

NATIONAL INTEGRATION AND COHESION IN PAKISTAN: VOICES FROM AJK

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to analyze the doctrine of national integration in specific perspective of Pakistan viz-à-viz Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJ&K) with its special status in the backdrop of greater conflict of erstwhile State of Jammu and Kashmir. National integration is a complex process that unites culturally and socially discrete groups into a territorial unit. The issue of national integration is worth viewing in a state like Pakistan that is considered a much diverse country in terms of ethnicity, sectarianism, language and race. Analyses of this study are based on number of reports comprised of interviews and focus groups which depict latest voices from AJ&K. The findings show that the minimum standards of common national interests have not yet been identified or agreed upon in the State of Pakistan. Moreover, it points out that political deprivations, socio-economic under development and ethno-regional nationalism in AJ&K are the key factors that can drift away the ideological and emotional attachment of people against the national integration in Pakistan. Hence, it is suggested that, addressing these issues in the existing arrangements of governance would bring a true and long-lasting harmony.

Keywords: National integration, political deprivation, harmony, AJ&K

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Introduction

National integration is a complex process that unites culturally and socially discrete groups into a territorial unit. Various studies showed that different states had employed different strategies to cope with the issues related to integration and cohesion based on their relative approaches and ground realities. The state of Pakistan has been undergoing a number of problems since its inception on 1947. The problems range from the lack of national integration, ethnic and sectarian tensions to language issues. Unlike India, where Nehru got the opportunity and laid down the foundation of new state, the founding father of Pakistan, Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, could not survive to play his effective role in nation building. After his death, the succeeding leaders could not foresee the imminent threat to national integration; therefore, the country, to this day, remains far away from national integration and ubiquitous national identity. The Pakistani leadership is unable to draw any lesson from the history of Dhaka Fall and the similar practices have almost pushed the province of Baluchistan on the verge of disintegration. More or less similar situations of security crises have been reported in other parts of the country i.e. Karachi, FATA, etc. The information in this study aims to highlight the voices prevailing in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJ&K) associated with national integration in the existing administrative arrangements of Pakistan. AJK is a part of greater conflict in the backdrop of erstwhile State of the Jammu and Kashmir where public at large is closely and emotionally attached with the ideology involved in creation of Pakistan.

The design of this study exhibits the foundation of national integration in a brief worldwide view. It also expresses the current status of national integration in Pakistan. It further highlights the key factors missing in the establishment of harmony in the country. Moreover, it points out that political deprivations, socio-economic under development and ethno-regional nationalism in AJ&K are the determinants that can drift away the ideological and emotional attachment of people against the national integration of Pakistan. Finally this study suggests that addressing these issues in the existing arrangements of governance would bring a true and long-lasting harmony.

This study may be divided into the following six sections on thematic bases. The first section of the paper describes the concept of national integration, its various definitions and schools of thought. The second section of the paper provides a comprehensive analysis of the situation of national integration in Pakistan. It also highlights the issues of provincial differences, centre-provinces relations, ethnic split, political instability, poverty, terrorism, radicalism, separatism and sectarianism which have contributed in weakening the national integration and harmony in all the provinces, Fata and AJ&K. The third section examines

the national integration of Pakistan viz-a-viz standpoint of AJ&K. It explains the disputed nature of the AJ&K in the light of the resolutions of United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan (UNCIP) and the AJ&K Interim Constitution Act, 1974. It further elaborates the AJ&K as a part of the larger conflict of Jammu & Kashmir; due to its disputed status and existing constitutional assignments with Pakistan, the people of AJ&K lack adequate socio-economic development and political empowerment. They are also undergoing identity crisis and regional effects of the conflict. Here the existing plethora of issues can drift away the ideology of the people of AJ&K and have harmful effects on the avenues of integration of AJ&K and harmony with Pakistan. The fourth section of the paper identifies the existing mechanism for national integration of AJ&K both at the level of society and government. The fifth section of this paper critically compares the situation of integration of disputed state of AJ&K with all the provinces of Pakistan. It examines juxtaposition on the political empowerment, socio-economic prosperity and literacy rates of AJ&K and the provinces of Pakistan. The last section put forward a brief conclusion followed by some concrete policy recommendations to crate national integration of the AJ&K internally and externally. The primary recommendation is to bring forth the constitutional reforms in the AJ&K to ensure the political empowerment and socio-economic prosperity.

The concept of national integration

Integration literally means the fitting together of parts to make one whole. Parts, of course, cannot be fitted together unless they are compatible. This is the first prerequisite of integration. A country, if it is to survive, must have national unity and integration. National integration is a process of achieving national cohesion, stability, prosperity, strength and feelings of being united as a nation¹.

History has demonstrated that creation of national integration is a complex process. To unify contrasting identities under one government becomes so difficult at the time when all the groups require a conducive environment for their cultural, economic, and political inspirations. In poly-ethnic societies with conspicuous customs, language and identities, the task evolves an abstruse nature. In an effort to understand the challenging relationship between ethnic politics and national integration, operational definition of integration is necessary to explain. Weiner (1965) refers to the term integration as a process that unites culturally and socially discrete groups into a territorial unit. In this way, the established national identity is helpful to overcome the problems between

¹ Mirza Muhammad Saleem, "National Integration," *Advance Contemporary Affairs*, 6 (2008): 424.

central authority and subordinate political groups. In addition to that it links the government with the governed.²

Shakir (1982) presented that the main thrust of national integration is to create congruity among various groups and transform them into a political community. For the economic and political upbringing of that community, national integration is an essential condition. In multi-ethnic societies, creation of harmony and thrive for national integration are important concerns.³

Contrary to the mentioned definitions of national integration, the understanding of former British Home Secretary, Roy Jenkins (1966) is also pertinent, quoted in a briefing paper of open society Foundations Institute for Strategic Dialogue. According to Jenkins:

Integration is perhaps rather a loose word. I do not regard it as meaning the loss, by immigrants of their own national characteristics and culture. I do not think we need in this country a 'melting pot', which would turn everybody out in a common mould, as one of a series of Carbon copies of someone's misplaced vision of stereotyped Englishman. I define integration, therefore, not as a flattering process of assimilation but as equal opportunity, accompanied by cultural diversity in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance. This is the goal we may fall a little short of this full attainment, as have other communities both in the past and in the present. But if we are to maintain any sort of world reputation for civilized living and social cohesion, we must get far nearer to its achievement than is the case today.⁴

The definition explains the importance of balance among diverse ethnic groups. It is the duty of the state to create social cohesion through balanced policies. The phenomenon is more critical in developing post-colonial states rather than developed states. It is the duty of the state to create social cohesion through balanced policies.⁵

In case of Pakistan there are different ethnic identities such as Baloch and Punjabi, but it is not easy to say that above their ethnic identities national integration is fully achieved. Hashmi (2014) stated the example of USA where different ethnic backgrounds fully observe American identity while keeping the ethnic diversity alive. She documented,

Among the modern industrialized societies, the United States of America presents the best example, where ethnically diverse groups, with different backgrounds merged in American identity and are

² M. Weiner, *New Nations: The Problem of Political Development* (Philadelphia: American Academy of Political and Social Science, 1965), 52-64.

³ Moin Shakir, "On National Integration," *Social Scientist* 10, 4 (1982), <<http://www.jstore.org/stable/3520327>>, accessed 22 April 2015.

⁴ Rehana Saeed Hashmi, "Ethnic Politics: An Issue to National Integration (The Case of Pakistan)," *South Asian Studies* 29, (2014): 346.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 346.

sharing equally the democratic rights. People with different origin like Italian, Korean, Spanish and Indian, etc, have developed a larger American identity. Despite the fact that they are also associated with their particular ethnic group, ethnicity is not a hurdle towards national integration.⁶

There may be diversity of language, culture and values in different ethnic groups which serve as a hurdle towards national integration and oneness of nation, at the same time there are number of possible government policies which can cater to the needs of national integration. Language diversity is observable in many countries of the world, but, adequate government policies can boost and exploit sentiment of nationalism. Government policies are evident to create pride on country level nationalism. For instance, Canada is a country where more than one ethnic group live and speak their separate languages. Although, in Canadian domestic politics, the language issue has remained very important for years but the government was successful in resolving it through a workable language policy. To alleviate the grievances of many of its ethnic groups, the Canadian government has introduced the multicultural policy, so that everyone should feel as Canadian.⁷

There are two proposals by two different schools of thought in political science for national integration. The first and old one is put forward by Karl Deutsch (1912-1992) who proposed that assimilation of diverse cultural, linguistic and religious group is a precondition of national integration.⁸ While the other school of thought is headed by Walker Connor (born 1926) who claimed that assimilation is itself a threat to national integration. According to him, if minority groups are forced to assimilate into majority groups, then an ethnic war may start.⁹

Contemporary shadow of national integration in Pakistan

Pakistan has been facing several problems since its creation as a nation-state, ranging from lack of national integration to the sectarian conflict. Despite putting their utmost focus on integration of different ethnic and sectarian groups living in Pakistan, the founding fathers of the country could not envisage the imminent threat to national integration. Therefore, quite contrary to their expectations, the country, to this day, remains far away from reflecting national integration and formation of a

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Michael J. Sodaro and Dean Walter Collinwood, *Comparative Politics: A Global Introduction*, 3rd ed., (New York: McGraw-Hill Companies, 2008), 150.

⁸ Rehana Saeed Hashmi, "Ethnic Politics: An Issue to National Integration (The Case of Pakistan)," *South Asian Studies* 29, (2014): 347.

⁹ Walker Connor, "Nation-building or Nation-destroying?" *World politics* 24, 3 (1972): 319-355.

ubiquitous national identity. However, national integration has inevitably become a pre-requisite of survival for today's Pakistan that is facing existential threats of terrorism and separatism.

The roots of palpable conflict between different ethnic groups, differences between provinces and emerging and strengthening trends of separation in Sindh and Baluchistan, stretch back to the time of country's emergence. The founding fathers, led by Muhammad Ali Jinnah, sought Islam as the uniting force between the Muslims of the sub-continent and thus demanded a separate homeland for them on the basis of two-nation theory, which differentiated Muslims from Hindus.¹⁰ However, Islam did not prove enough to hold the nation consisting of different tribes, cultures, castes, and languages, together and the country broke apart in 1971.¹¹

Despite facing with the debacle of East Pakistan, the leadership seems unable to address the problem of "lack of national integration" and create "cultural uniformity." Not only the leadership's failure implies its inability in curbing the emergence of problems, it also shows its failure in improving governance and addressing the long-standing grievances of the provinces. There is a long list of problems, each with its own history and repercussions, which have weakened the country over the years. Some of the problems have a historical context while others are a result of political instability and short sightedness of the ruling elite.¹²

Today's Pakistan is facing the problems of provincial differences, centre-provinces relations, ethnic split, elitist policies, political instability, poverty, separatism, terrorism, radicalism and sectarianism.¹³ In combination, these issues have harmed the course of national integration. For instance, radicalism has proved one of the major setbacks to the country. Parochial outlook of the conservatives ignited riots in 1954 and opened a path to violence against the minorities. Since 1950s, the radical groups have repeatedly employed violent tools against the minorities and hence represented Pakistan an insecure place for non-Muslims besides

¹⁰ In the Hindu dominated sub-continent, Islam proved a powerful and uniting force in struggle for a separate homeland. However, the strength of two-nation theory proved temporary, and new groups emerged even in 1950s, which relied on ethnic and linguistic rhetoric to accumulate public support.

¹¹ Ijaz Hussain, "The Dilemma of National Integration in Pakistan: Challenges and Prospects," *ISSRA Papers*, 49 (2009), <http://www.ndu.edu.pk/issra/issra_pub/ISSRA_papers_Vol_I_2009.pdf>, accessed 26 April 2015.

¹² M. S. Awan, "Impact of Radical Islamisation of Education on Pakistani Society," *Pakistaniaat: A Journal of Pakistan Studies* 4, 2 (2012): 45-55, <<http://pakistaniaat.org/index.php/pak/article/download/163/163>>, accessed 25 April 2015.

¹³ There might exist several other problems in the country, which are less relevant in the debate of national integration. Therefore, this study does not address all problems in the country and thus only focuses issues directly related to the topic.

sidelining them from contributing to national progress. It also converted the leadership's attention from long-term planning to everyday affairs.¹⁴

Radicalism has also led to terrorism. Religious and ethnic groups have extensively employed this tool to seek attention and pressurize the government. Intolerance for other voices has reduced freedom of speech and assembly in Pakistan and it has been growing with the passage of time. Different political, religious, ethnic and sectarian groups used violent tools to get an advantage over the opponents. Historically, the power structures also supported their allies in their struggle and provided them the necessary support. The Pakistani society, however, witnessed an unparalleled surge in the level of terrorism and violence after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979.¹⁵

The literature shows that the rise of sectarian (radical) organizations and *Jihadi* groups,¹⁶ which later on became active in sectarian conflict and the emergence of politically motivated militant wings weakened national strength and harmed the course of national integration. These developments provided the foreign factors (US, Saudi Arabia, Iran and India) an adequate space to pursue their interests. Friends and foes alike inflicted an irreparable damage on the Pakistani society while igniting and exacerbating extremism and terrorism for their interests. The leadership in Pakistan, civilian and military, is looking unsuccessfully to stop extremist elements from challenging the State's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

In addition to radicalism and violence, political instability over the years has also harmed the course of national integration. Political instability is one of the major hurdles in progress of underdeveloped and developing states, especially which are multi-ethnic and consist of various ethnic and linguistic groups.¹⁷ In the case of Pakistan, political instability has led to four military takeovers and messy tug of war among various interest groups. After the death of Quaid-i-Azam, continuous changes in government and political stalemate provided the military with an opportunity to take over, thus limited the prospects for democracy to strengthen. Political instability rather kept the leadership occupied with

¹⁴ M. S. Awan, "Impact of Radical Islamisation of Education on Pakistani Society," *Pakistaniaat: A Journal of Pakistan Studies* 4, 2 (2012): 45-55, <<http://pakistaniaat.org/index.php/pak/article/download/163/163>>, accessed 25 April 2015.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 46.

¹⁶ A well-known term used nowadays for Muslim Non-State Actors against their militant behaviour or beliefs.

¹⁷ Aslam Pervez Memon, Kiran Sami Memon, Saima Shaikh, and Fahmeeda Memon, "Political Instability: A Case Study of Pakistan," *Journal of Political Studies*, 18, 1 (2011): 31-43.

their “conflicts of interests” and hence they neglected developing the “sense of belonging to one state” and cultural uniformity.¹⁸

Another important problem on the part of leadership was their “elitist policies,” which exacerbated disintegration and provided a fertile ground for the outbreak of ethno-nationalism. The ill-conceived policies of the ruling elite badly affected the track to national integration. Both civilians and military rulers took several unnecessary and ultimately harmful decisions, which disillusioned the populace, especially Sindhis and Balochis.¹⁹ Elitist policies have a long history in Pakistan, ranging from Ayub Khan’s decision to implement “one-unit policy” (1955) to Zulfikar Ali Bhutto’s initiative of dismissing the elected government of Baluchistan. Such decisions have enraged the ethnic minorities. These groups have, therefore, moved away from the centre over the years and there have emerged several differences between the ethnic groups and the centre.

In addition to differences between the centre and provinces, there have been repeated calls for devolution of power from the former. Different ethnic groups such as Hindko, Saraiki and Muhajirs have raised their voices several times.²⁰ Then government’s decisions to change NWFP’s name to Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (KP) in order to address the identity crisis of the Pashtun community, led Hindko community’s protests and demand for a separate province.²¹ Similarly, the threshold of ethnic split in the Punjab and Sindh is also worrisome. After the elections of 2013 and consequent allegations on Mutahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) of poll rigging, the MQM chief Altaf Hussain gave an outrageous statement regarding ethnic plurality in Sindh. He said instead of abusing Karachi and its people “Separate Karachi (from the rest of the country) if you dislike its people’s mandate.”²²

In addition to identity crisis and grievances of minority ethnic groups, separatist trends in Sindh and Baluchistan also pose a threat to

¹⁸ This process requires strengthening the populace’s belief in single national identity.

¹⁹ Historically, the decisions of Pakistani leadership have not enraged anyone more than Bengalis. The latter accused the then governments of depriving them of their rights. However, in the context of the abovementioned lines, this study takes into account the post-1971 scenario, where Balochs and Sindhis have proven to be resistant and chanting slogans against Pakistan.

²⁰ Apart from four major ethnic groups in Pakistan, minority ethnic groups have also raised their concerns regarding identity crisis, deprivation of representation and exploitation from ethnic majority in their respective provinces. It remains noteworthy that the abovementioned ethnic groups are not among the major four.

²¹ Kalbe Ali “Hazara Movement: Divided We Fall,” *Dawn*, December 2, 2012, 04:49a.m., <<http://www.dawn.com/news/768333/hazara-movement-divided-we-fall>>, accessed April 24, 2015.

²² “Separate Karachi from Pakistan if you don't like MQM Mandate: Altaf”, *The News International*, May 12, 2013, <<http://www.thenews.com.pk/article-100684-Separate-Karachi-if-you-hate-our-mandate,-Altaf-to-establishment>>, accessed April 26, 2015.

national unity. Baluchistan, in particular, has been troublesome for the policymakers²³ and those troubles have multiplied after the killing of Baloch nationalist leader Akbar Bugti in 2005.²⁴ Nowadays, several militant separatist organizations are fighting against the state, notably Baluchistan Liberation Front (BLF) and Baluchistan Liberation Army (BLA).²⁵ They have damaged the state property, killed personnel of the law enforcement agencies, foreign workers and civilians.²⁶ Baloch insurgency movement has badly affected the development process in the province. Similarly, G M Sayed-led Sindhu Desh movement has also left a question mark on the future of the federation. Judicial murder of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and assassination of Benazir Bhutto during the military rules also aggravated the separatist trends in Sindh.²⁷ Although multiple differences exist between the nationalists on the goals and future of their movement, they may agree on leaving federation of Pakistan. Separatist trends are likely to exist and nourish in Pakistan due to the presence of the strong centre. Therefore, strong federation remains a hurdle in the way of national integration. The provinces accuse the centre of keeping all powers with itself and thus alienating the former from their basic rights.²⁸

In particular, strong federation has also boosted anti-Punjabi sentiments across the state. The majority of the non-Punjabis in Pakistan consider Punjab as an imperial entity, which overwhelms their mandate, gets attention of all political parties and secures more development projects. From development projects to the distribution of water, Punjab thus remains a party in every provincial and centre-province conflict. Secondly, its overwhelming size and impact on elections outcome has also made it important.

²³ Baluchistan is the largest province in the country. It is the second largest provider of natural gas in Pakistan (26% of total production according to Pakistan Petroleum Limited). In addition, it has an important seaport and several natural resources including precious stones, oil, coal, gold and copper.

²⁴ Bugti was killed in a military operation, conducted by armed forces of Pakistan. Analysts have named it second biggest mistake of military leadership after military operation in East Pakistan.

²⁵ The Baloch nationalists have accused the federal government of gifting away several profitable projects to China for very little in return. They have killed several Chinese workers in the region. For instance, they claimed responsibility of killing the Chinese workers in 2004 and 2006.

²⁶ According to a BBC report, 542 police officers have been killed only in Baluchistan in a decade.

²⁷ Amir Ali Chandio, "Politics of Sindh under Zia Government: An Analysis of Nationalists Vs Federalists Orientations." PhD diss., Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan, 2009, 99, <pr.hec.gov.pk/Chapters/308S-2.pdf>, accessed 24 April 2015.

²⁸ Although the centre ceded several powers to the provinces after 18th Amendment, Pakistan yet remains far away from national integration. Therefore, national integration is likely to take more time.

Thirdly, (ethnic) Punjabi majority in bureaucracy and armed forces have inevitably made it a tantamount to the centre for the non-Punjabis. And last, the leadership's failure in introducing flexible but more integrated federation through provision of constitutional powers to the provinces in all three constitutions has even disillusioned the supporters of the federation of Pakistan in Sindh and Baluchistan.

Financial problems, a decade-long war on terror and lack of foreign direct investment have also affected the course of national integration. Terrorist incidents and consequent transfer of capital to other countries has indirectly reduced affiliation with the state. Similarly, the rise of non-state actors in various parts of the country has led to ostensible interference of foreign intelligence agencies in the already turbulent provinces of KP and Baluchistan. In addition to obstructing new development projects, the insurgent movements have diverted the leadership's attention from important matters. Therefore, despite the presence of exploitable resources, Pakistan lags behind in almost every affair of life.

National integration of Pakistan and standpoint of AJ&K

Azad Jammu and Kashmir is a disputed territory which has been under the administration of Pakistan in accordance with the Resolutions of United Nations Security Council (UNSC), and United Nations Commission on India and Pakistan (UNCIP) and the Interim Constitution of AJ&K, 1974. It is enjoying the status of mere local authority without any international legal status. This territory was liberated by the local people with the help of the tribal people in October 1947 as a result of successful revolt against the Maharaja Hari Singh, the last ruler of the *Dogra* dynasty. As a result of successful revolt, nascent state of AJ&K with provisional government came into being on 24 October 1947. The population of AJ&K is almost 4.2 million and a great number of its State subjects are also settled abroad, particularly in the United Kingdom, thus the state having a very effective and sizeable diaspora.²⁹

AJ&K has been in a unique constitutional relationship with Pakistan right from the day of its inception. This constitutional relationship has greatly undermined and curtailed the empowerment of the people of AJ&K. It has kept them suffering under the controlled, constrained and compromised democracy. This situation of limited constitutional empowerment and lack of political development has had a worst impact on the overall socio-economic empowerment of the people

²⁹ Sardar Aftab Ahmad Khan, "Unlocking the Potential of the Kashmiri Diaspora in the 'Big' Society for Development and Just Peace", *Centre for Just Peace and Democracy*, 5, <<http://www.kdfajk.org/unlocking-the-potential-of-the-kashmiri-diaspora--sardar-aftab-khan.pdf>>, accessed 27 April 2015.

of AJ&K and has triggered a sense of deprivation and marginalization in the minds of the masses, which might turn counterproductive in future.

AJ&K is the part of the larger conflict of Jammu and Kashmir and both the states of India and Pakistan have entered into number of bilateral agreements as well as both are the parties to the Resolutions of UN on the conflict of Jammu and Kashmir. Thus, both the states have categorically accepted Jammu and Kashmir as a disputed territory. Being the part of erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir, AJ&K is also a disputed territory and like the people of Indian-Held Jammu and Kashmir, the people of AJ&K have also been demanding their inherent and inalienable right to self-determination under the auspices of the United Nations through a free, fair and impartial plebiscite. It is also pertinent to mention here that the Article 257 of the 1973 Constitution of Pakistan impliedly recognizes and fully supports the right to self-determination of the people of erstwhile State of Jammu and Kashmir including the people of AJ&K. It clearly explains the position of Pakistan that the decision of the accession of the Jammu and Kashmir will be decided in accordance with the wishes and aspirations of the people of Jammu and Kashmir (including the people of GB and the state of AJ&K). But until the implementation of the Resolutions of United Nations, the state of AJ&K needs some drastic constitutional and political reforms in order to pave the way for sustainable and effective socio-economic development in the region.

The existing constitutional framework of AJ&K has enforced a constrained, controlled and compromised democracy where the Islamabad is the key political player and the constitutional rights of the people are not fully guaranteed. The people of AJ&K have not been enjoying complete powers on all the subjects of legislation. The reprehensive legislative assembly of AJ&K enjoys limited legislative powers to the residuary subjects only and 52 subjects are expressly excluded from the cognizance of the Legislative Assembly of AJ&K under the provisions of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Interim Constitution Act, 1974.³⁰ It infers that the existing constitutional framework of AJ&K deprives the people of AJ&K to enjoy all the political, civil, economic, social and cultural rights to their full extent.³¹

The longstanding unresolved nature of the conflict of Jammu and Kashmir coupled with the lack of constitutional empowerment of the people of AJ&K has created a sense of deprivation, marginalization and acute frustration in the people of AJ&K generally and in the educated and

³⁰ See, Section 31 (2) (a) of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Interim Constitution Act, 1974.

³¹ CPDR-Centre for Peace, Development and Reform, "An Appraisal of Constitutional, Financial and Administrative Arrangements between the Governments of Pakistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir", (2011), 6, <http://cpdr.org.pk/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/2011_CPDR_Kashmir_Report.pdf>, accessed 21 April 2015.

ambitious youth of AJ&K particularly, due to the lack of economic opportunities, lack of rule of law and widespread corruption & maladministration without any institution of accountability.³² The situation becomes further aggravated in post 18th Amendment scenario in Pakistan where Constitution of Pakistan devolves most of the powers to the provinces and has created provincial autonomy, a landmark step for the empowerment of the people of all the provinces. But at the stark contrast of it, the people of AJ&K are not enjoying any empowerment and are at the mercy of the local political elite and cannot raise their voices for the political empowerment of the masses.

Azad Jammu and Kashmir has been facing a plethora of problems which have the tendency to drift away the sentiments and feelings of the people of Azad Jammu and Kashmir to the ideologies and having the harmful effects on the avenues of integration of this disputed state with Pakistan. There are two aspects of integration in the context of AJ&K: internal and external. As far as internal integration of AJ&K is concerned, it implies the peace, harmony and tranquillity among all the regions, sects, ethnic groups, races and political narratives within AJ&K.

On the other hand, the external perspective of the integration means the ideological and emotional attachment or sense of strong bonding and cohesion of the people of AJ&K with the State of Pakistan until its complete constitutional integration. It is very important that the territory which was liberated by the local inhabitants with the support of the Pakistani Tribal people and being indirectly controlled by Pakistan³³ should have the sense of ideological belonging and association with Pakistan. This will not only ensure the peace and security in the region but also strengthen the legal position of Pakistan on the longstanding issue of Jammu and Kashmir in the international arena particularly the United Nations.

This topic deserves comprehensive analysis as to what are the existing and potential threats weakening and undermining the ideological and emotional bonds of the people of AJ&K with the state of Pakistan? Following are the significant factors which have been weakening the pro-Pakistan political and social narrative of the people of AJ&K. These factors have also been encapsulating a tendency of effective socio-political movement based on ethno-regional nationalism for the constitutional rights, political empowerment and socio-economic development of this region.

³² Waqas Ali, "The Impact of Conflict on Young People in Azad Jammu and Kashmir," *CPDR*, (2012), 4.

³³ Christopher Snedden, *The Untold Story of the People of Azad Kashmir*, (C. Hurst & Co. Publishers: UK), 2012, 83.

AJ&K — identity crisis

The people of AJ&K have been undergoing through the phase of worst identity crisis. Though ethnically, regionally and religiously, they have the perception of their various identities yet when it comes to the political identity of AJ&K, their minds go in the state of numbness.³⁴ There are many people who think AJ&K as the province of Pakistan. But when they realize the fact that there is no representation of AJ&K in Parliament of Pakistan and other constitutional bodies like National Finance Commission (NFC), Council of Common Interest (CCI) etc., they undergo a psychological and emotional dilemma and a paradigm shift in respect of the political and legal perception about themselves and their statehood. On the other hand, there are many people who consider AJ&K as a separate state having some legal status under international law, but they also face a predicament when come to know that AJ&K has no legal capacity to make international relations. The United Nations Commission on India and Pakistan (UNCIP) has not recognized the Government of AJ&K and has termed it a local authority under the indirect control of Pakistan.

At this stage, we must keep it in view that regardless of the legal niceties of defining the territory, the identity of AJ&K should be viewed in a two-fold light: firstly, the territory has an affiliate status with the state of Pakistan (not as constituent unit); and secondly, it remains a part of the State of Jammu and Kashmir. Keeping this in view, it is important that until the exercise of right to self-determination by the Kashmiri people, the relationship between Islamabad and Muzaffarabad should be based on a stable footing. This should be Kashmiri commitment to the idea of Pakistan, in tandem with the full respect for and accommodation of Kashmiri identity.³⁵

The growing sense of “no identity” or “diluted identity” or “hybrid identity” has created an environment of mistrust, uncertainty and ideological breakdown in the society. This “no identity” mindset of the youth of AJ&K is more lethal and counterproductive for the integration of the AJ&K internally and externally with the protecting state of Pakistan. The educated youth of AJ&K has become frustrated due to the identity crisis coupled with the lack of economic opportunities and unemployment caused due to the flawed constitutional framework of AJ&K. The people want to keep their identity of being the inhabitants of Jammu and Kashmir intact until the final resolution of the conflict of Jammu and Kashmir. The identity crisis of the people of AJ&K has been gradually aggravating and

³⁴ Waqas Ali, “The Impact of Conflict on Young People in Azad Jammu and Kashmir,” *CPDR*, (2012), 4.

³⁵ *CPDR*, “An Appraisal of Constitutional, Financial and Administrative Arrangements,” (2011), 12.

the existing uncertain political situation of AJ&K is largely disliked by the public generally and the frustrated youth particularly.

Socio-economic problems

The other potential threat to the pro-Pakistan sentiments is the existing socio-economic conditions of AJ&K. The major factor in this context is the existing constitutional arrangements between the state of AJ&K and the Pakistan through AJ&K Interim Constitution Act, 1974. This Act provides 52 important subjects exclusively to the AJ&K Council. The council is a non-representative and undemocratic body where all the powers are vested with the Chairman. Since its inception, the AJ&K Council is solely overseeing the generation of taxes and revenues to run the affairs of State. This situation has led AJ&K to depend on the Prime Minister of Pakistan (*ex-officio* Chairman of AJ&K Council).³⁶ Due to this unfortunate situation, the socio-economic prosperity could not be attained in this disputed and landlocked region blessed with great natural and human resources. Furthermore, a number of reasons have contributed in economic deprivation of AJ&K including; lack of infrastructure and private sector employment, forest depletion, and proximity to the Line of Control (LoC). As a result, the most important sectors of AJ&K include exploitation of water and other natural resources, investment in industrial development, harnessing foreign remittances and the creation of employment opportunities remained stagnant.

The current measures have proved unsuccessful to improve the socio-economic situation of the people of AJ&K. The AJ&K Interim Constitution Act, 1974 divides the socio-economic empowerment of Azad Kashmir between AJ&K Council and AJ&K Government. The Government of AJ&K was entrusted the control over the subjects related to education, health, rural and inter-district road communication, electrification, provision of drinking water and population welfare. Interestingly the performance in these sectors is relatively better. For example the literacy rate in AJ&K is around 70%, it has the roads network of 12,000 km, and education enrolment ratio is 96%. However, the important sectors which were handed over to the AJ&K Council including telecommunication, tourism, hydro power generation, banking and finance, stock exchange and the exploration of minerals are completely stagnant. The foreign investment and assistance could be brought by the development of these sectors. These areas are neither developed by the Council nor by the Government of AJ&K is given the power to do it. As a result the state is facing poverty, prevalent unemployment, lower living standards and deprivation. An extraordinary twenty per cent collection charge on tax collection is charged by the AJ&K Council from AJ&K.³⁷ According to P&D

³⁶ Ibid., 15.

³⁷ Ibid.

(2013) it should not be more than 0.5% in any case.³⁸ In order to strengthen the socio-economic condition, it is necessary to focus on the sectors of tourism, hydro power generation, minerals, medicinal plants/herbs, agriculture and live stock keeping, cultural heritage (preservation and promotion) and human resource development.³⁹

All these important reforms would not only uplift the socio-economic conditions of the people of AJ&K but also overcome the panic, frustration and anti-Pakistan sentiments from the AJ&K which will eventually lead to integration and harmony both internally and externally.

Political empowerment

The real factor contributing towards the negative sentiments and ideological shift is the limited and controlled democracy. AJ&K is a disputed territory under the indirect administration of Pakistan. It is neither a province of Pakistan nor a separate state. In the light of the United Nations Resolutions and the AJ&K Interim Constitution Act, 1974, the state of AJ&K was given the nomenclature of "local authority". But perhaps, for all practical intents and purposes, the administrative setup of AJ&K resembles with the "municipality" or "district administration". If this situation is not be addressed by Pakistan and the current constitutional status changed within to a better constitutional document, the people of AJ&K can pose a threat to the integration and harmony in this disputed state region.

The erstwhile State of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K)'s present constitutional position is rooted in its particular history. Before 1947, it was an autonomous state under the suzerainty of the British Crown, with a Hindu Maharaja but a Muslim majority population. This suzerainty lapsed on 15 August 1947, when the British withdrew formal power from the subcontinent. Because the Maharaja prevaricated about whether to join India or Pakistan, tensions arose within and outside the State. A revolutionary government was set up in October 1947, which declared that the Maharaja's Government had been overthrown and replaced by an Azad Jammu and Kashmir Government as the *de jure* government of the State.⁴⁰ Muslim elements of the Maharaja's army rebelled and were joined by ex-army men and volunteers. Some parts of the State came under their *de facto* control. Subsequently, the official name adopted by this government was the "Azad Government of the State of Jammu and

³⁸ Government of AJ&K, "Azad Jammu & Kashmir, At A Glance," Planning & Development Department Muzaffarabad, (2013), <<http://pndAJ&K.gov.pk/Documents/AJ&K%20at%20a%20glance%202013%20final.pdf>>, accessed 3 May 2015.

³⁹ CPDR, "An Appraisal of Constitutional, Financial and Administrative Arrangements," (2011), 15.

⁴⁰ Christopher Snedden, *The Untold Story of the People of Azad Kashmir*, op.cit., 61.

Kashmir”.⁴¹ Thus the Azad Government is successor to the late Government of Jammu and Kashmir. The UNCIP laid down in its resolution of 13 August 1948 that the territory of AJ&K would be administered by the “local authorities” under the Commission’s scrutiny. This seems to be the reference point in the administrative setup established in Azad Jammu and Kashmir. Due to its disputed status, this territory could not be declared part of Pakistan. Moreover, the Government of Pakistan is not authorized by the Constitution of Pakistan to administer AJ&K as discussed above. Ministry of Kashmir Affairs (MKA)’s actions were autocratic and military rule, apart from devolving the Presidential system of 1970 (in AJ&K), has generally disempowered Azad Jammu & Kashmir.

Ever since AJ&K came into being in 1947, the Government of Pakistan has always had a strong presence in AJ&K. It controls defence, security, currency, and foreign relations. Pakistan still controls AJ&K through two devices: the AJ&K council and importantly the five lent officers that Islamabad continues to embed in the AJ&K administration. These lent officers act as Chief Secretary, Finance Secretary, Accountant General, Inspector General Police, and Development Commissioner. Between them, they control the most important aspects of AJ&K’s financial, bureaucratic, and law and order agenda. The lent officer’s institution is evidence of the actual power that Pakistan continues to exercise in AJ&K.⁴²

The parliamentary form of government was introduced, when AJ&K Interim Constitution Act, 1974 was enacted by the elected Legislative Assembly after repealing Act of 1970. This replacement was approved by the Government of Pakistan, which later on resulted in the creation of new legislative body with the name of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Council, headed by the Prime Minister of Pakistan. The section 21 of the AJ&K Interim Constitution Act, 1974, states that the Chairman of the AJ&K Council shall only be the Prime Minister or Chief Executive of Pakistan.⁴³In addition to this, AJ&K Council was given greater control over finances of AJ&K as income tax and some other taxes were transferred to it. Hence the executive powers were virtually transferred to the Government of Pakistan and AJ&K is, therefore, left with little autonomy or status.⁴⁴ There is no effective role of the elected members of the AJ&K Council in the decision-making. The Chairman being not an elected representative is not answerable to any of the elected body of AJ&K in respect of affairs of AJ&K. The situation in the setup at Muzaffarabad is opposite to this where an elected cabinet is vested with the executive

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² CPDR, “An Appraisal...,” op.cit., 2.

⁴³ See for detail, Section 21 (2) of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Interim Constitution Act, 1974.

⁴⁴ CPDR, “An Appraisal...,” op.cit., 15.

authority and this cabinet is answerable to the people of AJ&K and the Assembly. In the present era, this is not consistent with the norms of a democratic polity. The situation, therefore, leads towards the denial of the political rights of the people of AJ&K. The body of Council makes the people to entitle it as the council totally in favour of the Government of Pakistan. It is by no means the representative. Thus there is a very insignificant role of the elected representatives in legislation on the subjects vested in the AJ&K Council, and levying taxes.

The political rights of the people of AJ&K are being denied by assigning all the controls on subjects to the AJ&K Council as it has marginalized the powers of AJ&K Government over the affairs of the area. Moreover, the 12 seats of the Refugees of Jammu and Kashmir settled in Pakistan, ineffective Judiciary and Election Commission, controlled Accountability Bureau, and interference of Federal Ministry of Kashmir Affairs in the day-to-day activities of the Government of AJ&K has further lowered the status and governance of the Government. Thus in order to address the grievances of the people of AJ&K and to make the region peaceful and in harmony with the established national interests of the state of Pakistan, it is *sine quo non* to bring political empowerment through drastic constitutional reforms in this region.

Ethno-regional nationalism

Another significant factor causing great threat to the national integration and harmony is the growing ethnic nationalism in the state of AJ&K. The major causes of this movement is the stringent constitutional measures of state of Pakistan in AJ&K which deprives the people from social, political, cultural, economic and social rights and reduced the status of the state to a powerless and impotent state without any constitutional empowerment and socio-economic development. The identity crisis is also one of the causes of this growing ethno-regional nationalism which gives a *de facto* status to the people of AJ&K in the light of the glorious history of Jammu and Kashmir. In order to bring these dissidents back on the track of integration, the effective strategy is to give maximum political empowerment in the state and to ensure socio-economic development.

Linguistic and ethnic division in AJ&K

Ethnicity and Race are two intersected but different aspects in our society. They both have significant impact on the process of national integration in Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

In AJ&K we have refined norms and social relationships with respect to racial groups. So far the ethnicity of the people living in the state of Azad Kashmir has not been ascertained by any census.⁴⁵ According to

⁴⁵ Sardar Aftab Khan, "Understanding Politics in Azad Kashmir: The Role of Racial and Ethnic Identities," 1, <<https://www.academia.edu/1476497/> Understanding_

Snedden (2012) *Gujjars* are the largest group among them. Rajputs who are spread across the region and *Sudhans* mostly settled in Bagh District and Rawalakot are regarded as the influential ethnic groups in AJ&K.⁴⁶ These racial identities are generally accepted classifications of our diverse society and possibly to some extent are the basis of discrimination and racism in the society.

These norms have not only influenced largely on family relationships matters but also have great influence on concerns related to cohesion in the community. According to Khan (2012), in AJ&K, ethnicity along with race has been a source of manipulation by the political leaders to protect their maladministration. Khan further adds that political loyalties have far stronger influence on the basis of districts rather than racial identities where sharing resources or political positions of power matters.⁴⁷

The situation becomes more complicated as the different ethnic groups often speak different languages and exhibit fidelity to their own linguistic tradition. The people of AJ&K speak two dozen indigenous languages by virtue of their multi-ethnic society.⁴⁸

The remarkable linguistic diversity in AJ&K is highlighted in the following table:

Table 1:
Percentages of major languages spoken in the State of Azad Jammu & Kashmir⁴⁹

S No.	District	Population	Kashmiri	Dogri	Pahari	Gojri	Shina	Others	Among Others
1	Bagh	255,000	2%		94%	3%		1%	
2	Haveli	138,000	5%		64%	30%		1%	
3	Bhimber	302,000		30%	30%	5%		35%	Punjabi
4	Kotli	563,000			63%	35%		2%	
5	Mirpur	334,000			85%	10%		5%	
6	Muzaffarabad	350,000	15%		49%	35%		1%	
7	Neelum	171,000	20%		63%	10%	5%	2%	Kundal Shahi
8	Hatian	225,000	15%		48%	35%		2%	
9	Poonch	411,000			94%	5%		1%	
10	Sudhnoti	224,000			95%	4%		1%	
	Total	2,973,000	5.7%	3%	66.7%	17.2%	0.5%	5.1	

Politics_in_Azad_Kashmir_-_The_Role_of_Racial_and_Ethnic_Identities>, accessed 28 April 2015.

⁴⁶ Christopher Snedden, *The Untold Story...*, op.cit., 131.

⁴⁷ Sardar Aftab Khan, "Understanding Politics in Azad Kashmir: The Role of Racial and Ethnic Identities," op.cit..

⁴⁸ Mohsin Shakil, "Languages of Erstwhile State of Jammu Kashmir: A Preliminary Study," University of Azad Jammu Kashmir, (2012), 2,<https://www.academia.edu/6485567/Languages_of_Erstwhile_State_of_Jammu_Kashmir_A_Preliminary_Study>, accessed 27 April 2015.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 10.

Gujri accounts for the second largest group of speakers. It is spoken by the *Gujar* and *Bakerwal*⁵⁰ rustic population. *Pahari* dominates in Azad Jammu & Kashmir, 66.7% of population speak *Pahari*, 5.7% Kashmiri, 17.2% speak *Gujri*, 0.5% speak *Shina* and 4.9% of the population of AJ&K speak other languages.⁵¹ This linguistic diversity thus leads to a low level national integration. Urdu, the official but non-ethnic language has over the year become the *de facto* dominant working language in the state. It is the language used for all formal official tasks and it is the only language that is taught in all schools at all levels.

The linguistic differences strengthened the problem of national integration which resulted in unrests and riots in most parts of the country that in the long run cost us the separation of our Eastern wing.⁵² In this globalised world where homogenization is ruling and needs are persistently changing, the implementation of multilingual policy remains an enormous challenge. But with the belief of Education for All (EFA) movement in mind, it is important to accommodate minority languages. It is, therefore, needed to reflect and provide a comprehensive national language policy.

Various study show that in AJ&K the conflict often occurs over the relative status of the regional languages. None of the two dozen regional languages has been declared even as a national language. It is argued that unsophisticated disposition can suppress the feeling of national integration. Diversity, either linguistic or cultural, is an obstacle in the way of national integration when a proper way out is not sorted out in order to create unity in diversity.

Language unites people. But how could this be possible in a multi-lingual population? Ethnic and lingual divide increases prevailing internal conflicts.

In every nation, there is always a demand for a national language. The acknowledgment of regional language as a national language would enrich its importance. It will grow a sense of ownership and fidelity at national level and it could also serve as an important tool for developing national harmony. Neglecting indigenous languages can be a risk for societal cohesion.

⁵⁰ Gipsy like tribes in AJ&K and the other parts of J&K who carry with them sheep, goats and other animals in a large number during their travel.

⁵¹ Mohsin Shakil, "Languages of Erstwhile State of Jammu Kashmir: A Preliminary Study," *op.cit.* 10.,

⁵² Rehana Saeed Hashmi, "Ethnic Politics: An Issue to National Integration (The Case of Pakistan)," *South Asian Studies* 29, (2014): 354.

Impact of Jammu & Kashmir conflict on people of AJ&K

The conflict of Jammu and Kashmir also has badly affected the people of AJ&K and has engendered a sense of hopelessness and pessimism in them. They have realized that one of the reasons for their worst socio-economic conditions and bad constitutional status is their direct link with the conflict of Jammu and Kashmir which has imprisoned their all spheres of life and has been depriving their constitutional rights since the inception of the state of AJ&K. It is perceived from the existing literature that this psychological and emotional impact of the conflict is also a major impediment in the way of integration, cohesion and harmony in AJ&K viz-à-viz Pakistan. The state of Pakistan has to give them confidence, trust and empowerment so that they can get rid of the shadows of disappointment and pessimism influencing them and become a catalyst for the integration.

The long-standing and intractable conflict of Jammu and Kashmir between Pakistan and India is of great importance for the people of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJ&K). The costs of this deep-rooted conflict have become increasingly unbearable for Pakistan and India generally and for the people of the erstwhile state of Jammu & Kashmir particularly. Conflict, socio-economic and political developments are undisputedly interwoven.

AJ&K's development has been greatly affected by this conflict, resulting in persistent socio-economic deprivations and denial of political rights. Although most young people in AJ&K are civically engaged and aware of their basic rights and duties, yet as per the research, conducted by CPDR (2012) on youth, informs that they believe they do not enjoy the constitutional rights which citizens of a state should have.⁵³

Existing mechanism in AJ&K for national integration

Though there is no effective mechanism present in AJ&K to cope with the problems related to integration highlighted above, yet a few strategies to cater these issues are as follows:

Societal players

There are number of factors contributing to the controlling of the problems in the society pertaining to integration. The most important role is played by the political parties of AJ&K. It includes both the state-based and Pakistan-based political parties. It is merely observed that the spill over of Pakistan-based political parties in AJ&K have tendency to strengthen and mend the behaviour of the people towards the integration

⁵³ CPDR, "The Impact of Conflict on Young People in Azad Jammu and Kashmir, (2011)," 4.

with Pakistan. It may be argued that a greater vibe of NGOs acting in the territory of AJ&K particularly in the post-earthquake 2005 scenario has also played its role in harmonizing the weakened and deteriorated cultural and social ties among the marginalized and downtrodden population of AJ&K. Thus the resultant socio-economic development in the region coupled with the intellectual input provided by the pro-Pakistan think tanks, builds new emotional and ideological linkages with Pakistan. Moreover, the print, electronic and social media are also the important tools in creating cohesion which is already prevailed in the society due to social institutions like family, *biradari*⁵⁴ and the numerous religious seminaries/private schools systems being governed and observed by federally constituted boards. The strong cultural ties of the people of AJ&K developed towards the Pakistan due to the Pakistani heroes in all walks of life like sports, politics, TV drama etc is also an important driving factor for the integration.

Governmental arrangements

There are a number of state institutions like police and others departments which are playing their effective role in strengthening the values of integration in the state. The institutions of higher education at public sector and the mechanism of electoral process, though weak and semi-democratic, yet continuous, have also knotted the people of AJ&K with ideological bond with the state of Pakistan. Like the civil administration of AJ&K, the institutions of Armed Forces and security organizations are also promoting the environment of peace, harmony and cohesion in the state of AJ&K.

Similarities between Aj&K and other regions of Pakistan

It can be asserted that AJ&K has followed assimilation⁵⁵ policy of national integration. AJ&K has adopted Urdu as its official language. Besides this, dress code of senior state representatives is reflection of national culture that is *Shalwar Kameez*. Language based heterogeneity in Pakistan is observable in every province and federating unit. The common aspect is religion which is Islam followed by 98% of the people in Pakistan. When the lingual force became stronger than religion, it is capable to divide Pakistani nation into diverse ethnic nations.

In the history of Pakistan, language and religion are evident as two important features in the formation and deformation of nationhood. Before partition religion served first as a tool to segregate Muslims from Hindus and second as an organizing factor for Muslim community and for

⁵⁴ *Biradari* is a word of Urdu language which is equivalent to English word "Tribe".

⁵⁵ Assimilation model is based on social integration. Distinctive cultures are tried to incorporate fully with the national culture through the policy of assimilation.

the creation of their ideology. In all four provinces of Pakistan, Fata and AJ&K a common factor that energizes the nationhood is faith. If socio-political interest and religion are not the same direction forces, their clash can diminish the strength of nationhood. We have learned from history in the case of the East Pakistan (Bangladesh), where increase in the feeling of neglect, lack of political empowerment and poor social status decreased the strength of common religion as a binding force, and finally nationhood collapsed between East and West Pakistan.

Creating Urdu as state language may cause a threat to local languages. That is why Quid-i-Azam created a space for Urdu language under the umbrella of religion in the following piece of his speech delivered at Dhaka University:

The State language, therefore, must obviously be Urdu, a language that has been nurtured by a hundred million Muslims of the subcontinent, a language which, more than any other provincial language embodies the best that is in Islamic culture and Muslim tradition, and is nearest to the language used in other Islamic Countries (Jinnah, March 24, 1948).⁵⁶

In case of AJ&K, political and economic empowerment is even more important because high education and literacy rate have made people more demanding. Lack of economic opportunities in the region has send masses to foreign countries. A huge number of Pakistan diaspora communities in United Kingdom are from AJ&K. Lack of airport services in the region and cellular mobile service (in Neelum Valley only) are good examples about economic neglect. The study shows that AJ&K has the highest literacy rate in Pakistan, particularly female literacy. This leads to another serious economic problem in the region that is unemployment. Now, AJ&K and IHK people are visiting each other's place by availing bus service. When economic development is compared with people of AJ&K, this leads to serious threat to nation disintegration.

The executive function of state is governed by Azad Jammu & Kashmir Council under the AJ&K Interim Constitution Act of 1974. The subjects falling under the AJ&K Council's responsibility include electricity & hydro power generation, tourism, population planning, banking, insurance, stock exchange and future markets, trading corporations, telecommunication, planning for economic coordination, highways, miners, oil and gas, development of industries, newspapers etc. The major sources of income of the AJ&K government, i.e. income tax and some other taxes were transferred to the AJ&K Council, giving it greater control over AJ&K's finances.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Rehana Saeed Hashmi, "Ethnic Politics: An Issue to National Integration (The Case of Pakistan)." op.cit.

⁵⁷ CPDR, An Appraisal of Constitutional, Financial and Administrative Arrangements, 2011, 3, <http://cpdr.org.pk/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/2011_CPDR_Kashmir_Report.pdf>, accessed 25 April 2015.

Table 2
Similar Issues of AJ&K and Other Regions of Pakistan⁵⁸

Region	Language Groups	Issue	Presence in AJ&K
Punjab	Punjabi & Saraiki	Resentment against Punjabi dominance	×
Sindh	Urdu & Sindhi	Lack of representation in bureaucracy	×
Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa	Pashto & Hindko	New province movement on the basis of language	×
Baluchistan	Balochi	Royalty of natural resources, underdevelopment	√
Gilgit-Baltistan (GB)	Shina & Balti	Political empowerment, disputed status (identity crisis)	√

The above table demonstrates that unfortunately a few issues are common with other underdeveloped regions of Pakistan. However, AJ&K is free from the issues based on dominance of any community, contradiction for public representation against the norm of national integration.

Conclusion

The national integration merely depends upon the socio-economic development and political empowerment in a centre-unit relationship of a country. History of the world generally and Pakistan specifically tells us that the unequal distribution of resources and discriminatory behaviour in political administration disintegrate societies. The people of Jammu and Kashmir had strong emotional attachments with the creation and ideology of Pakistan which with the passage of time is weakening. The disputed status of AJ&K and political and economic deprivations are alarming factors against existing integration and harmonized relations with Pakistan. The status of the people of AJ&K have been facing a worst identity crisis and ideological shift which might drift away the emotional attachment of the masses and resultantly yield harmful effects for integration with Pakistan. To attain the national integration, cohesion and harmony of AJ&K, it is essential to introduce constitutional reforms in AJ&K. This will not only bring political empowerment in AJ&K but also strengthen the democratic institutions and result in the socio-economic development, welfare of the people and a strong rebuild in affiliation with Pakistan.

Policy recommendations

In order to create national integration, the state of Pakistan must emphasise the following important considerations:

⁵⁸ Issues are found from the survey of existing literature most of it is referred here in this document.

- It is necessary that Constitutional reforms should be introduced in AJ&K in order to ensure political empowerment of the people of AJ&K. In this context, the powers of the non-representative and undemocratic body of AJ&K council should be reduced so that the maximum powers could be devolved to the people of AJ&K in the light of the principle of 18th Amendment of Pakistan.
- It is also important to keep intact the identity of the state and its local political parties in order to strengthen the stance of Pakistan on the conflict of Jammu and Kashmir internationally. Besides, any action from the state of Pakistan to integrate AJ&K or GB as the province of the federation would have repercussions on the said issue.
- The Federation of Pakistan is suggested to devise a policy to distribute the appropriate proportion of the revenue of the natural resources for the development of the indigenous population. For instance, the share of hydal profit and water use charges for the state of AJ&K should be enhanced.
- The state specific industrial development must be inculcated in the highly potential region of AJ&K i.e. tourism, small industries, handicrafts and cottage industry etc.
- It will also be very effective to promote national integration by establishing the Policy Research Institute at state level under the parasol of the Government of AJ&K and Academic Institutions.

Since both the regions of AJ&K and GB are the part of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir and also the part of the larger conflict, therefore, it is also suggested to take immediate measures to bridge the gap between these two regions. In this regard, a joint upper house for both the regions can be established to bring the people of both the regions on equal footings and reviving their socio-economic and cultural ties with the aim of ensuring integration, cohesion and lasting harmony. Last but not the least, it would be of great significance to promote and foster the Pakistani national values and interests in the region of AJ&K to harmonize the emerging contradictory and disintegrating factors in the state.

