Margalla Papers

2015

(Special Edition)

"Perspectives on Contemporary India"

Margalla Papers

2015 (Special Edition)

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ

TAUGHT MAN THAT WHICH HE KNEW NOT

Margalla Papers 2015 (Special Edition)
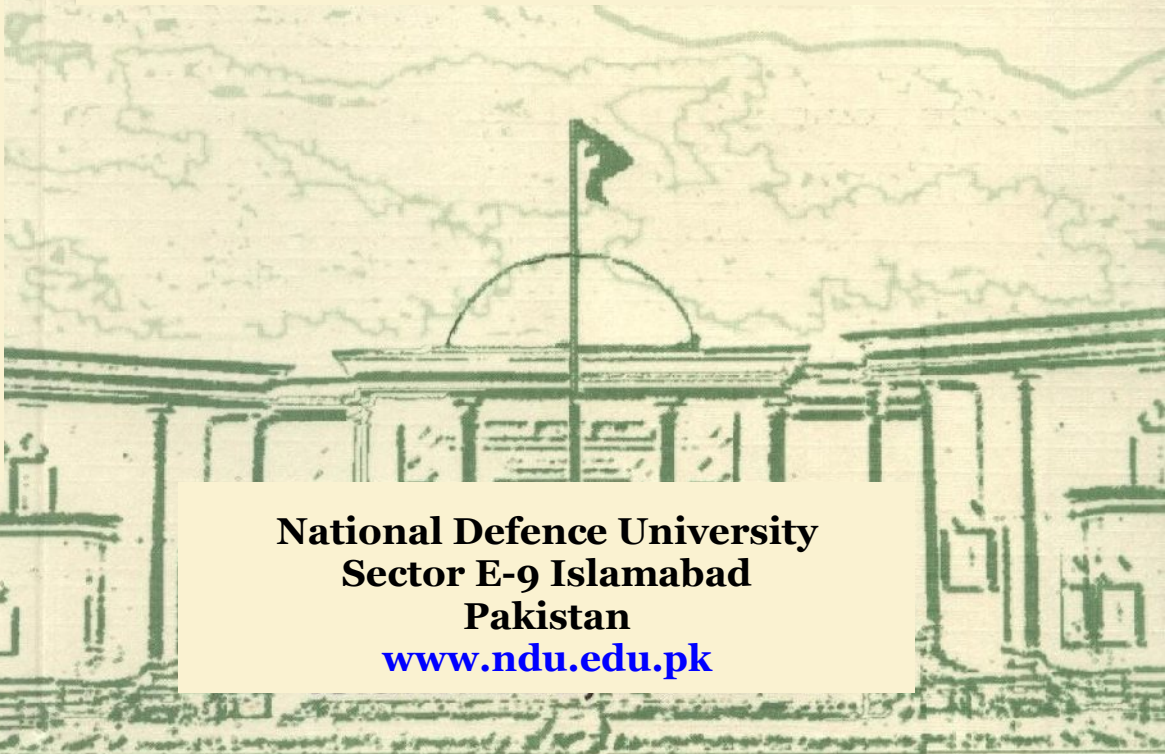
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CONTENTS

FOREWORD

The compilation titled: 'Perspectives on Contemporary India' represents an endeavor by researchers at ISSRA to revisit the contemporary Indian scene and unfold a critical appreciation of various themes that are relevant to shaping a composite picture. The study is significant in as much as the range of issues it addresses, vibrations of these issues beyond the national frontiers, and its timing to monitor the strategic changes that are in the making.

The perspectives unfolded in the study entail a vivid discussion of Indian aspirations of a major power role, dynamics of situation relevant to minorities and militancy, water management issues, and 2014 general elections that manifest a dichotomy between the elite's drive for the country's economic revival and reenactment of Hindutva. The compilation brings to fore an ensemble of rich though not necessarily unanimous, viewpoints on the emerging trends in our neighborhood.

The undertaking is in consonance with the mandate of ISSRA-NDU as policy-relevant national think tank. This offers a good reference point for further specialized studies, and for a closer consideration of the issues at policy-relevant circles.

Major General Noel I. Khohkar, HI (M)
Director General
Institute for Strategic Studies; Research & Analysis (ISSRA)

PERSPECTIVES ON CONTEMPORARY INDIA: AN OVERVIEW OF THE COMPILATION

Ambassador Arif Kamal

Prelude

Five India-specific studies in the compilation aim at offering perspectives on contemporary India and bring to the readership a better appreciation of thematic issues that are relevant to Pakistan's interface with India. The ensemble makes a broad-brush picture of the transformations, whether accumulated or in the making, in our neighborhood, thus relate to assessing the scenario and policy options. This carries a focus on India's aspirations for a global role, dynamics of minorities situation in the secular setting, interstate water management issues, militancy as a case study and recent electoral process that unfolds the new elite's twin track approach on 'Hindutva' and 'economic revival'. The themes when seen as part of an organic whole, offer a reference point for more specialized studies in the days ahead.

Significance

The scholastic undertaking presupposes significance of Pakistan's interface with India and vise versa as next door neighbors and therefore, of the profound impact which the dynamics of either scenario might carry on the other. The relationship in spite of tests and trials of our times, is critically important for peace and progress in South Asia and a subject of constant review.

Understandably, the fallout from India's domestic scene as well as its external posture evokes a legitimate interest in Pakistan. For example, India's power politics and who is on

the steering: hardline or softline; issues such as minorities and militancy have had their own momentum. Similarly, India's alignments within the global and regional frame, have been a determinant factor in Pakistani threat perception and in its response. Concurrently, Indian defence doctrine in spite of its China-specific pretentions remains very much cognizant of Pakistani reality in its neighborhood. The composite picture offered in the two-way exchanges remains critically important for issues of peace and progress in the region.

Today, India's profile is taking a significant turn in terms of aspirations and a reality-check of her capacity to perform and deliver. The contemporary scene, therefore, evokes considerable interest for those engaged in strategic studies. The study is well-timed as Indian scene has attained a dynamic shift in the follow up of 2014 general elections, from moderate though inertia-ridden approach to a hardline and proactive treatment of issues in the policy-relevant domains. The discussions are now focused on the quality and pace of 'India's Rise' and on whether the mix of proactive and hardline approaches promise any significant gain or otherwise for peace and progress in the region. This presents a dilemma viz-a-viz hopes that in the post 2014 Afghanistan scenario, Pakistan instead of facing a two-front situation finds an environment conducive for settling hotbeds of conflict and to build horizontal economic connectivity.

Methodology

The researchers while engaged in the study, employed qualitative methods of research and applied analytical and explanatory approaches in support of hypothetical statements. Instead of questionnaires and surveys, leading academic and policy relevant experts from Islamabad were gathered on our campus to deliberate on each issue separately. The papers are indeed case studies of five issues in the Indian scenario, presented from Pakistani perspective.

A good number of academicians and policy relevant experts from different institutes and think tanks in Islamabad had joined the ISSRA faculty in a series of thematic discussions relevant to this study. In this context, we note with appreciation invaluable feedback and contributions made by Dr. Muhammad Mujeeb Afzal (Quaid-e-Azam University), Mr. Ejaz Haider (Political Analyst, Capital Television), Mr. Salman Zaidi (Jinnah Institute), Dr. P.I. Cheema, (Dean, Faculty of Contemporary Studies), Dr. Muhammad Khan and Dr. Shaheen Akhtar (International Relations Department-FCS). The exercise enabled the writers to test their hypothesis and fine tune their products.

Scope

Amongst the studies, a revisitation of India's 'major power syndrome' figures in prominently as the first chapter. The study argues that pronounced as the largest democracy and rapidly developing country, India has a 'pressing urge to act powerful' and therefore, a mindset that is illustrative of its ambitions. Concurrently, the country is likely to benefit from the 'proxy role' on behalf of the US, as the later shifts its priorities and redraws rules of engagement. This aspect relates to how much it can cash on the so called US policy of China's containment.

If the capacity to influence the others is a key gauge, its reflection in acquiescence if not allegiance, will be very much relevant. It remains uncertain if India was any near to attaining the status. An answer to the preposition would, in major parts, rest upon an appreciation if there is any narrowing gap between the country's ambitions and military muscle on one hand and the quality of its socio-political development, economic progression on the other.

The discussion of minorities in India in relation to the country's secularism, is revealing in terms of newer approaches towards understanding the democratic order: democracy as synonymous with 'majoritarian' political culture, inability of secularism to deliver on equal opportunities for the religion-based minorities, and in the wake of Hindutva's rise, growing apprehensions of a faster loss of cultural identity in an otherwise pluralistic society. The study appreciates that an Indian minority, for example Muslims, show awareness of multiple identities carried by them at present. However, the minority representation in all sectors of Indian life and development remains abysmally low. In a nutshell, 'the secularism was seen as a vanguard to celebrate India's cultural diversity'. However, in reality, 'India has not celebrated the diversity but only accommodated it'.

The inadequacy of the Indian political system to unfold fair and equitable representation of minorities in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections is already manifested. Muslims constitute fourteen percent of the country's population while Muslim's returned to the legislature are only four percent of the total seats. In demographic terms, India is the third largest Muslim populated country and therefore, it remains critical for the country's image abroad, whether it conveys positive or negative connotations. The play of soft Hindutva as against the fundamentalist posture, can possibly slow down if not outweigh, negativities this may carry.

A segment of the study relates to discussion of the dispute settlement process over shared rivers between Indian states. It argues that although the process established for settling water dispute between the Indian states is unique and of significance importance, a number of problems have emerged in the course of implementing this process and those problems need to be addressed to strengthen the relevance and effectiveness of the process.

The work on 'insurgencies' or 'sustained armed resistance' phenomenon offers a comparative study in 'anti-systemic ideological conflicts' with reference to India's Maoists and Pakistani Taliban. It recaps the ideological motivation to bring about a change in the status quo, whether conceived by human mind or ordained by the Creator. Beyond the ideological realm, it extends diagnostic survey to the notions of greed and grievances and to fears of 'alien inroads' into their settings. Concurrently, the work unfolds prescriptive approaches to address the negative fallout of the phenomenon. Accent of the study is on addressing the existentialist threats in the arena and on best ways to facilitate the actors' reentry into the mainstream.

Last but not the least, elections in 2014 are seen as watershed in the BJP's rise under Modi and a significant loss to Congress while reinforcing India's institutional strength and democratic advance. However, it raises a three-fold question that does not necessarily conform with the stereo-type projections: the BJP holds twelve percent edge over the Congress in the popular vote while its relative gains in terms of seats is six hundred percent. Second, the party's spectacular rise is directly related to the Congress's losses while regional parties remain prominent in the arena. This also signals a north-south divide. The election outcome carries an imprint of incumbency factor faced by Congress and *Charisma* associated with Modi. Lastly, the new elite in its run upto government, presided over a mix bag of Hindutva and quest for economic change. The future direction of the Indian politics is likely to rest upon an interplay of these factors.

The researchers stay short of finding Modi's similarities with Vajpayee and his era in view of contextual changes in the arena and limited experience of the party's earlier tenure. For this reason, the new elite is seen as an 'unknown commodity'. However, the study pins hopes on the leadership's economic drive as against Hindutva posture as any failure on the first

count can lead upto distractions that may be unhelpful for the region.

To sum up, the compilation unfolds a composite picture of the contemporary Indian scene in a thematic order. It therefore, presents a useful package for any policy-relevant analysis that may be necessitated from time to time. However, it may be important to expand the area of study and research beyond the five segments of this compilation and to carry forward the process in the days ahead.

INDIA'S 'MAJOR POWER SYNDROME': INTERPLAY OF THE US AND CHINA FACTOR

Ms. Beenish Sultan

Abstract

The world order is in a constant mode of transformation. There is an aura of fading unilateralism and 'rise of the Rest' viz-a-viz the West in the global setting. Consequently, this shift in power augurs well to the rise of the 'Asian century', hinging majorly on states like India and China. In this regard, pronounced as the largest democracy and rapidly developing country, India has a pressing urge to act 'powerful'. It desires to advance its interface with the world as a 'major' power, in the wake of declining uni-polarity. On the other hand, it seeks to boost its power projection in considerable sectors of the global economic and military indicators. Nonetheless, in these emerging trends, the United States is looking towards a proxy role of India in the region and in that perspective is also seeking to promote India as its 'face'. On the other hand, China as an emerging economic giant is steadily growing and posing threat to the status quo as desired by the Americans. In this scenario, Pakistan, as a neighbour to both India and China and ally to the US, cannot remain in isolation from the emerging trends and its repercussions. This setting indeed has the tendency to fuel an aura of 'strategic competition' amongst these states. In addition, it has also paved way for new power structures and global rebalancing of potential participants. Nonetheless, this paper analyzes as to whether India has eventually achieved status of a 'major' power, capable of influencing the international political arena or otherwise. The central argument rests on the notion: is India a major power or is it a major power in the making? And more importantly, will it be able to achieve this status in the realm of China and US global competition? And finally, how is Pakistan likely to be effected by these aspirations?

Key Words: Major power, strategic competition, regional power structure.

Prelude

Since time immemorial, States have strived to achieve a significant position in the international arena. Similarly, it has been a long-standing desire of the Indian élite to attain the status of a 'major power' in the international system. In fact, this 'major power syndrome' has been pronounced in the policies of every government in office, despite variations of intensity in its ambitions, application of the means to achieve it, and in the willingness to take hardline positions.[1] The country's nuclear program, development in science and technology, space program, emphasis on economic development, desire to emerge as a significant maritime force; all are variables that confirm this syndrome.

Theoretically, in the realm words of Kenneth Waltz, such behaviour of states depicts the desire to rather exercise power to the extent that one affects the others more than they are affected by themselves.[2] Furthermore, the desire of such nature which is rooted at the domestic level is taken within the ambit of neo-classical realist approach; as, it accepts the domestic level role of the power elite of a state to interpret dictate of the international system in order to articulate the response of a state.

An impetus for the Indian ambitions is provided by the sheer demographic factor, democratic process and institutional continuity and economic growth. It has a desire not only to attain a particular status in the international arena but also be able to influence the international political system for its own interests; a classic benefit obscured by genuine major powers. It may not like to bandwagon with the major powers for eternity and would like to rather join them in the queue. However, it is a fact that, established powers do not like the rise of other powers that would in turn provide challenge to their power circle. In recent history, the confrontation between the US and China is a readily available example. While this is true, conversely, if rising powers rather augment their power position in the international system instead of challenging the position of the already

accomplished ones, they indeed have a chance. India would probably like to work on the lines of the latter argument.

Depicting itself as 'incredible India', the country is marred with immense internal issues. There is a large population which falls below the poverty line, increased rural distress, frustrated farmers who were victims of bankruptcy, malnutrition both chronic and endemic, ill treatment with minorities, host to the most significant forms of insurgency-Maoists/Naxalite, and also mass developmental dislocations. Furthermore, its notion of secularism runs contrary to the ethnic and religious conflicts, mass killings and riots.[3] In other words, it is an India with a very weak governance system with oppressive manifestations.[4]

However, despite the grim picture, strategic and economic indicators as depicted by India in the international arena, presses on India's desire to act global. Nonetheless, it is pertinent to address various questions regarding India's 'major power syndrome': can India be actually declared as a 'major' power? Or looking at its current power position, can India eventually actualize its dream of being recognized as a 'major power'? A good deal of response would rest upon the graph of India's attainment in the 'Asian Century' and its capacity to play cards well in relation to mounting rivalry between the US and China. Nonetheless, discussion in the paper has been majorly carried out from the Pakistani perspective, however, as it is also definitional and involves various factors, the scope of the arguments may not be seen in isolation from how the international community, particularly the US and China, think about India.

India's Domestic Scenario

India continues to face innumerable challenges expressed in terms of mobilizing the masses to achieve significant domestic objectives. India, with 1,270,272,105 (1.27 billion) people is the second most populous country in the world,[5] The rate of population growth has slowed considerably in recent years, although it is still rapidly growing as compared to its

neighbor China.[6] However, as population increases, so does the number of heads to feed increase. Over the years, India has suffered from unprecedented issues due to population increase and simultaneous inability of the government to provide an even distribution of wealth in the country; hence, bringing about numerous human security challenges.

Population increase resulted in rapid urbanization. The United Nations predicted India's urban population to be around 40% in the year 2030.[7] According to preliminary reports from the 2011 Census, India now has 53 cities with over one million inhabitants, roughly as many as the United States. During past decade, 91 million were added to the urban population.[8] In absolute terms no country in the world has ever witnessed such massive urbanization, with the exception of China. If traditional models hold, India is on the verge of an accelerated phase of urbanization and the pace will be even more rapid in years ahead.[9](The most urbanized states are in India's southern half: Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and, increasingly, Andra Pradesh). The fig below indicates the average rate of urbanization in comparison with rural areas till the year 2011.
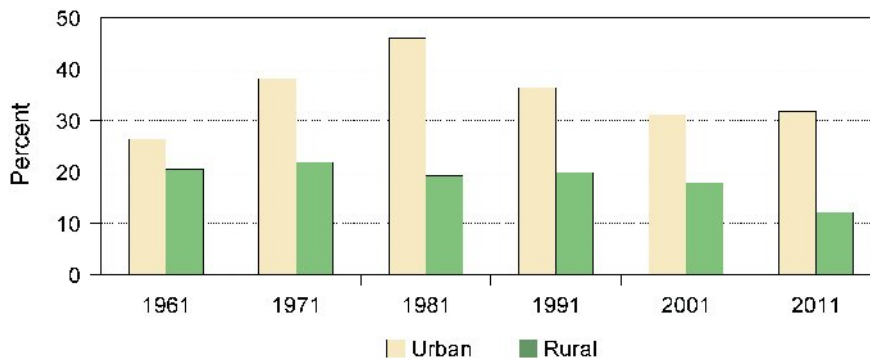

Fig. 1: India's average decadal urban and rural population growth rates for the decades ending 1961–2011 (percentage growth of urban and rural populations). *Source:* Government of India (2011).

Simultaneously, the urbanization trend carried with itself a huge drawback. Urbanization in India was not necessarily consistent with the industrialization process. This resulted in

increased numbers of slums in urban areas and a large population either being unemployed or employed in sectors which do not provide any financial benefits after retirement.[10]Furthermore, no Indian city is in the top 25 on GDP or GDP per capita.[11]On the other hand, it also puts forward the tragedy of low productivity from agriculture, where 52 % of the agricultural labor force only provides 17 % of the country's GDP.[12]Hence, a majority of India's rural population faces intense food price inflation of up to 17%.[13] How India will be able to merge millions of peasants in a desired modern economy is the biggest challenge India is likely to face shortly in near future.

Furthermore, where urbanization has increased the quantity of labor available in India, it will take a lot of effort to utilize this demographic dividend at its best. One challenge is posed in the sector of education. The most urbanized areas provide quality education to the well-off only, creating a supply-demand mismatch in the working class. Simultaneously, there is lesser utilization of the labor force available by the private sector and shortage of adequately skilled labor in other sectors. According to a recent Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Economic Survey of India, the key to achieving faster economic growth is to produce adequate regular employment in addition to self-employment and casual employment. The report suggests that although regular employment has reached a certain level, but the dilemma is that it represents only 15% of the entire employment sector, one of the less productive endeavors.[14]

On the other hand, there has been a considerable amount of infrastructure building in India. This includes roads, ports, civil aviation, and telecommunication. However, this development was not corroborated by improvement in the energy sector, railways and irrigation. Hence, it continues to lag behind in social development i.e. education and healthcare and portrays a sorry picture in treatment to minorities. Speaking of minorities, the magnitude and scale of communal violence in the 2002 Gujrat riots and the terribly low number

of fervors expresses a persuasive witness to the fact that minorities in India have always been mishandled.[15] As per the definition given in the UN Convention on Prevention and Punishment for the Crimes of Genocide, India is the only democracy in world which has treated its minorities to not one but four genocide killings in the time span of 18 years. Delhi (84), Bhagalpur (87), Bombay (92), Gujarat (02).[16]

Social inequalities had also paved way for fueling one of the most significant insurgencies in South Asia- the Maoists. It affected a vast area throughout eastern and central India, with over 20,000 insurgents.[17] The government declares it to be the most significant internal security threat to the country. The motivation behind such a movement is none other than social deprivation, economic disparity and extreme poverty in these areas.

Nonetheless, India's fragile domestic condition poses challenge to the country's dream of being a 'major' power. However, despite disparities in its internal situation and the image it projects to the outside world, what is the basis of India's aspirations to attain a major power status? Response to such a question lies in understanding the national attributes of the country of which the elite seem cognizant.

Current setting and Strategic Position

At the global footing, India is acknowledged as a rising power by various notions; chief among these being: its current geopolitical status, maintenance of hegemony in the South Asian region and its economic and military perceptions. The table overleaf indicates its projected power potential in the economic and military domains:

Economic		Military	
GDP	US $ 1.877 Trillion	**Defence Budget**	US $ 36.3 billion

Annual GDP Growth	5.5 percent	Weapon Purchases	US $ 14.93 billion

Table 1. *the figures indicate India's projected power potential for the year 2014 and beyond.
Source:
http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/MS.MIL.XPND.GD.ZS

There is a consistent perception among the Indian elite that the country has the world's most enduring and largest civilization history, which provides an impetus for acquiring a significant leadership role in the world. On the other hand, the Indians also believe that domestically, there will be a time that the issues will be catered for and India will boost its status as the largest and most developed democracy in the world. This desire does not merely rest upon achieving a particular status or protecting the Indian prestige in the international arena. The underlying factors envisage recognition of India's geo-strategic location viz-a-viz South East Asia and a headway of the Indian Ocean.

However, it will be safe to assume at this point that India as a country smacks off opportunism in view of translating its material capabilities in to an increased ability to influence the international world order. In this regard, India's both strengths and weaknesses need to be distinguished based on its traditional foreign policy, and how it is moving on short and long term basis. Pertinent questions arise from the Indian psyche and its posture in the international arena: as, whether India is a power maximizer or a security maximizer? Is it able to do politics through diplomacy? And what is the role of the Indian eagerness and posture towards its economic integration in the international arena?

Consequently, India purses regional strategic objectives with a global agenda. In other words, it desires to maintain pre-eminence in the South Asian region and concurrently uplift its international profile. This it intends to achieve by exploiting its linkages through the Indian Ocean region and

the South China Sea by trade, investments, diplomacy and strategic partnerships. India is host to various multilateral dialogue processes in the respective maritime domains including the biennial MILAN gatherings with countries namely: Australia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand, Srilanka and Singapore. This resulted in the formation of an Indian Ocean Naval Symposium – IONS, in which India is the lead organizer.[18] Furthermore, it has actively participated in the anti-piracy naval initiatives taken up by major powers in the waters of Somalia and its off shoots. Particularly, India is focusing on boosting its naval strength by power projection and strategic deployments in the Indian Ocean.

In terms of bilateral trade through the IORA (Indian Ocean Rim Association), India's external trade rose to more than eight-fold in the last few years from US $ 19 billion to US $ 156.3 billion with India's exports to the region amounting to US$ 69 billion, and India's imports from the region aggregating US$ 87.3 billion. India is the third largest contributor to intra-IORA exports, with a 13.4 percent share in intra-exports and the largest contributor to intra-imports, which stood at 17.8 percent of total intra-IORA imports in 2010. India contributed 15.6 percent of total intra-IORA trade in 2010. India's trade balance with the region started experiencing a deficit from 2006 onwards and stood at US$ 18.4 billion.[19]

On the other hand, Indian expeditions are also disturbing the regional security environment. This is in tandem with the fading uni-polar order and peaceful rise of China; where the US views India's potential not only as a large country but also a neutralizer to the growth of China. Similarly, Pakistan as a traditional rival to India, strategically aligns with the Chinese against the evolving situation in the region. Afghanistan imbroglio also provides a playground for these states to ascertain their status in the regional order. Nonetheless, it is the rise of strategic alliances and traditional differences simultaneously.

Although India's powers status is yet to be recognized by other major powers, there are various gauges suggesting it to be a 'power' in the making. The indicators include, the country's ranking as the world's second largest population, fourth largest economy, eighth largest industrial economy, image of 'largest democracy' World's largest pool of scientists and engineers after the US, and Middle class double the size of that of Japan. The country projects the GDP growth rate of 5 to 7 percent, putting it behind only the US and China and ahead of Japan and Germany.

Notwithstanding the above, India has been less integrated into the world system. It somehow depicts the notion of a 'status inconsistent' nation. In saying so, India's uncertain economic growth, socio-political heterogeneity, water and energy crisis, and intra-regional conflicts are the key factors in determining this inconsistency. On the other hand, its eagerness to reach a certain level of attainment has rather turned to be counterproductive for the country's ultimate goal. This is evident in its role as viewed by the United States in acting as a 'proxy' in the region. This comes in wake of the fading uni-polar order and rise of the Asian century, primarily due to the consistent economic rise of China. An analysis of this dimension is imperative to understand the dynamics of this role.

Posture towards China

China will, for the most projected future, stay a major foreign policy and security challenge for India. It is one major power which encroaches directly on India's geopolitical breathing space. May it be the well known border disagreements and skirmishes across the Line of Actual Control-LoAC or the relationship with the United States. The countries have visibly shown inconsistent political relations over the years in the context of evolving regional and global dynamics. Their relationship may be viewed as a mix bag of both interdependence and rivalry. However, from the Chinese perspective, India may not be a threat in itself, but rather a 'swing state' which manages relations with other States in

order to pressurize China. May it be the Indian posture towards China rests upon the notion of forming alliances and network of relations with other major power specifically the US in order to curb Chinese pressure but avoiding to set off threat perceptions in the Chinese camp.

India-China economic relations also present a complex and somewhat ambiguous picture. Bilateral trade is rising rapidly, with $ 70.59 billion in the recent year, but asymmetrically, with a growing trade surplus in favour of China.[20] So where China's trade with South Asian nations touched a whopping US $ 100 billion, the trade deficit between India and China neared $ 9 billion in the last few years,[21] and it may grow larger. For a start, the little manufacturing market of India tends to be quite high-end. As Chinese firms shift to more complex forms of production, the Indian firms are way behind and catching up with them. For example, metal cores of transformers for power grids were once made abundantly in India. However, China is the third largest consumer of the Indian transformer market and is giving locals a tough time.[22] Nonetheless, Chinese perceptions about India may generally be of an anti-China camp in the containment syndrome of the US but rather than adopting aggressive policies, China has started to penetrate the Indian market, particularly that of infrastructure.

In the maritime domain, China has emerged as an important player in the Indian Ocean Region. This has not only sent shivers down the spine of the US but also raised concerns amongst the Indians, particularly pertaining to the country's goal of becoming a major naval power and flexing its muscles in the South China Sea. It is a well-known fact that China's economy is sea based. It has to heavily depend upon its linkages across major Sea Lanes of Communication (SLOC) in order to manage trade and imports of oil. Hence, China has improved its strategic relations across the Indian Ocean region through investments and trade in order to maximize its goals.

India on the other hand, seeks to exploit its geographical location and curb the Chinese influence. It imports about 70 percent of its oil through the Indian Ocean Region to its various ports.[23] As a consequence, it has been enhancing its strategic influence through the use of soft power, by becoming a major foreign investor in regional mining, oil, gas, and infrastructure projects. In addition, India has aggressively expanded its naval presence, reportedly to include the establishment of listening posts in the Seychelles, Madagascar and Mauritius; in late 2009, it successfully co-opted the Maldives as part of its southern naval command. China is often accused of engaging in a String of Pearls strategy to surround India. Judging by India's naval build-up, though, the truth could actually be quite the opposite.[24]

Despite the disparities, both the countries have not 'ditched' each other. Trade is a tool for interdependence between the two countries. On the political side, their posture towards each other is carefully nuanced and constantly calibrated in response to changing global and regional developments. China is not closing all the options, and as a matter of fact, India may not also like to indulge into a Cold War with a rising economic power just in its neighborhood. India's role as a proxy in the containment syndrome of China is, however, a debatable issue. Can India afford to rather act as a 'face' of the US in order to curb Chinese influence and not benefit from the Chinese rise and simultaneously also reach a major power status?

Posture towards US

It is a popular belief amongst the Americans that by boosting India's power status, China's rise would be balanced off incrementally. A strategic triangle exists when three major powers are important to each other and each fears alignment of the other two against itself and takes measures to counter any such alignment. The United States' National Intelligence Council and the investment banking and securities firm Goldman Sachs predict that, by 2040, the world's largest economies will be China, the United States, India, and

Japan—in that order. Only political disintegration or prolonged economic stagnation or war would be their undoing.[25]It would be rather interesting to monitor how the US would like to deal with the economic rise of China. As soon as China emerged on the global arena as an economic giant, the US got signals of envy and rivalry. In order to deal with it, the US thought of rather balancing it off with boosting regional competition in the face of India. India as a matter of fact was also not easy with a Sino- centric region and seemed to be ready to take up this role.

In this regard, India was given a major position in the 'rebalancing' of the US Asia Pivot strategy as ascertained in the year 2012. So the United States started focusing on Pivot Asia but entailed the desire of rather using a proxy, by building India as a regional stand. Hence, US is strengthening its alliance with India by deepening economic, military, political and institutional ties. In doing so, the US desires to make sure that China does not rise in a vacuum. It is paving the way for India in various forums including the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation –APEC, [26]which would benefit India's economy to develop rapidly. On the other hand, the US along with India initiated strategic deployments in the Asian region and primarily naval deployments in the Asia Pacific in order to maintain physical presence in these waters. US is also paving way for India's role in the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), which China opposed vehemently. [27]

Concurrently, the New Silk Route concept is yet another dimension which strengthens the Indo-US partnership. The US intends to provide linkages through this route from Calcutta to the Istanbul and thus provide India a dominant role. US in this regard, is also promoting India's east-west connections through Myanmar, Thailand and on to Vietnam, to balance China's north-south connections to South-East Asia.[28]

Under the strategic umbrella of the US-China relationship, a natural observation is that there is a danger, considering the US getting close with India while China and Pakistan

maintaining their historic relationship, that a two-bloc scenario is emerging i.e the US- India bloc and the China – Pakistan bloc. On the other hand when we see the Pakistan-US relations, they depict a continuous deterioration over the past few years. This is feared despite the strategic competition runs in parallel with economic integration amongst these States. Hence, supposing that a very difficult and ruptured Pak-US relationship emerges, within this four- way relationship context, and the crisis continue to mount, turning into truly hostile and conflictual relationship, this would cause grave concerns within the US and China relationship too, using North Korea analogy.

Implications for Pakistan

Pakistan is bound to be affected by the Indian aspirations of gaining a major power status. This owes not only to the traditional rivalry between the two nuclearized neighbors, and to the major unresolved issues i.e. Kashmir, Sir Creek, and Siachin, but also to the strategic camps both of these states ought to choose in the realm of their competition. India has geared its cooperation with the US in significant sectors of defence, economy and strategy.[29] Conversely, Pakistan is enhancing its historic ties with China in order to exploit the strategic benefits of its geo-political disposition. The imperative question is to understand whether this interplay has tendency to change the strategic balance of the region.

Amidst the 'Global War on terror', Pak- US relations have remained quite uncertain. Pakistan has lost more than 50,000 lives in the war against terrorism which came in wake of the Pakistan's ally status with the US.[30] While dealing with this scenario, Pakistan has also been cautious about its eastern borders where tensions have risen with India on numerous occasions. In this regard, India's aspirations to rise as a major power and particularly with the cooperation of the US have made Pakistan quite uncomfortable. As part of this emerging relationship the United States has subsequently held joint military operations with India, encouraging them to actively

patrol the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea, and facilitation for the development of India's nuclear program.

In this milieu, Pakistan looked towards reinterpreting its strategic relationship with China. The 'higher than Himalayas and deeper than Oceans' Sino-Pak relations are expected to balance off the very aspirations of the Indo-US camp. This comes in wake of their mutuality of interests in posing India a strategic competition in every sector including the maritime domain and also dealing with irritants such as the Afghan imbroglio. China is holistically enhancing investments in Pakistan and recently boosted economic cooperation under the umbrella of 'Pak-China' economic corridor. Simultaneously, this setting also provides China a window towards dealing with the 'containment syndrome' as posed from the US.

It is then safe to believe at this point that, the current strategic paradigm of the region has tendency to disrupt the traditional power structure altogether. There is the traditional rivalry between India and Pakistan along with US-China global competition. In this scenario, India's aspirations to rise as a major power are infusing instability in the security apparatus of the region. The US not being a neighbor in the region still remains a major player in the process. Will it finally be successful in changing the power status of India?

India: A major power?

In keeping with the above discussion, a key question will be, Can India be considered as a major power? Or rather 'potential power' or 'power in the making'? There are two arguments to these questions, first in the light of what Henry Kissinger predicted that:

In the 21st century six powers will dominate the international system: US, Europe, China, Russia, Japan and India.

Second argument entails suggestion of a Norwegian scholar Johan Galtung that:

India and the European Union are on their way to a super power status. However, there is a major discrepancy found in India's accomplishments and aspirations. It remains less integrated in the international system and is overwhelmingly consumed in domestic issues. This may be the biggest hurdle in its objectives of attaining a giant leap towards a 'major power' status.

No matter, which course of argument is believed, it is pertinent to understand at this point that India's aspirations come in the wake of its history, psyche and self-image at the global level in the garb of secularism. However, internal realities of a country build external perceptions.[31] India's vulnerable domestic economy, consistent mal-treatment with minorities, inability to settle disputes with neighbors and host to one of the most significant forms of insurgency- the Maoists; all build negative perceptions of the country. In addition, its image as it portrays to be a 'rival' or 'competitor' to China, while openly accepting the ally status of the US, all affect India's global and regional aspirations.

Hence, India is a status 'inconsistent nation' which has been a victim of 'power-politics' due to its eagerness of achieving a major power status. It is a large power in terms of population, rate of urbanization and availability of labor which is a prerequisite for achieving industrial growth. However, it will have to decide that for achieving or rather emerging as a major power, it will have to improve and neutralize its relations with its neighbors as a key factor.[32]To be a major power, not only the quantitative indicators including nuclear capability, technological advancements, and military might and economic activities are imperative, on the other hand, the qualitative factors of India that would relate to acceptance of its rules in the international arena are equally important. India still has a long way to go in this regard.

Meanwhile, India remains important for the US aspirations in the Asian century. It is either related to the containment syndrome for China or benefitting from the looking East policy. US has been a hegemon in the international arena since quite a while now. In this regard, in the wake of fading uni-polar order, there is yet again rise of alliance formation, nationalism and resultant formation of new power structures. It is in this scenario, India has been given a significant role by the US. However, the US failed to assume that in doing so; it will disturb the entire power structure of the region having long term repercussions.

Conclusion

India is indeed a big power owing to its demography, democratic process and institutional continuity and economic growth. In the recent history, there has been a greater focus on the military and economic rise of India and the repercussions it carries for the entire South Asian region. India is indeed very swiftly rising as a great power if the statistics are kept in mind. However, the truth is that a steady rise depends upon how it maintains considerable stability in the domestic front, and also that how it crafts its policies towards Pakistan and China along with the US. To a certain level, this raises vagueness about the shape of the emerging international order, and India's own lack of a credible vision of its place in that environment.

Despite, the quest to secure recognition as a major power, India is incapable of establishing a power balance on its own because of its comparatively weak economic base, awkward polity, anxiety at the domestic front, and seemingly obstinate problems with weak and failing states in its immediate neighborhood. Hence, the idea is to assess the gaps whether they widening or narrowing down between the Indian ambitions, its military muscle, and the scale and quality of its economic growth.

To be recognized as a major power, India will have to inspire confidence in the region; neighborhood in particular,

as 'acquiesce' if not allegiance by others, is an essential attribute to assess its status. Concurrently, It will have to make sure a sustained effort towards a balanced growth in multiple and diverse sectors. This also includes a change in policies towards its outlook and neighbors, by adopting a non-engagement policy as China followed in the course of attaining a major power status. Nonetheless, the notion rests upon augmenting India's power status in the international arena and in doing so, India still has a long way to go in achieving a quantum jump.

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INTER-STATES WATER SHARING:
A CASE STUDY OF HYDRO-POLITICS IN INDIA

Mr. Abdul Rauf Iqbal

Abstract

Water is the elixir of life and indispensible resource for human activities, animals need and eco system. It is a critical natural asset and driver of socio-economic development. On the other hand, temporal variations of water resources, declining per capita water availability, profound reliance on irrigated agriculture, federal constitutional structure of the country, and the sharing of major rivers by two or more states have resulted into an acute competing demand for water among the different states in India. Those competing demands have been escalated in many areas to difficult disputes over the waters of those inter-state rivers. This article discusses and analyzes the dispute settlement process over shared rivers between the states of India. The article argues that although the process established for settling water disputes between the Indian states is unique and of significant importance, a number of problems have emerged in the course of implementing this process and those problems need to be addressed to strengthen the relevance and effectiveness of the process.

Introduction

Water is the 'elixir'[1] of life and indispensible resource for human activities, animals need and eco system. It is a critical natural asset and the driver to socio-economic development. With every passing day, the quality and quantity of fresh water is deteriorating because of numerous reasons. "Extensive demographic growth, disordered urbanization, political actions, economic motives and climatic changes" etc are the potent factors behind the worsening situation of water availability.[2] Uneven distribution of water resources further adds fuel to the fire and today states are witnessing serious

issues with regard of distribution of water. On one hand, water demand is increasing rapidly and at the same time, water supply is decreasing and resultantly a huge gap has emerged between demand and supply. This gap between demand and supply is creating a conflicting situation especially for the riparian states.

Interestingly, water runs in a particular channel and crosses the international and political boundaries. Therefore it not only determines the relationship between riparian states but further complexities arise when water is distributed disproportionately. So, sharing inter-state water becomes extremely difficult task and may create both conflict and cooperation among the states and same is the case in India.

Seventeen out of India's 18 major rivers are shared by two or more states[3] therefore distribution of water among the states is a serious challenge for India. Due to multiple reasons, many parts of India are facing water shortage and water is becoming increasingly a scarce resource in these areas. A report suggests that India is expected to become 'water stressed' by 2025 and 'water scarce' by 2050.[4] In 1951, the annual per capita availability of water was 5177 m[3], which reduced to 1342 m[3] by 2000.[5] The problems of water availability in India are compounded further by the temporal and spatial variations.

Some parts of India receive little or no rain at all, whereas other areas receive considerably high amount of rains and could be seemly affected by floods during the rainy season. Drought is also a recurring phenomenon and usually affects the large areas of the south and northwestern states of India.[6] The need to provide food for the increasing population has resulted in an upsurge of water use by the irrigation sector in India. Agriculture is the single largest user of water accounting for about 85% of total use and in some states, like the predominately agricultural state of Punjab, the figure is considerably higher, reaching 95%.[7] Under the federal constitutional structure of India, water is by and large, a state subject with a limited defined role for the central government.[8] The spatial and temporal variations of water

resources in India, the steadily declining per capita water availability, heavy reliance on irrigated agriculture, the federal constitutional structure of the country, and the sharing of rivers by two or more states have resulted in acute competing demands for water among the different states in India. Those competing demands have been escalated in many areas to difficult disputes over the waters of those inter-state rivers.

In this premise, this article discusses and analyzes the dispute settlement process over shared rivers between the states of India. The article argues that although the process established for settling water disputes between the Indian states is unique and of significant importance, a number of problems have emerged in the course of implementing this process and those problems need to be addressed to strengthen the relevance and effectiveness of the process.

Hydro Environment of India: An Overview

India is the largest country of South Asia in terms of both resources and population. It is a country that has long history of agriculture and farming due to suitable environment, soils and many major river systems that irrigate the country. There are 15 major river basins in India namely; Indus, Ganga, Brahmaputra and Baitarani, Brahmani, Rushikulya, Vamsadhara, Sarada and Nagavali, Godavari, Krishna, Cauvery etc.[9] This extensive network of rivers has allowed India to construct one of the most impressive and extensive irrigation networks in the world. India had begun to develop its agricultural base early on after the independence and in 1948 there were nearly 160 large-scale projects under construction in the length and breadth of India.[10] A Central Water Commission (CWC) report points out that there are more than 5000 large dams with height of more than 15 meters throughout India whereas most of these dams have been constructed after independence.[11] Similarly, more than 60 dams of national importance with each dam having net storage capacity of one billion cubic meters or more already exist and 10 more such dams are under construction.[12] Despite such an extensive irrigation network, most of these rivers flow

through many states before reaching their deltas. The historic boundaries of Indian states were formed by British on the basis of political, administrative and military aspects instead of any scientific basis of resource distribution. The case of development of irrigation networks follows similar framework. Therefore, the conflicting interests of upper and lower riparian states have led to many interstate disputes since Indian independence and several such disputes continue to mar Indian socio-political harmony despite several years of negotiations and arbitration.

It should be noted here that river water disputes among states have recently increased in their frequency as well as severity and this trend is likely to continue for a few coming years. Some of the main factors that can cause this trend are rapid urbanization, industrialization, water pollution and the aspect of sheer population pressure on the Indian continental land mass. The situation is further complicated by the fact that the source glaciers in Himalayas have commenced shrinking over the years leading to fears of acute water shortage in years to come. India is projected to be the most populous country by the year 2050 according to UN statistics. Such population pressures are going to create severe problems in terms of food security as well as availability of fresh water resources in India.

Similarly, the problem of geographic locations creates a major problem for India. On one hand India is trying to divert water from rivers going into other countries like Pakistan and Bangladesh, while it is itself facing a similar problem from planers in China which is an upper-riparian country in case of India. The availability or shortage of water in rivers is going to become a major source of disputes for India in both regional and domestic context in coming decades.

Inter-state Water Disputes in India

The federating units of India are vastly different from one another and the fact that majority of the states really on agriculture paves the way for water disputes. These disputes

are also exploited by the local politicians to gain political support. Incorrect information, politicization and involvement of ethnic passions often turn these disputes into violent clashes and enmity among populace of the state continues even after legal resolution of disputes.[13] Another important aspect is that major rivers pass through several adjoining states with each having a claim on share of water of the river.

Although there are several water disputes between states however, some of the major river water disputes between federating states that have emerged since Indian independence are; Yamuna river dispute among states of Delhi, Haryana and Utar Pradesh; Krishna-Godavari dispute between states of Maharashtra, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Madiha Pradesh and Orissa; Ravi-Beas dispute between Punjab and Haryana; Mahadiya river dispute between Goa and Maharashtra, Vansadhara river dispute between Orissa and Andhra Pradesh; Mullapriya dispute between Kerala and Tamil Nadu; Bhabli river dispute between Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh and the Cauvery river dispute between Karnataka and Tamil Nadu (although Kerala and Pondicherry have also claimed stakes on river water).[14] The case of Cauvery river dispute between Karnataka and Tamil Nadu draws an interesting analogy with inter-provincial dispute between Punjab and Sind in Pakistan over waters of Indus River. The dispute is mainly a result of politicization of the issue by opposing political parties and spread of incorrect information among the local populace that lead to long term enmity and attachment to the dispute by the people.[15]

Inter-state water disputes are increasingly becoming important for Indian government and the dispute resolution system, based on Inter-State River Dispute Act-1956[16], is considered by many experts as outdated and deficient in requirements of the contemporary era. The act itself leaves great room at the discretion of actors involved. In many cases, the dispute lingers on despite decisions by Supreme Court of India or an apparent political settlement.

An important point to be understood is that India's massive size becomes its primary advantage in such disputes as a dispute between many of such states cannot pose an existential threat for India despite politicization and involvement of sentiments of local populations. This size availability of resources gives central government a lot of leverage over state governments in settling disputes.

India's geographic location and size render the country to an advantageous position, where water disputes don't pose any existential threat to federation nor do the inculcate any vegetate emotion inclination among masses.

Constitutional Structure for Water Disputes

The relationship between states and central governments is defined by the Indian Constitution which is quasi-federal in nature. Articles 245 and 246 of the Constitution deal with distribution of powers between the Union Parliament and the State Legislature. "Article 245 empowers the Parliament and the Legislature of the state to emit laws for the whole or part of the country and state respectively, in both the cases, subject to the provisions of the Constitution. According to Article 246(1), Parliament has exclusive powers to make laws with respect to any of the matters enumerated in List I in the Seventh Schedule to the Constitution. This List is known as 'the Union List'."[17] On the other hand, the Legislature in any state, according to Article 246 (3) of the Constitution "has exclusive power to make laws for such a state with respect to any of the matters enumerated in List II t in the Seventh Schedule to the Constitution. This is known as 'the State List'."[18] "The Union Parliament or any State Legislature also has according to Article 246 (3) of the Constitution, has concurrent powers to make laws with respect to any of the matter of the enumerated in List III in the Seventh Schedule to the Constitution. This list is known as the 'Concurrent List'."[19]

Water is listed at Entry 17 in the State List and the State Legislature exercises power over water. The constitution states

that "water, that is to say water supplies, irrigation and canals, drainage and embankments, water storage and water power subject to the provisions of entry 56 of List I".[20] On the other hand, Entry 56 of the Union List in the Seventh Schedule endows the Union Parliament with legislative authority over "regulation and development of inter-state rivers and river valleys to the extent to which such regulation and development under the control of the Union is declared by Parliament by law to be expedient in the public interest".[21]

In addition to these two Entries, Article 262(1) of the Constitution deals with disputes relating to inter-states rivers. It states that "Parliament may by law, provide for the adjudication of dispute or complaint with respect to the use, distribution or control of the waters of, or in any inter-state river or river valley". Article 262(2) states that "Parliament may by law, provide that neither the Supreme Court nor any other court shall exercise jurisdiction in respect of any such dispute or complaint as is referred to in clause (1) notwithstanding anything in the Constitution". Taking lead from this Article, Indian Parliament passed Inter-state Water Disputes Act 1956.

Inter-state River Water Disputes Act 1956

The Inter-state River Water Disputes Act was promulgated on August 18, 1956. The Act defines a water dispute mainly "as any dispute between two or more states regarding the use, distribution or control of the waters of or in, any interstate river or river valley, or the interpretation of the terms of any agreement relating to the use, distribution or control of such waters or the implementation of such agreement".[22] Clause (2) of the Act deals with definition and it is amazing to note that the Act does not define the term 'inter-state'. Clause (3) of the Act provides mechanism of complaints by State governments. The aggrieved state can submit its complaint under this Act when it believes that a water dispute with another state has arisen or is likely to arise, because its interests in an interstate river have been, or are likely to be, prejudicially affected. Then central government analyzes the state requests and

when the central government is of the view that the water dispute cannot be settled through negotiations, it constitutes a water dispute tribunal, within a period not exceeding one year from the date of receipt of such request, by notification in the official Gazette.[23]

The tribunal consists of a chairman and two members to be nominated by the Chief Justice from amongst the judges of the Supreme Court or of a High Court.[24] The tribunal may appoint two or more persons as assessors.[25] It shall have the same powers as those vested in a civil court including the summoning and enforcing attendance of any person and examining him on oath and requiring the production of any documents and materials. As part of the decision making process, the tribunal may require any state to carry out or permit the carrying out of any surveys and investigations as it may deem necessary for the adjudication.[26] The decision of the tribunal may contain directions as to how the expenses of the tribunal including the remuneration allowances or fees of the Chairman, the other members of the tribunal and the assessors would be paid. Differences on any point are to be decided according to the opinion of the majority of the members of the tribunal.

The decision of the tribunal is final and binding on the parties to the dispute and is forwarded to the central government for publication in the official Gazette. According to Section 262(2) of the Constitution, neither the Supreme Court nor any other court shall have or exercise jurisdiction in respect of any water dispute which may be referred to a tribunal under the Act. If the central government or any of the party states to the decision believe that any part of the decision of the tribunal requires explanation, or that guidance is needed on any point not originally referred to the tribunal, a request for such clarification or guidance may be referred again to the tribunal, within 3 months of the decision, for further consideration. Once the central government is satisfied that no further reference to the tribunal related to the water dispute is necessary, then the central government shall dissolve the tribunal.

Although the tribunal helped in settling inter-state water disputes, yet the institutional gap surfaced as a new challenge since there was no institution to implement the decisions of the tribunal. To fill this implementation space, an amendment was passed to the Act in 1980 (Act 43 of 1980) which authorizes the central government to frame scheme or schemes for the establishment of any authority for the implementation of the decision or directions of the tribunal. Since the adoption of this Act, five disputes over the sharing of the water of inter-state rivers have arisen and have been referred to tribunals constituted under the Act. Those rivers arc the Krishna, the Narmada, the Godavari, the Ravi and Beas and the Cauvery.

River Disputes Settlement Process: Recurring Issues

Negotiations and mediation are considered as the basic tools for settlement of disputes. Although, these basic mechanisms have been used by the states, yet such disputes have emerged which could not be resolved through negotiations or mediation. This situation has resulted in the promulgation of the Inter-State Water Disputes Act in August 1956. Different scholars consider this Act as an "important development in the history of water law in India".[27] Notwithstanding, there are serious issues with water dispute settlement process which are discussed as under:

➢ The effectiveness of this constitutional milestone came under the question because of lack of implementation body as it was witnessed in case of the Ravi and Beas and the Cauvery rivers disputes. On the other hand, the disputes over the Godavari River and to some extent the Narmada River seem to have been successfully resolved.
➢ Second important issue is that the process is very lengthy. Firstly, the central government has one year to establish a tribunal. Secondly, tribunal takes a long time to issue its final order. The Act did not originally establish a time frame for the tribunal to reach a decision. The Krishna Water Disputes Tribunal took

over 7 years to reach its decision and each of the Godavari and the Narmada Water disputes tribunals took about 10 years.

➢ In order to streamline the process, central government adopted an amendment to the Act on March 28, 2002. The amendments require the Tribunal to issue its report within a period of 3 years with an extension of 2 years for unavoidable reasons. The central government constituted the Ravi and Beas Water Tribunal under this amendment which is again criticized as to why the central government confined the amendment of the Act to the Ravi and Beas. This is perhaps because the central government does not want to take a decision regarding the establishment of a tribunal and would rather leave it to the parties to make such a determination[28]. With water disputes being interwoven into politics in most states, this seems like a prudent decision.

➢ The Act only deals with procedural matters and does not provide any guidance to the tribunal on how to handle the substantive issue of water allocation among the riparian states. This may be one reason for the long time the tribunals usually take to reach a decision. The different tribunals thus far constituted have used their own criteria for allocation of water among the riparian states. They are generally guided by factors similar to those enumerated in the Helsinki Rules on the Uses of the Waters of International Rivers.[29]

➢ The Act excludes groundwater from adjudication while ignoring the fact that the groundwater is connected to inter-state rivers.

➢ Once the tribunal is dissolved, there is no authority with jurisdiction to provide clarification or on any subsequent controversies or issues related to the order of the tribunal that may arise.

➢ The Act does not provide for either an appeal or review of the tribunal award. Article 262 of the Constitution and Section 11 of the Act expressly take away the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court where any water dispute as referred to the Tribunal. Section 6(1) of the

Act declares that the decision of the Tribunal shall be final. The jurisdiction of the Supreme Court in the Narmada dispute was invoked under Part III of the Constitution for the enforcement of fundamental rights. In the case of the Krishna water dispute, the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court was invoked under Article 131 of the Constitution which provides for an Original Suit in case of disputes between the States. In the case of Cauvery water dispute, the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court was invoked for the implementation of the interim order of the Tribunal. These cases were adjudicated by the Supreme Court in spite of the express bar, due to lacuna in the present Act.

➢ Moreover, the amendment adopted in March 2002 to the Act further strengthens the decisions of tribunals. It states that decision of the Tribunal after publication in the official gazette by the central government shall have the same force as an order or decree of the Supreme Court.

➢ The Act originally did not include any provision regarding the establishment of an authority to implement the decision of the tribunal. This issue was settled by an amendment to the Act in 1980 to authorize the establishment of such an authority when experience identified the need for it. Yet the establishment of this body did not solve the problems that plagued the Narmada projects nor was the authority that was established to implement the interim order for the Cauvery dispute able to do so. This was due partly to the lack of the adequate authority for each of those organizations and partly to the lack of political will on the part of the riparian states.

➢ This Act does not provide any space for the establishment of a river basin organization for each of the shared rivers with adequate authority and resources. Such river basin organization could not only act as a joint management institution but could also assist in resolving any dispute that may arise between the riparian states.

➢ The Tribunal often sets a deadline for the review of their final order. The same happened in the Krishna award which was subject to review after May 31, 2000, as specified in the final order itself. This often leads to water grabbing because the concerned states try to invest heavily in water related works so that the review may go in their favor keeping in view the massive investment. It is worth mentioning that this review factor also proves as blessing in disguise since the investment in water related works does not go waste and helps the state in one way or the other.

It is worth noting the tribunals deal with the existing agreements between the riparian states in a different fashion. The agreements that were entered into by the predecessor states prior to the reorganization of the Indian states were superseded by the decisions of the tribunals. On the other hand, the agreements that were entered into by the states which are parities to the disputes have been largely honored by the tribunals. In the case of the Godavari, the agreement facilitated the work of the tribunal and the tribunal simply ratified and incorporated those agreements in its decision. Indeed, the decision consisted largely of annexes reproducing those agreements. This was because those agreements were entered into by the states which are party to the dispute, and not their predecessors. On the other hand, the Krishna award superseded some of the existing agreements because they were not entered into by the states that are parties to the dispute.

Conclusion

Inter-state River Water Disputes Act is a constitutional milestone which India has crossed back in 1956. This Act not only provides a platform for resolution of river water disputes but also creates an enabling environment where legal norms play their due role in dispute settlement process. With the every passing day, this Act has also faced problems and to keep the pace with the ongoing developments, requisite amendments have been made to this Act. The principle of

reasonable and equitable utilization has been the guiding rule for the different tribunals in their attempts to reconcile the conflicting claims of the riparian states. In this process, a number of principles on water sharing were either elaborated or confirmed. It should also be pointed out that although the tribunals have taken a long time to resolve the disputes, negotiations that preceded adjudication have also taken a long time. Thus, this Act is a unique legal instrument. The problems that cropped up since its enactment have not diminished its relevance and usefulness. Water is becoming increasingly a scarce resource in India and the state governments are becoming more assertive and powerful. Indian planners are deeply aware of the problems at hand and therefore massively spending on improving water management systems as well as conservation mechanisms for dealing with the emerging crisis. New mechanisms are being introduced for accurate measurement of available water resources as well as use. India has spent massive resources on conservation and reuse of water available for agriculture.[30] Under these circumstances, the urgent task is not to amend the Constitution to take responsibility over water away from the states and confine it to the center. Rather, it is time to realistically address the issues that have curtailed the relevance and usefulness of the Act since its promulgation. That is indeed the real challenge.

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'INSURGENCIES' IN SOUTH ASIA: A COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY OF INDIA'S MAOISTS AND PAKISTANI TALIBAN

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Abstract

Insurgency as a concept has evoked immense interest in modern day conflicts. Ranging from guerilla warfare to asymmetric violence and challenging the writ of the state for political motives, insurgency still remains an ambiguous phenomenon. In this regard, South Asia is viewed as a 'breeding ground' for the prominent insurgent movements; may it be the Maoists in India or Taliban in Pakistan. Nonetheless, such 'uprising' and armed resistance usually have both common and divergent denominators. On the other hand, it also brings into the fore the politics behind classification of armed conflicts specifically where the Taliban in Pakistan are concerned. In essence, both Maoists and Taliban are using violence against the state for achieving their goals and are observed to exploit the economic deprivations and ideological motivations as tools to mobilize the masses against their respective governments and existing state statute. In this regard, the study endeavors to evaluate the patterns of socio- economic grievances as well as political motives and gains insurgent movements are striving to exploit and obtain. The central argument rests on the notion that, sustainable strategies to counter and downcast these insurgent movements would not only result in socio economic stability of both terrorism struck countries but may also contribute to the overall regional stability and cooperation in South Asia.

Key Words: Insurgency, Socio-economic grievances, asymmetric violence, extremism.

Prelude

Since the last six decades, the South- Asian region has experienced significant 'anti-systemic ideological conflicts', [1]often classified as insurgencies or in approximate terms, viewed as a 'sustained armed resistance' phenomenon. They have in fact been more pronounced than most areas of East Asia and Latin America with continuity from the anti-colonial struggle to varying manifestations in the post-colonial arena. In this context, the politics of the 'Left' or of the other 'Radicals' has been synonymous with the activity generated by organized groups and networks. It mainly aims at changing the status quo to establish an egalitarian order, whether conceived by human mind or ordained by the Creator. The politics remain rooted in poverty and sense of deprivation, and its engine comes with notions of violent struggle against the established order. Classical manifestations of the phenomenon are the ones influenced by Marxist ideology and notions of a class struggle though subjected to differing interpretations and policy directions by various players. However, the same holds true for struggles against the status quo that are structured but derive their legitimacy from their mission which is perceived by them as 'divine righteous'.

While looking at South Asia, the Maoists in India and Taliban in Pakistan are the most significant examples of organized groups mobilized against the status quo. This is true because both have managed to develop as a well-structured movement with waging armed conflict against the government.[2] However, the classification of both the movements is sometimes considered divergent from each other. The Maoists in India are indeed a 'classical' example of insurgency in text bookish definitions and popular connotations of the word.

On the other hand, the official Pakistani position remains ambiguous in declaring the Taliban in Pakistan as insurgents, making it subject to politics in the backdrop of classical distinction of armed conflicts. However, in scholarly debate, the Taliban are mostly considered as insurgents in Pakistan.

Nonetheless, the phenomenon of such nature indeed provides an index of the ailing socio-economic condition of the respective countries. Furthermore, it also provides an insight into how masses can be mobilized in the name of belief system/ideology.

This research paper endeavors to analyze the Maoists in India and Taliban in Pakistan in the light of the theoretical and classical perspective of insurgencies. It aims to answer questions like, how did these insurgent groups manage to leave their mark at such a large scale? Is it their preparedness, motivational strength or weaknesses of the government in eradicating these armed resistances? And most importantly, can they be compared by analyzing their root causes and eventually dealing with them objectively? Needless to say that, the consequences of lack of institutional strength and make up of a country and fallout on its national security are indeed interwoven.

Classification of insurgencies: Origination and Objectives

Insurgency has been an area of interest for many political and social scientists. It has been a global phenomenon and has often been characterized in distinction with armed struggle; both being defined separately primarily on the basis of semantics. However, major definitional aspects are broadly agreed upon. Insurgency being a diverse phenomenon is of numerous kinds and classifications, it may be defined as:

A struggle between a non ruling group and the ruling authorities in which the no ruling group consciously uses political resources (e.g., organizational expertise, propaganda, and demonstrations) and violence to destroy, reformulate, or sustain the basis of legitimacy of one or more aspects of politics.[3] Or

'An organized movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through the use of subversion and armed conflict… [In other words] an organized protracted

politico- military struggle designed to weaken the control and legitimacy of an established government, occupying power, or other political authority while increasing insurgent control'.⁴

Furthermore, Steven Metz and Raymond Millen define insurgency more precisely as:

'Insurgency is a strategy adopted by groups which cannot attain their political objectives through conventional means or by a quick seizure of power. It is used by those too weak to do otherwise. Insurgency is characterized by protracted, asymmetric violence, ambiguity, the use of complex terrain (jungle, mountains and urban areas), psychological warfare, and political mobilization all designed to protect the insurgents and eventually alter the balance of power in their favor.⁵'

On practical grounds, insurgency is an 'armed resistance' from within a State, which challenges its control. The insurgents use guerilla and hidden force for achieving their goals. An active insurgent group has an organization that consists of a mobile main force and two paramilitary forces (regional force and local militia) that conduct limited operations to augment the effect of main force. Since the insurgency is based on manipulative motivations, its first goal is to survive. All insurgencies have important commonalities, but each one of them has distinct and peculiar features.

Motivation

Every insurgent movement has a key origination factor that plays the role of driving force making the energy of masses to orient in certain direction. Here in the next section, various origination factors will be discussed that may act as the purpose of mental as well as psychological motives for an insurgent group to involve in violent and aggressive activities to articulate the origins of certain human aggressions.

First, insurgencies based on *ideological grievances*: Ideological basis that lead to insurgent movements are among the most frequent causes of insurgency. Islamic and communist insurgencies are the most prominent types of ideological based insurgencies in the contemporary world. The more divided and mal-communicated a society is, the more chances are there for rebel and insurgent movements to originate.[6]So in divided societies, ethnic conflicts and insurgent movements are at the center of politics, and pose an obvious challenge to the cohesion of state and sometimes to peaceful relationships among states. These divides create powerful, affiliations that are often at the root of violence as a result of their perceived deprivations.

Second, insurgencies based on greed: Greed is the main driving force of origination of various insurgent movements.[7]For many individuals or groups, a conflict becomes an opportunity to make career in terms of finance and they see conflicts as ways of gaining benefits out of it in form of power, influence and wealth. This greed element is seen also reduce the insurgent movements to mere criminality sometimes like in the case of economically under developed or developing countries where the rich and poor divide is wide, in these countries the ideological or political origins of the insurgent movements are masked by greed of power and wealth.

Third, insurgencies based on State capacity: Governance and state capacity that include measures of government effectiveness, rule of law, corruption, as well as economic development are interrelated with the vulnerability of insurgency. The inability of any government to meet the ever increasing expectations of the masses generates what Ted Robert Gurr refers as 'Relative Deprivation', which serves as an important prerequisite for frustration among population leading to violent expression.[8]

Objectives

The nature of an insurgent movement is well understood on the basis of its objectives. The objective is in fact a key for determining the future shape and orientation of an insurgent behavior. Similarly, the prominent insurgent movements after the Cold War Era had objectives classified as Revolution, Reformist insurgency, Separatist movements, insurgencies based on resistance and Commercial insurgencies.

First, revolutionary insurgencies: These types of insurgent movements are aimed at replacing the existing political order and transforming the political as well as social transformation of the statute. Revolutionary insurgencies are more of spiritual insurgency which is the fruit of the Cold war, driven by the problems of modernization at a rapid pace. The Third World states faced an inability to meet the psychological need of their populations, especially during the rapid development, originating frustration and discontent that was used by the insurgent strategists which is civil wars and insurgent movements took momentum after the Cold war era.

Second, reformist insurgencies: The core of this insurgency is dismissal of a regime including its formulated political, economic and social system. The broad term of a 'reform' or 'modernization 'are used to indicate the clear objective of such insurgent motivations where arms are lifted and violence is used for the purpose of bringing about a change or altering the existing policies of an existing government. Insurgents often tend to blame certain Western ideas and practices that were borrowed and defectively applied by the local elites on the society. The insurgent strategists thus use this discontent and provide alternative system which they think serves the purpose of having authenticity and a good adaptability to their nation state's institutional framework.

Third, separatist insurgencies: Most states are divided by ethnicity, culture, opportunity, and sometimes power or wealth. The energy for separatist insurgencies

springs from a particular deprived segment of the population who feel unbearably excluded from the state's political, economic or social opportunities. They aim at independence or separation for a certain clan or group of people who are the majority inhabitants of a region within a state and feel that they are not being given the right of self determination and freedom to choose their path.[9]

Lastly, resistance insurgencies: This type of insurgencies aim at compelling foreign power (military) to withdraw from an area or region. The dependence of a state government upon presence of a foreign military force within the boundaries can spark great opposition for the population of that state. It often acts as a unifying narrative for insurgent groups who can use this foreign intervention as a tool to launch an armed insurgent movements against the external military powers.

Regardless of the causes and motivations that govern the insurgent movements, one objective of insurgency is to mould the perception of public regarding its legitimacy, which is often challenged. In this regard, violence is used as an instrument of persuasion, which eventually serves the purpose of attracting and mobilizing the supporters, threatens the opponents of insurgency and finally isolates them from the state framework. The 'armed propaganda'[10], hence uses or threatens to use the military power in order to shape the perception of public and opponents as well as allies about their ideology, situation and influence that their consequent decisions and course of actions are going to be based upon.

Maoists in India – Historic Perspective

For more than 40 years, the Maoist insurgency as an armed organization, has aimed at seizing power from the Indian state.[11] The origins of this 'revolutionary Marxism' in India is traced back to 1960s, when the communist radicals separated from the Communist Party of India- Marxist (CPI-M) and later formed Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) (CPI (ML)). The phenomenon was also called

Naxalite insurgency, the nomenclature derived from insurgency in Indian state of Naxalbari in 1967, regarded as the epicenter of the Indian Maoist militant activism. The radical communist outfits have by and large experienced polarization. However, later in the year 2000, after a decade of the announcement of neo liberal economic reforms by state of India, attempts were made to combine all the Naxalite splinter groups. In September 2004, unification of the splinter groups took place under the umbrella of two prominent and large Maoist groups MCC and CPI (M-L) People's war.

Mao insurgency can hence be characterized as an insurgent movement mobilized against socio-economic grievances of the masses at large. The role of greed was far less than grievances which were the motivation to participate in this insurgency.[12] The insurgents believed that through violent guerrilla warfare and action by the deprived classes of the Indian states would ultimately knock down the existing political and economic structure and establish a new communist dictatorship in New Delhi.[13] Since three decades, the Maoists have claimed the lives of nearly 12000 civilians and 3000 security personnel.[14] Their ultimate dream is to establish a 'people's democratic state' that provides justice to the ones who are the sufferers of poverty and unjust practices as well as unequal land distribution.[15]

Source: http://naxalnaxalitemaoist.wordpress.com/

Resultantly, the Maoist insurgency spread from the border of Nepal in north to Karnataka varying in degree of severity in the south comprising of seven Indian states forming a 'red corridor'.

In recent history, the Maoists have managed to further enhance their operational capacity. They have strengthened their regional linkages by setting up Regional Bureaus which includes both zonal and state- level jurisdictions in order to enhance political and military mobilization. There have been reports of Maoists in India forming connections internationally, with groups in Philippines, Turkey, Germany, France, Holland and Italy. The CPI- M is also part of the Coordination Committee of Maoist Parties and Organizations of South Asia (CCOMPOSA).[16]

Maoist leaders have a strong support for any ethnic group that pledges to secede from Indian Republic and also they have expressed their sympathies with many radical insurgent groups including the radical Islamist group like Al- Qaeda.[17] They have an argument that all radical organizations and insurgent movements have the same agenda that is to remove puppet regimes imposed and improvised by the West and to introduce new egalitarian social order.[18]

In this regard, the government in India adopted various approaches as their counter-insurgency strategy. It did not involve a 'Winning Hearts And Mind – WHAM strategy' but a 'raw state coercion'[19] and 'enemy centric approach'[20] through the use of specialized and well equipped police force. The more successful one was the 'Grey hound approach'[21] involving special commando units which carried sweep operations. However, it did not halt the spread of Maoist insurgency in the occupied territory, as prerequisite of reconciliation and bridging the gaps between state and insurgents was still missing.

Taliban in Pakistan

While looking at Pakistan, the tribal areas- FATA, which were marginalized constitutionally, politically and economically from rest of the country since its inception, has been a breeding ground for the popular 'insurgent groups' broadly categorized as Taliban. The area is a buffer zone between Pakistan and Afghanistan inhabiting approx 4.5 Pakistani tribesmen.[22] Due to its geo-strategic location, it has rather become a playground of opportunities for regional and global forces striving to extend their sphere of influence. The reasons for the ever disturbed situations of FATA are none other than socio economic grievances due to government's hands-off policy towards these tribal areas. In any case, it was not expected that the Taliban led militancy in the FATA region would swell up to the level of a full-fledged 'insurgency'. It was only after the change in tactics adopted by the Taliban in the year 2004 which paved their way towards this transformation.[23]

Consequently, the vacuum then left by the government provided an opportunity for anti state and religious extremists to exploit it even for their own benefits. This dates back after the Soviet retreated from Afghanistan in after a battle with the 'Afghan Mujahideen' and other fighters. Eventually, these 'trained' warriors converged into 'war lords'; mainly as they were abandoned and were not able to integrate into the country's mainstream.

Source: http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-27225593

The main objectives of the Taliban after gaining adherence from the locals of FATA was to unite all the various other groups of Pakistan and launch attacks on NATO/ISAF forces operating in Afghanistan, launching a defensive jihad against the Pakistani military forces, the imposition of *Shariah* (Islamic rule), and aspirations to unite against NATO forces in Afghanistan. Now, they successfully operate in the whole country as they are well aware of the, guerrilla tactics, sabotage and subversion. While main training facilities and bases are situated in South and North Waziristan Agencies, recruits from religious Madrassas in South Punjab, Karachi and other parts of state are also done having deprived population seeking to join this insurgent organization as a protest owing to grievances and deprivations.[24]

These Taliban generally carry an anti-West complexion as a re-enactment of resistance that originated in the colonial era. Currently, the Taliban have emerged as the most significant existential threat to the state of Pakistan. They have maintained a reign of terror in the effected regions. Their 'armed propaganda' operates in such a way that after gaining sufficient amount of control over a region, they ask the local people to stop supporting the government and aid the Taliban in implanting 'Shariah'. Those who do not agree to follow them are threatened with death as in the case of execution of many tribal leaders who opposed their ideas and were a hurdle in the strengthening of their rule. The people suspected to be spies are executed publicaly several times.[25] Many criminal gangs and other commercial insurgent groups are also attached with them in order to pursue their own interests in the umbrella of the Taliban insurgency. These splinter groups and criminal gangs employ looting, kidnapping, smuggling and arms dealing in order to generate profits for their own selves while fuelling the insurgency in the long run.

Nonetheless, the support extended by the masses to Taliban is subject to uncertainty. In this regard, the locals who do not have a clear consensus, and are motivated either by socio-economic pressures, half-baked knowledge of Islam, and also lack of education and awareness perceive them as

righteous, also certain religious groups have pro- Taliban feelings that is a matter of uneasy judgments for Pakistani government and military forces. On the other hand, the elite and educated population having sound knowledge and exposure regard the ideas of Taliban insurgency as a spill over effect from the Afghan Taliban and regard it as alien for Pakistan's system of governance and socio- political structure.

While the insurgents carry on their aggressive and coercive acts for destruction of society, they manipulate the religious sentiments by declaring to have a noble agenda of establishing *Shariah (Islamic rule)* in the country. People, who are deprived of social justice and economic incentives groaning under the heavy weight of poverty and insecurity, tend to overlook these acts of the so called *Jihadist.* However, despite these indicators, the Pakistani government is uncertain to declare the Taliban as insurgents. One of the main reasons to the hesitation rests upon the fact that to recognize this movement as insurgency would be construed as an indication that the recognizing state regards the insurgents as legal contestants not merely as lawbreakers. Therefore, insurgents and rebel groups would be recognized as lawful combatants.[26] Technically, the recognition of an insurgency in international law may also bring about the 'internationalization of an event'; hence, Pakistan as a third party can identify the situation as an insurgency according to its own political interests without any commitment.

The government in Pakistan first adopted measures like bar of support from tribal's to Afghan Taliban and convening tribal jirgas, 'Aman lashkars' and sanctions. However, when these measures did not serve the purpose, due to the close religious and cultural proximity, an armed offensive in the form of military operations were also conducted. Military operation did not yield effective results till then. Jirgas, economic sanctions, lashkars, payment of money, registration, use of force and even peace agreements failed to cope up with the increasing militant support in the FATA region, and ultimately Pakistani Taliban trained and sponsored by Afghan

Taliban and Al Qaeda, emerged as one of the most significant challenge to the government of Pakistan

Common Denominators of Maoists and Taliban/points of convergences

The insurgencies of Maoists in India and Taliban in Pakistan also entail interplay of diverse underlying convergences for maximizing their goals. In other words, both Maoist's and Taliban may not be necessarily viewed in isolation from each other. The question of whether one can compare Pakistan's Islamist militants to Maoist insurgents in India shows that commonality between both the 'insurgencies' is their ideological motive although they might differ in their respective nature. An appraisal of their commonalities of interest provides a lead to this discourse.

Firstly, with the Taliban ranked second in the list of most active non-state actors of the year 2013 and CPI- Maoists not far behind with the fourth rank,[27] both claim to champion the cause of social justice in their respective domains. This they did by overpowering the 'ideological grievances' of the society. In India, the Communists have been successful in appealing to various ethnic fractions for example in Punjab, Sikhs have been the prime party advocating Communism , in Assam Bengalis , in Kerala a community of poor tribe called Ezhava, and in Tripura a group of indigenous hill people are ideologically motivated people.[28]

In Pakistan, the Islamist affiliation that leads to insurgent motivation was more obvious in rural communities as well as urban fractions in particular the Waziristan region and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, where they use religious exploitation to gain public support and regard their version of religion to be the only means of social justice and righteousness.

Secondly, both the insurgent groups have been able to exploit the divide between rich and poor resulted by globalization in these countries where the rapid economic

growth was unable to make a considerable difference to the poorest sections of the population, making them vulnerable for insurgent leaders to exploit their grievances against poor governance and claim support. They hence, exploited grievances rooted in marginalization of the society. Maoist insurgent groups are active in eastern and central India, these regions are having majority of population below poverty line.

In 1967, Naxalbari violent uprisings, the peasants targeted the landlords, burnt land records and captured their lands along with cancelling their old debts. The main aim of this insurgency was as states in CPI (ML) agenda for 1970 and CPI (ML) agenda for 2004 was to liberate the rural areas and then capture the cities. This movement was also launched in the densely forested and hilly areas of Andhra Pradesh and Bihar, Orissa and West Bengal. There, Naxalite used to drive Landlords out of villages; people were given justice by establishing courts for the redistribution of land and there was planning done to commence mass mobilization of the poor rural population. It was a form of class struggle that was against the rich people, feudal lords, land lords, Government employees, as well as anyone who was to be suspected as a police agent.

On the other hand, Taliban in Pakistan have been able to exploit the socio-economic division in the tribal areas of the country where education is scarce and poverty is on the rise. According to an estimate, Pakistan's tribal areas- Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) have a population of about 3.5 million which is only 2.4 percent of the total population of Pakistan and falls below the poverty line.[29] Taliban have been able to exploit the unique legal position of FATA in the Constitution of Pakistan with the Political Agent and Tribal elders-Maliks being the sole regulator of the social life. The rich and poor divide of this area was well exploited by the Taliban in order to influence the local with their idea of *'Shariah'*.

Thirdly, both the insurgent movements aim at taking control of parts of the country by using coercion to keep out

the writ of state. The tactics they use involve suicide attacks, an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) and small arms attacks with other bombings in order to compel government and create a strong insurgent movement. Among major attacks the September 22, 2008 a suicide bomb attack on Marriot Hotel, Islamabad killing 57 and the October 2009 suicide attack on GHQ, Pakistani Army Headquarters killing 14 people are prominent while other several attacks took place and are still taking place varying in casualty counts.

Fourthly, managing territories within a state suggests a non-political idea of governance, one that both Indian Maoists and Pakistani militants seem to show.

Fifthly, both have the potential to cause existential threat to their respective states, which can be rather minimized at times.

Points of divergences

The review of the politics of Maoist's in India and Taliban in Pakistan indeed reveals a relationship between socio-economic grievances and ideological uprisings. Undoubtedly, poverty and sense of deprivation continue to shape the germination ground for the two streams. However, in some areas both the movements have adopted different lines, which are discussed below:

Firstly, in Pakistan, the Taliban are scattered in the tribal belt of FATA along with other rural as well as urban centers of Pakistan in a loose organization, while the Maoists are primarily confined to their parts of states that form the red corridor and extend their powers as a de facto control in these areas.

Secondly, Taliban in Pakistan use religion and its ideology as a motivational tool to accomplish their agenda. Conversely, the motivation for Maoist's is based on socio-economic grievances regardless of any religious affiliation, so it serves

the purpose of representing the deprived people in the secular India.

Thirdly, the Taliban have gained power enough to strike at the heart of the country's major cities. They have managed to increase their area of influence from the tribal areas to the settled areas of KPK and even fled to Southern Punjab. On the other hand, in India, the Maoists mostly remain confined to the country's interiors, although their influence is spreading across large parts of its rural areas.

Fourthly, Pakistani Taliban is an extension of the 'Mujahidin', bred and nurtured in the Soviet war in Afghanistan. They are the ones who were abandoned after the war was over and had no other option to take up an armed resistance against the government in order to safeguard their identity. Hence, as discussed earlier, the elite and educated population having sound knowledge and exposure regard the ideas of Taliban insurgency as a spillover effect from the Afghan Taliban and regard it as alien for Pakistan's system of governance and socio- political structure of the country.

In India, the Maoist insurgency has rather grown organically from its origins as a local 1967 uprising by communists over a land dispute in the village of Naxalbari in West Bengal, from where its name was derived as 'Naxalites'. They remain localized, and have a goal to bring a world proletarian revolution by overthrowing the semi-feudal, semi-colonial system under the neo-colonial form of indirect rule and exploitation.

Fifthly, the Pakistani Taliban, as the group is called, wants the imposition of *Shariah* in the country and do not recognize the existing Constitution. Most of the group's violent attacks, which are routine occurrences, specifically target civilians. The question of support for these militants is underpinned by local grievances over social injustice is highly debatable. Majority of Pakistani population dismiss the Pakistani Taliban and think that they are, adopted from an alien religious philosophy

imported from the Middle East by al Qaeda, and criminals and thugs have joined in for a mission to gain money and power.

While in India, even those who do not support the insurgency, acknowledge that poverty and the marginalization of rural areas– especially among the indigenous tribal population, have contributed to the mobilization and support.

The Maoists are not motivated by religious ideologies; rather they emphasize on eradicating socio-economic disturbances in the rural areas and have gained massive support over a passage of time.

Findings

The lessons learnt in the course of the study may be divided into four broad categories

Insurgency – a significant threat with lack of time efficient response

Irrespective of the motivation and origination of insurgency, the counter-insurgency efforts have always been delayed by the political administration. This is true in both the cases; Maoists in India and Taliban in Pakistan. The underlying reasons being that the security breach by such movements is initially not expected to swell up to such a huge magnitude. While, this is true, the impetus for ignoring these movements in the beginning also rests upon lack of institutional and administrative strength and capability to deal with a 'contagious' resistance. Dealing with guerilla warfare and armed resistance posed from within the country required intense clarity on the phenomenon and ways of curbing it.

Poverty- A menace indeed!

Poverty remains pivot for the insurgency based movement in the given setting of both India and Pakistan. The phenomenon of massive support of an insurgent movement by

a large population is always origin and objective based. Generally, the theories of mobilization explain insurgent actions in the form of coercion rooted in some kind of self-interest, grievance or perceived motivations. Hence, poverty, conflict, radicalization and isloation are the driving forces that lead to socio-economic greviances and greed which are triggered by the internal actors and conflict entrepreneurs to prolong and aggravate the insurgency.

Influence of external players

Insurgency as a movement requires immense funding and monetary support. The insurgents find refuge for this purpose under the umbrella of third parties and external actors which are ready to infuse instability in a country. Both the Maoists and Taliban are heavily funded by external actors who have their own vested regional, economic and geo-political interests. Hence, curbing the financial assistance pouring in from outside the borders could help in dealing with any form of insurgency.

Ideological extremism fuels insurgency

The more ideologically divided a society is, the more vulnerable is the system to fall prey to insurgent activities. Formulating a holistic process which includes not only a military response but also full fledged counter-ideology propaganda is the need of the hour. This rests upon improving governance and efforts for creating an inclusive social institutional setup with equal economic opportunities and justice. Studying the root causes and situational environment that lead to the mass mobilization for insurgency is crucial for understanding of any case study, the root causes if traced back and addressed properly could play a constructive role in pacifying the phenomenon of insurgency effectively.

Conclusion

In a nutshell, both the Maoists in India and Taliban in Pakistan pose grave security challenges to the established

political, economic and social machinery of their respective countries. They adopt violent means and armed resistance to confront their governmental policies diverse from traditional notions of security challenges.

At the domestic front, there is need of a holistic approach towards diagnosis and interrelated prescription of the socio-economic issues which provide motivation for armed struggle phenomenon. It should include adoption of short term, medium term and long term policies. Thus, ranging from a swift search and sweep military operation along with bridging the gap between state and locals by using a 5-R approach: Restitution, Reparation, Rehabilitation, Rebuilding and Reconstruction for a conflict prone zone. As, a long term policy, educational, political, economic and social reforms should be introduced which empowers and facilities participation of the locals.

Empowerment and mainstreaming is possible by inducing moves of promoting innovation, creativity and progressive growth in the indigenous cultural norms of a society. In this regard, a military operation should include a wholesome response, carrying a package which addresses several segments of greed and deprivations.

Similarly, it will be necessary to develop a fresh socio-economic structure for the entire region. Specifically, one that seeks economic betterment based on local resources and equal opportunities for the people. In this regard, acting as camp for the third parties is going to provide sustained hindrance to any kind of efforts to deal with such insurgent movements. It is high time that both the insurgents and the administration realize that, violence alone is neither an option to defend their rights, nor a feasible means to deal with such uprisings.

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INDIAN ELECTIONS 2014:

DOMESTIC AND REGIONAL FALLOUT

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Abstract

The dominating story of the 2014 Indian elections was the clear triumph of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and its leader Narendra Modi, together with a matching defeat of the Indian National Congress. In the run up to Delhi, the new political elite presided over a mix bag of two streams: the wave of 'Hindutva' and quest for economic revival. Interplay of the two will continue to provide a gauge for the direction of Indian politics and for the extent of their success or failure. This paper discusses the main ingredients of the election-relevant Indian scenario with reference to peculiarities and issues in the electoral process; the play of Hindutva ideology in the contemporary phase; and implications of the election results for the region and Pakistan. This discussion takes place in the backdrop of Indian political system, main players in the arena and new realities in the making. The main argument of the paper is, the success of BJP in elections offers both, promises of growth and apprehensions of decadence at domestic and regional levels. However, the reversal of economic progression or inability to deliver, can motivate the BJP to find distractions in the neighborhood.

Introduction

The 2014 elections in India unfolded a resounding victory for Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the rise of Narindhra Modi as the country's Prime Minister. This change in India's political spectrum has been exceptional in an otherwise stagnant milieu of past three decades, and thus carries with it newer connotations for the country's domestic scene and interface with the neighborhood. In the run up to Delhi, the new political elite presided over a mix bag of two streams: the wave of '*Hindutva*' and quest for economic revival. Interplay

of the two will continue to provide a gauge for the extent of their success or failure.

The BJP obtained a majority mandate amid high expectations to deliver in the backdrop of a stagnant economy, increasing urbanization, a burgeoning youth population and rapidly changing regional security environment. Notwithstanding the promises of socio-economic development, any failure of the leadership to deliver on this count may prompt them to find distractions in the neighborhood. The study thus argues, the success of BJP in elections offers both the promises of growth and apprehensions of decadence at domestic and regional levels.

This paper discusses the main ingredients of the Indian scenario with reference to peculiarities and issues in the electoral process and its aftermath; the play of Hindutva ideology in the contemporary phase; and implications of the change for the region and Pakistan. This discussion takes place in the backdrop of Indian political system, main players in the arena, one year report card of Modi's government and new realities in the making.

The Electoral Map

To recall, the sixteenth Lok Sabha that brought forth 'historic victory' of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), is the outcome of an electoral process carried in 543 parliamentary constituencies from 7 April to 12 May 2014.[1] The process was spread across 28 states and 7 union territories.[2] In terms of official data, 814 million people were eligible to vote, with an increase of about a hundred million voters since the last general elections in 2009.[3] The turnout in these elections remained around 66.4%.[4]

In essence, the National Democratic Alliance led by the Bharatiya Janata Party, won a sweeping victory by taking 336 seats of 543.[5] Conversely, the United Progressive Alliance, led by Congress could win only 58 seats.[6] There has been a remarkable increase in Hindu vote from almost twenty

percent to thirty-one percent in this election. The drivers behind this phenomenal change in Indian political arena include: the ten years of Congress incumbency, economic slowdown and charisma of Narendra Modi. A look at the report card of top 15 political national and regional parties explains that BJP's victory impacted mainly the national parties, and with a few exceptions, did not affect the regional parties.

The following table compares the top 15 parties of 2014 and 2009 elections in terms of seats.

Table: Seats' comparison of top 15 national and regional political parties: 2014 and 2009
Ranked by the number of seats in current Lok Sabha[7]

Party	Popular votes cast	Votes percentage	Seats won 2014	Seat comparison 2009	Party Type
Bartiya Janata Party	171657549	31	282	116 +166	National
Indian National Congress	106938242	19.31	44	206 -162	National
All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam	18115825	3.27	37	9 +28	Regional
All India Trianmool Congress	21259681	3.84	34	19 +15	Regional
Biju Janta Dal	9491497	1.71	20	14 +6	Regional
Shivsena	10262982	1.85	18	11 +7	Regional
Telugu Desam	14094545	2.55	16	6+10	Regional
Telangana Rashtra Samithi	6736490	1.22	11	2 +9	Regional
Communist Party of India	17986773	3.25	9	16 -7	National

(Marxist)					
Yuvajana Sramika Rythu Congress Party	13991280	2.53	9	9=0	Regional
Nationalist Congress Party	8635554	1.56	6	9 -3	National
Samajwadi Party	18672916	3.37	5	23 -18	Regional
Aam Admi Party	11325635	2.05	4	4=0	National
Janta Dal (United)	5992196	1.08	2	20 -18	Regional
Bahujan Samaj Party	22946182	4.14	0	21 -21	National

The outcome of the electoral process mirrored some glaring anomalies that are rooted in the country's political system. To illustrate, the defeat of Congress in terms of seats in Lok Sabha, has been viewed as 'far worse than anything in its long history' of dominating Indian politics: it won only 44 seats, less than one-sixth of its rival's 282. However, it is interesting that in terms of vote percentage, BJP had a 12% edge over the Congress while it gained 600% superiority on the rival in terms of seats. Moreover, Bahujan Samaj Party, despite third in vote percentage (4.14 percent), failed to obtain a single seat in the parliament. Another window on the anomalies is provided by the fact that Muslims who constitute over 13% of Indian population, could get only 24 seats (4%of the total 543 seats) and ruling party (BJP) does not have even a single Muslim MP in the Parliament.[8]

Significance: Broad Contours

Modi-led BJP victory is significant for a number of reasons. It was the first time that BJP gained power on its own, without need for a coalition. This signals that Modi faces no bottlenecks at the legislature in the pursuit of his agenda. Second, though BJP's '*Hindutva*' trademark brought it many

votes, it was largely Modi's message of economic growth and resurgence that motivated voters, even among those who are not inclined towards *'Hindutva', in Modi's camp.* Third, in the elections, Indians saw, in Modi, a charismatic leader with a message of Indian resurgence–a choice between a new future and a discredited past. Fourth, the BJP's success signalled the return of Right wing parties in Indian political spectrum. Fifth, in view of significant regional transformations now underway, the outcome of elections carries unavoidable linkages with the neighbourhood. In this context, it is important that we carry an in depth study of the emerging trends and come to grips with what may be the implications for the region and Pakistan.

Indian Political System: A Bird Eye View

To recall, India is a federal democracy with parliamentary system of government that reflects unitary characteristics. Its legislature is a bicameral parliament system which is divided into upper house, Rajya Sabah (council of states), and lower house, Lok Sabha (House of the people).[9] The electoral process in the country is based on the system of single seat constituency and there is no space for second ballot to ascertain the absolute majority.[10] Therefore, outcome of the electoral process is dependent on the majority vote cast in that constituency. Thus, the winner may not necessarily be a representative of majority. Although BJP won the elections and formed an independent government, voter percentage in the above table show that less than a third of Indians voted for it. Moreover, the political process does not *ipso facto* recognize the role of religion in terms of seat allocation and candidature, and therefore, reflects the secular characteristic of Indian state.

Over the years, India has transformed from an exceedingly centralized state ruled by one political party to an 'increasingly fragmented nation', influenced growingly by regional parties and more and more governed locally by unstable multi-party alliances. "In the general election of 2009, Congress and BJP faced each other in only seven of the 28 States".[11] In other

areas, one of the two national parties faced a regional party. Caste, communal and regional tensions keep haunting Indian political arena, sometimes even frightening its venerable secular and democratic ethos.

A counter to above argument maintains that the fragmentation of the electoral mandate among different parties is a result of unique development of democratic structure in India, which may be seen in other South Asian countries as well. Thus, the proliferation of political parties is a reflection of the absence of multi-polar competition within one family or even ideology that dominates the party system; consequently, competition takes place outside the party in the shape of another party. Whatever the reasons for electoral fragmentation among the Indian propertied political elite (middle class), there exists a strong consensus over the issues of democratic-capitalist order, India's place in regional and international levels and Pakistan.

Players and their manifestos

In the elections, three major parties BJP, Congress and AAP had similar manifestos focused on development, priority to education and other progressive measures. The significance of Hindu ideology was highlighted by both BJP and AAP but Congress refrained to do so. On the other hand, there was the bittersweet 11-party third front united by the twin goals of strengthening secularism and combating corruption. Conversely, Congress focused on the role of women in the development of the state while AAP portrayed that the elimination of the corruption from the state's institutions was its priority. Interestingly, a record 34 percent of the 543 elected members of the lower house of parliament face criminal charges.[12]

The election manifesto of the BJP was focused on the internal security issues, development and generation of resources. It also emphasized on the renegotiation of Article 370 of the constitution and establishing a unified civil code. Regarding internal and external regional security threats, it

already showed its hard stance by maintaining minimum credible deterrence and no first use of the nukes.[13]

Political system of India is reflective of its political elite, impacting country's domestic politics. On one side, there are hardcore elites focusing more on Hindu culture and agenda. On the other, there are elites who want to focus more on the economic revival. It, however, is an acknowledged fact that domestic factors impact the shaping of foreign policy.[14] Nonetheless, before moving towards the discussion of regional concerns, it is pertinent here to recap the peculiarities and issues that prevailed during the elections.

Peculiarities and Issues in the Electoral Process

The 2014 Indian elections were held under a politically charged domestic front. The process was closely monitored and its outcome highly speculated both at home and abroad. Domestic issues such as economic degradation and rising corruption remained at the forefront of parties' campaign. Understandably, incumbency and charisma factors were highly influential in the electioneering. Moreover, minority vote bank, emergence of third and fourth fronts and rise of regional parties were also among peculiarities of the elections. These issues and peculiarities are detailed in the following discussion:

Prominence of Domestic Issues

During the elections, domestic issues: corruption, a faltering economy, increasing inflation, unemployment, protection for women and national security were some of the key concerns that remained at the top in debates. This time, there was less focus on foreign relations. The incumbent Congress was accused by both, the AAP (or known as Common Man's Party) and the BJP for failing to curb corruption. This was mainly because, the Congress's term was marked by high-profile cases of alleged or proven corruption. These included but were not limited to the 2010 Commonwealth Games and the jailing of Laloo Prasad Yadav,

the former Railways Minister. The AAP, particularly had put the corruption at the top of its election campaign. Considering that an anti-corruption movement had given birth to the party this came as no surprise. The AAP had made a spectacular debut in Delhi elections during 2013. The BJP in its election campaign, focused on developing infrastructure, reviving the economy. Denying the BJP's corruption accusations, the Congress focused on portraying itself as a "pro-poor" party.

Accent on economy

The economy was the main issue and an impact-making factor in the campaign for all the parties.[15] Notwithstanding India's status with the famous BRICS (along with Brazil, Russia, China and South Africa), the country's lagging behind the expectations has signalled the "biggest disappointment of the lot".[16] This disappointment is visible in slowdown of Indian economic growth rate from approximate 7% to 4.5%. In 2013, Bloomberg had highlighted the slowing economy of India. It had also referred to stagnant policymaking and an inefficient bureaucracy.[17]

India's Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) declined marginally by 0.6% to $20.76 billion in the first 11 months of the 2013-14. Investments in the services sector, including banking, insurance, research and development and outsourcing among others, dipped by 54% to $2.18 billion during April-February period of in 2013-14.[18] India's gross domestic product (GDP) growth fell to 4.5% during 2012-13, which according to the Central Statistical Office (CSO), was "the worst performance since 2002-03".[19] Amidst these declining economic conditions, the charismatic Modi came forward within economic agenda which laid a crucial part in the success of the BJP.

Incumbency and *Charisma* factors

Fatigue of Indian voters and acute dissatisfaction with the ten years' Congress rule was shown in the election results. Although incumbent cy was an inevitable fact for Congress,

the shocking crush at this scale had not been predicted. Modi started his campaign focusing on the issues of 'development' and 'good governance' but this was interspersed with 'identity politics', as he invoked 'religion' and 'caste' elements to his advantage. He also focused on fulfilling the rising aspirations of people and youth in particular. The Congress, on the other hand, projected Modi as a divisive leader, who would destroy the secular fabric of the society. It put forward Rahool Ghandi as the new blood, custodian of Ghandi dynasty and for Congress, a person who could cut its losses of incumbency but to no avail.

Not strictly a two-way competition

The election did not represent a two-way competition. India experienced a complex fragmented party system which in turn, means rise of regional parties and perhaps, of third/fourth force. There were traditional Congress and BJP parties while other contestants were: an alliance of 11 regional parties as third and AAP probably as fourth factors. This in fact, reduced the average margin of victory in a constituency. Nevertheless, no alliance or force could stop BJP to snatch the bulk of the seats in the parliament. A significant impact of multi-party competition however was evident in stark difference between percentage of votes verses total seats obtained by a party in 2014.

Rise of regional parties

Another significant development in Indian politics is its extensive regionalization and north-south divide between the national and regional parties in the arena. The BJP maintains its impressive lead at the centre. However, in the southern and eastern parts of the country, the regional parties continued to dominate the scene. The regional parties maintained their overall strength while giving rise to *Mamata Banerjee* in Bengal and Jayalailita in Tamil Nado.[20] Interestingly, the difference in the votes and seats of BJP and Congress as illustrated in the table above, reflects also the collective strength of India's many regional parties.

Minority vote bank

Most surprising fact about the election results was that largest minority vote bank in India, Muslims that form the fourteen percent of the whole Indian population, could get only 24 out of 543 seats; a pathetic four percent. Most surprising of all, though Modi may have included two Muslims in his cabinet, 282 BJP representatives in Indian parliament do not include a single Muslim.[21]

'Hindutva' Reviewed

BJP's victory in the elections under the leadership of Modi signalled towards the revival of '*Hindutva*' ideology despite an accent of Indian leadership on economic growth. The term synonymous with Hindu nationalism, was initially coined by Vinayak Damodar Savarkar who proclaims the term as embracing 'all the departments of thought and activity of the whole being of our Hindu race".[22] In actuality, the ideology aims a fusion between the Hindu culture and the public culture of India, that Muslims and Christians can remain Muslims and Christians in the private sphere, in the mosque and the church, but in the public sphere they have to show allegiance to Hindu symbols.[23]

The term *"Hindutva"* has hard and soft manifestations. The hard Hindutva 'unite and militarize' Hindus against alien religions, like Christianity and Islam.[24] Followers of hard '*Hindutva*' consider only Hindus to be 'primary citizens' of India and covet to make the followers of other religions 'alien' secondary citizens. "They want to convert India into a country of the Hindus, for the Hindus and by the Hindus."[25] Denying the multi-cultural and secular-democratic traditions of the country, they identify only themselves as the true nationalists. The Hard Hindutva also contends that the religio-political issues should be resolved in favor of the Hindus even outside the bounds of the constitution. The soft '*Hindutva*' has the same aim and principals but without the fundamentalist or violent part.[26] It applies the policy of appeasement and conciliation towards minorities. The soft Hindutva however

seeks satisfaction of Hindu agenda within existing Indian constitution.

Modi seems to be following the policy of soft Hindutva. His success in the elections denotes that he was able to bring about consensus in the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) cadre and the popular Hindu vote on the soft Hindutva. There seems to be an agreement to transform the Indian state and society on Hindu ethos through a long-term process of economic success and cognitive changes in the nationalist discourse through the control of state instruments. On the other hand, fears of Modi again turning over to hard Hindutva are not without reason.

During last two decades or so, parties associated with Sangh Parivar such as BJP, the Bajrang Dal and the Vishva Hindu Parishad have gained prominence in Indian society. As a result, incidents of violence against minorities (more notably against Muslims) have become more prominent. In this regard, brutal incident of Babri mosque and 2002 Gujarat bloodshed of Muslims and violence against Christians in 2013 are a few in a long list. Considering Modi's past with RSS as an activist member since he was a boy, some on the Right may have expectations that he will follow the hard Hindutva. For example: building the temple in place of Babri mosque in Ayodhya; pushing to adopt a single uniformed code for all communities and abolishing religious personal laws; or changing the constitutional status of Muslim-majority Kashmir.[27]

In the contemporary scenario, the 'rise of Hindutva' has an inevitable interface with the 'quest for the country's economic revival'. It is therefore, expected that the drivers for economic revival will be one factor to contain the extremist manifestation of Hindutva.

Newer Realities in the Indian Scenario

The new realities in the Indian scenario include: rising role of regional parties; burgeoning role of religion; uncertain

future of Congress; contemplations on success / failure of BJP; and withering away of coalitions era.

Much has been written about the rise of regional parties in India. Milan Vaishnav of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace notes that, "rather than erode the stature of national parties, regional parties have more or less stabilized in terms of their relative power".[28] The number of states where regional parties gained greater shares of votes than either of the main national parties remained roughly the same, however, in some of the larger states—UP and Bihar—BJP popularity eroded the strength of regional parties. Nevertheless, national parties have yet to make inroads in states such as Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, or Tamil Nadu, where regional parties remain dominant.

Religion also remains a strong factor in Indian political life. According to exit polls, only 9 percent of Muslims voted for the BJP[29] which, although up from 4 percent in 2004, suggests that the largest minority religion remains excluded from the largest centre-right party. Although Modi, in his initial speeches after victory, sounded high-minded and made the right gestures about running the country for all, bringing everyone along, the question arises as to whether he would be able to shrug off his past with RSS. He also opined that the BJP's success transcended religious appeals and caste politics. Political posturing and dialogues aside, the BJP and Modi himself did make some use of caste and religion, as he played up his "other backward classes" background while campaigning in Uttar Pradesh, or as he criticized Bangladeshi (Muslim) infiltrators in Assam and West Bengal.[30]

Congress surely is passing through its most difficult phase. Since independence in 1947, for most of India's democratic history, the Lok Sabha has been dominated by the Congress. It had, by and large short periods out of power but the 2014 elections proved to be a disaster for the party. It simply did not lose power; it had to face a devastating defeat. This has raised questions about the possibility for the resurgence of Congress or end of Gandhi / Nehru dynasty. Nonetheless, it is

not totally out of the picture yet. The party carries the potential of a revival in view of its present 91 percent vote bank in case the leadership factor comes back into life.

BJP's government under Modi is relatively an 'unknown commodity' as the party's first tenure was limited in terms of time and space. . Second, it is for the first time, that any party other than Congress has gained such a decisive victory. Third, the scorecard of BJP and its leadership sends mix signals. On one hand, it presents the successful Gujarat economic model, while on the other, it is mistrusted due to party's connections with fundamentalist Hindu streak and shady past. Therefore, this success raises more questions than gives answers.

The coalition period that descended on India about a quarter century ago, ended with this election result as the BJP has crossed the magic number of 272 seats in the 543-member Lok Sabha on its own and does not need any allies – pre-poll or post-poll – to run the government. The flip side of it does not mean that it is sunset time for regional parties because parties like AIADMK (Tamil Nadu), Trinamool Congress (West Bengal) and Biju Janata Dal (Orissa) have done very well without the support of any party, national or regional. Not to mention the fact that for any government to run the affairs of the state smoothly, the support of these regional parties is essential. Moreover, BJP at present, does not have the majority in upper house of the parliament. Thus, for the approval of such acts that need clearance from both houses, it would need support of other parties.

Aspirations and Achievements: One Year of Modi's Government

The efficient media machine of Modi-led BJP election campaign created expectations that his strong leadership will bring rapid growth to India, prosperity to its impoverished millions and vault the country to instant great power status.[31] However, almost a year into office, there is an uncertain view on how much the administration would be able to meet the people's expectations and fulfil its proclaimed promises. A

measure of progress in economic domain is no doubt evident from Modi's multibillion dollar deals with the West and China. But the effects of these deals at home front would not yet visible for some more time to come, the progress on 'make in India' seems lacking and the 'common man' has perceptibly not witnessed the change. Moreover, the government's report card related to the minority rights and treatment remains questionable.[32] In addition, the results of states' elections held so far, send mixed signals for the country's future political map: for instance, on one side, BJP won the state elections in Maharashtra and Haryana, while on the other it had to suffer an embarrassing defeat from AAP in Delhi.[33]

Since Modi government came in to power, the RSS has launched a multi-pronged approach to propagate its ideas, often with the help of the state machinery. Appointments of RSS workers in the government and efforts to influencing the country's policies in defence and education are just few examples to quote.[34] This rising influence of RSS in the country gives credence to the argument that the BJP elite are promoting 'Hindutva ideology' in the cover of economic growth.

On the other hand, India has continued to keep its options open with all major stakeholders in the international arena while maintaining a tilt towards the US. Modi has also been successful in securing cooperation of France in civil nuclear technology field. At regional front, while Modi's invitation to the heads of all South Asian states on oath taking ceremony had blossomed hopes for a better future, but later his government's posture towards Pakistan and discontinuation of dialogue process showed an inconsistency in approach.

Current Scenario: Regional Security Paradigm and Implications for Pakistan

The elections and its aftermath offer a six-fold view of Indian polity and its current interface with regional and international community:

First, the successful elections and one year of transition confirms vitality of the country's democratic process and its institutional strength. This plays an important role in India's interface with other regional and global actors.

Second, with economic growth, geo strategic disposition, large market and burgeoning population, India acquired the capacity to act on issues of primary strategic and economic concern to the world powers including United States, China and Russia. For the last few years, India has been losing its economic growth. Though 2014-15 indicators show India's growth rate at 6.9%, but this increase is more due to statistical manipulation (changing the base year for calculation to 2013 from 2010) and less because of economic policies. Nevertheless, a higher rate of growth, improved infrastructure, expanded trade, and better governance are goals Modi has set to take his country forward. Therefore, a more economic focused agenda may be expected from the Modi's government.

Third, Modi's leadership has been welcomed in international arena in spite of the pre-election adverse images related to his performance on human rights. He had then not only been refused diplomatic visa to USA as Chief Minister but even his ordinary visa was withdrawn in 2005. Nonetheless, with this remarkable victory coupled with the country's huge size and vast potential, Modi is now no doubt the toast of foreign leadership. However, this power puts a great responsibility on Modi's leadership. He now needs to improve the country's impoverished population, provide security to minorities and deliver on his promises to cleanse himself of the past stigma.

Fourth, for Modi's leadership and assessment of success/failure of his policies, Pakistan factor remains a litmus test. The report card of India's successive postures vis-à-vis Pakistan has only enforced the latter's threat perception regarding India's 'grand strategy' as an 'existential threat to its survival'. Despite regime changes in New Delhi and Islamabad and numerous wars, cease-fires, diplomatic initiatives and

bilateral talks, Kashmir's status is as unresolved today as it was 67 years ago, and relations continue to be overtly hostile. On the other hand, it also needs to be remembered that the last time these touchy issues between the two states nearly got resolved, was not under a Congress government but a BJP-led one. With a person so concerned about his legacy, one would expect Modi to try and resolve issues with Pakistan for the well-being of his own country. In a nutshell, India cannot become a world power till it resolves its major issues with Pakistan.

Fifth, BJP has a record of productive engagement with the current Pakistani Prime Minister, Nawaz Sharif. In fact, the last time that an Indian Prime Minister travelled to Pakistan was under the Sharif tenure in February 1999. That visit by BJP Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee led to the signing of the Lahore Declaration which was intended to transform the India-Pakistan relationship. Under the terms of the agreement both the countries pledged that they would avoid a nuclear arms race as well as non-conventional and conventional conflicts. Prime Minister Modi's agenda of rapid economic growth, infrastructure development, trade, and investment sends positive signals for bilateral relationship, but last one year have not witnessed any substantial progress. Rather the relationship has remained tense. Moreover, it may be remembered that nationalist Hindus rhetorically engage Pakistan to legitimize their vision of Hindu India at home and improve their standing among secular Hindus and Indian Muslims.

Sixth, Modi seems to have followed rather a soft Hindutva-based discourse this time because of two factors: soft image that serves as India's strength and BJP's desire to break away from the past stigma of sectarian violence. The continuation of this style will largely depend on how the government will succeed to deliver in economic domain. If Modi's leadership can quickly achieve positive results on the economic front, it can thus remain popular. If, however, he is not successful on the economic front, there will be strong criticism not only amongst the liberals but also in his own camp. He may then

resort to finding the scapegoats. Hindutva-based polarization strategy at home or cross-border terrorism in the neighborhood will be amongst his first choices.

Conclusion

Notwithstanding all its problems, India remains a vibrant and functioning democracy that transmits images of continuity, and therefore promises a greater role in the arena. With regards to BJP and Modi's future posture, one key question will be the influence of RSS on the new government. In this regard, multiple scenarios are being unfolded. These range from hopes for economic revival and development to resurrection of hard Hindutva. In international arena, India yearns for a self reliant powerful role on the globe, amalgamated with its regional agenda i.e. achieving a status of a power that could dictate and influence its neighbouring states. Therefore, BJP's inability to deliver at home front or setback in economic development, can pave the way for fundamentalist sectors in Indian society to steal the show.

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STATE OF INDIAN MINORITIES: IMPACT ON DOMESTIC POLITICS AND THE COUNTRY'S STANDING ABROAD

Muhammad Shabbir and Gulandam Mian

Abstract

The religious, cultural and ethnic diversity in Indian society presents challenges as well as opportunities for the democratic structure of the state. India has used the vanguard of secularism to celebrate the diversity. However, its metamorphing interpretations have created a conflict between secular ideology and minority rights. The existence of personal laws derived from religion; the affiliation of political parties with fundamentalist religious organizations; and the rallying of a significant proportion of the Hindu Diaspora behind Hindutva philosophy are indicative of the conflict. This study aims at discussing the state of minorities in India and its interface with the domestic politics and the country's standing abroad. In this context, a probing look at the Indian experience due to its aspirations for regional leadership becomes pertinent. The paper argues that safeguard of minority groups in India particularly attracts the attention of the world community due to its complicated social fabric that is characterized by social ostracism on the ground of caste, ethnicity and religion.

Introduction

India is proclaimed as a nation celebrating 'unity-in-diversity': ethnic and cultural plurality and multi-religious make up, glued in a shared historical experience and political frame. It has used the vanguard of secularism to celebrate this diversity. The inter-relationship between diversity and secularism has been integral to India's political architecture for about four decades. However, its metamorphing interpretations have created a conflict between secular ideology and minority rights. The signs of this predicament in the relations between state, society and religion include the

precarious situation of India's religious minority groups, particularly the violence directed against Muslims in 2002 and Christians in 2013. In addition, the existence of religion-specific personal laws, the affiliation of political parties with fundamentalist religious organizations, and the rallying of a significant proportion of the Hindu Diaspora behind Hindutva philosophy are also indicative of the potential conflict. Whether the state can resolve conflicts and ease tension or is itself part of the problem, is a matter of political and intellectual debate.

In this backdrop, an appraisal of the Indian experience of the minority question, the religious ones in particular, is pertinent due to country's aspiration for regional leadership. This study aims at analyzing and discussing the state of minorities in India and its impact on the country's standing abroad. The paper argues that safeguard of minority groups in India particularly attracts the attention of the world community due to its complicated social fabric that is characterized by social ostracism on the grounds of caste, ethnicity and religion.

Minorities and Secularism in India

Secularism in essence separates the state and religion. However, the Indian constitution while declaring India as a secular state, hints at minority rights without clearly defining the term 'minority' itself. A comprehensive analysis of the Indian interpretation of minorities and secularism is the *sin quo non* for deciphering its impact on the Indian standing at home and abroad.

A window on the minority architecture

The multicultural existence of the Indian society is visible from the fact that it is home to a vast variety of cultural, religious and linguistic diversity. The composite structure of the Indian society can be divided into "6 main ethnic groups, 52 major tribes, 6 major religions, 6400 castes and sub-castes and 18 major languages along with 1600 minor languages and

dialects".[1]Therefore, it can rightly be described as a nation of minorities, yet it is overwhelmingly Hindu.

The term minority lacks a legally accepted definition, despite great importance attached to the protection of minority rights. Francesco Capotorti defines minority as "a group numerically inferior to the rest of the population of a State, in a non-dominant position, whose members – being nationals of the state - possess ethnic, religious and linguistic characteristics differing from the rest of the population and show, if only implicitly, maintain a sense of solidarity, directed towards preserving their culture, traditions, religion and language."[2] In this regard, the Indian minority groups can be divided in to four main categories on the basis of religion, language, caste and tribe. The Indian constitution provides certain rights to minorities on the bases of caste and language and not on the religious grounds. However, this study from an outsider perspective assesses the state of Indian minorities on the bases of aforementioned four categories.

The Indian constitution has used the word minorities in Article 29 to 30 and 350A to 350B, but has refrained from an unambiguous definition of the term minority groups in the Indian context. Article 29 of the constitution pronounces minority as "any section of citizens having a distinct language script and culture". But this creates a vague picture as an entire majority community, can be termed as minority because of its distinct culture or language or a group within a majority can also claim the status. Article 30 specifically, speaks of the religious and linguistic minorities in the context of their right to establish educational institutions. As far as the reservation of seats in the parliament and jobs in public sector is concerned, it   is not on the basis of religion or language or minority status but is based on the marginalized position of the scheduled tribe (ST), scheduled caste (SC) or other backward classes (OBCs).Thus, if the minorities fall under any of the three broad categories namely: Other Backward Castes (OBC), Scheduled Tribes (ST) and Scheduled Caste (SC), they can benefit from the policy of reservation. Arguably, the Constitution of India addresses various aspects of the

legitimate rights of minority groups. In this regard, Part III of the Indian Constitution guarantees certain fundamental rights for each and every citizen of India. These general rights have significant bearing on the protection of minorities.[3]

In numerical terms, Muslims constitute 13.4 per cent of the population, Christians 2.3 percent, Sikhs 1.6 percent, Buddhists 0.8 per cent, Jains 0.3 per cent and Parsis a few thousands[4]. A study of the geographical spread suggests that bulk of the Muslim population lives in four Indian states: Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal and Assam. Christians are mainly concentrated in Kerala, the four south Indian states and the north eastern states, more than 60 percent of the Sikh population in the Punjab, whereas the major concentration of the Buddhists is in the state of Maharashtra and Parsis mainly reside in Mumbai.[5] With regard to linguistic construct, more than 1500 languages are spoken in India, though 91 percent of the Indian speak 18 major languages.[6]

According to the 2001 Indian census, 16 percent of the total population of India consisted of the scheduled castes that included 'Dalits' also known as Harijans, or 'Untouchables'.[7] The schedule tribal population constitutes 8.2% of the total population. It lists 461 groups recognised as tribes, while estimates of the number of tribes living in India reach up to 635.[8] Among the tribal groups, six largest tribes constitute nearly one-half of India's tribal population. These tribes are: the Gonds of central India; the Bhils of western India; the Santals of Bihar and West Bengal; the Oraons of Bihar and West Bengal; the Minas of Rajasthan; and the Mundas of Bihar. Some tribes, though considerably smaller, constitute a majority of the areas in which they live: the Nagas, Khasis and Garos, for instance in India's northeast.[9]

Minority representation (mainly religious, caste and tribal groups) in all sectors of Indian life and development is abysmally low. In other words, India has not celebrated the diversity but has only accommodated it. The diversity in India is therefore tolerated till it conflicts with the unity of the Indian state and civilization. There is a covert thought that

they will soon be part of the mainstream due to the diversity of Hindu community that is in itself a guarantee for the sustenance to diversity and for minorities. Relative insignificance of the Indian minority groups is also explained in terms of a general rule that democracy is by nature majoritarian, where the tilt of policies is towards the majority. Thus, there exists every chance for the majority culture being construed as the national culture. Therefore, it is extremely important to make possible a significant position for the Indian minority groups before they lose their identity to the Hindu majority culture. As this is evident from the example of the Parsee community, which is on the verge of extinction from the Indian social fabric, due to its absorption into the Hindu majority culture. To understand the issues of minority groups in India, it is important to first appreciate the definition and various interpretations of the Indian secularism as brought forth in the Indian political history.

An Anthology of Indian Secularism

The generally accepted definition 'Secularism' explains it as "a political mode of governance based on two major principles, equal respect and freedom of conscience - and on two operative modes - separation of church and state, and neutrality of the state toward religion."[10]In the Indian context, the term has a unique interpretation because it is usually used in relation to the idea of a Secular State, established in the religiously pluralistic framework of India. The term secularism was embodied in the preamble of the Indian constitution only in 1976, by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi for political purposes. However, the term lacked a clear definition. In the Indian social history, there have been various approaches to religion that have been crucial to the makeup and evolution of the concept. The evolutionary phases of Indian secularism can be categorised into the following three periods: The initial period of romanticism, the era of pragmatism and the rise of "Hindutva".

The romantic underpinnings of secularism in the Indian society, initially flourished with the exposure of India's

intellectuals with the Western liberal political thought in the colonial era. Since the late nineteenth century, the Indian political and intellectual thinkers have been faced with the fundamental problem of discovering or devising some shared norms, coherent values and common commitments that could link and keep the diverse Indian society together. The answer of this dilemma was initially found in socialist nationalism. This approach of non-religious philosophy of secularism is associated mainly with the early 'liberal rationalist' Nehru and 'dialectical materialist' E.M. Sankaran Nampoothiripad. They did not view secularism separating religion from politics, rather maintained state neutrality in personal religious choice and intervened by codifying the Hindu Personal Law to protect the individual's family affairs.

An era of pragmatism starts with the second interpretation of Secularism, by the advocates of Gandhism and other ideologies of 'liberal Hinduism' like Radhakrishnan. It declares that the idea of Indian Secularism is an expression of toleration based on the traditional Hindu doctrine of equality of religions. Gandhi's opposition to the two-nation theory of Muslim League based on the religious differences between Hinduism and Islam and the partition of the country arising from it, was indeed religious. Gandhi said:

"Partition means a potent untruth. My whole soul rebels against the idea that Hinduism and Islam represent two antagonistic cultures and doctrines. To assent to such a doctrine for me is a denial of God...we are all, no matter by what name designated, children of God".

Thus, public adherence to the policy of constituting a secular democracy by post independence India was defined as the provision of just reverence to all religions, rather than the segregation of religion and state.[11] Therefore within a short period, the 'great Indian consensus' was moulded, thus creating a religious −secular India rather than a secular republic.[12] The third stage heralds the period of the rise of Hindutva philosophy or 'Indian Fascism'. It originally started as a nationalist movement under the RSS[13] in order to

overthrow the British imperialism and Muslim separatism by Keshav Baliram Hedgewarin 1925. The philosophy of Hindutva[14] was formally revived with the rise of BJP in 1980, an era infamous for promoting communal politics.

In essence, the evolutionary stages of secularism led to the development of a visible rift between the Indian nationalist project and the secularized constitution, due to the conflicting natures of their 'civilizing missions'. The former tried to liberate the newly born nation of the western influences and eventually cultural minorities, whereas the later craves for the recognition of religious and cultural plurality through secularized constitution and compartmentalizing religion and state.[15]

Religious society and secular norms: Tension in the Indian Polity

There are divergent views with regard to the success/failure of secularism in India. Efficacy of the creed is questioned by Hindu nationalists as against their political opponents (mainly the Gandhians and the Leftists) on a two-fold rationale: it is viewed as a vehicle of appeasement of minorities and thus in practice, always biased against Hindu majority. However, instead of renouncing the creed, the Hindu nationalists would rather give it a different interpretation and seek a "Genuine Secularism" as against the "Pseudo-Secularism" of Congress and Leninists.[16]

The question arises, what does the secular state offer by way of an emancipatory minority politics? It may be argued that a major rationale of constitutional secularism lies in its promise of support to minority groups. The debate on its uses, limits, and contradictions is a complex and extensive one, but there would be agreement about both their necessity and their insufficiency, with different emphasis placed on each. In particular the modern state offers itself as the alternative to religion and its norms, according to one definition of secularism (separation of church and state); but according to another it is committed to "protecting" the religious and

cultural rights of communities.[17]Moreover, the existence of four sets of personal laws, (discussed in detail further down in the paper), belonging to each of the major religions, plays a major role in exacerbating majority-minority tension over specific issues, contributing to the decline of Indian secularism.

In addition, the Muslim representation tends to be minimal in the political, administrative, judicial and other departments of public institutions but it appears to be part of the Indian political strategy to project itself as an inclusive society. The Indian government has often resorted to the practice of electing the least represented communities to important political and public offices. To explain, Iqbal A. Ansari argues: "to periodically appoint Muslims on positions of high visibility like a President and a Chief Justice is to give impression that Muslims are equal participants in the public life in India"[18] while the facts speak otherwise.

Thus, the Indian Secularism has evolved into a unique political mode of governance that neither resembles the traditional western secularism nor it finds itself at home in the Indian social setup. Therefore, a dilemma is faced when it comes to fit India in the Western liberal multicultural niche. The reason for which tends to be India's association with a civilization and its identification with the Hindu majority culture, declaring communities different from it as minorities. The concept of defining majorities and minorities is unobjectionable, but the problem lies with the very idea that there exists an uncompromising difference between the majority and minority culture. That has led to an increasing clash between the majority and minorities over issues such as language rights, regional autonomy, political representation, education curriculum, personal laws, even national anthem or public holidays.[19]

State of Indian Minorities: An Overview

Socio-economic disparities

The complicated Indian social fabric that is characterized by social ostracism on the grounds of caste, ethnicity and religion tends to confirm the susceptibility of the minority communities to discriminatory practices: exclusion, violence due to their marginalized position, poverty and low political representation. The minorities' whether religion-based or recognized as under-privileged classes, remain marginalized in the socio-economic milieu. In this backdrop, the ideal of 'secularism' offers glue to the Indian diversity but stays short of serving as the vehicle of equal opportunities or even progress for various communities in the arena.

The Indian constitution seeks to secure the minority groups and other socially marginalized groups while efforts under this umbrella have proved insufficient in the redress of grievances among different communities. The provisions do not *ipso facto* apply on the religion-based minorities, a far greater reality in the Indian scenario. The constitution guarantees fundamental rights of the citizens in Part III without any discrimination, whereas Article 29 proclaims the rights of minorities for maintaining their distinct culture or language. Similarly, Article 330 and 335 Part 16 reserve seats for the disadvantaged social groups (ST, SC and OBCs) in the government jobs and the Indian parliament. Under this system of compensatory discrimination, a total of 49.5% of the seats are reserved in the form of quotas[20] for the ST, SC and OBCs, out of which 27% are reserved for the OBCs, 15% for the ST and 7.5% for SC. However, there are no special provisions provided for securing minority groups because the reservation policy tends to take in its domain the marginalized communities in a certain social group, not the religious or linguistic minority groups until they fall in the category of the ST, SC or OBCs because of their disadvantaged position.

The reservation of quotas in government jobs has proved ineffective in speeding up the process of upward social

mobility of the minorities. For example, the percentage of minority recruitment in the government sector especially the public banks have continuously declined. According to the minister of minority affairs K. Rahman Khan, it has gone down to 6.24% from 10.18% in 2010-2011.[21]Similarly, the backward classes, which include the Shudra sub castes and the Dalits (Scheduled tribes and scheduled castes), and women are consigned to lowly unskilled jobs because of the prejudiced approach of employers, unequal distribution of the resources and a history of unfavourable status[22]. Likewise, the limited scope of the quota system introduced by the government for the welfare of minorities does not help in offering any relief as most of the quotas focus on securing jobs in undesirable areas such a menial or janitorial work. As a result, they remain employed in cast-based areas.[23]

The religious minorities especially the Muslim community face countless hurdles in seeking jobs in the government sectors: Ayesha Pervez in her report on India's working Muslims, terms such discrimination as the presence of "religious exclusion" in India's public sector. She has reiterated the existence of such religion-based exclusions in the region of West Bengal despite the state being home to 27% of the Muslim population; their political representation that stands at 4%. Low political and economic figures force the Muslim population in masquerading as Hindus for getting jobs.[24] The Sachar Committee report of 2006 and the Mishra Commission Report of 2007 also emphasized the deplorable condition of the Muslims in educational, political and socio-economic field. The 2011 Human Development Report by the Indian government reemphasizes the miserable socio-economic status of the Muslims.[25]Nevertheless, in a society that is based on the principle of caste and class the Muslim Ashraf has adjusted very well; they are well integrated as elite-middle class in politics, administration, education and culture of mainstream India. However, the fruits of this integration have not transformed to common Indian Muslim.

The religious minorities in India are also the victim of insecurity and anxiety that arise due to the animosity of Hindu

religious fundamentalists targeting minorities in general and Muslims in particular.[26] For example, the Muslim community has been singled out in the communal violence during 1992 Babri Mosque incitement where the state machinery proved highly ineffective in providing protection. Thus, the scenario, contradicted the secular principles of the Indian constitution.[27] The communal riots in 2001 witnessed the involvement of fundamentalist groups in setting the dalits against the Muslims. Many such incidents have been experienced by other religious minorities: the Kandamal Riots in Orissa (2008) involved Christian minorities where during the communal violence, the relief agencies were stopped by the administration from undertaking any relief work.[28] Arguably, the high profile position of Muslims in almost all aspects of Indian state and society is not entirely superficial but it reflects the integrated position of Muslim Ashraf through English education. It may be one of the reasons that migration to Pakistan of a section of the Indian Muslims stooped after the mid-sixties and they began to seek accommodation in secular-democratic India. The majority Urdu-madrassa-educated lower sections of the Indian Muslims are the real losers who live in poverty and communal strife.

The general grievances of the tribal minorities concerned with their demand of autonomous status and their below average socio-economic conditions, thus creating a dismal economic picture. The Jenukuruba tribe in Karnataka is a pertinent example of economic injustice. Despite being a population of 60,000, it lacks a single degree holder and are still dwelling on the trees.[29] Thus, the deplorable economic conditions of a group in a society starts a never ending vicious circle that leads to a meager political representation, as a result, the group is orphaned and unable to address its grievances , thus dying a slow death.

The linguistic minority groups are highly concerned about the recognition of their languages as the official language of the states, for strengthening their identity and solidarity. There are states with officially recognized state languages in

India such as Assamese, Bengali, Bodo, Dogri, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Kashmiri, Konkani, Mathalietc but on the other hand some states, where the local languages of the major minority groups lack official recognition e.g. Hindi is not spoken by the majority of the people in Meghalaya, Mizoram and Nagaland.[30] Thus a community that is socially and economically marginalized will fail to secure an effective political representation and their weak status puts them in a disadvantaged position creating the problems of political representation.

Political representation of minorities:

The political representation of minorities in India has been victim to majoritarian secular debate, quota controversy, discriminative elites and abuse of the system by the upper classes. The government of India has enacted various legislations, for ensuring smooth functioning of Indian democracy and elimination of the fear of encroachment of minority rights. Article 330, Part 16, of the Indian constitution, calls for the reservation of seats in each state for the marginalized groups (SC and ST) in the lower House of the Indian Parliament, in proportion to the size of their population in the respective provinces. That makes it obligatory on the SC and ST groups to contest elections in the reserved constituencies.[31]

The secular identity of the Indian state excludes the possibility of religion-based reservation of seats in the electoral process and provides reservations to lower castes to uplift their economic status. It assumes that Muslims, for example, are a community (not a minority in the classical sense) in the multicultural mosaic, and they will gain strength equal to the others while operating in India's political arena. Conversely, the electoral report card has been dismal. In 1952, Muslim representation in the Parliament was 4.3 per cent and the highest it soared was in the Parliament during 1984-89 period when it stood at 8.4 per cent. At one point, it dipped to 2.9 per cent. Comparing the results of 15th and 16th Loksabha elections, the Muslim representation, despite being the largest

minority, is at the lowest ebb. It is just 23 seats which means only 4% representation for a community that constitutes 14% of the population. The number of Muslim MPs had always remained between 20 to 30 except in 1980 when it was the highest 51 Muslim MPs and in 1984 the number was 48.[32]

Despite the fact that the quota system helps ensuring a more balanced and cohesive democratic societies, it has been criticized in India and otherwise for being discriminatory to the majority groups, creation of incompetent legislatures, time consuming, and involving a long cumbersome process.[33] Moreover, the middle and the lower class religious minority groups such as Christians and Muslims are doubly discriminated: firstly, for being a minority and secondly due to class dynamics. Furthermore, the social stratification into castes and classes produce elitist tendencies in the Indian democracy. The elites whether from the majority or the minority groups tend to act in unison for preserving the discriminatory social structure for their personal gain.

The mode of political reservation in India provides the right of reservation to the marginalized groups under the broad category of scheduled Tribes (ST) and scheduled Castes (SC) that can be utilized by the religious or linguistic minorities or the minorities in general only if they tend to be economically and politically marginalized. Such reservation is not guaranteed on the bases of ethnicity or religion. The percentage of reserved seats for minorities on the basis of their marginalized position in the lower house of parliament in 2008 were 14% for SC, 8 % for ST, 1 for Anglo-Indians and 2% for Zorastrians, Jews and Christians.[34]However, despite such an arrangement, the minority representation tends to be extremely low.

The main beneficiaries of the reservation system tend to be the upper classes of the societies or the influential people within the poor community (mainly the SC and ST). For example, Laloo Prasad's wife the ex-chief Minister of Bihar, who won the seat based on women reservation but in reality, the CM tended to be her husband. Thus, under the policy of

women reservation usually a wife, daughter or daughter in law is politically appointed but the real authority rests with the male member of the family. As a result, reservation works to the benefit of the well-to-do politicians.[35] Further more political reservation has increased atrocities to the very individuals who are meant to benefit from the policy i.e. the SC and ST.[36] There are divergent views held in India regarding the policy of reservation in the political and economic sectors of the government. A section of the society believes it has played an important role in dwindling the divide between the poor and the affluent castes by providing increased opportunities to the former in jobs, education and governance. Whereas others criticize it for widening the socio-economic and political disparities amongst the Hindu majority and minority groups ,discouraging merit-based system and encouraging vote-banking politics which has encouraged the growth of disruptive elements within the society.

Issues of personal laws:

Indian secularism contradicts the concept of the western secularism, mainly because of its inclusive approach to the religious laws, as binding on the state, unlike the segregation of the two. The four major religious communities, the majority Hindu, and the minority Muslims, Christians, and Parsis, have their own personal laws (other religious groups such as Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, and tribal and scheduled castes are subsumed under Hindu law). Despite the efforts made by the Sikh, Jains and Buddhists to declare themselves as distinct faiths, the Indian constitution views them as the offshoots of Hinduism. An effort was made by the National Commission for Minority Act in 1992, for recognizing Buddhism as a separate religion but it was challenged in the Supreme Court in 2005.[37]

Personal laws operate in matters relating to inheritance, marriage, divorce, maintenance, and adoption, which are regarded as "personal" issues, understood to be matters that relate to the family or "personal" sphere. Such as the Indian Penal Code, section 494, declares bigamy illegal, thus making the person contracting second marriage while the first is intact

as guilty of the offence. This takes in its scope also people who can by religion have more than one wife. Thus, the very fact that the operation of such penal provision is religion dependent is seen as the state interfering in the religious aspects of its people.

Similarly, the Muslim Women (protection of rights on Divorces) Act, 1986 regarding the treatment of divorced Muslim women by giving them rights available to the women of other religion, is looked at as the excessive interference by the state into the personal affairs of Muslim population, which should be decided according to their religious discretions. Likewise, in the case of Hanif Qureshi vs. State of Bihar, a decision upheld by the state, declared cow sacrifice as non-obligatory act for the Muslims. And state decisions of the nullification of Christian laws of inheritance on grounds of gender justice.[38]

The existence of anti-conversion laws in five Indian states: Gujarat, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Madya Pradesh, and Himachal Pradesh operate under the pretext of protecting vulnerable communities from forceful conversions.[39] These laws threaten the religious freedom as it restricts not only the people's choice or option to change their beliefs, nevertheless makes conversion literally impossible. The end goal of secularism that concentrates on restricting the state from legislation that confines the religious freedom of its citizens,[40] thus violating the fundamental rights ensured by the Indian constitution.

Indian Minorities: Impact on Domestic Politics

The preceding discussion of the minority issue in the Indian domestic scene has been reviewed exhaustively with particular reference to three elements: Socio economic disparities and communal violence; low minority representation in country's administrative and political institutions; and a dichotomy facing the religion-based personal laws. The discussion also reconfirms that besides the aforementioned factors, the mere tension in the Indian society owe to a lack of accepted definition of secularism and the term

minority, in an established diverse setting. The term secularism remains a subject of varying interpretation in keeping with the convenience of various political forces. In essence, the dismal socio-eco and political conditions of minorities in general and the Muslim community in particular, contradict the secular pretentions of India.

The very problem of Indian secularism has been associated with the daunting task of making a religious society secular. That has resulted in developing a concept of Secularism that runs contrary to the western secular ideals, mainly because of its inclusive approach to the religious laws, as binding on the state, unlike the segregation of the two. The existence of different personal laws on the basis of religion and the prevalence of anti-conversion laws run contrary to the secular principles and violate fundamental religious freedom.

The transforming concept of secularism has created insecurities amongst the minority groups at every stage whether it's the communal approach of the Hindu nationalists or the secular approach of the secular parties. Both have tried fidgeting with the religious aspect of the minorities and have treated them differently from the Hindu majority population. Consequently, minorities face a constant discrimination in all fields. The problem with Indian nationalism lies in its historically racial character unlike western nationalism that has successfully accomplished a certain level of unity in its society, Indian secularism is yet to achieve that level of maturity. It is because secularism in India is defined in majoritarian (Hindu) terms that minorities should define themselves by the so called Indian society and culture which in essence, is Hindu. On the other hand, minorities also play the race card and get certain privileges in education and jobs reserved for the backward classes.

In the wake of the existing domestic scenario, the Indian political scene has become associated with the two divergent interpretations of secularism as manifested in the political agendas of competing political forces. Firstly, the traditional mainstream parties, namely the secular politics of Nehru and

Gandhi that have an accent on egalitarian treatment of the minorities. Secondly, the Hindu nationalists identified with the rise of Hindutva and BJP have been associated with the notorious character of promoting communal riots.

The impressive BJP victory in the recent 16thLok Sabah elections: securing 282 out of the total 543 seats, is characterized by the lowest Muslim representation which remains the largest minority community group since independence. Comparing the results of 15th and 16th Loksabha elections, the Muslim representation is just 23 seats which means only 4% representation for a community that constitutes 14% of the population. The number of Muslim MPs had always remained between 20 to 30 except in 1980 when it was the highest 51 Muslim MPs and in 1984 the number was 48.[41] Conversely, it is hardly two Muslim MPs in the 16th LokSaba election.

The lack of political representation of the largest Muslim minority with an impressive size of 14% of the total population, reduces their say in the legislative process of the country resulting in government policies that are non-representative of the minority issues. In addition, rise of BJP to power, with its tainted track record, can put the country in a difficult situation by making the largest minority group feel insecure. In essence, the domestic issues of the Indian social life will take their toll by creating a negative image for India in the outside world, hindering India's progress toward realizing its regional ambitions. In this context, gauging the impact of minority issues on the global standing of India becomes pertinent for analysis.

India's Global Standing and Minority Factor

India's global profile is overwhelmed by the country's standing as the largest democracy and a growing international market. Concurrently, the total Muslim population of India makes it one of the third- largest Muslim countries on the world map after Indonesia. That statistically means Muslim community makes about 14 percent of India's 1.2 billion

people. The minority factor can therefore play a substantive role in India's global standing that may be viewed with a six-fold focus:

> ➢ Firstly, India's 180 million Muslim population, makes India one of the largest single Muslim country. This coupled with its secular face, affords India the opportunity to make inroads in the Muslim World and allows it to demand representation at International Muslim bodies such as the OIC, and, an access to the oil rich Middle Eastern region.
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> ➢ Secondly, the well-being of the largest Indian Muslim community can earn goodwill for India in the Muslim countries including Pakistan. It can create favourable circumstances for regional stability, by opening up trade and economic ventures, fuelling not only India's economic growth but also unlocking the potential chances for Indian regional aspirations.
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> ➢ Thirdly, for the projection of liberal democratic attire that is crucial for India's regional and global ambitions, the government has often, resorted to fudging facts related to the conditions of minorities. For instance, India has tried presenting the Indian Muslim community as a robust and healthy part of the society through a few high profile appointments of minorities at home and abroad in the form of presidents and diplomats. The facts on ground confirm a dismal picture, as evident from the zero percent representation of the Muslims in the ruling party (BJP) and parenthetically low Muslim representation in the overall make up of the Indian Parliament. Perceptibly, this portrays a 'hypocritical picture' of secular India, thus flagging an unhelpful image dilemma in the broader region.
>
> ➢ Fourthly, liberties promised to minorities in India have not prevented multiple serious human rights abuses that are hallmark of scenarios in many Indian states. This not only contradicts the liberal democratic norms but carries the potential of damaging India's global image.

> Fifthly, India's image dilemma has an unavoidable relationship with the prevalent discriminatory practices and the human rights abuses towards minority groups, together with the broader view of conflicts in South Asia. This enforces argument for hindering India's ambitions for a permanent Seat at the UNSC.

> Sixthly, for Pakistan, BJP's government with an accent on economic growth is good news. However, fundamentalist leanings of Modi and BJP invites uncertainty for the future. Thus, any incident of communal violence in India has the potential to ignite violence in Pakistan.

In a nutshell, for a society to progress, it is essential that all fractions of the society are taken on board and none is marginalized. The rise of BJP with its Hindutva philosophy has proved disastrous for the minority cause in the past but its recent pro development rhetoric might lead into the direction of an unexpected change. Only, if the new government resorts to an egalitarian distribution of the perspective economic opportunities that might become available. Thus, if all the communities are on a level playing field, the development of a prosperous Indian nation becomes sustainable.[42]

Conclusion

To sum up, in a diverse society like India, secularism serves as a cohesive factor. It is called upon to serve varied functions in a contradictory and variable fashion as it negotiates within a very narrow range of options between cultural nationalism, minority rights, liberal individual rights, and identity politics. In India, its own socio-political missteps, as much as the unleashing of religious intolerance, have caused much violence in the form of riots, civil wars, and genocide. One would not expect an outcome to the contrary as the Indian state has engaged minorities as legal minorities, not as citizens. Invocation of secularism in Indian society is very formal, but what it is in concrete terms, is yet to be explained.

In Indian politics today, minority issues are increasingly taking a centre stage, whether in the shape of demands for increased political representation or the calls for providing protection to many religions and cultures in the country are rising. India however, seems to remain compartmentalized in the future because this division favours the interests of the country's elites that dominate the state apparatus. Consequently, the elite and their interests make the state a party to the marginalization of the minorities in the country. Another disturbing characteristic in the last few years has been the rise of fundamentalism in India. Religious prejudice through the rise of Hindutva has been on the increase challenging the future communal relationships in the country.

At present, the ruling BJP seems to follow the soft Hindutva philosophy but there is a very thin line that can be easily crossed toward hard or extremist Hindutva. It will be in favour of India and the BJP to bring the minorities into the fold by allowing them maintain their distinct identities rather than following soft or hard Hindutva. Thus, the challenge for India and its newly formed government will be to put in a mechanism and establish a process that addresses the concerns of minority groups. This, in turn, will lead to the much needed stability at home and improved image abroad. In a nutshell, the era of increasing interdependence demands the weeding out of the parochial thinking and embracing an attitude of acceptance of the differences a nation is made of. It is this effective intertwining of diversity that can raise a country to the exalted throne of a regional or world power.

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