

Ethnic federalism and faultlines: In essence, Pakistan represents an ethnic federalism, which is largely territory based. The constituent units, though generally set up chiefly for administrative reasons and convenience, are more or less along ethnic and/or linguistic lines, despite a lingua franca and a link language (as in Russia, India, Nigeria and Ethiopia). Also, as in India, Belgium and Ethiopia, Pakistan makes visible the territorial distribution of ethnic groups with some faultlines – such as in Balochistan, southern Punjab (the Sarakai belt) and to a much lesser extent in Karachi and Hyderabad in Sindh. Hence the demand for more provinces. Generally speaking, more provinces lessen intra provincial grievances and hostility and facilitate greater integration since they extend greater opportunities to the various regions to develop along their own lines and become self sufficient and self reliant, instead of making the major component in the larger province a whipping boy for all their local ailments and failures. India which had only eight provinces in 1947, besides princely states and principalities, now comprises 28 states and four Union territories, and it is certainly not on the way to disintegration.

However, demography in Balochistan cuts across ethnicity, with Pathans constituting a significant integral component. During the past few years, Baloch ethnicity and sub-nationalism have spiralled to new heights, serving not only the long-resident Punjabis and the Mohajirs but also Pathans to flee the smouldering volcano. Nearly 1,200 settlers have been reportedly killed since 2008, and those fleeing are estimated to number somewhere between 100,000 to 200,000 by various bodies, including Balochistan Punjabi Ittehat. Even Pakhtuns have been forced to find shelter in non-Baloch quarters of Quetta.²⁴

The Seraiki belt in southern Punjab also cuts across ethnicity, but its demand for a provincial status within viable and self-sustaining boundaries cannot be long delayed. And to a lesser extent Sindh also represents a provincial unit where ethnicity cuts across territory, and may well pose a problem in the future unless the Mohajirs and the Sindhis

²⁴ See the series of articles entitled, 'Balochistan in focus' by Cyril Almeida and Nasir Jamal, in *Dawn*, 26-30 June 2011.

shed their particularisms and claims, and work for a *modus vivendi* for the province as a whole.

In any case, the mere creation of more provinces is no solution for local grievances, failures and demands, *per se*. Prime Minister Yusuf Raza Gilani's endorsement of a Seraiki province is, however, not altogether based on its merits, but is meant to dent the PML (N) at its base in the Punjab. In any case, the Seraiki demand bids fair to loom large among the hotly contested issues between the two major parties in the next elections, with the MQM and the ANP poised to back it up. Seraiki may well be self-sustaining economically, but it is a bit unwieldy territorially if it claims all the Saraiki speaking areas including these in the KP and Sindh. And, then, what about Hazara which the ANP dominated KP government has recently divided into two divisions, if only to foil the Hazara's bid for a provincial status. At another level of administrative complexity, how to carve out the Pukhtun dominated areas in Balochistan into a province? If Prime Minister Gilani plays politics with his Saraiki card, the Punjab Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif, without even MQM's prompting, has displayed the Karachi card. The furore over his statement, and Sindhi rhetoric over the graffiti calling for a Karachi province in some areas of the megapolis on 11 July 2011 provides a pointer to the sort of Sindhi reaction such a demand would spark. Above all, it should be recognized that mini provinces are bound to be administratively costly and economically unviable. Look at the federal and provincial cabinets, with their hordes of ministers and advisers. Every member of the Balochistan Assembly, for that matter, has been accommodated, either as a minister or as an adviser. This bad precedent the mini provinces are bound to follow – possibly with a one-point agenda to make the local notables fatter through corruption, nepotism and favouritism, as is the fashion at the federal and provincial levels at present. In any case, the hard reality is that the demand for more provinces hurt the smaller provinces as much as the Punjab. Neither Sindh, nor KP, nor Balochistan want to devolve.

To provide the various regions a sense of participation, a more rational solution will be to strengthen the local bodies (LBs) financially and make them autonomous, which alone could bring democracy and development at the threshold of every hearth and home. Paradoxically, the PPP, despite its avowal for LBs in its manifesto, has always been antipathetic to the empowerment of local bodies all along, and, for now, the PML (N) seems to have fallen in line. But why? Is it because autonomous LBs deny them some lucrative channels of corruption and favouritism? But, remember, LBs everywhere in the world constitute the

base tier of democracy, with the provincial/state assemblies being the middle tier and the national assembly at the apex.

Karachi: The Sindhi speaking population has perhaps an extremely slim majority in the province as a whole while the Urdu speaking Mohajirs do not command an absolute majority in Karachi. Due to internal migration over the decades, Pakhtuns constitute about 25% of Karachi's population, with Karachi being the largest Pathan metropolis in the world. More important, the ANP has successfully staked its claim, and sought to make a serious dent in the MQM's stronghold. The MQM-ANP's running feud is, of course, at the bottom of the periodic violence and target killing for the past few years. The violence, though ostensibly spurred on by ethnicity, actually stems from a power struggle over Pakistan's economic and financial hub. The Pathans, powerfully buttressed by the IDP hordes from the north, and covertly backed by the PPP, seem determined to dent the MQM's hold and assume a god-father like role over Karachi. Whatever the course this turf war may take in future, for the present this periodic political violence has had a domino effect on the quantum of crime, sector-wise. Just imagine Karachi hosting 1,452 murders, 1,211 rioting incidents, 29 gang rapes, 4 bank robberies, snatching/stealing of 14,941 motor bikes and 4,388 cars. And all this in 2010 alone, representing only reported cases.²⁵ A Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) report claimed that a total of 1,138 people were killed in Karachi during January-June 2011, including 490 people felling in targeted killing on political, sectarian and ethnic grounds.²⁶ And early in July, violence rose to new murderous heights, enveloping most of the city, with 97 persons killed, with grenade and rocket attacks, and with over a score of houses, shops and cars torched during just four days (5-8 July 2011). And all the while, the provincial government remained unmoved. But why? Was Karachi being punished for the MQM's 'crime' of walking out of the coalition on 26 June, on the AJK's election postponement issue? In any case, the countrywide outcry on the Karachi mayhem finally forced the government to send in the Rangers and the police to the troubled areas on 8 July evening and peace was restored within fifteen hours. This could have been easily done on the first day, within hours. Why did the government wait for full four days before moving its little finger? In any case, the end-result was simply horrible: *Dawn* claims that in terms of target killings and

²⁵ *The Friday Times*, 28 Jan.-03 Feb. 2011, p. 8.

²⁶ *Dawn*, 06 July 2011.

insecurity, 2011 has proved to be the worst year in Karachi's annals. It reported over 1,700 dead while *The Friday Times* put the toll at 1,891.²⁷

As if all this was and is not sufficient to make Karachi, Pakistan's chief economic artery, a veritable powderkeg, in had stepped the Lyari's Peoples Aman Committee (PAC) since 2010. Lyari has for long been notorious as a hub of criminal activities and gang warfare and beyond the government's writ. The PAC was originally founded in 2008 under Sindh's Home Minister Dr. Zulfiqar Mirza's patronage, to bring about and sustain a ceasefire between Lyari's warring gangs, engulfed in warfare since 2001. It did, of course, end bloodshed in 2009, but subsequently had reportedly turned to extortion, kidnappings and robberies, to quote LEAs and market associations' reps. It had also a sort of official PPP patronage. In response came the setting up of the Katchi Rabita Committee (KRC) comprising the oldest natives of Karachi, mainly comprising Memons, Gujeratis and Kathiawari speaking people.²⁸ PPP's inherent suspicions of the MQM and its electoral clout, despite its partnership with the latter both at the federal and provincial levels, have induced the PPP to come out in open support of the PAC. Zulfiqar Mirza, one of President Zardari's confidants, called the PAC a 'sister organization', at a public meeting at Malir, Karachi, on 6 March 2011, and this led to a PPP-MQM spat, with the latter finally pressurizing Zardari to restrain Mirza MQM's boycott of the National and Sindh Assembly.²⁹ Meantime, the PPP members in the Sindh Assembly accorded Mirza a rousing reception twice, pledging him support for his patronage of the PAC and urging him to move forward.

²⁷ '2011: The Year of Intrigue', *ibid.*, Supplement, 31 December 2011; *The Friday Times*, 06-12 Jan. 2012, p.4. Incredibly, political violence was 'at its peak during the first eight months': 129 people killed in January, 94 in February, 215 in March, 178 in April, 143 in May, 174 in June, 324 in July and 229 in August. While the violence, however, dramatically came down after President Zardari's intervention and the resignation of anti-MQM Home Minister Zulfiqar Mirza. (*Ibid.*) That indicates how critical was Mirza's presence in the corridors of power.

²⁸ *Dawn*, 08 March 2011. The state of insecurity and gangsterism ruling the roost in Lyari generally was dramatically demonstrated by the *en masse* resignation of some 300 employees from the faculty in all the 13 departments of the Benazir Medical College on 01 October 2011, citing serious concerns about their security and alleging, among other things, physical abuse and sexual harassment. The alleged threats mostly affected female members, constituting 70% of the faculty. *Ibid.*, 02 October 2011; and *The Friday Times*, 04-10 November 2011, p.15.

²⁹ *Dawn*, 08 March 2011.

This PPP's stance created a first rate crisis among Sindh's major coalition partners, but it was somehow fortuitously averted by Zardari's timely intervention to calm the rough and troubled waters. The PAC has been dissolved with its members joining the PPP, and its patron, Dr. Mirza, induced to go on 'long leave'.³⁰ But when he did come back he ignited yet another crisis by (what *Dawn* calls) his 'irresponsible and inflammatory statements' – this time at ANP's Shahi Syed's reception on 13 July, wherein he called 'an entire community, the Urdu. speaking people of Sindh,... as a whole worthy of condemnation', and the progeny of *bhuka aur nanga* immigrants into Sindh at partition time. The huge conflagration it stoked across urban Sindh was somehow doused by a presidential intervention and MQM Chief Altaf Husain's appeal for calling off the 'spontaneous' strike across urban Sindh, some seventeen hours later.³¹

Target killing is, for now, confined to Mohajirs, Pakhtuns and the Baloch, and some 250 MQM workers as against ANP's 70 have been killed, reports *The Friday Times*. But the Home Ministry, when pressed by the MQM to come up with a list of target killers, leaked a list of names that was 'entirely made up and targeted the MQM alone, confirmed a joint investigation committee member. It omitted other political parties and mafia gangs and was disowned by other constituents of the joint committee'.³² The HRCP report, cited above, also gives the affiliation of those falling prey to targeted killing. Topping the list is MQM with its 77 activists gunned down, followed by ANP (29) and the PPP (26).³³ A Free and Fair Election Network (Fafen) report claimed that 595 people fell victim to political violence throughout the country during March-May 2011, and that the MQM was 'the most targeted political party'.³⁴ These three reports from credible sources indicate MQM as the worst sufferer in target killing and yet Mirza's Home Ministry would put the MQM as the major target killers and not the most target-killed. This means that the PPP never misses an opportunity to get its major coalition partner's clout and credibility eroded.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 07-18 March 2011, see also *The Friday Times*, 28 January-03 Feb. 2011, p.8.

³¹ See 'Needless provocation' – editorial, *Dawn*, 15 July 2011; and *Business Recorder*, 15 July 2011, esp. editorial: 'Please get your facts right Dr. Zulfiqar Mirza'.

³² *The Friday Times*, 28 Jan.-03 Feb. 2011, p.8.

³³ *Dawn*, 06 July 2011, p.15.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p.3.

The provincial government is altogether devoid of vision, viable options, efficiency, and political will, to effectively call a halt to this continuing internecine warfare. Moreover, of late the most effective trouble shooter, Federal Interior Minister Rahman Malik, also seems to have taken a back seat since his ‘interference’ in Karachi had ruffled the feathers of the provincial rulers. Hence, unless the federal government effectively steps in with a viable strategy to evaluate, process and accommodate the claims and counter claims of the contending parties, the economic hub of Pakistan is bound to continue smouldering.

Executive-judiciary tussle: For two years now, the executive-judiciary relationship at the national level has followed a roller coaster course. Since Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry’s restoration as Chief Justice on 16 March 2009, the Supreme Court (SC) has handed down several rulings against government’s appointments and decisions, besides ruling out as illegal the National Reconciliation Ordinance (NRO), promulgated by General (Retd.) Musharraf in 2007 to enable the PPP leaders to return and participate in the upcoming elections. Sometime the government meekly surrenders, and at other times the Supreme Court simply turns the blind eye, on the government’s failure to carry out its directives, and abstains from a follow-up – if only to avert a complete breakdown and confrontation between the two major organs of the governmental structure. The most recent clash between them got initiated on 10 March 2011, when the SC had declared the appointment of Justice (Retd.) Syed Deedar Hussain Shah as National Accountability Bureau (NAB) chairman as ‘illegal’, and ordered him to relinquish his post immediately. This, of course, he did but the SC ruling also initiated a new round of confrontation between the executive and the judiciary. Taj Haidar, Sindh PPP’s Secretary General, and Sharjeel Memon, Sindh Chief Ministers advisor, called for a strike on 11 March throughout the Sindh province, and Karachi, as usual, descended into an orgy of death and destruction. More provocative: the provincial assembly took the step of passing a resolution against the SC ruling and Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan, the Leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly. The undertone behind the protest and the resolution was, however, implicit: that Sindh was being penalized. Of course, Chief Minister Syed Qaim Ali Shah, as usual, indulged in *suppression veri* and *suggestio falsi*: he denied the PPP or the Sindh government having had anything to do with the 11 March strike, although the PPP’s Secretary-General and Sindh government’s advisor were actively involved in it. And perhaps as a reward for organizing a ‘successful’ riposte Memon was sworn in as Minister for Information subsequently. Memon was charged with

contempt on 26 March, and he came out with the plea that his was ‘merely a fair and healthy comment on the decision of the honourable court’. Inter alia, his submission alleged, ‘But judgments always came against popular leaders from Sindh and other small provinces’.³⁵ And herein lies the rub: the PPP is still obsessed with playing the Sindh card.

In any case, this episode calls for special notice since the SC rulings have been brought to the street, and this by the government of the day. Not only unprecedented, but also violative of democratic norms, this confrontationist posture poses a new hurdle towards strengthening the federal polity.

At the same time, it must be pointed out that the emergent judicialism of politics is not an unmixed bag. It bids fair to cause a profound shift in power from the elected and accountable institutions, and hence poses a threat to the survival and consolidation of parliamentary democracy in Pakistan. The judiciary needs to avoid taking nitty gritty and nuts and bolt issues such as fixing commodity prices, Haj quotas, executive appointments at the lower levels and the like, and needs to restrain its activism from playing out an instrumentalist role in the country’s politics. More so because it may well ‘trigger a struggle for supremacy between the judiciary and the other two branches of government’. Moreover, because the judiciary itself may get ‘politicised if its decisions pertaining to partisan politics fail to secure public acceptance’.³⁶ And as far as the recurring executive-judicial confrontation is concerned, it’s high time both the organs heeded *The Friday Times*, warning: ‘The only same course is for both the SC and Zardari government to step back from the brink, take a deep breath each and survey their declining graphs. The masses are alienated from the courts for denying them quick justice and from the government for pushing them over the povertyline’.³⁷

Conclusion

Finally, to sum up our discussion. The problem of how to balance diversity with unity plagues all federal polities, and Pakistan is no exception to it. The inherent tension between diversity and unity does affect federal governance in a large measure, and since federalism cannot flourish without full fledged democracy there is an organic relationship between federalism and democracy. After all, a democratic polity alone

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 11,12 and 18 March 2011, and 06 July 2011, p.14.

³⁶ See Mushtaq Gaadi, ‘Politics and the Judiciary’, in *ibid.*, 05 July 2011.

³⁷ Editorial: ‘What an extraordinary week’, *The Friday Times*, 22-28 Oct. 2010.

can accommodate diversity via the conduct of public policy including ongoing claims for rectification of past wrongs. Successful management of differences call for a democratic culture, an equitable share in power, decision making and resources, and development of backward areas and communities on a preferential basis. The case of East Pakistan during the 1950s and the 1960s and the case of present day Balochistan indicate that the attributes listed above are in the nature of a must to balance diversity with unity.

Other than long standing tensions, there is a need, at once imperative and immediate, to recognize differences and to respect them while promoting unity, trust and solidarity among citizens and groups. In essence, *this means that there is scant need to assimilate or get assimilated into other cultures but to respect them for what they are.* Translated into mundane terms, it means that it is not absolutely necessary to flaunt a Sindhi topi at the Sindh Cultural Festival, if only because you are used to be attired differently, but to respect the Sindhi topi for what it is worth – as a symbol of Sindhi culture. The same goes for the Sindhi ajrak as well. (Following the Sindhi leaders, Isfandayar Wali Khan and his cohorts have begun sporting a cap with an ANP emblem – for instance, at the Bachha Khan-Wali Khan death anniversary in Peshawar, in late January 2011.) Likewise, personal participation in the Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai's Urs is not a must but respecting him as a mystic poet and Sufi is. On my part, I have taken to the western attire because it is more convenient, more functional and more universal. In tandem, I have taken to English, not because I love my mother tongue and other Pakistani languages less, but because English brings me to the threshold of an ocean of knowledge and unlimited opportunities. Attire, language and the like are guided and determined by certain utilitarian values and prerequisites, which we are obliged to adhere to for sheer survival in a *laize-faire*-based cosmos.

Although the endeavour to balance diversity with unity is a continuous process, there is a dire need to develop multiple identities. Whatever be one's racial, ethnic, linguistic and religious identity, everyone inhabiting Pakistan is first and foremost a Pakistani, and his Pakistani identity comes first. Remember, what Adlai Stevenson, the Democratic candidate in the US 1952 presidential elections said early in November 1952, while conceding victory to General. Eisenhower: 'that which unites us as Americans is greater than that which divides us into parties'. Translated into our context, it means that that which unites us as Pakistanis is greater than that which divides us into a motley crowd of sub-identities, cultural and linguistic entities and ethnicities. There's no earthly reason why anyone should opt for an exclusive single identity.

Multiple identities are the law of life, and the ruling passion with the globalized village. No wonder, Amartya Sen (*Identity and Violence: the Illusion of Destiny*) recommends the cultivation of multiple identities, more so because it makes a person generous and tolerant as opposed to one with only a single identity which solely determines what he 'includes' and what he 'excludes'. This, however, does not call for downgrading or wiping out any of the sub-identities.

Remember: diversity is not inherently a threat, *ab initio* or *ipso facto*, to the survival and prosperity of a federal country like Pakistan. More important, the recognition, accommodation and integration of ethnic, linguistic, racial and/or religious minorities are compatible with legitimacy, national unity and social cohesion. Above all, this denotes greater integration rather than disintegration. Hence it is high time that we went in for an inclusive, rather than an exclusive, approach – both in precept and practice.