

Federalism in Pakistan: A Conflict Management Tool to Manage Ethnic Diversities (2002-2012)

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Abstract: *Federations can be different at the level of centralism and in practices of governance. Due to such idiosyncratic features, states can be considered as centralized on the basis of the powerful federal government at the centre or decentralized because of the implementation of the theory of devolution of power and majoritarian federations due to the influential position of majority ethnic groups of the society. Certain federal states can apply a multi-dimensional system of governance, power and authority, while some other states can ascent more centralized and powerful governance. Some scholars alleged that the capability of the Federal state to meet the issue of ethnic diversity diverges transversely to its commitments and different structures. The aforementioned is further claimed that “a formal federal system functions in practice as a unitary system; the system’s capacity is not according to the needs to accommodate ethnic and national cleavages” (Kohli, 2004). On the basis of such suggestions, this research paper endeavors to examine federalism as a tool to manage ethnic diversities in Pakistan. This paper argues that a more effective paradigm of the power sharing mechanism can be fruitful to enable federalism in Pakistan to manage ethnic diversities more exclusively.*

Key Words: Federalism, Pakistan, Ethnic Diversities, Conflict Management, Power Sharing

Introduction

Ethnic conflicts are not a new phenomenon, but their present insurgency and concentration are considered a new development; it needs an essential consideration and comprehensive examination. It is claimed that 90 percent of nations and their homelands are heterogeneous in nature, and this characteristic of heterogeneity is supposed to be increased with the passage of time due to patterns of global migration of human beings based on different aspirations and needs towards different states and regions, ethnic clashes and the consequential political strains to convert more prevalent in future decades. Such worldwide indicators of ethnicity have been engrossed substantial attention from social scientists. Many advanced, as well as emerging states, have been experiencing the issue of ethnic diversities; the problematic conditions of political unpredictability triggered by ethnic issues seem to like to be more anxious in the developing regions or states. Experiential studies of progressive federations recommend some acquaintances amongst political institutions and the increase of ethnic mobilization. Policies recommended different levels to accommodate

ethnic diversities in such multi-ethnic federations suggested some practicable and acceptable conflict management paradigms like an equal distribution of resources, provincial autonomy and power-sharing arrangements (Mushtaq, 2009).

Democracy is likely to be possible in heterogeneous societies, nevertheless, merely if their type of democracy based on the basic essence of conflict management theory truly. Certain European countries have managed diversity through democratic norms by adopting a federal system of governance, but an inclusive concert of these arrangements remained diversified. McGarry argued, “Federalism is usually not enough: practices like to accommodate marginal ethnic groups of society, particularly at the level of the federal government, are highly important to the success of multi-ethnic federalism” (McGarry, 2006). Adeney suggested that, “marginal groups should be provided a certain degree of accommodation and representation in institutions of decision-making within federal designs of states.” She also argued, even though the federation is responsible for

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autonomy, however, it does not ensure security to different ethnic groups at different levels of the federation in national decision-making institutions ([Adeney, 2007](#)).

Bermeo determines that federal structures expedite efficacious settlements in ethnically diverse federations. Nevertheless, federations can fluctuate on the basis of centralization and the system of governance. It is believed that the capability of a federation to meet ethnic diversities can be different on the basis of its functions and features ([Bermeo, 2004](#)).

The Federal setup in Pakistan has witnessed many vicissitudes since 1947. Many times, it has remained incapable of managing ethnic diversities after its independence. At present, Pakistan as a federation is amongst the most linguistically and ethnically multifarious state. Pakistan's history proves that many ethnolinguistic and culturally diverse groups have jeopardized the writ and authority of the state on multiple occasions due to ethnic differences (Cohn, 2005).

It has been noted that political violence based on ethnic diversities caused political instability in many states. Many substitutes have been presented to federation wished-for managing diversity based on ethnicity in Pakistan. The anticipated solutions consisted of confederation and accommodation of marginal groups in the decision-making process through the power-sharing mechanism and fresh delimitation of provincial boundaries ([Adeney, 2007](#)). Some stakeholders argued the assimilation of barred and marginalized ethno-linguistic groups into the mainstream political process and federal structure of Pakistan ([Alqama 1997](#)). However, there are strong arguments for unflinching strategies to reorganize Pakistan as a federation to accommodate ethnic problems. Kennedy has proposed to reshape territorial frontiers of the federating units to make arrangements to bring them more adjacent with conflicts based on ethnicity in a federation to control the intensity of ethnic diversities. Kennedy also ratified enhanced federalization of power and capability for the suggested identical constituent associating units of the state ([Kennedy 1993](#)).

Theoretical Perspective

Federalism is not only considered as a system of governance to make institutional arrangements within a nation-state but also analyzed as a political theory. In federalism, a group of adherents proposed to bind together with a principal head of the state representing the masses of different aspects of the society. The

word federalism has been derived from the Latin word, "foedus" it may be explained as "a union or alliance where units of a state agree to form a common union with its own distinctiveness and integrity, but at the same time, different parts will keep its own individuality and integrity" ([Peterson, 2004](#)). According to this explanation, "federalism is a system of sovereignty rule and shared rule; there is a supposition that diversities can be resolved peacefully through judicial guidelines and by constitutional mechanisms".

Federalism helps in promoting to create a political unification and a nation-state involving various constituent federating units and people of different ethnic aspirations through mutually agreed constitutional and legal structures that determined the association among newly formed federal authority and its constituent federating units and also help to make arrangements of power-sharing mechanism between them. Federalism helps as an instrument and performs as an effort in heterogeneous societies to encourage collaboration and harmonization in all the aspects of a political system, especially in social, political, economic and administrative arenas, as well as to accommodate ethnicity and regionalism of the constituent units in a federation ([Nazir, 2008](#)).

On the basis of the above discussions, it can be determined that a vital characteristic of the federation is the presence of two sets of government within the same locality or territory. Each set of government enjoys its independent powers within their exclusive domain provided by the federal constitution. Important political institutions should be established, and some political measures have to be taken to accommodate this independence of each government of federating unit. Such arrangements can be designated as prerequisites of federalism. Such essentials of federalism are Sovereignty of the Constitution of the federation and the Formal Division of Power among the federating units of the state.

The constitution promulgated to fulfil the needs of a federal state promotes the separation of power amongst the central and regional governments of the federating units in a federation within their defined sphere ([Friedrich, 1968](#)). The rule of formal division of power is mostly agreed upon. However, the question of intensity of authority, power and autonomy for the central government in the federation or its constituent federating units is a still debatable and controversial issue ([Wharee, 1990](#)). In federations of scattered regions, the style of power-sharing paradigms between central and

governments of the units, found different from state to state. Though, all the constitutions in federal states are promulgated by following the theory of separation of power. The governing standard is that whatever is commonly agreed in the federal structure of a state and for which homogeneity is required bestowed to the central government, other matters and issues that required intensive precise intentions are assigned to the constituent federating units. But the specific values and rules can be different from state to state, based on political experiences and intentions set by the framers of the constitution. The central government should neither be too strong as in the case of the former USSR that the constitutional units of federation lose their individuality, nor it should be as weak that some federating units attempt to declare their independence is culminating in civil war, as it happened in the USA causing civil war in 1864-1865 ([Riker, 1964](#)).

In order to avoid any clash concerning central and regional governments, their roles are defined in the constitution comprehensively with as much accuracy as possible. However, an almost uniform scheme is implemented in all the federations of the world to attain the required purposes. Generally, this role is consigned to legislatures, and the federating units have also been allocated a direct or indirect role in the law-making process. Despite the demarcation of areas of proficiency and division and separation of power, all the governments of federating units in a federation, have to collaborate and harmonize their activities to run the affairs of state more smoothly and successfully ([Schwartz, 1955](#)).

According to any description of federalism as a political system or political theory, the line drawn between the federal or central government and the governments of federating units is precarious for engendering the necessitated benefits of federalism. Such frontiers of federalism determine the powers bestowed to the federal government and those detained by the governments of federating units, states or provinces within a federation. Usually, in a federation federal government at center and state governments of federating units legitimately and conventionally cooperate and share responsibilities with each other to run the affairs of the state smoothly. The mutual authorities do not suggest that authority consignment is inconsequential. The capability and efficacy of a federation can be contingent upon the commitment of such authorities as well as the capacity and inclination of each level of government to fulfil its obligations.

Ethnic Conflict Management Approach to the Study of Federalism

Theoretic methodologies to federalism explain considerations concerning the landscape of federal structure and its features functions. Such methods have been categorized into two broad-spectrum categories, normative and empirical. It is believed that Normative approaches mostly elaborate presumed benefits and disadvantages of ideological and institutional federalism. Some explanations at the normative level relate federalism with reconciliation, sanctuary, nationality and democratic norms. On the other hands, a viewpoint of scholars resists that federalism instigates territorial disparities and coercion of native minorities by indigenous majorities. Empirical or Experiential studies discoursed structures of federations by analyzing power-sharing arrangements amongst central and integral regimes of federating units, fluctuating nature of relationships among these constitutional phases of government, discrepancies between federal structures and systems comparatively, the process of functioning of federal structures, and foundations and magnitudes of the creation and termination of federal systems ([Burris, 2001](#)).

This classification can be liable for an informal discrepancy regarding operational (empirical) and theoretical (normative) traits of the federal system. Consequently, various challenging approaches for studying federalism were evolved during the last five decades. Formal, Legal, Political and Sociological approaches have been introduced by C.D. Tarlton to explain federalism. Institutional and Sociological aspects of federalism have been identified by Anthony H. Birch. Davis as a social scientist has introduced basic inclinations for explaining federalism as the quality of society, a matter of degree of conflicts, the process of power-sharing for a nation-state to operate and flourish as a federation. Sociological, Political and Institutional approaches to study federalism have been introduced by Thorlockson. Such classification has provided different methods to scholars for answering multiple and significant questions about the structure and functions of a federation. In spite of all these approaches nowadays the ethnic conflict management approach is more prominent in federalism to accommodate or tackle ethnic diversities to stabilize the political system of a federal state.

The theory of ethnic conflict management is applied to reduce the intensity of conflicts and issues caused by ethnic diversities. According to this theory, such policies formulated and institutions are established which support to

recognize the ethnic conflicts based on linguistic, religious, and social differences, arrangements made to accommodate all such cleavages of society to protect them from majoritarian aggressions. Conflict management does not intend to root out such ethnic differences and issues permanently; it will only help to overcome the differences by accommodating different minority and ethnic groups in mainstream politics and the decision-making process to bring stability in the political system of a federal state. Because it is argued, "the crucial problem in politics is the management of conflicts based on ethnicity." That's why some scholars advocated that the ability of federation to deal with different conflicts could not be assessed on the basis of elimination of ethnic conflicts ([Gagnon, 1993](#)).

The foundations of ethnic conflict management theory are based on different political, legal, territorial, economic and other practical approaches in ethnically heterogeneous states to manage ethnic diversities successfully. F.S. Cohen explained, "Ethnic conflict management refers to the capacity of political institutions to contain ethnic conflicts within their mechanisms, routines, and procedures for resolution." Presently, it is suggested that cultural and ethnic heterogeneity should be recognized by ethnically heterogeneous states to ease ethnic diversities, while in past states tried to attain ethnic homogenization to deal ethnic, cultural and political conflicts. In this respect, techniques of coercive acclimatization and physical annihilation are followed by multi-ethnic states ([Kymlicka, 2001](#)).

J. McGarry and B. O'Leary, who elaborated categorization of state functions concerning parameters of ethnicity, have separated policies towards ethnic problems of ethnically diverse states into two comprehensive groups of managing and doing away with ethnic conflicts. Among the methodologies of removing ethnic conflicts comprised of integration or assimilation, based on enforced bulk population transfer, genocide and secession of ethnic groups within a federation. Techniques of handling ethnic diversities, in contrast, consisted of hegemonic control, mediation, sanctification, consociationalism and federalism ([McGarry & O'Leary, 1993](#)). They opine that from among the four tools of doing away with differences, mass killing and enforced massive inhabitants relocations are not ethically supportable, and hereafter should be shunned to discourse issues of ethnic diversities ([McGarry & O'Leary, 1993](#)). Conversely, integration and separation are both supported and criticized. Though, they are tools of ethnic homogenization ([McGarry & O'Leary,](#)

[1993](#)). Globally, many multi-ethnic countries experienced assimilative strategies with a view to abolishing ethnic differences. Western democratic states where rubbishing to recognize communal privileges of ethnic subgroups are tradition endorsed what Sammy Smooha termed as a strategy of "privatization of ethnicity" comprehensively used the policy of integration. In broad-spectrum, policies of assimilation tried to promote only linguistic and cultural renounce communal and group moralities deprived of various indigenous groups of official instruments for distinctive survival ([Smooha, 2002](#)).

Nonetheless, today we notice a mounting recognition that imitating ethnically diverse groups of people into a progressive and undeviating nation is not a pragmatic approach. Consequently, tasks to assimilative strategies are on the rise due to their discrepancy in relations with societal impartiality. Many intellectuals such as W. Kymlicka explains further and are of the opinion that the implementation of basic values of liberalism, alike freedom of a distinct is linked with affiliation to cultural and linguistic institutions that must be respected by liberal democracies so far as minority rights are concerned ([Lijphart, 1991](#)). Secession, just like assimilation, is an approach to accommodate ethnic diversities in the federal state to attain ethnic homogenization. But, in this case, they pursue ethnic homogenization through territorial partition by dividing a state. It could also be an integral part of self-determination. The compatibility of secession with liberal democratic theories are broadly accepted by many a scholar ([Kymlicka, 2005](#)).

In this regard, Daryl J. Glaser is of the view that secession by eliminating ethnic diversities related to political activities and enable the restructuring of political antagonism about a specific ethnic class, sociopolitical metamorphoses and approaches of governance in a state. Such a "normalization of politics" might be diminishing representative consideration further meaningfully, permitting the aforementioned to ponder on designs, programs and ideas reasonably than ethnic reliabilities" ([Glaser, 2003](#)). Conversely, persons who opposed secession renounce the notion of crafting ethnologically homogenous states due to multifaceted and overlying designs of ethnicity and enhanced peripheral and ultimate migration. Despite these polarized interpretations, many social and political scholars like Arend Lijphart looked to have assorted visions of separation. He distinguished that in a large number of circumstances, partition, separation, or secession cannot be practised as a concrete solution to deal with ethnic conflicts. On the other hand, Lijphart

pointed out the harmony of particular statesmen and intellectuals in entirely renouncing separation. He recommended office-bearers and head of states to be liberal, democratic and lenient towards separation to decrease the intensity of ethnic conflicts amongst different ethnic groups existed within a nation-state when it is possible (Lijphart, 1991). Afar such two diverged techniques of managing ethnic diversities, on other hands consociationalism and federalism are more acceptable and prominent instruments to deal with ethnicity. These philosophies are cooperative with democratic customs and values but as well as became prevalent mechanisms of balancing harmony and diversity in states that are demarcated by social and political cleavage. (McGarry & O’Leary, 1993). In federalist states, by applying conflict management theory in a true sense, usually the tactics of power-sharing, equal distribution of resources and provincial autonomy are used to eliminate or control the intensity of ethnic diversities within the society of a federation. This research paper also critically

investigated the practice of the power-sharing mechanism as a principle of conflict management theory to accommodate ethnic diversities in Pakistan as a federal state.

Power Sharing to Manage Ethnic Conflicts

General elections of 2002 were contested between two groups of political alliances, clearly alienated into pro-Musharraf and anti-Musharraf political parties. The alliance of political parties supporting Musharraf consisted of PML-Q, National Alliance, and MQM established a federal government at center. PML-Q also formed the provincial government in the province of Punjab, the largest federating unit of the Pakistani federation and was also succeeded to establish coalition governments in Baluchistan and Sindh with the support of MMA and MQM. MMA emerged as a single leading political party and established provincial government in federating unit of NWFP, currently known as Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK).

Table 1. Party Position in General Elections 2002.

Party Name	National Assembly	Punjab Assembly	Sindh Assembly	NWFP (KPK) Assembly	Baluchistan Assembly
Pakistan Muslim League	92	131	6	11	6
Pakistan People’s Party Parliamentarians	46	63	51	8	2
Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal Pakistan (MMA)					
Alliance consisted of four following Islamic political parties					
• Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan	45	9	8	48	13
• Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam					
• Jamiat Ulema-e-Pakistan					
• Tehrik-e-Jafaria Pakistan					
• Jamiat Ahle Hadith					
Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz)	14	38	0	4	0
Muttahida Qaumi Movement	13	0	32	0	0
National Alliance (NA)					
Alliance consisted of four following regional political parties					
• Sindh Democratic Alliance	13	12	12	0	5
• Millat Party					
• National Peoples Party					
• Sindh National Front					
Pakistan Muslim League (F)	4	0	10	0	0
Pakistan Muslim League (J)	2	3	0	0	0
Pakistan People’s Party					
Pakistan Awami Tehreek	1	0	0	0	0
Jamhoori Wattan Party	1	0	0	0	3
Pakistan Muslim League (Z)	1	1	0	0	0
Balochistan National Party	1	0	0	0	1
Pakhtun-khwa Milli Awami Party	1	0	0	0	4
Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf	1	0	0	1	0

Independents	17	38	5	15	7
Pakistan People's Party Patriot	17	0	0	0	0
Pakistan People's Party (S)	2	0	0	9	0
Awami National Party	0	0	0	8	0
Total	272				

Source: Election commission of Pakistan (www.ecp.gov.pk)

The results of General Election 2002 show that no political party succeeded to attain a simple majority, required to establish a government in the

center lonely. Therefore, a coalition government was established to accommodate multi-ethnic identities within the state.

Table 2. Summary of Coalition Cabinets 2002-2007

S. No	Leading Party	Prime Minister	Coalition Partners	Votes Polled		Coalition Type	Time Period
				In favor	against		
1	PML Q	Zafarullah Jamali	PML-Q, MQM, PPP-S, NA	172	170	Multiethnic	2002-2004
2	PML Q	Shujat Hussain	PML-Q, MQM, PPP-S, NA	189	153	Multiethnic	2004-2004
3	PML Q	Shaukat Aziz	PML-Q, MQM, PPP-S, NA	191	151	Multiethnic	2004-2007

It was the first occasion in the contemporary history of the political system of Pakistan as a federal state that politically heterogeneous government at center and in federating units consisted of coalition completed their constitutionally identified legislative tenure. Though, political steadiness was promising due to Musharraf's vibrant and commanding involvement in keeping the coalition integral. While Musharraf set aside top political leadership like Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto outside the game of mainstream politics during the tenure of the coalition regime to overcome the issue of political instability. Though, this effort provided the opportunity for political rivals of the past to join hands with each other against Musharraf's regime. In London, the "Charter of Democracy" was signed by both the famous political leaders of the political arena of Pakistan. The major theme of this charter of democracy was to work together for the restoration of democracy in its true sense with complete customs and values in Pakistan (Kronstadt, 2008).

In October 2007, presidential elections were held; Pervez Musharraf won the election and elected as president of Pakistan for the next five

years term easily. After the presidential election, the stage for general elections of 2008 was set to attain fresh mandate for National assembly as well as provincial assemblies. PPP and PML-N won 88 and 67 general seats in the National assembly and appeared as mainstream leading political parties in the general elections of 2008. After the provision of reserved/ special seats for women and the amalgamation of autonomously elected members of the parliament, the number of seats secured by PPP and PML-N rose up to 122 and 91, respectively. At provincial level politics, in general elections, Punjab was led by PML-N as a major political party. While in Sindh province, PPP succeeded to claim the required majority clearly. However, in urban Sindh, MQM emerged as a leading political party by winning 25 seats of the National assembly. ANP as a political force claimed the majority in the province of KPK. PML-Q was in a position to establish its government in Baluchistan. A coalition government was established at the center by forming a broad-based alliance comprising of PPP, MQM, MMA, PML-N and ANP. It claimed that this coalition of political parties was the largest heterogeneous alliance of its kind in the political history of Pakistan (Rizvi, 2008).

Table 3. Results of General Elections 2008

Political Party	National Assembly	Punjab Assembly	Sindh Assembly	NWFP (KPK) Assembly	Baluchistan Assembly
Pakistan People's Party	122	107	93	30	12
Pakistan Muslim League (N)	91	170	0	9	1
Pakistan Muslim League (Q)	54	84	9	6	18

Muttahida Qaumi Movement	25	0	51	0	0
Awami National Party	13	4	2	48	4
Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal Pakistan	7	2	0	14	10
Pakistan Muslim League (F)	5	3	8	0	0
Pakistan People's Party (S)	1	0	0	6	0
Others	20	4	3	11	20

Source: Election Commission of Pakistan (www.ecp.gov.pk)

In a post-Musharraf era, the theory of politics of reconciliation became the most popular political stance in the field of politics in Pakistan. In the Bhurban declaration, both the leading political parties, PPP and PML-N, expressed their sentiments and showed determination to evolve in power-sharing mechanism to establish coalition governments at the center as well as provincial levels also. The Bhurban announcement was acknowledged as an excessive step to promote the politics of reconciliation in Pakistan. While political analysts were arousing questions on such power-sharing arrangements among mainstream political forces due to past political rivalries. Sayed Yousaf Raza Gillani, a major leader of PPP from south Punjab, was appointed as Prime Minister of Pakistan by the PPP's led coalition government in the centre. Mr. Gillani organized the federal cabinet. Every coalition partner was given a due representation in cabinet ministries on the basis of its numerical strength in the National assembly of Pakistan. In the beginning, out of 24 positions, PPP claimed 11, 9 ministries were allocated to PML-N, 3 positions given to ANP and JUI-F and one ministry was given to an independent candidate. ([Kronstadt, 2008](#)).

The installation of the grand coalition government in Islamabad was an exceptional practice in the political history of Pakistan. The coalition was also unique due to its heterogeneous nature because it comprised of PML-N and PPP, leading national-level rival political parties, MQM and ANP, two regionally influencing political parties with different ideological and political bases and JUI-F as a religious, political party. All these political parties set aside their mutual political and ideological clashes for the restoration of the democratic process and civil rule as a prerequisite to bringing stability in the political system and federal design of Pakistan as a nation-state. Political leadership seemed, agreed upon the doctrine of mutual cooperation and reconciliation because they were in fear that their mutual differences might help non-democratic actors and powers to gain their benefits by rolling backs the democratic system. But this concept did not flourish for a long time, and mutual understandings vanished within a very short

period of time due to past political clashes and ideological differences of coalition partners ([Rizvi, 2008](#)).

Dispute over the restoration of the judiciary was the main reason for PML-N to leave the coalition government. On May 12, 2008, PML-N presented the resignation letters of their ministers of the federal cabinet to the prime minister. While, on the other hand's leadership of PML-N announced to continue its support for government conditionally based on sensitivity and importance of a specific issue. But after a very short span of time, PML-N categorical declared to leave the federal coalition government completely and to play its role as an effective opposition.

In provinces, coalition governments were also established. But the situation of clashes was not different than center. In Punjab alliance was shared by PML-N and PPP, but the relations among the two partners were not exemplary in nature. PPP leadership showed their grievances about the behavior and treatment of PML-N with their party representatives in the coalition provincial government in Punjab. Such issues were posing a threat to the coalition government, and the separation of PML-N from the federal cabinet triggered the problematic conditions to become more verse. In Sindh, a coalition government was shared by an alliance consisted of PPP, ANP and MQM. ANP and MQM have rivalries in Karachi and attacked each other many times. ([Burki, 2010](#)).

In addition, PPP and MQM have ideological and political differences on numerous issues. MQM tried to realize the PPP leadership that if policies of the Sindh government did not change towards MQM, it would leave the coalition governments at the center as well as in the province. On the other hands, the small provinces of KPK and Baluchistan were showing more success in the functioning coalition governments smoothly. In KPK, a coalition led by PPP and ANP managed to overcome and settled their mutual differences successfully, and complete harmony was prevailing on different issues and policies. In the same way coalition government in Baluchistan was also functioning successfully. Initially, the federal government was established

by five coalition partners to promote the doctrine of reconciliation and mutual cooperation for the sake of democracy. But now, with the passage of time, only two major partners PPP and ANP were running the affairs of the state. The most heterogeneous political coalition at the center could not survive for a longer period of time because coalition partners at federal and as well as provincial levels found involved in mutual antagonism.

Conclusion

Pakistan is one of the most heterogeneous states in the world. The multi-ethnic political culture caused much political turmoil in the state's political system since its inception. The issue of ethnicity forced the political leadership to divide the country into two independent states in 1971.

After this horrible incident, the political leadership of Pakistan tries its level best to sooth the bleeding wound of ethnic diversities by accommodating ethnic groups in mainstream politics through applying different essence of conflict management theory within the federal structure of the state. In the last two decades, especially after the 2002 general elections, more effective steps were taken to accommodate different ethnic groups. The rule of power-sharing by establishing a coalition government in the centre and in the federating units of the state was followed to fulfil the demands of marginal political and ethnic groups to strengthen the federation. In the light of all the steps taken by the federation to grasp ethnicity, it can be concluded that the ethnic diversities in Pakistan, in spite of few incidents, always played a vital role to strengthen the federation.

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