Freedom Gate Prosperity

CULTURAL FEDERALISM:

EMBRACING UNITY IN DIVERSITY IN PAKISTAN

Jami Chandio





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Foreword

Pakistan's languages, traditions, faiths and regional identities are a source of knowledge and shared possibility. A democratic federation must give these identities space to flourish and ensure that every citizen enjoys equal dignity, rights and opportunities.

Freedom Gate Prosperity is pleased to reproduce Cult ural Federalism: Embracing Unity in Diversity in Pakistan by Jami Chandio as a resource for civic education and public dialogue. The book examines federalism in relation to Pakistan's cultural realities, exploring linguistic pluralism, religious diversity and the role of inclusion in resolving conflict.

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Having worked with FNF for more than three decades, I deeply value its contribution to democratic dialogue, civic education and freedom in Pakistan. I also acknowledge Jami Chandio for his scholarship and Akhtar Shah, known as Shahtoon, whose illustrations enrich the original publication.

At FGP, we connect democratic governance and human rights with inclusive prosperity. We hope this book will help educators, young people and civil society practitioners question prejudice, listen across differences and participate confidently in public life.

I invite readers to approach these pages with openness. A stronger federation grows through fair participation and the assurance that every community belongs. By making space for our different voices, we can deepen mutual trust and build a more peaceful and inclusive Pakistan.

Muhammad Anwar
Chief Executive Officer
Freedom Gate Prosperity
2026

Preface

Pakistan is an incredibly diverse country. This holds true for its geographical as well as its socio-cultural, political, economic and historic fabric. The Pakistani flag pays tribute to this diversity: the white elements acknowledge the existence and contribution of minorities to the state of Pakistan. Pakistan's founding father M.A. Jinnah propagated the vision of "a homestead for Muslims, but not a Muslim state". However, while the founding narrative and official state symbols such as the national flag acknowledge the diversity of the people, who live on Pakistani soil, historical developments and realities on the ground often tell a different story. While Pakistanis live their different customs and traditions every day, this is not appreciated publically or politically. Why is the overwhelming diversity of Pakistani society a "denied reality"? How can the heterogeneity of Pakistan be turned into an asset, rather than being perceived as a threat and source of conflict?

FNF Pakistan discussed this topic in a series of web panels with experts from academia, politics, public administration and civil society. Each web panel dealt with a specific topic related to the diversity issue in Pakistan based on a paper written by Jami Chandio, touching upon the political and constitutional framework, the socio-cultural mosaic, ethnic and linguistic pluralism, religious diversity and diversity as a conflict resolution mechanism.

While these debates and the main statements of our keynote speakers can still be accessed on social media (check out the FNF Pakistan facebook page!), this discussion deserves a deeper understanding and further attention, as "diversity" and how Pakistan manages its diversity will be a crucial factor for the future development of this country. This is why we have decided to publish the workshop papers of our "Unity in Diversity" web panel series in book form and add some relevant information of the latest scientific debate about diversity and conflict resolution in heterogeneous environments.

As "diversity" is a concept, which can be perfectly expressed through art, the reknown cartoonist Akhtar Shah participated in every panel discussion sketching the main messages of the panellists in rapid live drawings. Some selected pieces of his work illustrate this publication, because they shed a different perspective on this topic. After

all, it is important to keep in mind that the discussion about diversity in Pakistan is not a theoretical debate about legal or administrative concepts, but a question of how to give adequate space to the people of Pakistan to live and develop their very own identities in the best possible way and for the benefit of society as a whole.

Birgit Lamm
Head of Country Office
Friedrich Naumann Foundation
for Freedom -Pakistan

“The sweet beloved is in heart, the dearly loved is in heart
You are pointlessly wandering here and there, the nightingale is in your body,

You are loitering outside with duality; he is not in desert, jungle, or ocean, You stealthily try to Find him in different faces; your moon is in your garden,

The orthodox ran away from the chain of locks, the shallow one is enmeshed is his superfluous thinking,
The friend having fully made up had come to put on a view

He is permanently in your heart why you see him in mirror,
My spiritual leader, the perfect one, had come to my courtyard.”

-Sachal Sarmast
(The rapturous poet, Translated by Agha Saleem, July 2013)

1 Unity in Diversity and Pluralistic Spirit of Federalism in Pakistan

'Being federal means the legitimate recognition and accommodation of diversity!'

- Cesar Colino and Luis Moreno[1]

What is Federalism?

Though a famous English political theorist and economist Harold Josef Laski declared in 1939 that 'the epoch of federalism is over!'[2], the system not only continues to work in 29 countries but it is evolving its significance with the passage of time and enhancing pluralistic socio-cultural nature of the world. The contractual political system, which was developed in the beginning of the last quarter of the eighteenth century, has developed more relevance and applicability in the 21st century in the post-modern era when plurality is being given more prominence due to multi-faceted integration of human society. Federalism has three sub forms i.e. political, fiscal and cultural; all three forms have their own strengths and complexities, which have taken a long way during last more than two hundred years to get resolved. Still there are federations, which are confronting political, fiscal and diversity challenges due to inequalities, injustices, imbalances and lack of political will as well as corresponding structures, mechanisms and approaches.

Diversity and plurality are persuasive metaphors and organic realities of today's world. Renowned federal experts Cesar Colino and Luis Moreno rightly says that diversity is one of the most modern subject in the current internal and global politics:[3]

> 'Debates about ethnic, national, linguistic, religious and economic diversity and its accommodation in viable and legitimate polities feature prominently in discussions among academics and practitioners of comparative politics, conflict resolution studies, political sociology and political theory'.[4]

Diversity works in ways, as a source of conflict as well as a rainbow image of societies representing variety of ethnicities, languages, regional distinctions, religious practices and diversity in diversity. It cannot be denied that 'culture, tradition, language, and religion are integral part of any human personality. Politics cannot ignore this indispensable fact and choose only those dimensions that it considers important';[5] it is more worsened and complicated when federations ignore their spirit and rationale of accommodating diversities in letter and spirit. Federations are different from unitary states because in federations, T. K. Oommen rightly points out that 'Nation is not a built but a felt entity, but the intensity of attachment to it varies across nations depending upon the degree of nation-ness. It is a well-known fact that some "nations" are well integrated and others are loosely knit'.[6] Pakistan can be counted in second category not only because it is a highly diverse society but also because it lacks the sense of realization about federal spirit of unity in diversity at the state level. This happens when the problematique of diversity is not understood or realized and is not justly addressed. Dynamics of diversity-driven complexities do not exist in rhetoric but they exist in solid disparities and injustices. This is why:

> Diversity as a social fact always existed in the world at-large but it becomes a 'problem' mainly when it exists within the territory of a state. There are two reasons why diversity within the state territory becomes a problem. One, when the social, cultural, or racial differences become the basis of group inequality. Two, when the different groups perceive one another as inferiors or superiors.[7]

There is no fixed rule weather diversity would further divide societies on national, ethnic, cultural, religious, linguistic and regional lines or it would work as a binding factor; it depends how those distinct identities are being apportioned, treated, protected and celebrated. Global and historical cases ascertain that challenge of unity in federal societies can never be met through professing upon uniformity by denying significance of diversity. George Anderson, a Canadian federalism expert and former president of Forum of Federations has tried to address this issue in his famous book on federalism and portrayed unity as the major complexity in the some of the federations of the world, also in the non-federal regimes, especially where societies are divided along the ethnics, religious, linguistic and class lines. In the extreme some complexities give birth to the separatist movements also.[8]

While describing types and categorizing the diversities and identity-based complexities he writes that:

> 'We have seen that federations are extremely varied in their institutions and social make up.
>
> - Some are relatively homogenous and citizens share a strong and dominant sense of a national identity. In these federations, unity is not a major issue and the social forces in the federation often create pressures from further centralization.
>
> - Others are very diverse and citizens identify with very distinct groups, which have conflicting views or objective. In some cases, members of a particular group may see their identity as incompatible with the national identity, thus creating tensions around the issue of national unity. This is especially true where such a distinct population is regionally concentrated'.[9]

Focus on Uniformity vs Denial of Diversity

Pakistan falls in the second category and is among those post-colonial federations, which have been confronting diversity and unity issues; Pakistan confronts this challenge since its inception in 1947. The main reason is the focus on uniformity paradigm and denial of diversity. Due to the varied nature of society, the uniformity paradigm hardly works successfully in any federation anywhere in the world. Now larger sections of society, especially, academia and intelligentsia strongly believe that Pakistan could also have

started its journey by accommodating and securing all shades of diversity in Pakistan through inclusive or cooperative and multinational federalism. Almost all the federations have faced this challenge in various forms and many of those have resolved those conflicts and challenges through inclusive policies and approaches, few examples are the USA, Canada, Switzerland, Australia, Belgium, Ethiopia, Germany, Bosnia, Sudan, South Africa and Nepal.

Countries like Spain, Nigeria, Democratic Republic of Congo, India and Pakistan continue to face this challenge. The issue is not a very complex or unresolvable challenge; it actually requires a paradigm shift from uniformity and unitary mindset to the approach of unity in diversity. It simply merits a political will and pluralistic realization. George Anderson has rationally given



Figure 1

"If you open your mind only then you will be able to sing with joy" - Shahtoon

in' models. In this views, building out means including 'the demand for regional government'. Besides, building in ensures that the significant and fundamental minority groups are joined, and 'integrated into the symbols, institutions, and policies of the central government as well as through other constitutional provisions'.[10]

Pakistan: 18th Amendment to Constitution

Though the 18th Constitutional Amendment was a big step towards

the paradigm shift form highly centralized and unitary approaches to decentralized federal notions and practices, still it could not address diversity issues. Renowned scholar Dr. Ayesha Siddiqa terms this paradigm shift as 'reimagining Pakistan'.[11] Unfortunately, the process of that 'reimagining' could not be materialized in the 18th Constitutional Amendment despite many proposals, suggestions and pressure from larger sections of society. By and large the spirit and culture of unity in diversity in Pakistan can be created and promoted through the following substantial measures:

- Pakistan needs to reshape its cultural and identity mindset and policy on the basis of ground realities, global federal norms and practices of cultural federalism
- All the national, ethnic, religious, linguistic and cultural identities, status of mother languages should be recognized in the Constitutional and federal policy of Pakistan
- Religious minorities should be given adequate space on the formal state as well as private media
- Diversity should be highlighted and respected in the text books of Pakistan
- Pakistan needs a strong local government system to ensure 'cultural autonomy'[12] through decentralization or 'self government'.

  (Cultural autonomy refers to a more institutionalized version of the personality principle. Cultural autonomy translates into various shades of self-government for certain communities, regarding the matters considered to be crucial to their validity.)[13]

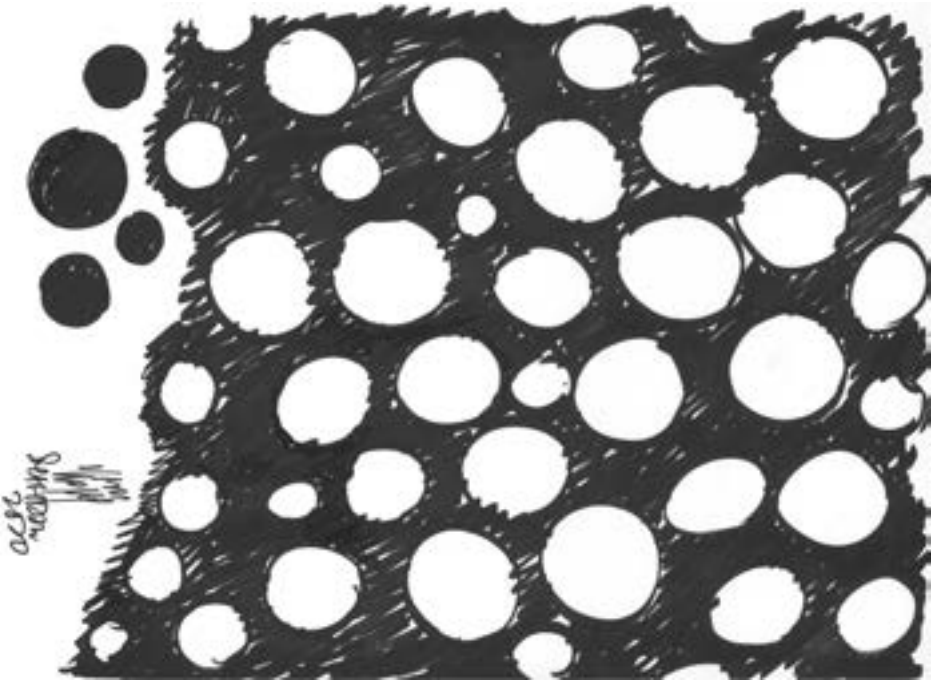


Figure 2

"If minorities are less in number it does not mean that we should push it to the corner. They should be integrated "discussion on minorities and their rights as shown in Pakistani flag, as interpreted by Shahtoon- July 2020

Pakistan is a multi-cultural, multi-national, multi-lingual, multi-religious and multi-regional country, where the historic nations, diverse small communities and cultural groups possess unique traditions of their own identity, national status, language, culture, literature, and poetry. The above-mentioned diverse prominence would have been the strength of Pakistan, which has been turned into feebleness and unending discord due to self-deceiving and malignant denial of the ground realities and pluralistic nature of society. On the contrary, unity in diversity can be claimed only through pluralistic and inclusive federalism and alternative approaches.

As far as the issue of respectability of diversity is concerned, the diversified society of Pakistan also needs to be sensitized along with the state, governments and government institutions. As Winston Churchill said that war is too serious to be left at the hand of generals so is the case of diversity, too, that it cannot be left alone at the mercy of states and governments. Society is its real custodian, provided it is made to realize the beauty and strength of unity in diversity in the plural societies.

“Culture is the whole way of life of a community. It changes when social conditions change. Cultural development is not a conceivable without social development. The arts represent the level of a society’s civilization. They are not a passive reflection of reality but an active agency for social uplift or degeneration. The arts are the Visible image of a nation-hence it’s best media of projection. Opposition to art and culture in Pakistan stems from social prejudice and political considerations rather than religious or moral scruples. The arts are not a luxury. They are an important factor in nation’s mental and moral health and productive efficiency. The national culture of Pakistan is a composite of the many elements. Regional cultures and folk arts are the best preserved elements of this culture. The national culture of Pakistan is as yet in the process of evolution. This evolution can be helped but the development of regional culture and their creative synthesis. Classical traditions a being common to all regions of Pakistan are an important factor in national integration. These traditions must be remolded in the light of modern knowledge and contemporary conditions.”

-Faiz Ahmed Faiz

(Complied and edited by Sheema Majeed, culture and identity selected English writings of Faiz, 2005)

2 Socio Cultural Mosaic and Diversity of Pakistan

"Democracies, including federations, facing a unity challenge can promote a positive political nationality that citizens feel is compatible with their other important identities with in a climate of tolerance and accommodation. Embracing diversity as a national value can enhance unity".[14]

-George Anderson
Former President Forum of Federations, Canada

Rise of Multiculturalism

Though all human societies happen to be diverse and heterogeneous, but federal societies are peculiarly varied due to their historical context, social taxonomy and palpable cultural, linguistic, religious and regional features. Pakistan is also one of those 29 federations in the contemporary global world. Many successful federations have harmonized their intra-federal conflicts through inclusive policies and accommodating diversities constitutionally, politically and culturally. Pakistan can also learn from their wide-ranging experiences and transform its pluralistic social mosaic into greater political and cultural strengths. Modernity, the cosmopolitan phenomenon, economic globalization, inter-regional migrations and even post modernity have also enhanced the diverse composition of human societies across the world, which is termed as cultural creolization.

Resultantly, multiculturalism has emerged as a global democratic norm in the contemporary political culture and academic discourses. It has enormously impacted democratic republics, federal states, plural societies, global, regional and domestic policies as well as the disciplines of art, literature, academics, education, and intellectual discourses in almost all shades of life.

Examples of Multicultural Societies

Andrew Heywood rightly writes:

> Although multicultural societies have long existed-examples including the Ottoman Empire, which reached its peak in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, and the USA from the early nineteenth century onwards-the term 'multiculturalism' is of relatively recent origin. It was first used in 1965 in Canada to describe a distinctive approach to tackling the issue of cultural diversity. In 1971, multiculturalism or 'multiculturalism within a bilingual framework' was formally adopted as public policy in Canada, providing the basis for the introduction of the Multiculturalism Act in 1988. Australia also officially declared itself multicultural and committed itself to multiculturalism in the early 1970s.[15]

Heywood justly says that the term 'multiculturalism has been used in a variety of ways, both descriptive and normative',[16] he mainly addresses the colonial cosmopolitan societies. In those societies individual identities are being signified and secured more, whereas in countries like Pakistan 'group identities' are more sensitive and this is why they are strongly being professed upon. Those identities are not limited only to multiculturalism, they include diverse cultural shades besides competing narratives and conflicting political interests. That is the case of most of the Asian, South American, African and especially South Asian societies, Pakistan is not an exception.

Contrary to the democratic federations, the unitary states do not construct on identity-based diversities, although, potentially, they can include diversities partially by the centrally-determined decentralization. While federations can

provide constitutionally-guaranteed regional self-governance for the federal components but also the collective rule at the federal level, for example, by a two-chamber system even in the organization of the executive. Furthermore, the federal systems can set up mechanisms for nonviolent management of clashes and 'conflicts among different diversities or recognize diversities with the formation of new constituent units'.[17] The same above-mentioned joint academic study on 'building on and accommodating diversities' also suggests that,

> The diverse features of a multicultural society create conditions that cannot be changed because they are rooted in a common history. Nor can violating fundamental human rights such as religion or language effectively modify them. Compared to economic diversities that can be changed in a society by improved equality or by political decisions approved by the majority, these diversities are not quantitative but qualitative, thus cannot be changed only by a majority. Furthermore, they are often rooted in symbols and emotions.[18]

Pakistan: Socio-Cultural Mosaic

Pakistan is a highly diversified and rich society in terms of variety of cultures, history, ethnicities, religions, faiths, music, art, social topography, folk heritage, poetry and literature. This pluralistic rainbow portrait of Pakistani society is happily celebrated and respected by society by and large, despite the denial of diversity in Pakistan at state level. In fact, the socio-cultural mosaic of Pakistan could have worked as a great source of strength for the state and the society had the state realized its political and cultural potential to develop unity in diversity within the state and society of Pakistan. Though, Pakistan was not a unitary state and it was a federal polity, its cultural approaches remained unitary based on the denial of diversity, which had always proved to be a failed premise.

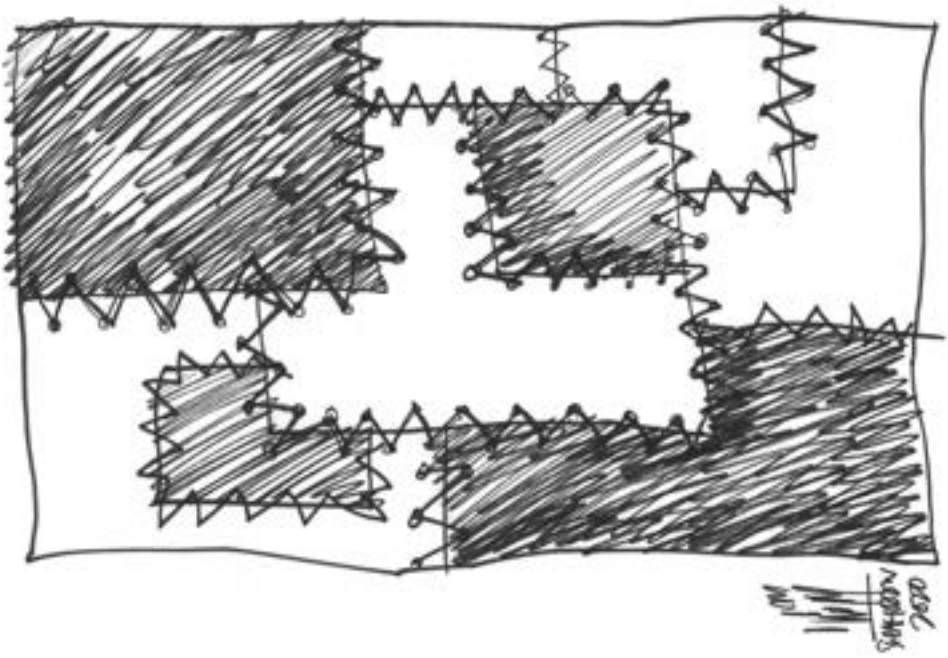


Figure 3

"Socio cultural mosaic can be understood by our local 'Ralli' which is a beautiful patchwork quilt with lots of colors and all stitched together in harmony" Shahtoon

Pakistan is a peculiar case, where even the majority population of Punjab stands deprived of the recognition of their national identity as well as acknowledgment of their language as one of the national languages of Pakistan along with Sindhi, Balochi, Pushto and Siraiki, (keeping Urdu as common lingua franca), despite having enormous influence over state power and legislative processes. The East Bengals had the same issue but they did not have any influence on the state power, and that makes it a different case. That is why many people in Pakistan strongly believe that without adequate sensitization and developing a sense of cultural ownership for the language and ethnic identity in Punjab among Punjabis, the issue of official recognition of the other sub-national, linguistic and cultural as well as religious identities cannot be resolved in Pakistan.

Cultural Identities

Consequently, after having passed more than seven decades the identity issues continue to shape Pakistan's intra-state conflict scenario. Though Pakistan is a different case in terms of cultural identities but in most of the post-colonial South Asian states, the majorities appear dominating by all means. According to I A Rehman, the main factors contributing to this situation have been:[19]

- A strong disinclination to replace the colonial patriarchal state structures with new models of governance to accommodate diversities
- Making constitutions that envisage centralized state structures and effectively exclude minority groups
- Reliance on theoretical safeguards for minorities without adequate guarantees for their enforcement
- Failure to realize that poverty and shortage of economic opportunities make it impossible for minority groups to grow out of their primary social affiliations and accentuate their feelings of hurt of real or perceived discrimination
- Lack of affirmative action to integrate majorities and minorities into single nations while hoping for assimilation without overt state intervention
- Re-interpretation of self-determination in the interest of majorities
- Politicization of religion.[20]

Pakistan is not only assorted with respect to inter-provincial distinct realities; every single province or sub-region also brings a variety of intra-provincial cultural, linguistic, religious and demographic variations. This heterogeneous montage of distinct dynamics and diverse realities of Pakistani society can provide great strength to the democratic politics, federal spirit, public institutions, organic socio-cultural culture and variety of religious rituals and cultural festivities to harmonize society and stabilize state with inclusive sense of ownership.

Need of a Paradigm Shift

This definitely merits a paradigm shift at the state-level to realize that the

diversities must not be 'considered as a burden but as an asset that states can build upon'.[21] One must consider the identity-based diversities as a prospect or chance for those states that are rich vis-a-vis languages and cultures, and religions and societal traditions. Nonetheless, if a state is capable not only to deal 'with and accommodate diversities but also to build on the diversities and cherish its will it will be able to contribute to a sustainable development'.[22]

Time has come for greater realization by the state and all the state institutions as well as political parties, civil society and intelligentsia of Pakistan that diversity is a living, tangible organic reality of Pakistani society, which needs not only to be realized but to be secured and celebrated. It is also a test case for the intellectual and political leadership about how they may deal with the socio-cultural mosaic of Pakistani society and connect it with the democratic and federal principle of 'unity in diversity'. It is an objective and undeniable fact that diversities augment cultures, politics, legislature and the judiciary. Not only that, the diversities also train people vis-a-vis mutual coexistence with tolerance and flexibility.

By their essence, in a variety of ways, human beings are different from each other. 'A polity that builds on and accommodates diversities provides for more justice and better guarantees of human dignity because it respects the reality of the diversity of the human nature'.[23]

Although Pakistan faces many challenges, while all deficits and challenges cannot be met only through unity in diversity; at least it can take a substantial

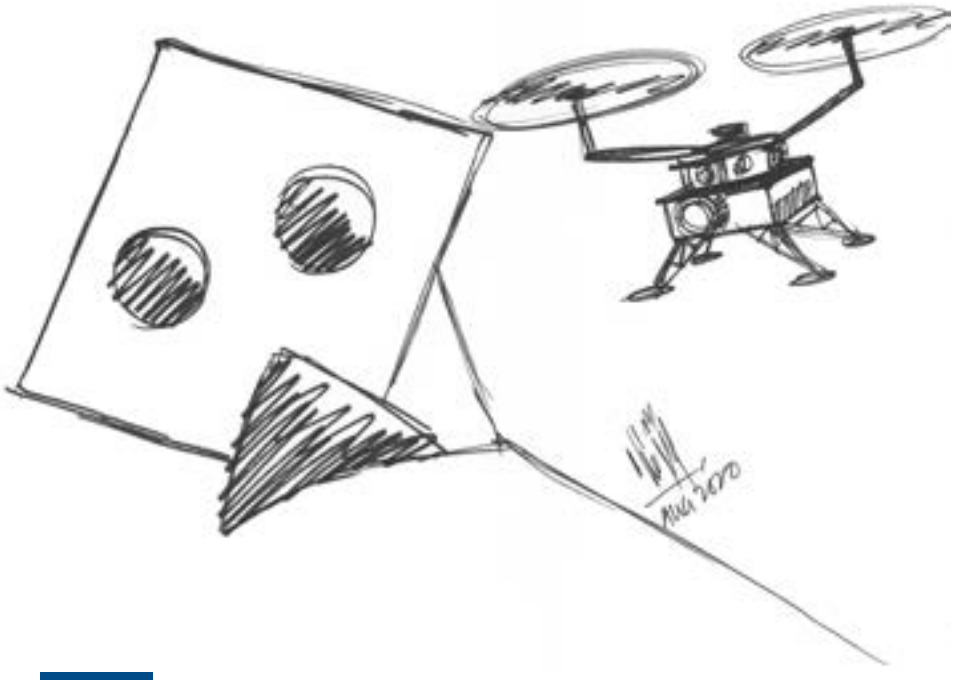


Figure 4

"We need to embrace diversity like we embrace technology, look how a drone is capturing the videos of a traditional kite" as shared by Shahtoon, August 2020

step to realize and practice qualitative democracy and federalism by making an open departure from a unitary mindset to a diversity paradigm. Let me borrow thought-provoking words from Heywood when he says,

> As such, multiculturalism is rooted in an essentially communitarian view of human nature, which emphasizes that people cannot be understood 'outside' society but are intrinsically shaped by the social, cultural and other contexts within which they live and develop.[24]

Federalism in Pakistan can flourish and work only in a harmonious way, when the diverse socio-cultural mosaic of Pakistan is realized and cherished at the federal and provincial levels.

Autonomy has always worked as an efficient way to capitalize political federalism to address complexities of cultural federalism. Renowned federal expert Johanne Poirier has suggested autonomy as a gesture to embrace

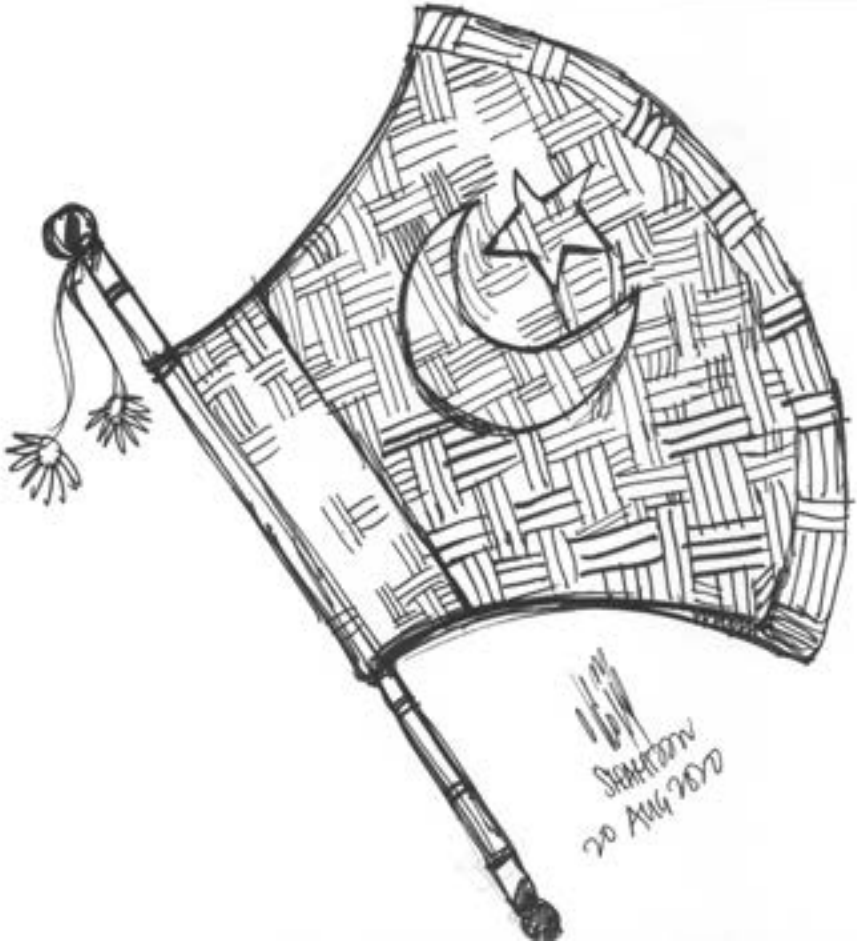


Figure 5

"The art of folding dry leaves to make hand held fan in used all across Pakistan. These interlinked knots strengthened the unity of the flag" as shared by Shahtoon, August 2020

this is crucially important. Autonomy is about having some space (both physical and political) in which to exercise the right to decide about one's rights. Autonomy is about empowerment. The paradigm shifts from "rights" to "power".[25]

We have already discussed in the first chapter that provincial autonomy and vibrant local governments can be inclusive ways to acknowledge and empower the socio-cultural mosaic of Pakistan. Along with provincial autonomy, strong local governments are becoming more pertinent because 'according to the United Nations, 2007 was the first year in human history that the world's urban population exceeded the rural population, a trend which indicates the importance of including an examination of the role of megacities within federations'.[26] Pakistan is also rapidly emerging as an urban society (The present ratio of urban rural population is 38.6% and 61.4 % respectively),[27] which needs a strong and vibrant local government system to ensure self-rule at the local level. Strengthening the senate can also be an effective measure to strengthen and truly represent diversity at federal level in decision-making. This is why federalists across the globe value self-rule to embrace socio-cultural diversity as it is mentioned below:

> With regard to the challenge of diversity, regional self-rule and autonomy is, together with the shared–rule principle, the most important structural tool to accommodate different diversities within a state. The various diverse groups can foster their own culture and identity if they have a measure of autonomy. In a federal system different communities are able within the overarching federation to enhance their own interests based on their special identities by enjoying at the same time both the advantages of profiting from being members of the superior federation and retaining their cultural identity through the guarantee of autonomy and their cultural development.[28]

"Language is not only the means of communication of idea or attitudes; it is also a component of our culture and identity. It constructs is and gives us the thoughts, the values, the attitudes and the manners which make us distinguishable from the members of other communities. There are, of course, other forces which construct the personality also. Among these are religion, class, nationality and, of course, our genetic heritage, upbringing and education. As such it is difficult to argue that language is the main constructor of the self. However, it certainly isn't a very important one and that is the major reason why it is important in education.

One way of saving the 699 or so of the languages of the world is to use them in education but first why should we save the minor languages of the world at all? The answers given to this are many but let us follow David crystal who has given a very clear account of them. Crystal cites the following reasons:

- Because we need diversity.
- Because languages express identity.
- Because Languages are repositories of history.
- Because languages contribute to the sum of human knowledge.
- Because langurs are interesting in themselves. (Crystal 2000:27-67)

The problem is that the states see the first two reasons as threats. They do not want diversity and the only identity they want to uphold is the national one."

Dr. Tariq Rehman,
Book on 'Language and Education', SDPI, 1999

3 National, Ethnic Diversity and Linguistic Pluralism in Pakistan

"Diversities are not to be considered as a burden but as an asset that states can build upon…one has to consider diversities as an opportunity for states that are enriched by different languages, cultures, religions and traditions"[29]

-Jonah Isawa Elaigwu & Thomas Fliene

Denial of Diversity

Diversity being an organic and dynamic reality of society is a historic phenomenon that does not only maintain multiple shades of our social life but also creates enormous forms of coexistence, in which distinct identities and diverse groups accommodate themselves.

We have already discussed numerous forms of diversity and pluralism from unusual to usual lenses and angles but many more forms still remain to be explored and discussed from the perspective of inclusive federalism. For example, national, ethnic and linguistics forms are among those, which can never be denied, underestimated and compromised due to their essential and indispensable sensitivities.

Modern political history has proved that the syndrome of denial of diversity can never bring unity and harmony in socially pluralistic and diverse societies and states. It

becomes a major source of conflict among various competing and conflicting populations and sub regions. Unitary or authoritarian and even majority-driven states often try to quash diversities to create pseudo uniformity instead of professing upon unity in diversity. Pakistan is also one of those federations where diversity has never been taken as a strength. Nonetheless, it needs to be realized to explore the strengths and benefits of diversity for a qualitative federal culture, which could make inclusive federalism a norm and pluralistic reality.

People or Structure?

A group of federalist scholars rightly state in their joint paper 'Building on and Accommodating Diversities' that:

> Difficulty arises when there are attempts to "manage" identities and when an "official nationalism" emanates from the nation state, serving not the people but the state structure. This difficulty can be overcome if the concerns of diverse groups are accommodated within concerns for the proper and just functioning of the state. Once the state is just in its treatment of the constituents of society, the later are less likely to have difficulty in recognizing the legitimacy of the composed nation state. It is in this context that federalism can accommodate diversities and provide the mechanisms for achieving this.[30]

Three Questions on Federalism

Federalism might have many fiascos and failures in different parts of the world due to historical complexities and authoritarian tendencies of centralization, however it is true that it has successfully worked as a strong instrument to deal, acclimatize and rejoice diversities since the latter half of the 20th century. Political scientists and federal experts have raised questions, such as,

- What makes federalism special as a tool to profit from, and to accommodate diversities in comparison to other governmental systems?

- Is federalism at all relevant to constitutional and structural solutions vis-a-vis diversities?
- What are the main structural, institutional and procedural elements that would enable multicultural federal states to build on their identities?

These questions highlight a range of socio-political and cultural issues. The first issue concerns the relationships between diversity and modern polity. Diversity in the past was usually not considered as a foundation for building a polity. Traditionally, constitutions either denied diversity as a basic element for the nation building, pretending for the nation to be composed only of citizens, or they have been built on the majority culture of the nation.[31] Successful and inclusive models of democratic federalism have not only been outmoded coercive tactics of the 'melting pot' model, but they have also introduced ample approaches, where diversities are experienced as a flexible and dynamic reality. Unfortunately, Pakistan has not realized it yet, and it merits a whole paradigm shift in the state and society of Pakistan. Watts and Chattopadhyay in their work Autonomy and Diversity, Unity in Diversity-Learning from each other state:

> The need, however, is for modern (federal and democratic) polities to consider diversity as a basic foundation for building their polity. Excluded diversities disintegrate society and consider themselves as discriminated and permanent losers within the majoritarian democracy. Culture, tradition, language and religion are an integral part of the human personality.[32]

Pakistan: Ethnic and Linguistic Diversity

Pakistan like other South Asian societies and countries ensue to be highly diverse; it has major five nationalities i.e. Punjabis, Siraikis, Sindhis, Pashtoons and Balouchis along with more than seventy other ethnic, linguistic and cultural groups. Territorial diversity is another ground reality in Pakistan, and every single province has its own kind of intra-provincial sub diversity, which often causes local national, ethnic, racial, cultural, religious and linguistic conflicts. Those conflicts otherwise can easily be prevented or harmonized and resolved through inclusive federal approaches, which we have discussed above. Diversity as a complex social reality had always existed in kingdoms, empires and various forms of governments in

the past. It was only modern democratic federalism, which has developed inclusive approaches, corresponding policies and institutional tools as well as mechanisms to develop empathies for understanding and equating diversity with the polity. Due to uniformity approaches, the excluded identities and diversities are still bitter realities in Pakistan, which not only badly affect the spirit of federalism but also pose serious threats to the integrity of federation and a genuine federalism in the forms of a variety of conflicts.

A renowned political scientist and federalist T K Oommen in his paper 'Nation Building and Diversity' articulately states:



Figure 6

"Love and music are universal languages with no boundaries and no limitations" Shahtoon

Diversity as a social fact always existed in the world-at-large but it becomes a 'problem' when it exists within the territory of a state. There are two reasons why diversity with in the state territory becomes a problem.

One, when the social, cultural, or racial differences become the basis of group inequality.

Two, when the different groups perceive one another as inferiors and superior.[33]

Oommen is very much right because diversities are not managed liabilities but they are integral and distinctive part of collective human personalities of democratic and federal polities. 'Cultural pluralism upholds the principle of dignified coexistence of all cultural groups'.[34]

National, ethnic and linguistic pluralism also has great nexus with administrative arrangements, federal institutions, education system, federal cultural policies, provincial autonomy, local government system and democratic governance. In a decentralized administrative system diversities can reclaim their self-governments and political autonomy, secure their economic interests, socio-cultural-linguistic rights as well as sense of security and respect by the polity. A research study of a group of scholars, while signifying provincial and local autonomy and its linkage with the national, ethnic and linguistic pluralism articulately, suggest:

> With regard to the challenge of diversity, regional (provincial as well as local) self-rule and autonomy is, together with the shared-rule principle, the most important structural tool to accommodate different diversities within a state. The various diverse groups can foster their own culture and identity if they have a measure of autonomy. In a federal system different communities are able within the overarching federation to enhance their own interests based on their special identities by enjoying at the same time both the advantages of profiting from being members of the superior federation retaining their cultural identity through the guarantee of autonomy for their cultural development.[35]

Limitation of 18th Amendment

In this context, the nexus between identity and politics needs to be understood and realized because 'nationalism is politicized ethnicity'.[36] Unfortunately the 18th Constitutional Amendment did not address the issues of national, ethnic and linguistic identities due to a compromise with the unitary mindset of various right wing parties present in the parliament as well as in the 24-member parliamentary committee, which formulated the draft of the 18th Amendment. This bitter experience makes us realize that unless a federal and pluralistic cultural and linguistic discourse is constructed, the majority of the mainstream political parties would not apprehend the importance of unity in diversity in Pakistan.

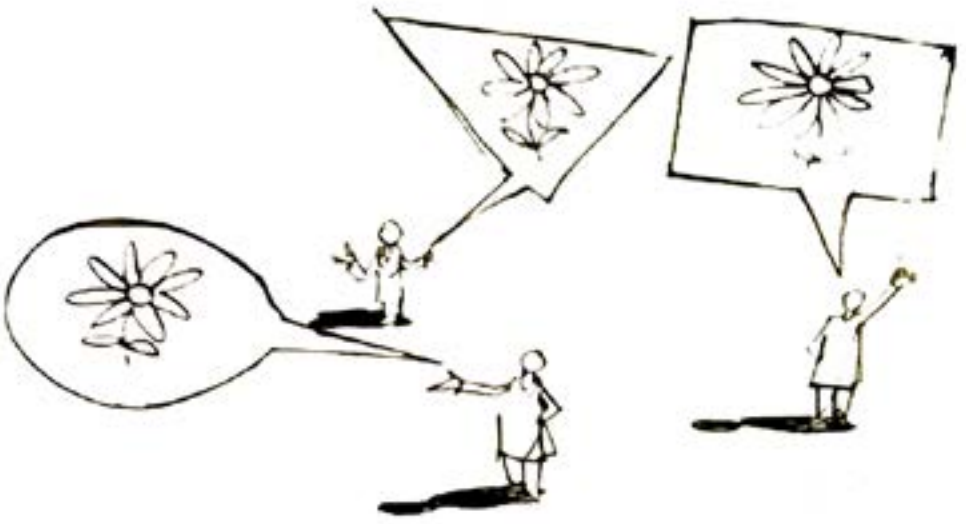


Figure 7

"Each person is using different language but the message is same" Shahtoon

A substantial discourse, which creates political consciousness among wider sections of society and state institutions that Pakistan is neither a unitary state constitutionally, nor a homogeneous society, needs to be established.

The unity of the country can only sustain if the national, ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic diversities are honored and protected; especially, the language issue in Pakistan is very serious and sensitive. Renowned thinker Edward Saeed rightly said that 'everyone lives in a given language; everyone's experiences, therefore are heard, absorbed and recalled in that language'.[37] It

also applies to nations, nationalities, ethnic units, and linguistic groups.

Linguistic Plurality Solutions

In Pakistan many mass movements have been launched since 1948 on language issues in East Bengal, Sindh and other parts of the country in order to give their respective languages the status of national languages and contest the status of Urdu as lingua franca, although Urdu is not even a major language of any province in Pakistan. The language issue in Pakistan can be resolved by continuing Urdu as lingua franca, English as state language, all the major languages of the provinces i.e. Punjabi, Siraiki, Sindhi, Balochi and Pushto as national languages and the rest of all languages as federal languages. Basic education should be given to children in their mother languages as recommended by UNESCO. Along with that, all the provinces can have their major languages as provincial official languages; such a provision is already available in the current constitution in Article 251/3. This can be a better way to harmonize all languages, minimize linguistic biases, eradicate linguistic discrimination and above all ensure linguistic equality and equity in the federation, which is the spirit of federalism. Pakistan can and should learn from other federations in this regard, which have secured and honoured all languages with equality and an equity paradigm.

Throughout the world federations are born out of diversity and they can withstand only through accommodating and respecting diversity. Culturocide and ethnification' (T K Oommen-2010) have virtually failed in all the federations across the globe. The federation of Pakistan can only cherish, flourish and sustain, when along with other requisites like political equalization, fiscal justice, decentralization and self-government, the principle of unity in diversity is adopted and made the basis and rationale of the Pakistani federation.



Figure 8

We ourselves have to protect our mother languages" Shahtoon Oct 2020

Case Study: Aspects of Language Policy in Some Federations

India has 40 languages with more than one million speakers. Hindi (mother tongue of 18 per cent and spoken by over 40 per cent) is 'the' official language, but English is also official for many purposes. States may choose which of 22 constitutionally scheduled Indian languages. Nigeria has 3 important indigenous languages that are official, but at least 450 others; English is the principal language of government and education, though local languages can be used; some rights of citizens, e.g., in the courts, are based on a language that is understood, not preferred. Ethiopia has 2 major indigenous languages, as well as 11 minor and many tribal ones: there is no official language and all enjoy equal recognition in principle. English is also used in education and government. Amarhic is the working language of the federal government and some of state governments; each state chooses its language(s) of work.

South Africa has two European languages and nine significant indigenous languages, no

one of which is spoken by more than a quarter of the population. English is the dominant language, though local languages are encouraged for oral use in the local administration and in some teaching. In Malaysia, Malay is the mother tongue of 62 per cent of the population and is the official language, though English is prominent as a language of use in government of the courts; minority language rights are very limited.

Switzerland has 3 official languages and 1 national language at the federal level, with 19 unilingual and 3 bilingual cantons and 1 trilingual canton: in unilingual cantons, all public services and education are in local language. Belgium, too, emphasizes territorial language rights, with services being provided only in the language of each linguistic zone; Brussels is bilingual. Canada is officially bilingual federally and in New Brunswick, with other provinces providing various rights for minorities: rights to federal services in the language of choice exist 'where umbers warrant'. Canadian and EU law includes language requirements for labeling packages sold in commerce.

In Spain, (Castilian) is the unique national language that 'all Spaniards have the duty to know and use'; it is the mother tongue of three-quarters of the population. There are seven languages of 'nationalities', the largest of which, Catalan, is the first language of 60 per cent of Catalans. Catalan, and Valencian (effectively the same language), Basque, and Galician are the only languages of 'nationalities' that can be co-official with Spanish in their respective autonomous communities, with varying rights and duties.

(George Anderson, Introduction to Federalism, OUP, Canada-2010)

National, ethnic and linguistic diversity is not merely an identity issue, it has a great deal with fiscal justice as well. All three shades of federalism i.e. political, fiscal and cultural cannot be separated and those are interlinked as well as inter-dependent. Salma Butt a youth development expert and a columnist rightly says that 'Manifesting diversity at the state and government levels will eventually bring in resources to improve employment opportunities for the people. It also has direct relevance with economic uplift and social outlook. Examples can be quoted from nation models where local languages are recognised at state level, resultantly generate employment for the masses. Considering that a language is a medium of instruction and learning, and communication is a vital tool of networking and connectivity, people brought up and raised in local languages when asked to work in a different language altogether results in jeopardizing their efficacy, trust in the system and self-confidence. It alienates citizens from the state and society and the government.'[38]

Happiness for everyone!

"The Buddha was saying near Savatthi, one morning, as he was talking into city to beg for food, he observed a group of boys hitting a snake with a stick. When he returned, he summons his monks, and told them about incident. Then he said: ' the snake wasn't happiness, as much as any man or woman does. The snake wants to be saved from suffering as much as a man or a woman does. Those who themselves want happiness, and yet cause suffering to other livings beings, will not themselves find happiness. Those who themselves want happiness, and cause no suffering to other living beings, will indeed find happiness for themselves."

- Buddha
(366 readings from Buddhism, UK, 2001

4 Protecting Religious Diversity and Democratic Society in Pakistan

"All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood"[39]

-Article 1, Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)

"You are free; you are free to go to your temples, you are free to go to your mosques or to any other place or worship in this State of Pakistan. You may belong to any religion or caste or creed that has nothing to do with the business of the State… Now I think we should keep that in front of us as our ideal and you will find that in course of time Hindus would cease to be Hindus and Muslims would cease to be Muslims, not in the religious sense, because that is the personal faith of each individual, but in the political sense as citizens of the State."[40]

-Mohammad Ali Jinnah, 11th August 1947
Speech at first Constituent Assembly of Pakistan

Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)

This rights-based framework is being relatively signified, respected and practiced in almost all substantial democracies, and diversity is being given a central place in federal republics across the globe. Religious minorities

are one of the most major segments and characteristics of federations and democracies, while the quality of democratic federations is made directly proportional to the respectability for the religious minorities no matter how big or small they happen to be in size or quantum. This is why there are a number of reasons why the study of minorities is of greater value today, especially in the western academic discourses. 'In western political philosophy scholarship, the period of the 1990s saw an immense interest in ideas of citizenship, multiculturalism, and the rights of minority groups in the democratic nation state. This was the period when the United Nations prepared the draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.'[41]

Jinnah's Vision

Pakistan's heterogeneous nature of society has already been discussed from various outlooks in earlier parts of the paper; its relatable aspect of religious diversity is also very much significant, which merits a serious discourse and paradigm shift in approaches and engagements at societal and state level, in public policy, law and the constitution. Although the founder of the country M A Jinnah clearly said in his radio broadcast recorded on 19th February 1948 that 'make no mistake: Pakistan is not a theocracy or anything like it';[42] nevertheless the vision was compromised and Pakistan started its state journey as an Islamic state, officially from the 1956 constitution, a constitution which was made during the era of the One Unit. This is why after having passed more than seven decades many progressive sections of society still continue to demand the implementation of the secular vision of Mr. Jinnah.

Though Muslims comprise around 90% of the country's population but people of other faiths also make a variety of religious minorities i.e. Christians, Hindus, Sikhs, Ahmadis, Parsis, Bahais, Buddhists, Jains, Kalasha (from Chitral) and other small cultural communities. 'Legally speaking, the Pakistan Citizenship Act, 1951, enumerates the circumstances and conditions under which a person could be regarded as a citizen of Pakistan'[43] and Article 25 of the Constitution says that 'all citizens are equal before the law and are entitled to equal protection of law';[44] despite this security the people of other faiths in Pakistan endure to struggle and have to pay sacrifices for the equal status before law, equity in society and protection by and large.



Figure 9

“ When people are not looking at a candle how can they appreciate its light? “ Shahtoon

For progressive sections of society it is a kind of a litmus paper test for the state and society of Pakistan to evaluate, whether it qualifies to be termed democratic or not. Ground realities and discriminatory practices in legal frameworks and in the Constitution of Pakistan show that it is still a long way to translate this dream in reality.

Pakistan first constituent Assembly: Inclusive Examples

Apparently, religion seems a source of conflict in many societies and states but it can work as harmonious varied requisite force in diverse societies comprising multiple religious faiths. In such societies religions must be equally esteemed, protected and celebrated by the state with equal sense of respect with the understanding that faith is limited to the personal realm of individuals and it must be kept away from the business of the state. This is what Mr. Jinnah clearly said in his first address to the people of Pakistan in Pakistan's first constituent assembly on 11th August 1947. Equal mentioning of all citizens in the constitution is a fundamental right of everyone, and making the constitution discriminatory simultaneously virtually destroys the federal and democratic spirit of the polity. This happened due to the above-mentioned paradigm shift. Otherwise Pakistan started its initial journey with inclusive examples i.e. Pakistan's first constituent assembly was presided by a Hindu member Jogandar Nath Mandal, a Hindu member of the Muslim League from East Bengal, who became Pakistan's first Law and Justice Minister later. Mr. Sir Zafarullah Khan, Ahmadi in faith, served as Pakistan's first foreign minister, Pakistan's first three Governors were Christians and Pakistan's three heads of the armed forces were also Christians. There are many more precedents in this regard. The Muslim elite, excluding Jinnah, which struggled for the Muslim minority rights in united India, parted ways from their position when it came to acknowledging and respecting the rights of people of other faiths in Pakistan. Previous they had demanded in famous 1940 Lahore resolution:

> The adequate, effective and mandatory safeguards should be specifically provided in the Constitution for Minorities in these units and in the regions for the protection of their religious, cultural, economic, political, and administrative and other rights and interests in Consultation with them and in other parts of India where the Mussalmans are in minority.[45]

Savita Pande rightly points out that

> Jinnah, even when he was a Governor General Designate had said in an interview as early as July 14, 1947: "I shall not depart from what I said repeatedly with regard to the minorities. Every time I spoke about the minorities I meant what I said and what I said I meant. Minorities to whichever community they may belong will be safeguarded. Their religion or faith or belief will be secure. There will be no interference of any kind with their freedom of worship. They will have their protection with regard to their religion, faith, their life, and their culture. They will be, in all respects, the citizens of Pakistan without any distinction of caste or creed. They will have their rights and privileges and no doubt along with this goes the obligation of citizenship. Therefore, the minorities have their responsibilities also, ad they will play their part in the affairs of this state.[46]

Unfortunately, the status of people of other faiths in Pakistan depicts a contrary picture in the state of Pakistan especially after the demise of Mr. Jinnah. 'Unlike the national or ethnic minorities, which are not recognized by the constitution, the religious minorities are referred to in it (the constitution) at several places',[47] but when it comes to the notion of equal rights and status, the ground realities are bleak and disappointing. Secondly, it is not only the matter of religious freedoms and security of places of worship; the modern federal and democratic notions demand a broader range of rights as equal citizens; be it constitutional, legal, political, economic or cultural rights. The rights-based framework has immensely evolved over the years[48] and decades especially in the realm of the 21st century, which the state and society of Pakistan have to realize at all levels. I fully agree with this recommendation that 'different religious communities should be ensured full freedom of expression and practice of their beliefs. The practice of identifying religious communities as being in majority or minority does not serve any purpose, but to create obstacles in nation building. These communities can be identified as being Muslim, Christian, Hindu, etc, but not as the majority or minority entities'.[49]

The following table gives a picture of discriminatory practices in the Constitution and legal frameworks of Pakistan.

"Regulations which put minorities at a disadvantage"[50]			
S.N	**Law Category**	**Group discriminated**	**Reference**
1	Constitution of Pakistan	Ahmadis	Article 260 (3) (b) (b) "non-Muslim" means a person who is not a Muslim and includes a person belonging to the Christian, Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist or Parsi community, a person of the Quadiani Group or the Lahori Group who call themselves 'Ahmadis' or by any other name or a Bahai, and a person belonging to any of the Scheduled Castes.
2	General laws	Ahmadis	298 B and C to the PPC sealed the expulsion of Ahmadis from the Pakistani state in 1984. An Ahmadi, calling himself a Muslim, or preaching or propagating his faith, or outraging the religious feelings of Muslims, or referring to herself or himself as a Muslim is now liable to three years imprisonment.
3	National Curriculum 2006	All minority groups of other faiths	National Curriculum 2006 required children of all faiths from classes one to three to be taught to "recite and memorize Kalima Tayyaba with its meaning", and "memorize and recite Darood Sharif with translation" and "memorize and recite prayers for starting and ending fasts in Ramzan". National Curriculum 2006 and public school textbooks based on it clearly violate Article 22(1) of the Constitution. This article says: "No person attending any educational institution shall be required to receive religious instructions, or take part in any religious ceremony, or attend religious worship, if such instruction, ceremony or worship relates to a religion other than his own." Article 22(1) of the Constitution clearly means that teaching any particular faith as part of the curriculum must be restricted to students of that faith and such teaching must not be imposed on students of other faiths

4	Constitution of Pakistan	All minority groups of other faiths	Subject to certain restrictions, Articles 19 of constitutions grant citizens the freedom of speech. In the Pakistani Constitution, speech may be restricted 'in the interest of the glory of Islam', (Art 19) a religious limitation that is entirely absent from the free speech provision under the Indian Constitution. In fact, Article 19 of the Pakistani Constitution can be used to derive legitimacy for the current blasphemy laws in Pakistan, as amended by General Zia-ul-Haq during the 1980s, which are deemed as infringing upon not only religious freedom but freedom of expression as well.
5	295 B, 295 C & 298 A of the Pakistan Penal Code, & particularly for Jamat Ahmadiyya by means of Sections 298 B and 298 C	General Laws	Lack of clarity in substantive laws and discriminations in the blasphemy punishments for different faiths, coupled with misuse and abuse of procedures, has created real troubles for religious minorities in Pakistan.
6	Constitution of Pakistan	All minority groups of other faiths	Constitutional provisions which can be deemed to be alienating religious minorities can be found in other articles of the Pakistani Constitution as well. The primary example of this is that one of the qualifications to attain the post of the President (Art 41(2)) and the Prime Minister ((91)(3)) of Pakistan is to be a Muslim, thereby making all non-Muslims ineligible.
7	Personal laws	Hindus	No separate **Hindu Marriage Act** in Pakistan. A draft bill is in process but has been deferred. Due to the absence of the law, Hindu couples faced difficulties in getting their marriages registered as per Hindu customs.

8	Special Laws	All minority groups of other faiths	***Hudood* Ordinances** has had seriously damaging consequences on all sections of Pakistani society. Women and religious minorities, in particular, have been targeted and victimized as a result of these ordinances. Despite the recommendations by the Council of Islamic Ideology (The institution which even played a pivotal role in drafting these laws in the first place in 70s) to thoroughly revise the ordinances in 2007 no progress could be achieved. Further instruments of exploitation and discrimination deployed against women, weaker and poor segments of society and religious minorities appear in the form of the ***Qisas and Diyat* Ordinances**. These ordinances have given legitimacy to honour killings
9	Constitution of Pakistan	All minority groups of other faiths	Article 228 -the establishment of the Council of Islamic Ideology to advise, if the state laws are in line with Holy Quaran and Sunnah for Muslims. All the state legislation is subject to review by the council though it has only advisory role and it cannot force the decisions but still the whole apparatus ignores the religious minorities on two counts: one, all the legislation will follow Islam being the state religion thus ignoring other faiths; and secondly no institutional level governing or regulating mechanism on personal/public laws has been devised for people of other faiths.
10	Constitution of Pakistan	All minority groups of other faiths	The constitution declares **Islam Pakistan's official religion** and states that sovereignty belongs to Allah, effectively willing powers of legislation and legal interpretation to the Muslim clergy. Provisions of the Constitution, including Articles 227, 228, and 229, require that all laws be interpreted in the light of the Quran and that "laws shall be brought in conformity with the Injunctions of Islam as laid down in the Quran and Sunnah".

Keeping in view the above-mentioned facts and challenges, Dr Syed Jaffar Ahmed rightly says that 'the role of religion in statecraft was recognized in the three constitutions of 1956, 1962 and 1973, in varying degrees. The last constitution perhaps had greater quantum of religion as compared to the previous ones',[51] which confirms the denial of Jinnah's foundational 11th August speech in the first Constituent Assembly of Pakistan. Though the 18th Constitutional Aamendment paved the path for democratic federalism in some areas of the constitution, unfortunately, it did not address the issues of religious discrimination in the constitution and political system. Consequently, such discriminations continue to exist even after the passage of the 18th Constitutional Amendment.

Role of Text Books

The State narrative being professed upon in the text books is also not corresponding with the vision of the founder of Pakistan and emerging democratic norms of the contemporary era. The discriminatory approaches and religious biases in the constitution have badly poisoned the minds of generations in Pakistan. That is the reason; the renowned historian of Pakistan Mr. K K Aziz termed it 'the murder of history' in his book (carrying a critique of history textbooks used in Pakistan). Such biased and variety of narratives based on the distortions of facts and ground realities have developed a sense of alienation among the people of other faiths in Pakistan on one hand, and have created socio-political narcissism among the extremist or conservative sections of Muslims populations on the other hand, which is a potential conceptual threat for the democratic spirt of any federal society. Because 'the essence of federalism lies not only in the constitutional or institutional structure but in the underlying society itself'.[52] A joint research paper of a group of federal scholars rightly say that 'communities built on diversity need to grant those diversities collective group rights. Citizens belonging to minorities need to have the feeling that the cultural value of their minority is considered equal to other majority or minority values. Minority alienation can only be transcended if the distinct communities are enhanced with group rights. Such group rights should, however, not enable the group to interfere with basic human rights.'[53]



Figure 10

“ If the kids are friends or not, their books should be talking to each other, if books are fighting so are kids!” Shahtoon

A research study of the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) states that:

> The findings of this study are published in the report "Connecting the Dots: Education and Religious Discrimination in Pakistan" that was launched by US Commission on International Religious Freedoms. The report reveals that pejorative treatment of minority religions in the textbooks and the biased attitudes of teachers lead to the discriminatory attitudes of students towards religious diversity. Analysis of the data shows the negative portrayal of non-Muslims in the textbooks as well as in the teachers' attitudes towards and their teaching practices – both in public schools and madrassas. This study shows that the role of non-Muslims in the formation, development and defence of Pakistan is altogether omitted from the educational discourse. The attitudes of public school teachers are often prejudiced towards the religious diversity and reflect bigotry. The study provides the evidences of prejudiced attitudes of teachers being passed on to the students hence transmitting the negative perceptions and stereotypes in the education system. The report presents the case studies of the discrimination faced by non-Muslim students within the school environments, often by their peer groups and teachers, alongside a sheer vacuum of any institutional arrangement to address such discrimination. The study also suggests a number of reforms – for both public schools and madrassas - ranging from the production of new textbooks free from biases, training of the teachers to respect the religious diversity, to establish institutional mechanisms to address the incidents of discrimination against non Muslim students.[54]

Shrinking 'white' space of the flag

Political violence and continuous acts of targeted terrorism against people of other faiths in Pakistan is another upsetting and inchoate reality especially in some sub-regions of the provinces of Punjab and Sindh. Serious issues like ill-motivated false allegations and misuse of blasphemy laws, forced conversions, mob attacks on neighbourhoods of Christians and Hindus, violent attacks on temples and churches, shrinking spaces for the freedom of expression for people of other faiths and many other challenges are becoming more alarming day by day. It is happening due to the overall emergence of religious extremism in society, weak capacity of state institutions and governments to protect religious minorities and the conservative nature of state and society in Pakistan.

Dr. Syed Jaffar Ahmed appropriately narrates that 'after the creation of Pakistan, Jinnah realized that the same mistake of letting the nation to divide into a majority and minority and a minority on religious lines should not be repeated'.[55] Still the power structure and persistent ruling elite have not fully realized that integrating people of other faiths with Pakistan's mainstream state institutions and political society would strengthen democratic culture and federal essence of polity.

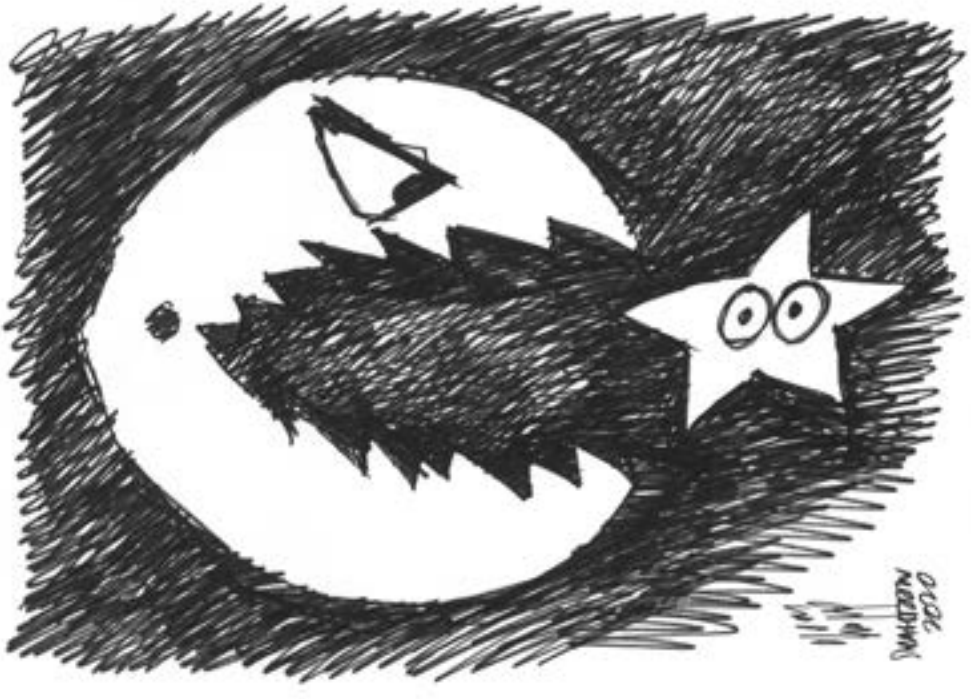


Figure 11

The white space in your flag which is supposed to be for the minorities it is becoming thin. If we don't do something about it, very soon there will be no space left. We have to act now" Shahtoon

Along with the progressive sections of political society of Pakistan, civil society by and large has also played an effective role in mainstreaming the concerns and issues of religious discrimination in Pakistan but 'civil society needs to have the organizational tools that enable associations, parties, gender and professional groups such as the labor unions that cut across the borders of the fragmentation within the polity.'[56]

Finally it is a shared responsibility of the progressive sections of political and civil society to construct a robust discourse about the strengthening of democratic society in Pakistan through the protection of people of other faiths and their equal rights.

> **“Jinnah, even when he was a Governor General designated has said in an interview as early as July 14, 1947:” I shall not depart from what I said repeatedly with regard to the minorities. Every time I spoke about the minorities I meant what I said and what I said I meant. Minorities to whichever community they may belong will be safeguarded. Their religion or faith or belief will be secure. There will be no interference of any kind with their freedom of worship. They will have their protection with regard to their religion, faith, her life, and her culture. They will be in all respects, the citizens of Pakistan without any distinction of caste or creed.””**

-Adeshir Cowasjee,
The Sole statesmen, The Dawn, July 9, 2000

5 Celebrating Diversity as a Conflict Resolution Mechanism in Pakistan!

'The essential task of every federation is to strike a balance between promoting diversity on the one hand and solidarity on the other in order to ensure that the majority of the citizens accept decentralization and autonomy. If a political system is perceived by its citizens to be unjust, it will not be endorsed in the long run and its legitimacy will be called into question….

……In the area of environmental protection great importance is now justly accorded to biodiversity-an international convention has been established to protect the environment. A similar convention should also be signed for peoples and nations'.[57]

-Georg Milbradt, a German Scholar on Federalism

Relationship between Conflict and Diversity

Conflicts are the integral part of political, economic, cultural, religious, ideological as well as regional and territorial dynamics of plural societies. Conflicts can play both roles as a source of conflict, as well as a self-motivated binding force. It depends on how they are treated by the plural societies and the state polities, which also reflects democratic culture and training of those societies and polities through an enabling environment. Federations across the globe since the inception of the first ever federation - USA, founded through a constitution in 1781 - have experienced a variety of inherent and newly emerging conflicts at various levels. In 29 federations of today's world, some 510 distinctive nationalities,

ethnicities, cultural, linguistic and religious communities live under those federal constitutions and democratic order (except the UAE). Any social, political or economic exclusion and marginalization or denial has mostly founded a bone of contention among the diversity; whereas the democratic federalism with inclusive approaches provides a constitutional and political framework to prevent, manage, accommodate and resolve those conflicts in a peaceful and democratic way. Apart from federalism and even before the established political systems 'the daunting task of managing conflicts is as



Figure 12

"This is our planet which is wearing a mask during COVID-19 with all sort of diverse things that you need right now" Shahtoon

old as human history'.[58] The federal and democratic history of the modern world also goes with conflicts of all kinds in all regions of the world, because after a long journey of bitter experiences and a series of conflicts they finally realized the significance of peaceful and democratic coexistence.

Diversity should not be tolerated only as a special burden by the majority. Diversities in fact enrich the polity with additional values only by granting autonomy, which not only can foster diversified identities, but federations also draw profit from this enrichment. By providing autonomy to different communities, a federation both builds on and fosters diversity. By enhancing diversities, it enables all inhabitants of the country to feel at home within their motherland. A country challenged by its diversities has to build itself by managing and accommodating these diversities. This again requires the diversities to be given the opportunities to develop according to their own ideas, values and interests. The diversities are able to define themselves and build on their own self-consciousness only when they are able to cooperate on the basis of partnership with other diversities and thus contribute added value to the common nation.[59]

Federal expert T. K. Oommen accepts that 'the tendency on the part of states to indulge in ethnification and culturocide, processes that are destructive of diversity, in the name of national integration, is widespread'.[60] However, it is globally established that contrary to the accommodative model, which is called 'consociational federalism', assimilatory or unitary approaches of denial in plural and diverse societies and polities have never played a positive and reconciliatory role in bringing together diverse populations. Renowned federal expert Richard Simeon in his paper 'Managing Conflicts of Diversity' has rightly emphasized that 'repression, marginalization and assimilation –while unhappily common –do not fall within our criteria for effective management of difference'.[61]

Unitary Approach vs Unity in Diversity Approach

The main reason why diversity became conflict-ridden in Pakistan is, because the state of Pakistan adopted a unitary approach towards cultural federalism, which has proved to be a failed paradigm in all other cases too; that is why federal countries, such as, Canada, Nigeria, Belgium, Malaysia, India, Ethiopia brought a paradigm shift and moved towards cultural federalism based on the principle of unity in diversity. It is also the case of some other federations where 'federalism has been adopted in the post-conflict environments in Bosnia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Iraq, Sudan and South Africa and is being considered in Sri Lanka'.[62] Because finally they realized that multiplicities augment politics, literature, art, culture, education, legislation and pluralistic values. They edify society to forbearance, behavioural elasticity and mutual coexistence. It is true that human beings are diverse by virtue of their social, cultural, ideological, conceptual, cognitive and subjective as well as objective nature. A state and a society that shape on obliging diversities provides for more righteousness and healthier pledges of human grandeur because it complements the existence of the diversity of human nature. This is how it plays a key role as a conflict resolution mechanism in federations. Pakistan direly needs to learn from this federal and democratic paradigm.

Thomas Fleiner along with other federal scholars rightly says in their joint theme paper 'building on and accommodating diversities' that 'one has to consider diversities as an opportunity for states that are enriched by different languages, cultures, religions and traditions. Only if a state is able not only to cope with and accommodate diversities but also to build on the diversities and cherish its diversities will be able to contribute to sustainable peaceful development'.[63] The political rationale behind the espousal of diversities is that federations do not create miscellanies but varied historical nations, nationalities, ethnicities, cultural, linguistic and cultural communities and religious groups together constitute a federation not by withdrawing or compromising their historical identities but by sustaining, securing and celebrating their miscellanies.

Historical 'Diversity Analysis' of Constitution of Pakistan

Pakistan could have prevented all the variety of national, ethnic, linguistic and religious conflicts by adopting inclusive approaches since its inception but it failed to develop a social contract based on respecting diversity. In political terms constitutions are considered as formulae of social contracts in the federations and democracies but Pakistan continued inheriting the British colonial constitutional framework for nine years from 1947 to 1956. During that normative phase along with other federal and democratic deficits diversity was also denied, which immeasurably created resentment, in East Bengal, Sindh, Balochistan and NWFP. One unit was created in West Pakistan and that also negated provincial autonomy, which is a prerequisite to accommodate and empower diversity. The creation and imposition of one unit badly damaged the federal spirit and the existence of territorial diversity.

The 1956 and 1962 constitutions were neither made through democratic inclusive processes nor did those serve a federal purpose especially in terms of political, economic and social diversity. Unfortunately, even the 1973 constitution also continued with the same denial syndrome and the unitary cultural federal model was continued. Even after the passage of the 18th Constitutional Amendment, which was a good step in restoring the federal spirit in the constitution, it failed to address the diversity issue with a constitutionally acknowledging gesture. Consequently, diversity continues to be a denied reality and source of conflict in Pakistan.

One more important aspect is that diversity in federations cannot only be secured and celebrated through constitutions, laws and public institutions; it also merits sensitization in society, which is termed as the federal spirit, because a state apparatus alone cannot guarantee harmony among diverse populations unless a democratic and federal spirit has not deeply rooted in those societies. T K Oommen rightly says that 'the essence of federalism lies not in the constitutional or institutional structure but in the underlying society itself'.[64]

Diversity as an Asset

Keeping in view the above discussion and the wide range of conflicts in

Pakistan the state as well as the political society of Pakistan need to understand and realize that 'unity can be grounded in diversity, that diversity can give rise to unity, that unity need not to dissolve diversity into homogeneity, and that there is no necessary contradiction between unity and diversity'.[65] On the contrary 'diversity is not to be viewed simply as a problem but as an asset to be built upon in the process of nation building'.[66] It can be resolved from federal history of modern times that diversity should not only be accepted ceremonially but it should be strengthened and acknowledged through autonomy and empowerment but, unfortunately, the fact is that

> 'Autonomy as a tool to accommodate diversities is often rejected with arguments that it prepares the way to succession, leads to disintegration, undermines solidarity within the state, and creates inequalities. Consequently autonomy is regarded as an impediment to integration and instead systems of multi-ethnicity based on individual human rights are advocated in the belief that minorities will be able to foster their especial identities within the melting pot or multi ethnic system.
>
> Whoever explores these challenges will direct that federations with the guarantee of strong autonomy for their constituent units have in fact had the opposite experience. Indeed, strong autonomy has often fostered the real accommodation of diversities because unity can only be sustained on the basis of mutual respect and tolerance. If the citizens (and communities) feel at home and secure within their regional and local community, they are more willing also to identify as citizens of the larger federation. They will be convinced to the win-win benefit from being part of a federal system. They can both nurture their identity and of the constituent unit and profit from the advantage of the bigger state through cooperating in the shared rule with other diversities at central level of the federation'.[67]



Figure 13

"These prayer beads do not have a religion of their own. Anyone cas use them" Shahtoon Oct 2020

If we conclude the above argument, it can be said that 'countries challenged and enriched by diversities will never find 'the end of history' of their country. As long as diversities exist, they will develop their identities and their own interests. With the flourishing of their diversities, a federation will itself evolve and develop continuously in the design of its polity. One should, in principle, not seek final solutions. One should rather permanently seek processes, procedures, institutions and tools that enable a continuing and peaceful management of any conflicts among controversial diversities'.[68]

Keeping in view the variety of conflicts in Pakistan the solution can only be a vision of a secular, federal and democratic polity, which is committed to its citizens, which believes in decentralization, respects diversity, treats citizens equally and creates an enabling political environment where all kinds of conflicts are prevented, managed and resolved fairly and democratically. While discussing state-people and people to people conflicts in various forms Dr. Moonis Ahmar suggests that

- Conceptually speaking, six important requirements of conflict management can accomplish the vision of a secular Pakistan.
- The first requirement is the political-will and determination to initiate the process of dialogue and negotiations. The question is, in the absence of culture of tolerance, dialogue and accommodation, how it is possible to deal with conflicts which threaten the very survival of the people?...
- The second is the holding of purposeful and meaningful negotiations to reduce the intensity of the conflict. It means, once the conflicting parties agree to sit on the negotiation table, the next task should be to make these negotiations purposeful and meaningful.
- Third is overcoming stalemate in the negotiation process so that the conflicting parties can move forward for the management and resolution of conflict. Here the state and societal are expected to play a vital role in preventing stagnation in negotiations so that a break through is achieved for the management and resolution of conflicts.
- Fourth is to address charges and counter-charges against each other so that an environment of trust and confidence may be created. If the environment is not conducive and suspicious against each other loom charge, one cannot expect any positive transformation of conflict.
- The fifth requirement would be to adopt a flexible position by conflicting parties and finally pursuing a win-win situation so that the two parties involved benefit from the conflict management process. The last two requirements can go a long way in seeking durable peace through a process of conflict management and resolution.[69]

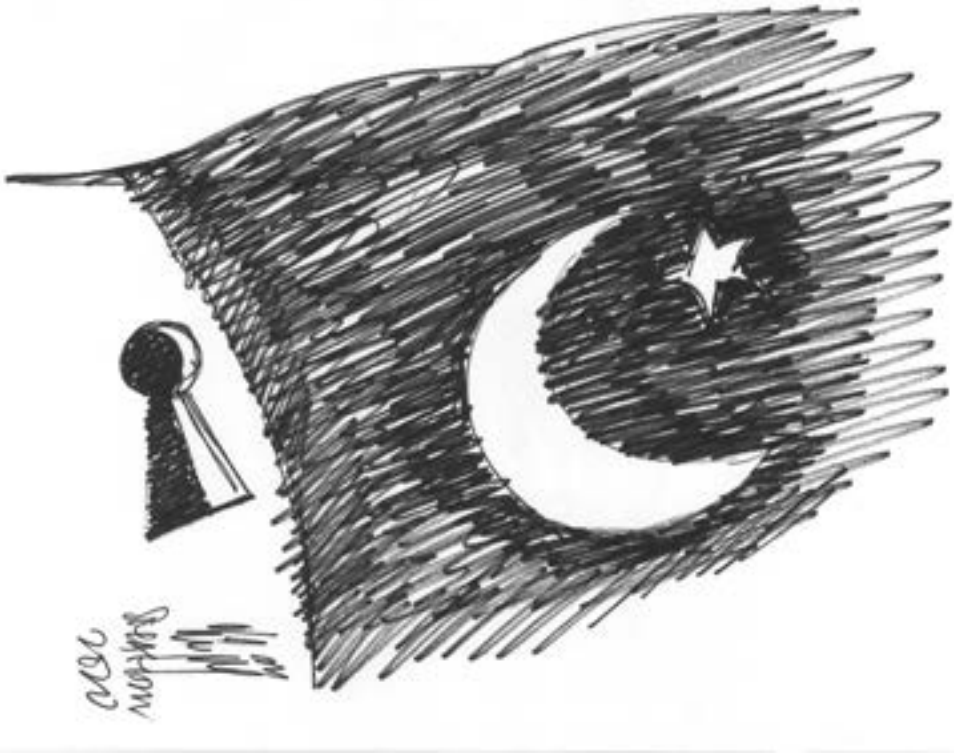


Figure 14

Figure 14: "The key to progress is to be inclusive" Shahtoon

“

- **The downpour has returned again and amassed clouds.**
- **The lightning flashes too convoyed to rain on the earth around**
- **Some of the lightning illuminated Constantinople and some headed towards the west.**
- **Some flashed over China also, and some land on Samarkand.**
- **Some of it flew to Turkey and some operated in Kabul and Kandhar.**
- **Some showered with lightening/thunder over Delhi, Deccan and Girnar.**
- **Some lightning sparkled over Jassalmere, Bikaner and Bakar,**
- **Some proceeded towards Punjab, some roam over the Halar**
- **A heavy cloud burst to Bhuj and to borders of the desert.**
- **Some soaked Umerkot and Walhar or low areas.**
- **O Lord! Keep Sindh affluent at all times!**
- **My dear Friend! I pray may you prosper and flourish the entire world!**

”

-Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai
(Translated by Dr Sahar Gul)

6 Conclusion and Recommendations

In the light of the above treatise, and on the basis of federal configuration of Pakistan, it can be concluded that Pakistan is a multi-national, multi-linguistic, multi-religious and multi-territorial federation. Pluralistic and diverse societies and states can only grow, prosper, and coexist peacefully and harmoniously, when there is economic justice, political, cultural and identity-based rights of nationalities, linguistic and cultural communities are safeguarded, mainstreamed, and admired by both the state and society. It merits a robust federal political culture and compatible state policies. Regrettably, Pakistan has virtually failed to accomplish the indispensable requisites and obligations of cultural federalism, which heavily depend upon unity in diversity instead of a perceived and unrealistic involuntary homogeneity.

There are some key preconditions of federal systems, which we have already discussed in various sections of this paper. Pakistan needs a paradigm shift to ensure and strengthen cultural federalism through protection, participation and inclusion of cultural, religious and linguistic as well as regional heterogeneity. Pakistan can learn well from the principles and practices of other successful federations, which have prevented, managed and resolved a variety of conflicts they inherited during the formation of the polity due to compulsions of history or mutual voluntary choices.

Denial of diversity is also one of the key reasons and dynamics behind the continuous federal turmoil in Pakistan since its inception in 1947. Despite the fact that it was born out of diversity, the socio-cultural plurality was never realized by the state or seen in the state narrative and its unitary mindset and power hegemony. The cultural state narrative has never been insightful and realistic; it has been deficient of incarnate connection with historical facts,

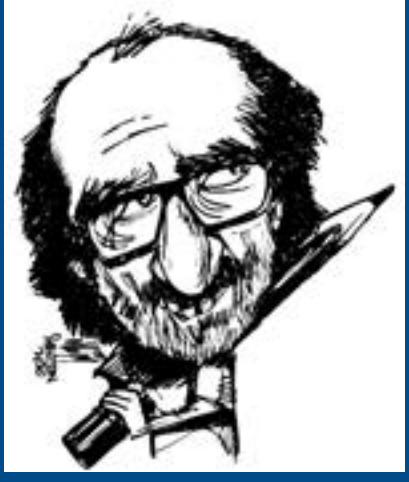
empirical realities and counter narratives of smaller provinces.

The following recommendations can lay the foundation of an inclusive cultural federalism in Pakistan.

1. Pakistan should be secularized in accordance with the globally established democratic norms, and founder of Pakistan Mr. M. A. Jinnah's foundational speech of the 11th August 1947, which clearly mentioned that religion would have nothing to do with the business of the state.
2. Pakistan needs a holistic constitutional amendment to abolish all the contradictory articles, which promote various forms of discrimination, especially with citizens of other faiths.
3. Keeping in view Pakistan's heterogenic nomenclature, Pakistan should be a multi-national, multi-religious and multi-cultural federation to make its departure from the uniformity paradigm, which have caused conflicts in Pakistan.
4. All major languages of provinces and nationalities of Pakistan, i.e. Punjabi, Sindhi, Siraiki, Balochi and Pushto, should be declared as national languages of Pakistan, where as Urdu should continue as lingua franca and English as the state language at the federal level.
5. The educational curriculum should be made free from all kinds of biases based on religious, cultural and gender identities. Considering the diversity of historical backgrounds of all provinces, the forged uniformity in curriculum should be discouraged. Chapters should be included in the curriculum about other faiths and cultural diversity of Pakistan. All the factional distortions about history in the curriculum should be done away with, and science subjects like physics, chemistry, mathematics and biology should be kept away from religious rhetoric.
6. The Senate in the federation is considered as the upper house of the federation; it not only represents regional diversity and competing and conflicting interests of the constituent units but it also equalizes the diversity of political representation in the decision-making constitutional and legislative forum. The Senate should be made stronger and a genuine upper house in a bi-cameral legislature in decision-making.
7. Under the Article 140-A, the local government system is a provincial subject and it should be made more vibrant, empowered and an efficient political apparatus of good governance, service delivery and self-rule.
8. Under the Article 251/3 of Pakistan's Constitution, the constituent units have provision to declare their provincial languages as official languages of the provinces without challenging Urdu. Currently only in Sindh Sindhi is an official

language of the province, a similar step should be taken also by the rest of the provinces through provincial legislation.

9. Apart from major languages of provinces i.e. Punjabi, Sindhi, Siraiki, Balochi and Pushto all other languages of Pakistan should be secured, promoted and supported through institutional mechanisms at local, provincial and federal levels.
10. Based on the UNESCO recommendation, basic education in Pakistan should be given to children in their mother languages.
11. The state media should allocate adequate time and space for other languages, cultural festivities, and faiths to promote diversity in Pakistan
12. Official languages at provincial levels should be encouraged and used in official correspondence in public and private sectors.
13. The corporate sector should be encouraged to include provincial languages in their promotional literature and products.
14. Poetry and pure literature of all languages of Pakistan should be translated into the major five provincial languages (Punjabi, Sindhi, Siraiki, Balochi and Pushto) including Urdu and English.
15. Indigenous identities, languages, cultures, forms of art and literature, and ceremonies should be recognized with their historical identities instead of terming them merely Pakistani.



About the Illustrator

“Started my career as a graphic Artist in Add agency continued till 1986 when I joined The Muslim as editorial cartoonist thus begins the ordeal that has continued till today.

Eat cartoon,drink cartoons, think cartoons and sleep cartoons the only relief lies in the graphic depiction of various training materials required by development organizations once they are utterly helpless in getting their messages across which unfortunately happens nearly all the time.”

Akhtar Shah or Shahtoon participated as cartoonist for the five ‘Unity in Diversity’ Web Panel Series that were conducted in July-November 2020. His sketches summarize the discussion by panellists as well as gives him a platform to share his personal opinion on the topic in discussion.

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About the Book



Cultural Federalism: Embracing Unity in Diversity in Pakistan examines how Pakistan's cultural, linguistic, ethnic and religious diversity can strengthen its democratic federation. Jami Chandio explores the relationship between identity, equal citizenship and participation, highlighting the importance of recognising and protecting the country's distinct communities. Through discussions of federalism, linguistic pluralism, religious freedom and conflict resolution, the book considers how inclusive institutions and respect for cultural rights can support peaceful coexistence. It offers educators, students, policymakers and civil society practitioners a thoughtful resource for understanding Pakistan's diversity and building a shared future grounded in dignity and mutual respect.

About Freedom Gate Prosperity

Freedom Gate Prosperity (FGP) is a nationally registered non-profit organisation established under Section 42 of the Companies Act, 2017, in Pakistan. Based in Islamabad, FGP works to advance democratic governance, climate action and inclusive prosperity, with particular attention to young people, women and marginalised communities. Through research, civic education, training and partnerships, the organisation promotes human rights, citizen participation, green livelihoods and skills-based empowerment. FGP connects policy dialogue with community initiatives, helping people gain the knowledge aAnd opportunities to shape decisions affecting their lives. Guided by dignity, freedom and environmental responsibility, FGP works towards a more equitable, resilient and prosperous Pakistan.

About the Author



Jami Chandio is a Pakistani writer, scholar and civil society practitioner whose work spans federalism, democracy, human rights, political thought and literary criticism. He has authored and compiled books in Sindhi, Urdu and English and contributed to research, policy dialogue and civic education. His work has brought him into engagement with political parties, journalists, academic institutions and civil society organisations in Pakistan and internationally. In Cultural Federalism, he examines the recognition and accommodation of Pakistan's diverse identities as a foundation for democratic participation, equal citizenship and peaceful coexistence.

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