# Linguistic Background of Regionalism in Pakistan and its Impediments to National Security

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## Abstract

*The paper carries an analysis of regionalism in Pakistan, its origin, its reasons, and its impediments to the national security of the country, through the linguistic lens. The paper in its analytical findings reveals that several factors are responsible for regionalism in Pakistan leading to some serious impediments to the national security of the country. Short-term, medium-term, and long-term solutions are recommended for the solution to this problem and therefore, the paper concludes that the need of the hour for the country's leadership is to rise above self/vested interests, unite the nation, and respond to the challenge of regionalism.*

**Keywords:** *Regionalism, regionalism in Pakistan, history of Pakistan, politics of Pakistan*

**Introduction**

In the 16th century during the reign of Mughal King Akbar Muslims and Hindus would together study the Koran in Arabic and Vedanta's Philosophy in Sanskrit along with logic, ethics, history, Persian, and natural sciences. Moreover, the Sufi Saints of the sub-continent also welcomed every non-Muslim and treated everyone alike with love and respect. They were a bridge of conversation between Hindus and Muslims in the region (Eaton, 1974, pp. 117-118). Muhammad Ali Jinnah, known as the greatest ambassador of Muslim-Hindu unity up to the 20th century was opposed to the idea of mixing religion and politics and wanted to see Pakistan as a stable, peace-loving democratic state. However, historically, from its very inception, Pakistan has been suffering from political instability. It was during the initial 11 years since the inception of the country that seven Prime Ministers with eight cabinets, one after the other, took over. The main cause of this instability was the growing sense of regionalism (Kiran, 2020).

Regionalism subsequently gave birth to several insurgencies and sub-nationalist uprisings; resulting in the dismemberment of the country in 1971. Barely recovered from the shock the country was caught between the bear and the ocean when in 1979 the former Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan. Pakistan decided to side with the US to fight communism as a frontline state (Sunawar & Coutto, 2015). Staunch Muslims from all over the region were rallied in the name of Jihad and the proxy war was waged in Afghanistan to subdue the USSR under the auspices of the CIA and ISI (Alexander, 2021). Consequently, after the end of the Soviet-Afghan, war religious militancy grew in the region for the first time, taking shape of Talibanization, religious intolerance, Kalashnikov culture, and terrorism in the country. Moreover, the US attack on Afghanistan in October 2001 and Pakistan's U-turn further "worsened the security situation of the country to an unprecedented degree" (Murphy, 2012). In today's geopolitical environment, Pakistan stands at crossroads regarding the challenges of

fundamentalists in the face of a changing world (Kreft, n.d.). The country is passing through its worst financial crisis. Terrorism and religious extremism are also posing serious challenges to its internal security. It is about time that serious measures are taken to mitigate the impact of regionalism, terrorism, and militancy on the national security of Pakistan, or else be prepared for severe consequences (Javaid, 2011).

## Review of Literature

'Modern', 'Westphalian' or 'nation-state' model (Farr, 2005) has within it an inbuilt bias towards conflict. Based on the "doctrine of territorial sovereignty" (Corner, 2021), this model suggests that there should be unity among all within the territorial boundaries of a region or a country, and complete loyalty from all citizens because, in case of no clash between identities, there are no conflicts. Otherwise, in a state where different identities contradict one another, there are chances of conflict and tension of varying degrees of intensity within them (Weingerg & Pedahzur, 2004). If a conflict is of high intensity, it can cross the territorial limits of a state affecting neighboring states and even international peace and stability (Khan, 2009, p. 387).

Therefore, the term 'nation-state' means a state which has only one nation within its boundaries (Rejai & Enloe, 1969). "Regions may be delineated by administrative divisions, culture, language and religion, among others" (Hudson, 1991, p. 4). But today most states have multiple nations living within the boundaries and a one-nation state rarely exists. The 'state-nation' approach (ibid.) means that the state is superior to the nation and the national identity evolves within the state boundaries. The concept of the modern state is based on the "nation-state" approach although studies in this regard suggest (Chiu & So, 2022) that state also revolves around national identity because almost all democracies prefer to establish a single national identity by creating a common cultural identity or a special fidelity among their people despite that they at the same time encourage cultural distinctions exerting various

forms of alternative social/cultural identities by coercion (Ito et al., 2008). Likewise, the state makes policies that involve creating a feeling of belonging to the state simultaneously respecting and guarding prominent linguistic or socio-cultural diversities. If people of a certain language have a feeling of owning their country, they perceive it as a tradition being attached to its history and culture (Linz et al., 2004).

Pakistan has adopted various forms of nation-state policies for nation-building. It denied linguistic and ethnoreligious diversities. The Pakistani leadership adopted a nation-state policy based on the Islamic religion base, negating linguistic, political and ethnic diversities. Mohammad Ali Jinnah, the founder and the first Governor-General of Pakistan, refused to accept the demand of declaring Bengali as a national language besides Urdu thus underlining that policy very clearly (Khan, 2009, p. 388). Likewise, the demand to name the NWFP province "Pashtunistan" was also denied because it (Shah, 2019) reflected their ethnolinguistic identity. This led to Pakistan being a unitary state and resulted in the undemocratic development of Pakistan. Thus, a religion-based identity, denied other identities, like ethnolinguistic characteristics that were a mindset and interests of the colonial bureaucracy. As a result, a unitary state structure was generated based on one religion i.e. Islam, one language, i.e. Urdu, and one nation, i.e. Pakistani. With this, the religious parties also became active again.

**Regionalism/Sub-nationalism**

Political instability due to regionalism has always been one of the major problems in Pakistan. The origin of this problem dates back to Liaquat Ali Khan's cabinet divided between two linguistic factions, Bengali and Punjabi; one under Fazlur Rahman who led the Bengali group and the other under Malik Ghulam Mohammad leading the Punjabi group (Afzal, 2001, p. 95). The next PM inherited these rifts as he was a Bengali leading the Bengali faction of the Cabinet. An orthodox by nature he was not in favor of the Western

Block and did not want Pakistan to be an ally of the USA, as a supporter of "Pan Islamism" (Schwanitz, 2021). On the other side, Ghulam Mohammad, Zafrullah Khan, Iskandar Mirza, and Ayub Khan, of the Punjabi faction, were pro-America and wanted Pakistan to join defense pacts with the USA. The Punjabi faction ousted Nazimuddin from the Government also the defense pacts with the USA were signed (Kiran, 2020).

Another rift existed due to the anti-Ahmadiyya movement between Nazmiuddin and Zafrullah Khan. The later wanted the cabinet to condemn the attacks against Qadiyanis, but Nazimuddin along with his group did not do so despite being insisted by the Governor-General. This movement exemplified the regionalist tendency in Pakistan. The Chief Minister of Punjab tried to fail the government of the Bengali Prime Minister by supporting the agitations by giving subsidies to the media for promoting his cause. Ultimately Nazimuddin's government was dismissed by Malik Ghulam Mohammad and the East Pakistanis were very unhappy with this (Kiran, 2020).

Suhrawardy's cabinet was another example of regional biases. As a mixture of contradictory personalities, it raised real conflicts between the ministers of the East Pakistan-based Awami League and the West Pakistan-based Republican Party over the One-Unit issue. ministers of the Republican Party started a campaign to establish four provinces and dismember One Unit of West Pakistan (Ahmad, 2019, p. 382). Suhrawardy showed disagreement with this on the basis that this experiment required enough time. He called a cabinet meeting but it was boycotted by ministers who demanded his resignation. Later, Suhrawardy had to resign under the threat of dismissal by the President (Nawa-i-Waqt, 1957).

The next PM was Ibrahim Ismail Chundrigarh whose government too fell victim to differences on having a separate or joint electorate system. President invited Malik Feroze Khan Noon to form the next government but as he was a PM from the Republican Party. His

cabinet was again divided into groups between East Pakistani Ministers from Krishak Sramik Party (KSP) and West Pakistani ministers from Republican Party and this is evident that a linguistic background was again active in this division. After four days, the Awami League ministers resigned from the cabinet, over the issue of portfolios of ministries (Wu & Ali, 2020).

It is not difficult to conclude that the difference during the initial eleven years of its existence started to grow on regional lines. Adding fuel to the fire were the federal cabinets that mostly consisted of more than one political party making the hold of the Prime Minister weaker. Ministers made internal issues of cabinet public but the PM was never able to take action against them because the Constitution of Pakistan did not give the right to dismiss the minister to the PM.  Therefore, the individual ministers always got strengthened and the PM became weaker during the coalition governments' period.

In Pakistan, the ruling regimes worked to relate national identity with Islam as a move to counter the regional and linguistic divide between various communities like Bengalis, Sindhis, Pathans, and Baluchis. However, instead of relying on building a consensus between different ethnic and culturally diverse communities on this premise through open discussions, the Governments imposed the idea that the underlying principle of the formation of Pakistan was Islam. Moreover, Pakistan Military was unable to use the theory of majority that had been used during the Pakistan independence movement, since in this case, Bengalis were the majority (Riaz, 2002). The Muslim minority in Bengal had voted for Pakistan, however, now their loyalty and patriotism were being questioned on daily basis in Pakistan. Any attempt by the Bengalis on dialogue was termed as a lack of loyalty toward national identity. This situation was further emphasized by the economic oppression and political isolation of the Bengalis, who then started a movement against the Pakistani state. Bengali middle class articulated Bengali nationalism in the same way as Islam was used by the Muslim League.

The resulting nationalist movement that started in the 1960s, followed by the 1971 war, resulted in the formation of the Bengali nation-state, which Sheikh Mujibur Rehman had not demanded in the 1940s, but got in the end (Riaz, 1994).

Many mistakes were committed by Pakistani leadership during the early years of its independence. Grievances created in Bengal resulted in anti-West Pakistan that led to a separatist movement based on Bengali nationalism. The Bengali politicians depicted the central government of West Pakistan as hostile towards the sentiments of Bengal, who were exploiting the rights of the Bengali people. The Pakistani Government made passive efforts to counter the anti-Pakistan sentiments. However, after the General elections of 1970, the Awami League achieved an overwhelming majority and refused to compromise on its six-point agenda. A non-cooperation movement was also launched by Mujib-ur-Rehman. The Awami League established a parallel Government in East Pakistan and a violent group, known as Mukti Bahini, backed by India at the forefront of anti-Pakistan demonstrations. The Awami League declared March 23 as "Resistance Day" which further increased the tensions in the region. India fed fuel to the fire by further exploiting the situation and on November 22, 1971, launched an attack on East Pakistan. Pakistani armed forces in East Pakistan fought against a combined army of India and the Mukti Bahini. With all odds against them, the war ended with the surrender of the Pakistani Army in East Pakistan, and about 45,000 uniformed and an equal number of civilian personnel were taken, including prisoners. The complete unravelling of events was a mix of factors ranging from poor governance, personal political gains, and non-acceptance of the true gravity of the situation by the Pakistani Government hierarchy (Kamran, 2008).

**Sub-Nationalism in Baluchistan**

Although there are no parallels in what happened in and with East Pakistan, however, for their vested interests the detractors try and draw parallels between the two and try to

exploit the prevailing law and order situation to undermine Pakistan in an attempt to keep the region far from stability and peace. Baluchistan, the largest region of Pakistan, is the least populated and the least developed area. Its location on the cross-roads of great powers, its presence of abundant natural resources, such as oil, gas, gold, copper, and uranium, its proximity to strategic points on important sea routes, its nearness to mineral-rich countries, and its large size with a long coastline and world's third-largest deep seaport make it geo-politically, geo-strategically, militarily and economically a strategic pearl for Pakistan. However, despite its great strategic and economic potential for socio-economic development, it has never seen genuine infrastructural development; instead, it has generally suffered instability, backwardness, lawlessness, insurgencies, and military repressions. There have been several issues in Baluchistan including human rights abuses, more autonomy, revenues, royalties from its natural resources, and in some cases, full secession (Siddiqi, 2015).

### *Historical Perspective*

The Khan of Kalat, another personality from a strong linguistic background, had a customary over-lordship and nominal control over the three states of Kharan, Makran, and Lasbela. He approached the British rulers to obtain the status of a British state contrary to the status being given to the other Indian states. He aimed to keep his state as a British territory instead of becoming part of Pakistan. The British did not agree to his request and the Khan called a meeting of the tribal Sardars to discuss the situation. However, none of them came to meet him as they had already promised allegiance to Jinnah on February 12, 1948, at Sibi. Ultimately Khan declared accession of the state of Kalat to Pakistan on March 22, 1948. However, Shahzada Abdul Karim who was his brother gathered 130 tribesmen with the purpose to start an insurgency, which never materialized, and the issue was brought into control. A second rebellion in Baluchistan took place after the constitutional arrangement of "One Unit" on October 14, 1955. The Baluch leaders declared their dislike for the

constitutional arrangement of "One Unit." They proposed that there should be a gradual change in their consensus. After the arrest of Khan of Kalat on October 5, 1958, the anti-state disturbances started. Two days later, Martial Law was declared. In 1962, Khan asked for forgiveness and was then pardoned by the Government.

Later, in February 1973, ZA Bhutto dismissed the Baluchistan Government headed by Sardar Attaullah Mengal as Chief Minister. This sparked a protest by the Baluchis and resultantly the Marri and Mengal tribesmen took to the mountains. The tribesmen were fighting Government control and this led to heavy action by the Military to restore control. Several important tribal leaders however managed to escape to Afghanistan to continue their struggle with the help of the tribesmen there. The fifth wave of conflict in Baluchistan started with the death of Nawab Mohammad Akbar Khan Bugti in a Military action on August 26, 2006. Bugti had been having tense relations with the Federal Government and refused to yield to his demands. Since his death, the situation in Baluchistan has gone from bad to worse and continues to deteriorate (Bahadur et al., 2006).

### Origin of BLA

The Baluchistan Liberation Army (BLA) was formed in Dec 2000. It is presently working under Hrbyan Murree son of Khair Baksh Marri and is believed to be funded and supported by India (Butt, 2011). Brahamdagh Bugti agreed to be ready to accept aid from India and Afghanistan, in an interview, to help in the defense of Baluchistan. BLA claims to fight for an independent Baluchistan. After the murder of Nawab Akbar Bugti, the group remains an active threat to law and order in Baluchistan and a terrorism catalyst as a whole (Murphy, 2012). Yet it seems to act mainly under nationalist realms and the insurgency in Baluchistan has external support. Foreign players are being supported by local hosts for the instability in the province because it has great resource potential and geo-strategic importance. Moreover, it has the potential of being a future energy route. Therefore, RAW is

certainly playing a negative role (Siddiqui, 2010). It is important to mention that BLA is active in only 6 districts, In Kohlu, the group is operating under Harbyar Murree, and in Dera Bugti, it is under Brahamdagh Bugti. In Kalat and Khuzdar, the Akhtar Mengal group is active whereas, in Awaran, the Dr Allah Nazar group is carrying out militant activities. Whereas Quetta being the heart of Baluchistan is a playground for a show of power and all groups are instrumental in instability. LeJ and TTP joined hands with Baluch militants to carry out a sectarian attack in Baluchistan (Grare, 2013). Poverty, a sense of deprivation, lack of development, and illiteracy are the chief means of attracting poor and uneducated Baluchi youths to various training camps present in the province. These are involved in violent actions that swing from criminal activities like ransom taking to the bombing of railway lines and trains e.g. Jaffar Express in October 2013. Accordingly, the most common targets are sites with natural resources and the Government of Pakistan tries to harvest those resources, especially through natural gas pipelines and oil fields. In Quetta, soldiers, journalists, and civilians are also targeted. BLA conducted many such attacks and was declared a terrorist organization in Pakistan in April 2006. Due to the protracted media campaign against civil armed forces law enforcement activities in Baluchistan, the issue of missing persons has also come to the fore. As claimed by the media from 2003 to 2012, it is believed that 8000 people went missing in the province (The Economist, 2012). However, the case of only 35 missing persons is in court

## Research Methodology

This study aims to do a Critical Discourse Analysis of the historical and political events that led towards the emergence of regionalism in Pakistan. For the critical discourse analysis of this issue, the events since the inception of Pakistan were analysed. The ideological square of Van Dijk (1995; 1998; 2000) reveals that language biases promoted regionalism in Pakistan. A qualitative approach was adopted in this study using secondary

data. Open resources were taken into consideration while analyzing the causes of regionalism and its impediments to the national security of Pakistan.

## Analytical Findings

Emerson (1860) says, "Shallow men believe in luck, strong men believe in cause and effect." Some pertinent points require detailed deliberation. The study proved that the problem of Regionalism is not a recent phenomenon. Their seeds could be found even since the time they came into being. The early death of the Quaid was one of the major factors in the deviation of Pakistan from the right track and the other contributing factors are discussed in the subsequent paragraphs:

**Illegal Immigrants**

Around 5M illegal immigrants have been residing in different cities of Pakistan for more than three decades including approximately 2M Bangladeshis, and 2.5M Afghanis. 0.5M immigrants include Africans, Iranians, Iraqis, and Myanmar, currently residing in Quetta, Peshawar, Lahore, Islamabad, Rawalpindi, and several other cities (Iqbal, 2012). Partition of Pakistan in 1971, the 1980s Cold War in Afghanistan, Iraq's law and order situation, Pakistan's porous borders, the declining morale of investigation agencies (FIA), and the weak writ of the state are the chief reasons for these illegal immigrants pouring to Pakistan (Rehman, 2021; Waseem, 2011). Pakistan's friendly policies and international obligations to accommodate Afghan refugees also brought illegal immigrants into the country. Many of these are involved in criminal activities like the smuggling of narcotics and drugs. In Karachi, several Bangladeshi and Afghanis are involved in target killing, extortion, kidnapping for ransom, theft, and dacoit. It is a total failure on the part State to manage the refugees while most of them have managed to get the Pakistani NICs and Passports.

**Poor Governance and Social instability**

The seeds of the secessionist movement were sown in the 1950s when the leading one after the other failed to understand the sensitivity of the ethnic issues. India took advantage of the situation by exploiting cultural differences between East Pakistan and West Pakistan, while at the same time propagating the same phenomenon of unity in diversity in their case. The political elites could not establish terms because they had political concerns and the homogenous people from East Bengal had strong ties with their language and culture (Altaf, 2019). Not only the process of constitution-making was affected and delayed unnecessarily but a great deal of damage to the cause of national integration also occurred. After 24 years of independence, fear of political leadership deprived of power, poor governance, economic inequality, and social injustice led to the separation of East Pakistan. Not learning any lesson from history, Baluchis have been deprived of their due share in the national income accrued from the exploitation of their natural resources for too long. Social injustice and economic disparity have resulted in Provincial discord. Baluchistan has been in turmoil for quite some time and the unrest shows no sign of abating. The continued violence has been compounded by the entry of diverse internal and external players. What was initially viewed as just a law-and-order problem has grown into a complex issue that calls for a rethink of past strategy. Despite heavy involvement by the security agencies, the situation has not stabilized.

**Sense of Deprivation**

It may be the fear of political or economic deprivation that leads groups and societies towards unrest in a state (Hashmi, 2009). Among all kinds of militants and others promoting regionalism, the fear of being deprived of the role, status, or desire of what they want to achieve is a dominant factor. Some feel fear of change and some feel fear of the loss of power or influence. Therefore, it is pertinent to note that Pakistan's leaders adopt poor policies because it serves their purpose and releases them from the fear of power deprivation. In contrast, common individuals react violently toward other regions or groups.

**Political Instability**

Political instability in Pakistan is one of the major impediments to good governance. The rulers are unable to cope with the growing menace of regionalism, which affected the structure and work of the state's institutions. If regional challenges had been identified timely and mitigated properly the future of Pakistan could have been different from what it is today. Unfortunately, these transnational threats multiplied with time. And their consequences were seen as the collapse in the social fabric of the country and they are still experiencing neo-forms sub-nationalist threats.

**Poor Education System**

Corruption in education, division of education system and curricula has far-reaching consequences for society in general and national integration in particular. Various governments in Pakistan have been unable to provide a successful education policy for the country. The education policies remain flawed and unable to improve the literacy rate, employment, and quality of life of the people. There are thousands of ghost schools and even in active public schools, the education remains far from satisfactory. On top of that, no implementation of education policy and plans is ensured. An uncontrolled population growth rate coupled with limited resources devoted to education had a detrimental effect on the further expansion of educational opportunities and keeping pace with demographic development. On average, only around 2% of Pakistan's GNP  is spent on the education sector. Attendance in schools and literacy rates in Pakistan are among the lowest in the world. Although roughly 75 % of school-age children go to primary school, only 25% obtain a completion certificate (Looney, 2003, p. 257). Even the increasing numbers of private schools which do accommodate students from the poorer segments of society are unable to significantly increase the country's literacy rate. On the other hand, the Madrassas, ready to absorb any number of children from poor backgrounds, are growing in number. The

education imparted in these Madrassas is of low quality. However, in most cases, religious indoctrination is inclined more toward sectarianism and regionalism (ibid. p. 158).

## Sectarian Divide

Shia-Sunni sectarian division in Islam is an old phenomenon. By and large, the two communities had been living peacefully throughout their existence in United India under Muslim rule. However, the Islamic revolution in Iran and Saudi Arabia's support to Islamic militants against the invasion of Afghanistan by the erstwhile Soviet Union, followed by the proxy war between the two Islamic countries disturbed the balance and regional and sectarian division started to grow in magnitude. The worst manifestation of this phenomenon is characterized by armed clashes between rival sectarian organizations, murders of sectarian leaders, and attacks on places of worship of either sect, projecting Pakistanis as one of the most intolerant nations.

## Impediments for National Security

### Terrorism/Militancy

The greatest harm of fighting someone else's war has been witnessed as an increase in militancy and extremism in Pakistani society. Consequently, Pakistan's failure to isolate and peacefully integrate militants' cadres into the societal mainstream and their manipulation by foreign elements has worsened the situation. In short, Pakistan failed to manage the blowback from its engagement, first in the Afghan war and subsequently in the war on terror (Javaid, 2011).

### Corruption

In Pakistan corruption is cutting across the socio, political and cultural frontiers. Approximately daily 7B PKR is lost to corruption in Pakistan making it another factor for social instability and regionalism in the country. In the 1990s, serious attempts were made at accountability, but later these proved to be failures in face of the pressures from the power

lobby. In the presence of rampant corruption, economic stability, and social prosperity have remained a dream. Even today despite numerous anti-corruption establishments, it is found at all levels and groups of the country public, private, political, judicial, commercial, and religious (Rose-Ackerman, 2009, p. 4). In May 2014, the National Accountability Bureau released a report showing that in 2013 out of 18607 complaints about corruption were filed out of which 1179 complaints were pending. 99.2% of the agreed amount of Rs 3149.985 million is pending which is a challenging indicator for NAB (PILCAT, 2015). This is creating challenges to the security and basic needs of people. Over a period, it has taken the shape of frustration, aggression, and extremist behavior.

**Deployment of security forces**

The activities related to regionalism have effectively put the Pakistan armed forces on internal security. Forces that would otherwise be required for the protection of the frontier are now detailed on defending vital installations and infrastructure of the country. Pakistan Rangers are actively involved in operations against the militants in the Karachi area. Regular army fighting units, including Special Forces, are busy in action in the North-West Frontier Province. It is estimated that around 150,000 armed forces personnel are engaged in internal security duties. As a consequence of this internal deployment of forces, the border areas, both towards the East and West have depleted strengths to meet any contingency.

**Casualties**

Approximately "23,372 civilians and 8,832 security personnel in Pakistan have been killed in the War on Terrorism" (The Nation, 2018). Moreover, according to the Government of Pakistan, "the direct and indirect economic costs of terrorism from 2000–2010 total $68 billion" (Hamid, 2011), and the Pakistani economy suffered a total loss of $126.79 billion since 2001 due to the War on Terror (Dawn, 2018).

**Economy**

In the fiscal year 2009, Pakistan's economic growth remained at around 2% only, due to the global financial crisis and the internal war on terror which was launched by the military in the KPK and FATA. It resulted in the displacement of approximately 3M people. A major chunk of the government's financial resources was consumed by the war and the rehab of these IDPs resulting in widening the fiscal deficit and barring economic growth. Businesses found it difficult to obtain bank loans and get into long-term contractual obligations. According to the PM, Pakistan has suffered a loss of USD 103B in the war against terrorism. A huge amount could have been used otherwise for the betterment and welfare of the people.

**Increased Defense Budget**

The security situation over the last decade left no option for the Government to strengthen defences of vital installations, government buildings, and foreign missions. Huge expenditures have been spent in the last few years to enhance security measures. These security measures, at times, tend to paralyze normal day-to-day working. Expenditure for the passive security measures taken by the defense forces is met from the defense budget and runs into millions every year.

**Psychological Factors**

The huge number of casualties, both civilians and armed forces is a source of severe national psychological stress. An estimated 40,000 Pakistani nationals have died in terrorist-related activities in the last decade. The situation is such that war has been brought inside the country and no one feels safe, anywhere.

**High-Value Assets at Stake**

The terrorist onslaught in the country has put the nation's high-value assets at stake. Daring attacks on military installations were aimed to target high-value assets and undermine Pakistan's warfighting potential.

**Reduction in Foreign Direct Investment**

One of the negative impacts of regionalism in the country is related to a drastic reduction in foreign direct investment. With the reluctance of western countries to invest in the local industry, the potential of the low labour cost of Pakistan cannot be realized. This has negative bearings on the country's earnings. Pakistan achieved an FDI of 5.7 bn dollars in 2008 but after that, there was a steep decline. The share of FDI flowing into Pakistan is minimal compared to available opportunities, mainly due to political instability, law and order situation, energy crisis, and corruption. All this is further contributing to regionalism.

**Findings**

Analytically, since its inception, Pakistan has been faced with challenges of a very tall order, and even today, it is facing crises of governance resulting in crises of survival (Afzal, 2022). Significant causes behind the impacts of Pakistan's insecurity and regionalism are political instability, poor governance, and a lack of will to manage ethnic diversity. Even today this failure is being attributed to either foreign interventions or the undemocratic growth of the Pakistani state. (Khan, 2009).

Multi-dimensional effects of regionalism on Pakistan's national security can only be countered effectively when related circumstances and contributing factors including the political, socio-economic, security, and diplomatic domains are addressed. To be effective, the strategy has to be multilayered and all-encompassing, focusing on both short-term goals and long-term objectives. Given the complexity of the long-pending issues, it is evident that our leadership must rise above self and with sincerity unite and motivate the nation to rise above caste creed and religion and gel into one nation determined to uphold Pakistan's national interests. Some of the factors, if not given due attention, would have a direct bearing on national security.

## Recommendations

**Short-term solutions**

Few immediate although short-term solutions can help the country to eradicate regionalism. First of all, each government should take measures to reduce corruption, and ensure transparency and merit across the board. Strengthening the outreach of NAB, speedy trials of corruption cases by all courts, and provision of incentives for enforcement of anti-corruption measures are steps that can help reduce corruption in the country.

There is a need to undertake de-radicalization efforts at the national level to provide an opportunity for the militant elements to mainstream themselves in society. Government should consider setting up proper de-radicalization camps, using the army's experience, and providing the required resources. Clergy, tribal elders, and psychologists can help in the process. Skill development and job opportunity should be made part of such a program.

For speedy dispensation of justice, the number of courts should be increased based on population statistics, the availability of judges in existing courts must be ensured to reduce the rate of pendency, a system of cut-off dates be introduced for cases and the Supreme Judicial Council be made effective for efficiency of the judiciary in terms of several cases decided in six months.

Checking of all foreigners including US nationals and foreign NGOs/ organizations to rule out their involvement in undesirable activities is needed. Determined efforts need to be made to register all foreigners who are still unaccounted for. Effective monitoring of the borders with neighboring countries is needed to intercept and check terrorist movements. Moreover, the government should ensure proper utilization of a biometrical identification system for personal identification and check of travel documents at all exit/entry points and illegal immigrants including Afghan refugees must be deported to their respective countries.

**Medium-term solutions**

The foremost midterm solution recommended here is to Squeeze Terrorist Financing because the proscribed organizations change names to avoid restrictions. The government needs to ensure that local as well as foreign funding of terrorist outfits under any name is stopped. Effective use of an integrated computerized system of banking is required to monitor inflows of money to terrorist organizations and to trace out the black/narcotics money. Moreover, necessary legislation may be done to monitor/control the flow of funding to the various organization including proscribed organizations and their offshoots, and the "Hundi System" also needs to be kept under strict watch.

Illegal weapons are a source of igniting militancy. Setting aside political pressures, dealing with crime and terrorism has paid some dividends in Karachi. Automatic weapons have found their place in cities through smuggling, weak border control, and foreign funding. Political backing of militant wings is also responsible for this partly. These should be removed gradually from the urban areas through systematic operations. To ensure De-weaponizing, the wings of all political parties using public/societal pressure through media and civil society must be disarmed and banned. CAF can be used for repeated checks on weapons. Gang wars in Karachi must be stopped by Law Enforcement Agencies through effective intelligence gathering and the use of force. Police should be effective to protect the citizens. Rangers may be authorized to conduct periodic operations. Provincial anti-terrorism forces to retain control over areas cleared while prohibited bore arms licenses must not be granted to anyone.

Good governance impacts the socio-economic mosaic of the country. To achieve this first of all De-politicizing of state institutions particularly the bureaucracy and LEAs is a must. Secondly, merit at all tiers and the adoption of best practices in all sectors of governance must be ensured.

To combat sectarian militancy, which is another suggested midterm solution, the government must encourage scholars of all sects to publicize common points of view and denounce sectarian violence in media to promote religious harmony and national solidarity. The Election Commission of Pakistan should solicit all political parties to present meaningful agendas in their election/party manifestos to eliminate regionalism. Moreover, passing judgment on the Islamic credentials of another Muslim be made a punishable act, and strict implementation of the ban on the sale, purchase, and playing of provocative audio/videos and controversial literature having sectarian overtones must be ensured by district administrations.

The lack of acceptance and growing intolerance in society has resulted in the rise of regionalism. It needs to be addressed through a requisite change in syllabi and incorporating teachers for educational institutions to de-radicalize society and through incorporating the role of civil society in promoting forbearance. Religious scholars and media need to promote religious tolerance/acceptance and societal harmony. Apart from this, the radical approach must be checked in all segments of society through mutual advice and support, especially by civil society and the police.

**Long-term Solutions**

Educational reforms that include reforms of Madrassah Education are recommended as a long-term solution to control regionalism. Over 10,000 madrassas need radical reforms with the view of bridging the gap between formal education and the Madaris education system. The institution of Wafaqul Madaris needs to function dynamically in this regard and the Ministry of Interior should provide funds and monitor the progress of given objectives. The growth of new Madaris should be strictly controlled along with documentation of all leftover Madaris and checking of their funding and sources of income through regular audits. It should be ensured that Madaris teaches general subjects and take educational board

examinations. Moreover, Madaris found involved in malicious activities should be sealed and banned including those constructed illegally on government land.

General educational reforms should include a clear perception of national issues enhancing the mental horizon of the masses. An increase in the education budget and gradual improvement in the literacy rate by up to 70 % is essential in long term to form a responsible society that can differentiate between right and wrong. More schools can also be established promoting free education specifically for girl children. Gradual removal of regional disparity in standards of education that varies in different provinces of Pakistan must be a priority of the long-term reforms. Furthermore, ensuring technical and vocational education to address unemployment in the medium to long term and peace education must be included in curriculum texts.

Another long-term solution that can be aimed at is the promotion of national integration and cohesion as a national interest. The government should follow the strategy of political accommodation in response to political challenges. Dialogue and political discourse be encouraged at each tier by demonstrating a political will to integrate the nation in a crisis like the 1965 war, floods, and earthquakes.

**Conclusion:**

Regional and ethnic divides in the country, political instability, poor governance, corruption, and religious fundamentalism coupled with terrorism (Jalalzai, 1988), are the major hurdles to the progress and prosperity of Pakistan. The country's image as a progressive nation has been marred in the comity of nations. The situation is acting as a psychological barrier to a vast segment of society in raising feelings of national pride. Poverty, illiteracy, the influx of illegal immigrants, and lack of social justice are acting as a catalyst to terrorism and militancy, severely affecting the National security matrix of Pakistan. Today, Militant outfits pose the greatest threat to Pakistan's internal security. The

need of the hour for the country's leadership is to rise above self/vested interests, unite the

nation and respond to these challenges with sincerity, courage, and resolve. As Allama Iqbal

rightly said, "All imprints are incomplete without heart blood."

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