

POLITICAL GOVERNANCE OF MULTICULTURALISM IN PAKISTAN; LESSONS FROM SWITZERLAND

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Abstract

Multiculturalism is not a new phenomenon. It echoes throughout the history of human civilization for several centuries. Historians, social pundits, political scientists, linguists, and philosophers accentuate it with contrary opinions. Some of them believe multiculturalism to be beauty and strength of a nation, while others deem it as menace to solidarity, peace and social harmony of a state. Hence, cultural diversity has become a political challenge throughout the world. Modern societies have gradually changed from homogeneous societies to multicultural societies. Developments in human history, particularly wars, treaties, invasions and migrations have ensured that most states in today's world are multicultural or sometimes even multinational in character. Switzerland is home to 8 million unevenly divided souls, languages, minds, backgrounds and idiosyncrasies. Today, it stands as one of the exemplary viable democratic countries whose better political governance and policies have not only effectively coped with recurring issues of multiculturalism but have also bridged differences among French, Italian, German and Roman based linguistic, ethnic and religious groups. Today Switzerland stands as a model state for all those heterogeneous countries that are struggling against multiculturalism. Pakistan is among them. Because of inadequate political governance, multiculturalism has badly hit Pakistan internally and externally. The research has concluded that despite many differences in size of the country, population etc., the Swiss model of political governance of multiculturalism, with innovation and modifications can be applied to Pakistan.

Keywords: Multiculturalism, Diversity, Linguistic, Ethnic, Religious, Political, Governance

Switzerland is often called “willensnation”, the product of a national will.¹ Switzerland despite hosting linguistic, ethnic and religious diversities has succeeded in carving out a nation that is united in diversity. Neither this unity has emerged overnight nor did it happen miraculously. It took many centuries to attain this political stability. Multiculturalism is a blessing in disguise, which evolves over a period of time. This pretext seems befitting in the context of Switzerland. Yet, it is fundamentally unrealistic to think of Switzerland as a country without historical conflicts and issues. The process of nation-building, urbanization, industrialization and modernization were accompanied by social, religious, linguistic and ethnic conflicts just as they happen in other countries. Modern Switzerland is not formed by a single homogenous people but varying ethnic groups speaking different languages and having different religions.

Today foreigners wonder about Swiss conservatism and economic progress as a small nation, and they thereupon are amazed at the absence of social, economic, ethnic, linguistic and religious strife. History may show us some conflicts inflicted by the cultural differences, such as religious differences, which led the whole nation to the civil wars, but there are now no more reasons of tussles in Switzerland. Bigotry and sentimentalism about religions has lost its strength in the lives of the people and it's no more instigating force in the society. Ethnicity, except in the case of Jura, has never aroused feelings of hatred against the citizens belonging to other ethnic groups. Language is a matter of personal choice; it gives the respective speakers an identity but a single language doesn't enjoy any privilege in itself. However, as earlier said, this ideal picture of political and social stability did not happen by chance. The nation reached this stage through a lot of effort over several centuries with the ultimate result of political maturity as a nation. The causes of disruption and conflicts that often lead multicultural societies to civil wars and social instability have been addressed with conscious efforts and premeditated measures of political governance.

Many political thinkers and analysts are of the view that Switzerland represents a 'paradigmatic case of political integration.' According to Karl Deutsch, political institutions of Switzerland have mainly helped the country to become a society with its own identity. The role of political

¹ Bruno Schoch, "Switzerland- A Model for Solving Nationality Conflicts?" trans, by Margret Clarke (Frankfurt: Peace Research Institute, 2000),iii.

institutions is very important in uniting and contenting people with four languages, two religions and different regional cultures, and turning the disadvantages of multiculturalism into advantages.²

Thus, Switzerland has appeared victorious in coping with ethnic conflicts, linguistic quarrels and religious strife with its effective political governance. The modern research has found the Swiss political system as promising idea for settling issues of multiculturalism. But the answer to any question raised - namely, whether, the Swiss model can be applied in other multicultural countries – must be ‘No’. Deriving general guide lines from the particular conditions in which the political system originally emerged is not possible, but it can be subject to abstracting lessons for the rest of the multicultural countries. Hence, despite many limitations such as the circumstances involved in making, age of the country, size of territory, number of population, geographical making, etc., the Swiss model offers promising lessons for Pakistan.³

Multiculturalism in Pakistan

Ethno linguistic conflicts broke out in the country just after a year of its creation. Pakistan was established as a federation of five provinces, i.e. Punjab, Bengal, Sindh, Balochistan and Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) in August 1947. But, unluckily, federalism could not flourish in its true spirit. Pakistan is culturally a diverse country. It is a multi-lingual, multi-racial and multi-ethnic state. Its provinces reflect diversities in terms of area, population and development status. At its inception, the Eastern Wing of the country (Bengal) formed the majority of the population and possessed homogeneity in terms of linguistic and cultural composition. On the other hand, the Western Wing, which was made up of four units, i.e. Punjab, NWFP, Sindh and Balochistan, depicted the intra-wing diversities in terms of socio-economic conditions.⁴ The differences between the Eastern and Western wings were very recognizable and had serious implications on the easy functioning of the state. These disparities heightened over the

² Samuel Barnes and H. Karl W. Deutsch, “the Nerves of Government: Models of Political Communication and Control,” *Behavioral Science* 10, no. 1 (1965): 81.

³ Wolf Linder, “Building a Multicultural Society by Political Integration,” In *Swiss Democracy*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1998), 2.

⁴ Ayesha Shehzad, “The Issue of Ethnicity in Pakistan: Historical Background”, *Pakistan Vision*, Vol.12, No. 2: 130-131.

time. The diversities within the Western region created additional problems for the working of federation.⁵

The declaration of Urdu as the only national language of the country in 1948 by the then governor general misconstrued in many parts of the newly born state and linguistic unrest occurred severely in Eastern part. Although Urdu had united the Muslims of sub-continent in the form of Urdu-Hindi controversy in 1867, some miscreants and nationalists exploited the ethnic feelings of the people. They took this decision as an unjust and a coercive imposition on other linguistic groups. Bengalis, who were 54% of the whole population, demanded their language to be the national language of the country. This decision of making Urdu the only national language did not only create the mood of resistance in the Bengalis but also affected the Sindhis, the Pashtuns and the Punjabis sentiments, and it sowed the seeds of resentment in them. They propagated that despite their majority their languages were given inferior status to Urdu. Those groups indirectly wanted the majority to rule over the country.⁶

During the period (1947-1969), divisions between East and West Pakistan and assertion of Bengali ethnic difference (due to the perceived sense of deprivation on the part of Bengalis) was a significant feature of Pakistani politics. The mistrust and discontent and lack of participatory political culture and economic mayhem not only increased but it also penetrated into other regions and segments of society. Under the Martial Law rule, the feelings of alienation among the groups and specially Bengalis grew more severe due to non-participatory political institutions and processes.⁷ The military elites though commenced certain plans for national integration among different provinces by establishing council for national integration, inter-wing scholarships, postings of civil officers, cultural exchanges and delegations. Further steps were also taken to lessen the gap between the two wings. But they could not yield the desired results.⁸

⁵ Tariq Rahman, *Language And Politics In Pakistan* (Karachi: oxford university press 1996), 97.

⁶ Syed Mahmood, *Pakistan Divided: Study of The Factors and Forces Leading to the Breakup of Pakistan In 1971* (Lahore: Jang Publishers, 1993), 112.

⁷ Ibid., 10.

⁸ Nehal Karim, "The Emergence of Nationalism in Bangladesh" *Journal of Sociology*, Volume 8, Issue 2 (1992), 61.

The fears of being deprived of their rights and exploitation by a strong center were further heightened by the election of 1970 when the Awami League, a political party from Eastern Pakistan, got majority vote was allegedly and reportedly not allowed to form the government by the leaders of West Pakistan and the then establishment. That resulted into the war of succession instigated by arch enemy India in 1971.⁹

Apart from the unrealistic perception of linguistic and political suppressions by the people of Bengal, there were many other factors that caused sense of alienation among them. Another element which aroused Bengali ethnic feelings was the continuation of the British criteria to create a Marshall race that hinders the inclusion of people of East Pakistan in the army. The intelligentsia also felt aggrieved about the segregation from armed and the civil services.¹⁰

Economic differences between the two wings also provoked ethnic issues. Economic disparities resulted in social divisions and bifurcation of society and therefore impoverished ethnic groups were sidelined in economy. It was more a false impression than a reality that was created by the separatists in Bengal. They cultivated the feelings that their interests had been ignored and they were mistreated by West Pakistani policy makers. Those feelings of economic imbalance aggravated dissatisfaction among Bengalis. There was a negative sensitivity about the central government that it favoured West Pakistan and East Pakistan was deprived even of its due share.¹¹ These feelings of maltreatment and partiality were not meted out by the state. Though many steps were taken to address the grievances of East Pakistan but they were less in size and intensity as compared to the propaganda and perception created by the opposite forces. Thus, the state failed for many reasons to soothe and conciliate the rising adverse feelings of Bengalis.

After the partition of East Pakistan, it was believed that Pakistan might develop as unified entity in South Asia. But it could not materialize. The

⁹ Tariq Rahman, *Language and Politics in Pakistan*, (Karachi: oxford university press, 1996), 153.

¹⁰ Syed Mahmood, *Pakistan Divided: Study of The Factors and Forces Leading to the Breakup of Pakistan In 1971* (Lahore: Jang Publishers, 1993), 112.

¹¹ Ayesha Shehzad, "The Issue of Ethnicity in Pakistan: Historical Background." *Pakistan Vision* 12, no. 2 (2011): 124.

diverse society of Pakistan was unable to evolve a sustainable and stable political system. Pakistan took birth as a state but could not carry on creating nationalism. Subsequently, ethnic, linguistic and religious identities strongly re-emerged on the political scene. The Bengali ethnic and linguistic sentiments were replaced by Sindhi-Muhajir ethnic conflicts in Sindh, Pushto and Balochi linguistic and ethnic tussles in Balochistan, Pakhtoon and non-Pakhtoons in KPK and Saraiki-Punjabi strains in Punjab, which were coupled with sectarian and religious unrest and conflicts across the country. Though different governments formulated numerous policies to provide different ethnic groups opportunities of participation in policy making process, but anticipated results could not be attained.¹²

Factors Contributing to Ethnic Conflicts in Pakistan

Muslim leaders after partition failed to fathom the ethno-linguistic diversities of the country. They strongly believed that Muslims were a cultural nation. This led them to deny the existence of many nationalities, which had appeared from tribalism to form the feudal national identity in themselves. Provinces were based on ethnic and linguistic populations and they were not administrative units. The leaders were allergic of talking about ethnic diversities, and they actually abhorred the idea of multiculturalism.¹³

A thorough investigation of the history of ethnic, linguistic and religious conflicts in Pakistan point out a number of factors involved as delineated in the following.

Historical & Cultural Factors

In the context of Pakistan, which is a heterogeneous state in nature, historical and cultural factors are very significant with respect to ethnic conflicts. Ethnicity is also generally linked with territory. At the time of partition, changes in territorial boundaries led to important changes in ethnic identities. Colonial powers abused religious, racial, linguistic, caste and other differences among native people of subcontinent to prolong their rule,¹⁴ and unfortunately this practice has been continued by the inept rulers even after the independence. The self-motivated politicians

¹² Babar Ayaz, *What's Wrong With Pakistan?*(London: Hay House, Inc, 2013),49.

¹³ Gulshan Majeed, "Ethnicity and Ethnic Conflict in Pakistan," *Journal of Political Studies* (2010),51.

¹⁴ Ayesha Shehzad, "The Issue of Ethnicity in Pakistan", 128.

politicized ethnic groups in the country. They presented themselves as the only guardians and protectors. For instance even Pakistan People's Party (PPP), acclaimed liberal party, threatens the state to play Sindh card whenever its interests are jeopardised. Similarly Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PMLN) feeds on Punjabi sentiments. There are many other political parties such as Muhajir Qaumi Movement (MQM), Jeay Sindh Mahaz Quami Movement (JSQM), Balochistan Awami Party (BAP), Hazara Democratic Party (HDP), Balochistan National Party(Awami)(BNP), have been named behind a particular ethnic group. This has been a divisive factor in the ethnic conflicts of the country because these parties don't hesitate to capitalize on ethnic sentiments of the voters for their own ends.¹⁵

Linguistic and ethnic diversity is a salient feature of the society of Pakistan. The questions related to national language or official language, majority-minority issues and religious cleavages are a common phenomenon. Smaller ethnic groups feel vulnerable due to the major ethnic entities. The relegation of smaller groups has created ethnic strains in society. Several ethnic conflicts have also prevailed around the country due to the differences of religious sects. The cultural features of ethnicity, religion and customs are the real causes for clashes and actually mirror the relationship between the subordinate and the dominant culture in the state.

Economic Inequalities

In any heterogeneous society, economic discrepancies strengthen ethnic identities, thus economic differences among the groups in Pakistan played a vital role. The smaller groups feel insecure. In Pakistan these feelings are rooted in nonexistence of socio-economic justice. The economic factors play a vital role in intra state conflicts. Pakistan as a state has failed to protect an individual's privileges and freedom and to uphold impartial opportunities among numerous groups, and therefore minority groups are inclined to perceive government institutions as partial or repressive.¹⁶ This situation has increased isolation of ethnic groups from the state institutions and has caused ethnic conflicts. At many junctures of history, the ethnic groups have used violence as the only mode to express their grievances.¹⁷

¹⁵ Ibid, 64.

¹⁶ Ayesha Shehzad, "The Issue of Ethnicity in Pakistan", 125.

¹⁷ Katharine Adeney, *Federalism and Ethnic Conflict Regulation in India and Pakistan* (London: Springer, 2016), 34.

Political Factors

Political factors have badly affected Pakistan and even divided it in 1971. They are the most potent factors for ethnic conflicts in the country. Political turmoil follows when some ethnic groups are denied their due share and representation in decision making process and the power structure of the state. In this situation, ethnic groups inclined to identify themselves by their respective regions. Moreover, political parties motivated minor groups for their own purposes and even established new marginal communities. There are so called national parties whose politics revolve around hate speeches and vilification of other ethnic groups. The smaller politically underprivileged ethnic groups attach themselves to political parties to gain some political power to guard their interests. Sometimes, these ethnic groups felt that their socio-cultural individualities are being amalgamated into state-centric national identities due to fewer chances in the state structure. They perceive themselves to be isolated from the state institutions and political process, and become more unconcerned towards the state. Subsequently, the socio-cultural individualities of these groups offer the basis for political mobilization. It creates the problem of social unity and becomes a grave threat to national harmony. It also obstructs the path to national incorporation- inclusion of every faction of the society through active participation in the affairs of the state, subsequently leads the country to ethnic conflict.¹⁸

Uneven Resources

Another factor considered as one of the causes of ethnic conflicts in Pakistan, i.e. modernization. Partiality and discrimination in terms of development and progress in different areas has created mode of resistance in the society. Dissent and disagreement in remote areas of the country is the result of this sort of discrimination. This situation has created a perception of relative deprivation in underprivileged ethnic groups.¹⁹

In different parts of the country, citizens feel that they have less than their peers. For instance, recent developments in different big cities of central Punjab has created dissatisfaction among the people of South Punjab because they perceive that they are being ignored. This type of dissatisfaction becomes an essential variable which provoke ethnic groups

¹⁸ Brian Barry, *Culture and Equality: An Egalitarian Critique of Multiculturalism* (USA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 222.

¹⁹ Ayesha Shehzad, "The Issue of Ethnicity in Pakistan", 126.

into agitation.²⁰

This phenomenon of deprivation also helps explain the causes of political mobilization and demand for autonomy in East Pakistan where an uneven development along with external factors, created disappointment and psychological frustration among the people. This is still a potent reason for discontent in various peripheries of the country.

Demographic Factor

Ethnic problems in Pakistan are not merely the products of socio-economic processes but also because of demographic changes such as assimilation and migration. Large-scale migrations have contributed to ethnic conflicts. After partition migrations also created problems of assimilation.²¹ Thus, ethnic conflicts occurred between outsiders and local populace, particularly in Sindh this issue has caused deadly clashes between the locals and migrants. When migrants came into contact with different cultures, traditions and identities, this situation leads towards ethnic differences in most of the developing heterogeneous societies.²²

External Factors

Since the establishment of the country, unfortunately Pakistan has been target of the external forces. External influence has generated ethnic conflicts in the country, and ethnic groups get ideological and financial support from external forces.

History of Pakistan is replete with examples of ethnic conflicts because of outside influences. From the dismemberment of the country in the form of separation of East Pakistan to the recent armed insurgencies in Balochistan and terrorist activities in KPK, are the vivid instances of external interference. Despite the internal treaties and agreements signed under the flag of the United Nations to refrain from interference with the internal issues of other countries, the neighboring states have played vicious role in supporting and inflaming ethnic, linguistic and religious conflicts in Pakistan.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ayesha Shehzad, "The Issue of Ethnicity in Pakistan", 129.

²² Muhammad Qasim Zaman, "Sectarianism in Pakistan: The Radicalization of Shia and Sunni Identities," *Modern Asian Studies*, 32(3), (1998), 689.

It has not been target of neighbors only; having immense strategic importance the great powers of the world have also exerted their influences in the internal affairs of the state. Especially during the Cold War, Pakistan remained the battlefield of the proxy war between the Communist and Capitalist blocks. A particular sectarian and ethnic group was pushed into Afghan Jihad. It costed a lot to Pakistan, shattered social unity, sowed the seeds of religious extremism, created mistrust among the citizens and promulgated Kalashnikov culture. Hence, Pakistan had to face an immeasurable external pressure in the war on terrorism. The whole country was dragged into a war like situation. It caused deaths and devastation for more than 600000 people belonging to every corner of the country. Many years have lapsed in this war; the country is still struggling and could not reach to eternal peace. The effects are lingering yet.

Religious Factors

From the very beginning, ruling elite could not create unity in diversity. It remained unable to make multiculturalism a positive force in Pakistan. Due to unjust distribution and lack of political institutionalization, socialization of masses could not be harmonized. After the departure of father of the nation Muhammad Ali Jinnah and his most able Prime Minister Khan Liaquat Ali Khan, political leaders of the nascent nation were not of their stature. They could not fully establish a strong democratic political system in which every individual could invest his faith.

The religious parties whenever got chance in government remained incapable to develop a cohesive policy due to austere ideological differences in their ranks. In Pakistan's special conditions, the differences between different sects preclude acceptance of a single religious ideology by the entire nation. In reality, the more the state interferes and regulates the religious affairs of the people to benefit it, the more resistance and resentment are likely to be shown by the religious minorities.²³

Sharp differences too exist in major sects, they are at odds with each other; they do not want to practice religion under the leadership and guidance of the same imam. Whenever efforts have been made to bridge the gaps and to bring them close to each other, serious problems ensued. The

²³ Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, "Islam, the State and the Rise of Sectarian Militancy in Pakistan." *Pakistan: Nationalism without a Nation* (2002): 85.

interference from external forces, has been reported to be responsible for this sectarian mayhem in Pakistan.

Rulers further pushed different religious groups into sectarianism to advance their own specific personal interests. The policy during 80's made the differences among different religious groups clearly obvious and widened the gulf by politico-religious indoctrination. Thus, the major sects formed militant organizations and got involved in serial killings and sectarian violence. In the 1980s and the 1990s, this attitude created an atmosphere of polarization and unrest in the country. The so-called religious leaders promulgated very narrow-minded dogmas from which religious chauvinism and extremism acquired militant overtones. Different sects attacked each other. Minor differences in practices of faith were deliberately propagated. This turned minor implicit conflicts into major explicit conflicts, which did not only destroy the political environment but also broadened the already existing cleavages between different sects. Foreign funded leaders of different groups open Madrassas and enrolled thousands of students within the country as well as from abroad. These Madrassas are also assigned to train these students as militants. During Afghan war in 1979-1988, these trained students played an important role in Afghanistan – Soviet war and later posed a serious threat to the integrity of Pakistan itself. Unwillingly, Pakistan again started to play a significant role in the war on terror after 9/11 incident. To address the concerns of world powers, Musharraf government framed various policies to deal with extremist elements of society. These policies back lashed and negative forces became active for weakening the state. The whole country resonated with bomb explosions and suicide attacks. An endless series of suicide bombings created terror. The government remained paralyzed for many years, and thousands of citizens were killed. Finally, law enforcement agencies took different measures to control extremist elements of society.²⁴

Lessons for Pakistan

It would not be practically adequate to assume that the Swiss model of multicultural federation befits every nation. Therefore, it is quite deceptive to talk about a single model of the 'multicultural state.' Yet every model has some lessons to be successfully followed by the other states and

²⁴ Babar Ayaz, *What's Wrong With Pakistan?* (London: Hay House, Inc., 2013), 161.

nascent nations who want to have multicultural sustainability.²⁵ Being the oldest state, and successfully multicultural, Switzerland offers many lessons to Pakistan and other countries who have been struggling to deal with this issue, whose unity and social integrity has been challenged and jeopardized by this for many decades. Issues and causes of multicultural conflicts are ubiquitous, ingenious and innovative approach to the devices employed by Switzerland can help Pakistan to improve the political governance of multicultural diversities.

Political State not a Cultural State

The notion of nation-state has eroded now. Very few countries around the world such as Iceland, Portugal and Korea are mono-national. In Pakistan this sort of national homogeneity had to be vigorously constructed by the state by a range of 'nation-building' policies that encouraged the chosen national identity, and all substitute identities being subsumed. Almost every country has followed this ideal of nation state at some stage. But an increasing number of states, particularly Western democracies, quitted this aim in favor of a more multicultural model of the state in the 18th and 19th century. But after the emergence of theories like "Clash of Civilization" some of the Western countries are reverting to nation state, yet there are many countries which strongly believe in multiculturalism and take it as strength to their country. These countries are successfully governing multicultural issues and offer lessons to others.

Switzerland is the only exception to this pattern in the history of the world and offers viable lessons to the rest. Switzerland has never endeavored to create a single national language on state level. It has always believed different groups would exist as separate ethnic and linguistic groups.²⁶ But unfortunately, the situation in Pakistan has been averse to this. Despite existence of diversity, it has been pursuing the goal of a common national identity since its creation. Pakistan needs to learn this lesson from Switzerland to accommodate and accept diversity without hurting individual distinctions of the ethnic groups. It must struggle to sustain itself as a multicultural state.

Pakistan being a multicultural state should disclaim the older idea that the state is ownership of one national group. Instead, the country should be

²⁵ Oliver Hartwich, Go Swiss, www.nzinitiative.org.

²⁶ Ibid.

seen as belonging equally to all members. Second, it must eventually renounce those nation-building policies that exclude or discriminate members of marginal or minor groups. Instead, it should agree that individuals should be able to approach state institutions and assume responsibilities and duties as equal citizens in political life without any fear of denial of their ethno-cultural identity. Like Switzerland, Pakistan must accept responsibility to harmonize the culture, history and language of minorities in the same way as they acknowledge and accommodate those of the dominant group. Third, it should acknowledge historic injustice that was made to minority groups by the previous policies of exclusion and discrimination. It should exhibit a readiness to offer some sort of rectification and remedy for them.²⁷

Thus, Pakistan should denounce the policies that contribute towards cultural nation. It requires policies and action to become a political nation like Switzerland where the citizens are convinced and persuaded to live together peacefully in diversity for the sake of common welfare and national interest rather than sameness of culture. The people of different factions of the society should understand that they do not constitute uniformity because they do not have common culture but are a nation because their political and economic interests are same.

Intercultural Citizen's/ Public Willingness

The most effective and operative lesson, transcendent geographical peculiarities, that Switzerland offers to any multicultural state is the willingness of peaceful co-existence on the part of its citizens. The survival of a multicultural state depends on the individuals who belong to this sort of state. A multicultural state survives due to the tolerance of its citizens. This is the most important lesson that citizens of Pakistan need to learn.

Here, it means that a sufficient number of citizens must favor the general principles of multiculturalism: that assimilationist and exclusionary nation-building policies should be replaced with policies of acknowledgement and accommodation; and that every citizen gets equal opportunities.

This is the basic step towards the development of a multicultural state that Pakistan has hitherto missed. Education plays an important role here. For

²⁷ Raymond Breton, "Institutional Completeness of Ethnic Communities and the Personal Relations of Immigrants," *American journal of Sociology* 70, no. 2 (1964): 193.

example, at educational institutions children should be taught about the realities of the nation, its true composition, its multiethnic and multicultural nature, and they should be very explicitly informed and helped to explore why earlier ideologies of nationhood were proscribed.

Making institutions and laws that are accommodative of diversity is not enough to make a sustainable society. Progress at the level of state institutions should be matched by progress at the level of the subsequent experience of inter-group relations.²⁸

Pakistan as state has tried many times to become more unprejudiced, comprehensive and accommodating, but inter-group relations remained tensed and strained. It has failed to get its citizens renounce the old concept and faith in nation-state. The citizens of Pakistan are still robustly attached to the pre-partitioned slogans for their unity. They still have a strong faith in religion – Islam as the only cohesive bond among themselves. But besides religion the citizens of Pakistan must also accept that Pakistan is home to diverse cultural, ethnic, linguistic and sectarian groups and the state belongs equally to all groups. Pakistan as state has lost a lot in denial of the recognition of equal rights to its inhabiting groups. It has been dismantled, it has experienced bloody conflicts, and it has touched the lines of civil war.²⁹

To make the country more multicultural and sustainable, the citizens of Pakistan can demonstrate a range of constructive and positive personal attitudes towards diversity. They need to become individuals who are inquisitive rather than aversive to other people and cultures, who are interested in learning about other means of life, and who are keen to reflect on matters from other people's point of view. They should shun view that their inherited way of life or viewpoint is higher than others. Pakistan needs citizens who feel contented in intermingling with people from other backgrounds.

Due to the different forces of globalization, personal interculturalism has become increasingly necessary. Today, there is a dire need of interdependence among the members of different groups. No group is

²⁸ Ibid, 197.

²⁹ Bruno S Frey, "Direct Democracy: Politico-Economic Lessons from Swiss Experience," *The American Economic Review* 84, no. 2 (1994): 338.

truly 'self-sufficient' anymore, and neither is it truly 'institutionally complete'. Even the groups which constitute huge majority are not self-contained but are integrated into larger national and transnational economic, social and political structures. Consequently, everyone today should be able to deal with people from outside, and hence must understand how to cope with diversity.³⁰

Direct Democracy

The system of direct democracy is one standout feature of the Swiss system of government. There are many other countries that have referenda as well—but such a fundamental part of the political system as referenda in Switzerland is not present in any other country.³¹ In Switzerland, referenda have a long history stretched over centuries. When other European nations were still ruled by absolutist emperors, engaging the people in political process had started in Switzerland. Pakistan also has a history of referenda, but there is dissimilarity between the nature of the sovereign in Pakistan and Switzerland. In Pakistan, authority rests on parliament. In Switzerland, however, the authority is the people. This distinction is much more than a mere convention. It has practical and serious implications. Because the Swiss parliament is not sovereign, it is not the premier order of political power. Hence, parliamentary decisions can be reversed in referenda. It is democracy in the real sense of the term: the people govern. Consequently, in the Swiss parliament, there is not the typical separation between government and opposition. All main parties mutually form the government, made of just seven federal councilors. These councilors have a twofold task. At the same time, they are members of the government and thereby run the affairs of the government as well as they head a government department just as a minister in Pakistan. In other words, in this arrangement there is no parliamentary opposition because the people are the opposition. The benchmark for initiating a referendum is low. Although this process decelerates the work of parliament, it possibly also means that the quality of legislation is greater—and there is more need to make a good case for legislative change. A careless piece of law, pressed by the parliament without a proper public debate, is more likely to be rejected in referendum. Therefore, good legislation, particularly once established in a referendum, will create more trust.³²

³⁰ Ibid, 343.

³¹ Oliver Hartwich, Go Swiss, www.nzinitiative.org.

³² Ibid, 338.

Direct democracy is not just a feature of the government at the federal level; it is also practiced in all tiers. Councils, cantons and the federation each call their respective citizens to the polls several times a year. What is impressive about this is not just the routine with which policies are decided by the people but also the disciplinary effect this can have on government spending. In the city of Zurich, for example, referenda must be held for any proposed capital expenditure exceeding CHF (Swiss Rupees) 20 million or recurring expenditure of CHF 1million per annum. Another fascinating characteristic of Swiss democracy is the nature of the parliament. It works as a part-time institution. The National Council, the parliament of Switzerland, one of the two houses, gathers four times a year for three weeks at a time. As a result, professional politicians are marginalized in the parliament.³³

Localism, direct democracy and federalism with its constant plebiscites and public congresses are perhaps the most attention-grabbing elements of the Swiss system of government. It is highly-devolved nature of Swiss government. In Pakistan a local government system prevails but there is no comparison between these two systems. With a population of 20.4 million and a landmass spanning 79696km², Pakistan has four units of government. Pakistan has total of 158 districts, as per the census of 2017, with almost 596 tehsils and 6000 union councils in all four provinces.

Demographic Comparison of Switzerland And Pakistan

Country	Population	Area	Units	Population Per Unit	Area Per Unit
Pakistan	20.4 million	709696 km ²	4	40 million	19924 km ²
Switzerland	8.4 million	41,285 km ²	26	3,20000	18 km ²

Adopted from bureau of Statistics, Government of Pakistan and government of Switzerland

³³ Arend Lijphart, "Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries (London: New Havens, 1999),9.

Switzerland, meanwhile, has lower population, i.e. 8.4 million, and its area is much smaller, i.e. only 41,285 km². And within this small country, there are 26 cantons (regions) and 2,294 communes. In other words, while Pakistan has an average of 40 million people per provincial unit of government, the corresponding value for Switzerland is only 320000 people. And while the average Pakistani provincial unit covers 19,924 km², in Switzerland that area is just 18 km². The small size of Swiss political components is also surprising. But these political components are not only small but also autonomous and powerful. In Swiss political life cantons and communes are most imperative. Symbolically, this is evident from the fact that there is official capital in Switzerland. Bern is the base of the federal government and national council but it is the only de facto capital. The significance of the two lower layers of government is reflected in their tax revenues. The Swiss state receives taxes equal to 9.5% of Swiss GDP. Communes and cantons combined collect more than that, i.e. 10.5%.³⁴

Based on these numbers, Switzerland seems to be one of the most devolved countries on earth. This is one of the country's great strength. From a Pakistani perspective, this sounds odd. We have been educated to have faith in bigger units which usually means better. After all, this has been the main argument behind not making more provinces in the country. Making Southern Punjab a province and merger of FATA into KPK may raise movements in other parts of the country. Many Pakistanis believe that local government is more incompetent, inept and wasteful part of the government. Central and provincial governments are reluctant in giving local governments more money and power which seems counter intuitive. Given this extensive perception of local government, why Switzerland's devolved system has a viable advantage is something that Pakistan would not easily understand. However, the Swiss experience proves that a different way of managing local and provincial government matters is not only possible but also beneficial. There is one key word that explains and helps to understand Swiss successful regional and local government: incentives. Because there are federal, local, and cantonal taxes for both company and personal incomes in Switzerland, each tier of government contributes in increase of its tax income. There is competition between neighboring councils because the structures of local government are so small. They compete not only in provision of public services but also on

³⁴ Ibid, 143.

tax—each commune is able to set their own individual tax rate. In Switzerland, local governments are remunerated for positive economic outcomes. When a city or a region or a village grows, their economy and consequently their budgets automatically increase too. This localism, which is a main characteristic of Switzerland's edifice of government, is the antithesis of Pakistan's centralism. In Pakistan, local and regional governments have no financial incentives to promote economic growth. The Swiss model offers valuable lessons for reform of the local government in Pakistan. At the same time, there are some organizational differences between these two countries. Pakistan lacks the Swiss tradition and faith in bottom-up decision-making. We presently do not elect people to public office with the same capability as Switzerland does. A different format of local government in Pakistan would change both the way in which local government works and an involvement in local politics is made more attractive.³⁵

Proportional Representation

Another very effective lesson that can be learnt from the Swiss experience is the consensus model of democracy based on "inclusiveness, bargaining and compromise."³⁶ Consensus model of democracy would be the one that introduce a multi-party, power-sharing alliance, chosen through a system of proportional representation. Contrarily, in "majoritarian" democracy power is focused on one party majority often chosen through an uneven system. Proportional representation may uplift the democracy as well as the governance in Pakistan. It will help the state to get rid of the compulsory numbers in the parliament, and consequently relieve the government of demands from parties in alliance. Like Switzerland, this sort of democracy will diminish opposition in the parliament, which aims at hampering policies and causing delay in government actions.³⁷

However, in the Swiss model, political parties who have not gained an absolute majority but have substantial support within the country are included in the government, and thus are involved in legislative decisions; however, in Pakistan, the opposition party, regardless of its huge support, has very little power over legislation promulgated by the majority party,

³⁵ Ibid, 46.

³⁶ Ibid, 9.

³⁷ Brian Barry, "The Consociational Model and its Dangers," *European Journal of Political Research*, 3(4) (1974): 393.

who are comparatively free to make policy as they consider appropriate. This means that within the multiple-party system there is generally a large segment of society that finds little representation as well as little say in the policies, a fact that seems less democratic.

Conclusion

Succinctly, Although Pakistan cannot blindly imitate the Swiss model of political governance of multiculturalism. Yet, it can extract many viable and effective lessons. Besides, inculcating faith in cultural diversity among its citizens, it must establish ingenious and innovative political democratic institutions like Switzerland. Having stopped harping on single string of common religion and one language for national unity, Pakistan requires to create social, cultural, and linguistic unity based equity, political participation and common interest. Multiculturalism must be looked at as an extra power of absorption of human and natural diversity necessary for the deployment and progress of the state.