

The Making of the Centralization Process in the Early Years of Pakistan: An Appraisal

Mohammad Waheeduzzaman Manik*

Abstract: Given the pluralistic nature of Pakistan society, a genuine federal form of government would have nurtured and cemented the national integration between people of diverse regions and cultures of Pakistan. Instead of recognizing geographic, ethnic and linguistic diversities of various distinct cultural regions, the Central Government had made the determination to impose “uniformity” through the use of various nefarious policies and devious instruments of centralization. The provincial Governments were dwarfed and clobbered by the Central Government of Pakistan. The subsequent regimes had essentially continued to employ the instruments of centralization. The purpose of this article is to assess the nature, the extent and the process of centralization and the pattern of interaction between the Center and Provinces. The failure of national integration in Pakistan was an epic failure of the centralizing features of the governance structures of the new nation of Pakistan. The relevance of such a reappraisal is more poignant in an era when the history of the making of Bangladesh’s long struggle for freedom and independence from the ignominious colonial domination of Pakistan is being systematically distorted and marginalized.

Keywords: Centralization Process, National Integration, authoritarian modes of governance and Colonial Legacy.

Introduction

Given the fact that the weaker provincial governments were tightly controlled, monitored, and maneuvered by the stronger Central Government of Pakistan, it is quite relevant to appraise the nature of the structural relationship that had existed between the levels of Governments in the formative years of Pakistan. The poignancy of such a reappraisal is more evident in an era when the history of the making of Bangladesh’s long struggle for freedom and independence from the ignominious colonial domination of Pakistan is being systematically distorted and marginalized. The recapitulation of Pakistan’s free-hand experimentation of unlimited centralizing features will also demonstrate to the younger generations of both Bangladesh and Pakistan that the political history of the formative years of Pakistan had been replete with anti-democratic and authoritarian modes of governance.

The main purpose of this paper is to assess the nature, the extent and the process of centralization and the pattern of interaction between the Center and Provinces in Pakistan. Although the relationship between the stronger Central Government of Pakistan and the weaker regional governments during the period from 1947 through early 1956 is the main focus of this article, some generalizations will be made on the pattern of interaction between the central and provincial governments beyond early 1956. However, the salient features

* Professor Dr. Mohammad Waheeduzzaman (Manik), Department of Political Science & Public Management, Austin Peay State University (APSU), Clarksville, Tennessee, USA.

of the 1956 and 1962 Constitutions of Pakistan have not been brought within the parameters of this article. In other words, no attempt has been made to appraise the centralizing features of the abrogated 1956 Constitution and the debunked the tailor-made 1962 Constitution.

Pakistan: A Test Case of a Centralized form of Government

The emergence of Pakistan as an independent nation-state on August 14, 1947 was one of most spectacular events of the twentieth century. Pakistan was a divided nation-state both geographically and culturally, and this new nation had remained divided into two wings— East Pakistan and West Pakistan—separated from each other by at least one thousand miles of hostile Indian territory. Doubtless, Islam was the common denominator of both wings of this new nation of Pakistan. Yet, the social and cultural differences between East Pakistan and West Pakistan were fundamental in nature.

Ethnically and linguistically, there were profound dissimilarities than similarities between the people of two wings. Even the dietary, demography and topography of East Pakistan were at sharp variance with that of West Pakistan. Apart from profound differences between East and West Pakistan, there were linguistic, cultural and regional differences within the provinces and the various territories that constituted the Western part of Pakistan. For example, before the amalgamation of all of the provinces of the Western wing of Pakistan, princely states, tribal areas and federal territories into a single province of “West Pakistan” through the enactment of the so-called “One-Unit scheme” in 1955, West Punjab, Sind, and the North West Frontier Province were the original provinces. There were also princely states of Bahawalpur, Khairpur, and Baluchistan. Some tribal areas in North-West Frontier Province and Baluchistan were reserved to the Central Government of Pakistan. Karachi, the Capital of Pakistan, was also kept under the jurisdiction of the Central Government.

In his seminal work titled *Pakistan: A Political Study*, Keith Callard had observed: “Before West Pakistan was consolidated into a single political and administrative entity [in 1955], Pakistan consisted of a complex array of units of government. In the east, East Bengal formed a single province. The position in the west was more complicated; there were three Governors’ provinces, (West) Punjab, Sind and the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP), as well as (British) Beluchistan, the Baluchistan States (Khalat, Las Bela, Makran and Kharan which were grouped together as the Baluchistan States Union), the North-West Frontier States (Dir, Amb, Swat and Chitral), the frontier tribal areas, the federal capital area of Karachi and the princely states of Khairpur and Bhawalpur.. ----- Pakistan also laid claim to

the states of Junagadh and Kashmir, but of these only a sparsely populated portions of Kashmir was under actual Pakistan control” (Callard, 1957, p. 155),

Although the western wing of Pakistan was geographically compact and contiguous, there were distinct cultural, ethnic and linguistic variations within those areas that constituted West Pakistan. For instance, each of those four territories had its own native language: Punjabi in West Punjab, Pushto in NWFP, Sindhi in Sindh, and Beluchi in Beluchistan. In his book, *Constitutional Development in Pakistan* G.W. Choudhury had observed that soon after the emergence of Pakistan, the “provincial regional feelings began to manifest themselves. East Pakistanis felt that they did not have a fair and adequate share in the central government and administration. They felt that they had been neglected and were dominated by the West. This gave birth to the feelings of regionalism in East Pakistan, while provincialism was making equal headway in West Pakistan. The consequence has been that in Pakistan politics, issues have often been judged not on national considerations but on the basis of provincial interests. National unity and national feelings have been considerably damaged and there lies the root cause of the difficulty in a basis for representation in the legislature for the future constitution. Each unit feared the domination of the other, and consequently the framers of the constitution had to evolve the formula of a government based on regional parity” (Choudhury, 1969, p. 78).

Roots of Centralization Process in Pakistan

Given the pluralistic nature of Pakistan society, a genuine federal form of government would have cemented the national integration between people of diverse regions and cultures of Pakistan. Instead of recognizing geographic, ethnic and linguistic diversities of various distinct cultural regions, the Central Government of Pakistan elected to impose “uniformity” through the use of various policies and instruments of centralization. In other words, the Provincial Governments were dwarfed by the Central Government. For instance, the unlimited powers of the Office of the Governor General of Pakistan, Emergency Powers, Offices of the Provincial Governor, Public and Representative Offices Disqualification Act (PRODA), and Section 92A and Governor’s rule of the Indian Independence Act (section 92A was incorporated as Article 193 in the 1956 Constitution of Pakistan) were the salient instruments of centralization process in the early years of Pakistan.

Pursuant to Section 8 of the Indian Independence Act, 1947, the Government of India Act, 1935, with necessary and proper adaptations, was to be employed as the Interim Constitution of Pakistan. Although 1935 Act of India had a semblance of a Federal system, the Governor General of British-India had retained methods and

procedures for controlling and monitoring the governments of Provinces. However, most of the Indian provinces including Bengal from 1937 till independence in August 1947 had gained some degree of self-governance. Therefore, it was reasonably expected that Pakistan would have genuine Federal Governmental structure in which the constituent units and provinces would be granted provincial autonomy. Yet, after Pakistan emerged as an independent nation-state, the provinces had lost out to the Central Government whatever rudimentary form of self-rule they had enjoyed under the British from 1937 through August 14, 1947.

Of all the salient provisions of the 1935 Act of India, the 7th Schedule distributed three types of subjects to various levels of Government: a. The Federal List (59 items); b. The Provincial List (55 items); and c. the Concurrent List (36 items). The Provincial Governments that were formed after the passage of 1935 Act of India had more flexibility in dealing with the matters specifically enumerated for the provinces. The provinces also had authority to have jurisdiction over concurrent powers provided the provincial actions were not in conflict with the Central Government. In case of any conflict between the Center and Province over the Concurrent subjects, the Central authority would take precedence over the province. Could the Central Government legislate on the subjects listed under the Provincial List? The answer is in the affirmative. According to Section 102 of the 1935 India Act, the Center could act upon or legislate on the items enumerated under the provincial list through a “Proclamation of Emergency by the Governor General.”

In his book, *Pakistan: Its People, Its Society and Its Culture*, Donald N. Wilbur pointed out: “The federal government for which the 1935 Act provided was never brought into existence during British rule, but the provisions for it became the basis for the Federal government of Pakistan. Although the provinces elected their legislatures and were responsible for such functions as health, education, police, land revenue, and local government, the 1935 act gave a variety of controls over the provinces to the federal government, and similar controls—particularly emergency controls—appear to have become an established feature of Pakistan’s system” (Wilbur, 1964, pp. 235-236).

After independence, at the behest of M.A. Jinnah, first Governor General of Pakistan, and later by his successors, the scope of the 7th Schedule and Section 102 of 1935 Act of India was enlarged. First, many Enumerated Provincial functions were added to the Central List. Second, the Central Government took away some of traditional Provincial sources of Revenues (Sales tax, Income Tax and Customs Duties). In his quest for authoritarian and centralized modes of Governance, Mohammad Ali

Jinnah had tailored the 1935 Act of India for the purpose of concentrating powers in the Central Government of Pakistan. Instead of modifying or adapting to the unique needs and priorities of the constituent units or provinces of the new nation, centralizing features of the 1935 Act of India were replenished in the subsequent years by the ruling elite of Pakistan.

Incorporation of Infamous Section 92A and the Governor's Rule

Based on even a fortuitous review of writings on the early years of Pakistan by celebrated writers (Callard, Wilbur, and Sayed, for examples), it is entirely possible to observe that there is no doubt that the Governor General in British-India under the 1935 Act of India had enormous controlling powers over the Provincial Governments. Yet, at the behest of M.A. Jinnah, the powers and authorities of the Governor General vis-à-vis Provincial Governments were enormously expanded by the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan through the passage of Section 92A, and in fact, this provision had conferred unlimited powers upon the Office of the Governor General of Pakistan.

The expansive scope of Pakistan's Governor General's powers over provincial authorities could be gauged from the following provisions of Section 92A (reference: The Pakistan Provisional Constitution Order (Third Amendment), 1948 under Section 92A): "If any time the Governor General is satisfied that a grave emergency exists whereby the peace or security of Pakistan or any part thereof is threatened, or that a situation has arisen in which the Government of a province cannot be carried on in accordance with the provisions of this Act, he may by proclamation direct the Governor of a province to assume on behalf of the Governor General all or any of the powers vested in or exercisable by any provincial body or authority; any such proclamation may contain such incidental and consequential provisions as may appear to the Governor-General to be necessary or desirable for giving effect to the objects of the proclamation including provisions for suspending in whole or in part the operation of any provisions of this Act relating to any provincial body or authority. Provided that nothing in this sub-section shall authorise the Governor-General to direct the suspension of any of the powers vested in or exercisable by a High Court, or to suspend either in whole or in part the operation of any provisions of this Act relating to High Courts".

In his book titled *The Civil Service of Pakistan: Bureaucracy in a New Nation* Henry Frank Goodnow pointed out that the Governor General of Pakistan had substantial control over the Provincial Governments: "Undoubtedly the most important element of the Governor General's power was his ability to control—or

at least suppress – the governments of the provinces by appointing and dismissing provincial governors. These governors could appoint and dismiss the provincial ministers and summon or prorogue a provincial assembly. When the assembly was not in session, the Governor could promulgate ordinances. Such ordinances, however, expired six weeks after the legislature reconvened. Although a provincial governor was required to appoint a chief minister who had the support of the provincial assembly, he [the Governor] could dispense with both the assembly and its cabinet if he had the cooperation of the Governor General. The Governor-General, the governor of the province, and the [Central] civil servants then ruled the province as they saw fit, subject only to the moderating influence of the courts if they went beyond their authorized powers. This state of affairs was referred to as Governor's Rule" (Goodnow, 1964, p. 60).

In his seminal book, *Pakistan: A Political Study*, Keith Callard pointed out that the British Government had used "greater degree of centralization" in India during the second World War and the years following the war. As noted by Keith Callard: the "Provincial leaders hoped that this trend (the centralization process) would be reversed after independence (in August, 1947), but in fact the degree of central control was increased. Its (section 92A) most spectacular application was in the political sphere. Powers existed under Section 93 of the Government of India Act (1935) for a provincial Governor, on behalf of the centre, to take over the administration of a province if the normal constitutional machinery had broken down. This power, with its undemocratic implications, was removed by the Pakistan Provisional Constitution Order (1947). However, Mr. Jinnah, acting under the extraordinary powers of the Independent Act, inserted a new section (92A) into the Act. This section (section 92A) Similar gave to the Governor-General in case of emergency, power to direct the Governor of a Province to assume on behalf of the Governor-General all or any of the powers vested in or exercisable by any provincial body or authority (excluding the High Court)" (Callard, 1957, pp. 159-160).

M. A. Jannah's quest for unlimited centralizing powers can also be gauged from the following observations of both Callard and Sayeed. Keith Callard underscored that the section 93 of 1935 Act was widely used by the Governor General of British India during the war years. However, the section 93 "was clearly an exceptional measure designed to deal with cases where a provincial ministry was unwilling to accept the implications of British rule. Section 92A, on the other hand, became a normal part of the working of federal political relations between the centre and the provinces" (Callard, 1957, p. 160). In his seminal book, *Pakistan: The Formative Phase, 1857-1948*, Khalid Bin Sayeed observed: "On 16 July 1948, by the Pakistan Provisional

Constitution (Third Amendment) Order, 1948, the Quaid-I-Azam inserted Section 92A in the Government of India Act, 1935. By this Governor General could direct the Governor of a Province to suspend the normal constitutional machinery in that Province on the plea that a grave emergency existed which meant the Government of that Province could not be carried on in accordance with the provisions of that act. All these instruments of Central control had been there in the armoury of the British Government of India. Pakistan, as a successor Government, was carrying on these traditions. Pakistan's neighbour, India was also working on the same model. Thus, Pakistan was not unique in possessing and exercising such powers. What was extraordinary was the location of these powers. In other countries, these powers were exercised by the Central cabinet which responsible to Parliament. But in Pakistan, neither were the circumstances normal nor could its Governor-General (Jinnah) be described as a constitutional figurehead. He was not only the successor of the powerful Viceroy but also the Quaid-I-Azam of Pakistan. The author [Khalid Bin Sayeed] has been told that the Cabinet by a resolution had authorized him to exercise all these powers on its behalf. He could overrule the Cabinet. He had, again by a Cabinet resolution, direct access to all the Secretaries and all the files" (Sayeed, 1968, pp. 258-259).

The Central Government of Pakistan from the days of M.A. Jinnah had ruthlessly used the powers of Governor General's office for dislodging or controlling the provincial governments. It seems that the first Governor General was intolerant to any form of criticisms of his policies and ploys. All forms of disagreement or dissenting views from the provinces or other Federal jurisdictions were thwarted with iron fist. From the beginning of independence, all strategies, tactics, laws, rules, and procedures were employed the Central Government for controlling and clobbering the provincial ministries. For instance, M.A. Jinnah had dismantled the pro-Congress Ministry of Dr. Khan Sahib in NWFP on August 22, 1947 for quickly installing a Muslim League Government even though the dismissed Chief Minister was enjoying majority support both in inside and outside the Provincial Assembly. False and frivolous charges of "conspiracy" against Pakistan were brought against the Chief Minister even though the British Governor of that province had clearly vouched that Dr. Khan Shahib was not at all disloyal to Pakistan. Above all, Abdul Gaffar Khan, the dismissed Chief Minister's younger brother, was arrested in June 1948 for allegedly instigating masses and "conspiring" against the Government of Pakistan, and he was imprisoned for six years. Yet both Dr. Khan Sahib and his younger brother Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan, on a matter of principle, were not willing to be on their knees in front of Quaid-I-Azam or his successors.

Mohammad Ayub Khuhro, the Chief Minister of Sind, was also summarily dismissed on April 26, 1948 on the charges of corruption, favoritism, nepotism, embezzlement and misconduct. There is no doubt that some of those charges against the Chief Minister of Sind had some merits. Yet, the main reason for Ayub Khuhro's immediate removal from the office was his "opposition" to M.A. Jinnah's plan for separating the city of Karachi from the province of Sind.

Ayub Khuhro's dismissal was followed by more dismissals of Ministries in Sind between 1948-'54. There is no doubt that Ayub Khuro's disgraceful removal from the coveted political position was a setback and a humiliating experience for him. Yet he had proved in later years, beyond any reasonable doubt, that he had mastered the art of surviving and thriving in those early years of Pakistan's politics of conspiracy and conflict.

Although Khan of Mamdot, first Chief Minister of West Punjab, was not fired by M.A. Jinnah, his administration was sternly reprimanded by the Governor General. Khan of Mamdot was accused of inefficiency in the administration of refugee problems. However, Khan of Mamdot's duly elected Ministry of West Punjab was most ignominiously dismissed later in early 1949 on flimsy ground at the behest of Liaquat Ali Khan, the powerful Prime Minister of Pakistan. The real reason of Khan of Mamdot's unfair dismissal in January 1949 was that the Chief Minister's blunt opinions on refugee issues were at sharp variance with that of the Prime Minister of Pakistan. As noted by Keith Callard that Section 92A was invoked in West Punjab by the Central Government. On the advice of the then Governor General of Pakistan (Khwaja Nazimuddin), Sir Francis Mudie, (British) Governor of West Punjab had dismissed the Ministry of Khan of Mamdot, the Provincial Assembly was dissolved, the Governor's rule was imposed in January 1949 and continued till April 1951 (Callard, 1957, p. 160). Donald Wilbur also confirmed about the belligerent imposition of Section 92A in West Punjab: "In January 1949, acting on instructions from the Governor General, Mudie dissolved the provincial legislature and established governor's rule—which was to continue until the provincial elections [in West Punjab] in March 1951" (Wilbur, 1964, p. 227).

There had been no dearth of instances of the arbitrary and capricious impositions of 'Governor's Rule' in different provinces in the early years of Pakistan. In fact, through the execution of the section 92A, the Governor's Rule was imposed on the following provinces: Punjab from January 1949 through April 1951; Sind from December 1951 through May 1953; and East Bengal from May 29, 1954 through June 6, 1955.

Although the Central Government had frequently employed a variety of instruments of control for browbeating or controlling the provincial governments, the rampant of execution of Section 92A on three specific occasions in the early years of Pakistan had far reaching impact on the pattern of Center-Province interaction. As aptly observed by Keith Callard, “Section 92A was used for political purposes on three occasions, but its influence was constantly at work. No provincial politician could fail to be aware that the centre possessed and was willing to use power to govern without provincial legislative or ministerial assistance. In most federal systems, provincial governments are in law or by political convention irremovable by the national authorities. But in Pakistan the possibility of the indefinite suspension of parliamentary government constantly influenced the attitudes of both central and provincial cabinets” (Callard, 1957, pp. 161-162).

The Making of the Infamous “One Unit Proposal” and Undemocratic “Parity Principle”

The ruling elite of Pakistan had started a clamor for “amalgamating” all provinces and federal jurisdictions of western part of Pakistan into one province of “West Pakistan. The demand for instituting one-unit formula for West Pakistan was deliberately designed to clobber the dominance of the majority rule in Pakistan. In other words, the proposal of both the “one unit plan” and “parity principle” were aimed at dismantling or neutralizing the “numerical majority” of the then East Bengal (East Pakistan) once and for all in the Central Legislature (initially it was called the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan and later under the 1956 Constitution, this body was known as the National Assembly of Pakistan).

With the exception of West Punjab, the so-called “one unit” proposal was vehemently opposed by Sind, North-West Frontier Province and Baluchistan. Specifically, the one-unit plan for West Pakistan had scathing criticism from Abdus Sattar Pirzada, the popular Chief Minister of Sind. The Sind Legislative Assembly had also formally rejected the proposal for unification of all of the provinces of West Pakistani into One Unit. In retaliation, Abdus Sattar Pirzada was dismissed by the Governor General, and he was replaced by Ayub Khuhro as the new Chief Minister of Sind. (As mentioned earlier, the same Mohammad Ayub Khuhro who was disgracefully dismissed as the Chief Minister of Sind in April , 1948 by M.A, Jinnah on the charges of blatant corruption and misconduct).

As the newly installed Chief Minister, Ayub Khuro had willingly employed all forms nefarious tactics and vile threats against the legislators for the passage of One Unit scheme by the Sind Legislative Assembly. Henry Frank Goodnow summarized

the threatening context and intense situation within which the 'one unit plan' was passed in the belligerent Sind Legislative Assembly: "Certainly in Sind Province the situation was clear. The Governor dismissed Pirzada Abdus Sattar's ministry on the grounds of 'mal-administration,' arrested G.M. Syed who was the leader of the opposition in the Sind Legislative Assembly, and appointed the infamous Khuhro to be the new Chief Minister. The only reasonable explanation for these steps was that Sattar and Syed vigorously opposed to 'One Unit' while Khuhro agreed to support it. Under Sattar's leadership, 74 of the 110 members of the Sind Assembly had signed a statement opposing the (One Unit) plan. Under Khuhro's threats and pressures the docile [Sind] Assembly was persuaded to support 'One Unit' by a vote of 100 to 4 (on December 12, 1954. Certainly Khuhro, who was supposed to rectify Sattar's 'mal-administration,' had peculiar qualifications for that assignment" (Goodnow, 1964, p. 65).

The dirty tricks, threats and blackmailing that were rampantly employed by Khuhro, the Chief Minister, were characterized by many politicians as "Khuhroism". Khalid Bin Sayeed quoted from the [second] Constituent Assembly debate (of September 10, 1955) for explaining the implications of 'Khuhroism': "It is very interesting to know what Khuhroism means! that members of Legislative Assemblies shall be arrested; their relatives will be put under detention; officers will be transferred who will not carry out the behest's against inconvenient persons; elections shall be interfered with and members of legislatures shall be terrorized" (Sayeed, 1967, p. 78). When the Second Constituent Assembly met in July 1955, there was an extended debate on the "One Unit" plan. Although H. S. Suhrawardy was one of the supporters of integration of West Pakistan provinces, he had criticized Ayub Khuhro's ruthless methods of forcing and intimidating many members of the Sind Legislative Assembly to enlist or accrue support for One Unit plan. Keith Callard had observed: "Much of the (second Constituent) Assembly was devoted less to discussing the merits of the (One unit) scheme than the demerits of the method by which it had been brought into operation. Mr. Suhrawardy made a speech, covering twenty-six pages of the official Debates, on the subject of 'Khuhroism.' His (Suhrawardy's) central point was a personal accusation against the Chief Minister of Sind (Khuhro). 'You (Khuhro) struck terror—and I say this with confidence--- that you struck terror into the hearts of the Members of (the) Sind Assembly when they came to vote (on one unit scheme" (Callard, 1957, p.191).

Donald Wilbur succinctly summarized Khuhro's tactics of survival throughout his political career: "His (Khuhro's) career in the first years of independence was marked by venality. When Jinnah ordered his dismissal as premier of Sind in 1948 (on April

26), the charge sheet contained sixty-two specific allegations of mal-administration, misconduct, and corruption. Khuhro was sentenced to two years' imprisonment, only to be acquitted on appeal to the chief court of the province. Premier (of Sind) again by early 1951, Khuhro was forced to resign later the same year (1951) in the face of further allegations of corruption and mal-administration. In 1953, on the recommendation of a special tribunal the Governor General (Ghulam Mohammad) disqualified Khuhro from holding any public or representative office for six years, but the act under which his disqualification had been ordered was repealed the next year (1954), and Khuhro resumed his post of the Chief Minister of Sind (Ghulam Mohammad ousted Pirzada Abdus Sattar for his staunch opposition to One Unit Scheme) having meanwhile gained the endorsement of the central authorities by espousing a single province of West Pakistan. In passing, we might note the docile nature of the Sind legislature as illustrated by its voting record on this issue (of One Unit scheme): under Pirzada Abdus Sattar's premiership, 74 members supported his opposition to the (One Unit) plan; under Khuhro the members quickly reversed themselves and endorsed the 'one unit' resolution by 100 to 4. In October, 1958 Khuhro was again arrested on charges of corruption. And again disqualified from holding public office" (Wilbur, 1964, p. 225).

Although the Central Government of Pakistan was able to enlist support of Dr. Khan Sahib in favor of 'One Unit' scheme (in fact, he was promised to be the first Chief Minister of West Pakistan), the NWFP Legislative Assembly was reluctant to lend any kind of attestation or endorsement to the passage of the one unit plan. Specifically, Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan had opposed such undemocratic scheme of unifying the various autonomous regions of western part of Pakistan. Yet, the NWFP Assembly had to succumb to the various types of pressures of the Central Government. As noted by Donald Wilbur, "under pressure from the central government, Sardar Abdur Rashid, the premier and a former police official, agreed in behalf of the North-West Frontier to endorse the integrated province of West Pakistan with the condition that, until 1965, not more than 40 per cent of the members of the new provincial legislature could come from the Punjab. Rashid was later dismissed from his post when he reportedly developed misgivings about the execution of the 'one unit' plan, which of course had in 1955 ended the separate existence of the North-West Frontier province" (Wilbur, 1964, pp. 224-225).

Being essentially goaded and intimidated by the authoritarian Governor General of Pakistan, the provincial legislative assemblies of West Pakistan eventually agreed to endorse the "one unit" plan. The leaders of various provinces of the then western part of Pakistan were told by the Punjabi dominated central ruling elite that the

implementation of One Unit scheme was the only viable option to dismantle the numerical majority of East Pakistan in the Central Legislature of Pakistan. Khalid Bin Sayeed had observed: “The Governor-General (Ghulam Mohammad) tried to pressure some of the influential members from the smaller provinces of West Pakistan into lending their support to the zonal sub-federation plan. It was reported (that) he (Ghulam Mohammad) threatened that if they did not support the zonal sub-federation plan, PRODA (Public and Representative Offices Disqualification Act) proceedings would be started against them” (Sayeed, 1967, pp. 73-74).

Given the fact that Ghulam Mohammad had already dismantled the First Constituent Assembly of Pakistan in October, 1954, there was no Constituent Assembly in existence at that time. Ghulam Mohammad, the Governor General, tried to take the fast lane in the process of implementing the one-unit scheme for establishing ‘one unified’ West Pakistan. As noted by Keith Callard in 1957: “In this fashion the approval of the people’s representatives (Provincial Assemblies of West Pakistan) having been recorded with near unanimity, the government (of Pakistan) was in a position to proceed (with the creation of one unified province of West Pakistan. In December (1954), the Governor General (had) issued an order establishing a Council for the Administration of West Pakistan, which was to make recommendations concerning the administration of the new province (of West Pakistan). It began to meet on the day after its establishment and presented its report in February 1955. In March (1955), the Emergency Powers Ordinance sought to amend the Government of India Act (of 1935) to the effect that: ‘--- The Governor General (of Pakistan) may by order make as appears to be necessary or expedient--- (a) for constituting the province of West Pakistan’. Under cover of this ordinance, an order (G.G.O, 4/1955) was issued on the same day. Its title was the West Pakistan (Establishment) Order, and it authorized the Council for the Administration of West Pakistan ‘to take such steps as it may deem necessary or expedient for the purpose of enabling the Province of West Pakistan to be constituted on the appointed day....’ a week later Mr. Gurmani was named as Governor-designate of the new province and Dr. Khan Sahib as prospective Chief Minister. ...At this stage, the Federal Court (of Pakistan) intervened to inform the Governor-General (Ghulam Mohammad) that his powers did not include the amalgamation of (the) provinces. The enactment of the (One Unit) scheme had therefore to await the session of the second Constituent Assembly” of Pakistan (Callard, 1957, pp. 188-189).

In compliance with and pursuant to an Order of the Governor General, the Second Constituent Assembly of Pakistan (CAP) was expeditiously elected by various provincial assemblies in June 1955. This second CAP consisted of 80 members

evenly divided between “two wings” of Pakistan (40 from eastern part of Pakistan and 40 from western part of Pakistan). The allocation of “equal” number of seats to “East” and “West” Pakistan was nothing but the backdoor implementation of the so-called scheme of “one-unit” and undemocratic “parity” principle even before the second CAP was formed. As noted by Donald Wilbur: “The (Second Constituent) assembly met for the first time on July 8, 1955. It (the Second Constituent Assembly) subsequently validated most of the legislation about which there had been so much controversy and on September 30 (1955) passed ‘one unit’ bill establishing the province of West Pakistan. Then in quick succession a new Constitution was presented to the assembly (on January 9, 1956), adopted (on February 29, 1956), and put into effect (on March 23, 1956)” (Wilbur, 1964, p. 241).

The concept of one-unit was against the basic principles of a representative democracy in which representation is based on the number of population because ‘representatives’ are supposed to represent the ‘people’, not the mountains, not the barren meadows, not the acres of land, not the rivers, not the deserts etc. Yet, H.S. Suhwardy, the so-called champion and the defender people’s democracy had taken the shameful responsibility upon himself to convince the then East Pakistani members of the Second Constituent Assembly of Pakistan to support the one-unit plan. Much to the chagrin of Maulana Bhashani, the President of the then East Pakistan Awami League, H.S. Suhrawardy was successful in the passage of the so-called ‘one unit’ plan with the support of the East Pakistani members of the second CAP.

However, some members of the Second CAP from the then East Pakistan had openly criticized the one-unit proposal. For example, Fazlur Rahman and Mahmud Ali had vocally opposed the one-unit plan in the CAP.

Impact of the Centralization Process on National Integration in Pakistan

The imposition of a centralized form of government had serious negative impacts and harmful consequences on the prospect of true national integration of Pakistan even before the untimely demise of M.A. Jinnah, the founding father of Pakistan. Although the centralized governmental structure was intensely resented by the non-Punjabi population of Western Pakistan, the Bengalis in particular, started protesting the discriminatory policies of the Central Government of Pakistan. The progressive Bengali leaders and the student community of the University of Dhaka (in some instances even some Muslim Leaguers) had started protesting various blatantly unfair policies and programs of the ruling elite of Pakistan Government.

Some of the Bengali CAP members had started ventilating their grievances even in the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan (CAP). For example, in support of a resolution for holding the CAP session in Dhaka at least once a year, Shaista Suhrawardy Ikramullah (there were some other members from East Bengal who also supported this proposal) pointed out in the Constituent Assembly on February 24, 1948 that a “feeling is growing among the East Pakistanis that Eastern Pakistan is being neglected and treated nearly as a ‘colony’ of West Pakistan” (CAP Debates, February 24, 1948, Vol. II. No. 1, pp. 6-7, cited in Quddus, 1981, p. 29; also cited in Sayeed, 1968, p. 275).

Liaquat Ali Khan had made it clear quite early that a centralized government was the most suitable form of Government for Pakistan. He even refused to recognize the fundamental differences between the federal and centralized (unitary) forms of Government. The typical anti-federalism and anti-Bengali attitude of M.A. Jinnah was manifested in Prime Minister Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan’s arrogant and insensitive response to a Bengali leader’s question on the issue of provincial autonomy for East Bengal (at the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan on March 2, 1948): “Today in Pakistan there is no difference between the Central Government and Provincial Government. The Central Government is composed of the provinces. We must kill this provincialism for all times” (The CAP Debates, March 2, 1948, p. 140-141, cited in Quddus, 1981, p. 29).

The negative impact of the centralizing principles and features were so glaring even in the early years of Pakistan that the die-hard defenders of the Muslim League domination in the then East Bengal political scene started raising doubts about the efficacy and relevance of the over-centralized mode of governance. For example, in a speech at the East Bengal Legislative Assembly (EBLA) on March 18, 1949, Nurul Amin, the Chief Minister of the then East Bengal Government, expressed his deep sense of frustrations over the question of blatant interference of the Central Government in the affairs of the Provincial government: “I should mention another point, that is, the anxiety on the part of the Central Government to encroach on every field of provincial activities..... After the achievement of freedom there has been (a) race for centralisation of power.... I consider this to be the most unsound and shortsighted policy. The province must be allowed to enjoy the full autonomous position, must be as free from the Central Government as it is thought practical. But particularly this province of East Bengal which is far flung from the capital of the Central Government must enjoy fullest autonomy” (East Bengal Legislative Assembly, Proceedings, Vol. 3, March 18, 1949, p. 265, cited in Quddus, 1981, p. 29).

The issue of “strong centre” versus “provincial autonomy” had dominated the debates in the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan in early 1950s. For example, A.K. Brohi, one of the widely acclaimed constitutional lawyers of the formative years of Pakistan, had emerged as the ardent defender of the centralized-unitary form of government in Pakistan, and he started propagating that a “strong central government” was the best way to “adequately deal with the problems which” were “peculiar to Pakistan”. Nothing could be farther from the truth.

An example of the absurd arguments and inconsistent rationales in favor of a centralized mode governance in Pakistan that A.K. Brohi had provided in the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan on October 23, 1953 can be gleaned from the following excerpts of his speech: “If there had been geographical contiguity between East Pakistan and West Pakistan then the principles of decentralization of powers may have been the basis of our Constitution and may have been advocated. But in order to surmount this natural difficulty in the way of unity of the peoples of Pakistan, the difficulty which exists in the shape of hostile distances that supports the two wings had no alternative but to provide for a strong Central Government” (CAP Debates, October 23, 1953 cited in Rashiduzzaman, 1967, p. 95).

There is no doubt that A.K. Brohi’s belligerent speech in favor of a Punjabi-dominated and Karachi anchored Central Government of Pakistan had infuriated some of the Bengali-speaking members of the then central legislature of Pakistan but the most pungent response came from Sher-e-Bangla A.K. Fazlul Huq, the 80-year old parliamentarian of Pakistan. In his widely acclaimed book titled *Pakistan: A Study of Government & Politics*, M. Rashiduzzaman had captured the context and contents of that historic reply of A.K. Fazlul Huq, the doyen of Bengal politics, in the following succinct manner: “On the 24th October, 1953, Mr. A.K. Fazlul Huq gave a taunting reply to those who advocated (for a) strong Centre. He explained to the people that East Pakistan, in view of her geographical separation, needs more autonomy. It was impossible for East Pakistan to be governed by the directives from the Central Government (of Pakistan). West Pakistan derived all the advantages because the Central Government (of Pakistan) was located within her territory. Giving his criticism to the Basic Principles’ Committee Report’, Mr. (A.K. Fazlul Huq) said: ‘I make only one suggestion: Let us feel in actual practice that we are autonomous; we have our own government; we make own laws’. He (A.K. Fazlul Huq) went to the extent of saying: ‘You cannot have the same Constitution for all the different Units of Pakistan. It must be different from Unit to Unit. Leave East Pakistan (alone) to work out its own destiny’ ” (Rashiduzzaman, 1967, pp. 95-96).

There is little wonder why in his speech in 1956 at the Second Constituent Assembly

of Pakistan, Abul Mansur Ahmad had underscored the dissimilarities between East Pakistan and West Pakistan: “Pakistan is a unique country having two wings which are separated by a distance of more than a thousand miles. ----- These two wings differ in all matters, excepting two things, namely, that they have a common religion, barring a section of the people in East Pakistan, and that we achieved our independence by a common struggle. These are the only two points which are common to both the wings of Pakistan. With the exceptions of these two things, all other factors, viz., the language, the tradition, the culture, the costume, the custom, the dietary, the calendar, the standard time, practically everything, is different. There is, in fact, nothing common in the two wings, particularly in respect of those which are the sine qua non to form a nation (CAP Debates, Official Report, Vol. 1, January 16, 1956, p. 1816 cited in Callard, Keith 1957, pp. 157-‘158. Also cited in Islam, 1989; p. 16).

This line of generalizations about the regressive nature and effect of the centralization process in the early years of Pakistan can be bolstered and substantiated from the gleanings of credible studies on Pakistan. For example, in her book, *Pakistan: Failure in National Integration*, Rounaq Jahan had observed: “the administrative-political policies pursued during the first decade (of Pakistan) were characterized by extreme centralization. They led to the establishment of an administrative-political system which has been termed (as) ‘vice-regal’. The Act of 1935, under which Pakistan was administered until 1956, (had) provided for a strong central government; and the constitution of 1956 perpetuated the essentially strong position of the center vis-à-vis the provinces. The office of the (provincial) governor of each wing was often used as an instrument of centralization. Though under a parliamentary system of government the governor (of a province) is supposed to be a figurehead, in Pakistan during the 1947-58 period the governor (like the governor-general at the center) was generally the effective head of the province; and being the center’s appointee, he (governor) always protected the center’s interests in the province. Furthermore, the governors were often powerful men who had close party contacts” (Jahan, 1972, p. 28).

Raunaq Jahan’s study also underscored other instruments of centralization in Pakistan: “Another often used instrument of centralization was governor’s rule. (The) Article 92A of the Government of India Act of 1935 (article 193 in the 1956 Constitution) enabled the central government to dismiss the provincial government and impose direct central rule on the provinces. The article (Section 92A) was used to thwart any challenge to the position of the ‘national’ political elite. Its more blatant imposition was in East Pakistan in 1954, when the newly elected

United Front (Government) was forced out from office. The center could also control individual provincial politicians through the Public and Representative Offices (disqualification) Act (PRODA). ----- But the most effective instrument of centralization was the central services, especially the Civil Service of Pakistan (CSP), which manned most of the key decision-making posts in both the center and the provinces. And even when the CSP worked in the provinces, its ultimate coordination lay with the center. As was the case in pre-independence India, the central services were the single stable bond between the center and the provinces” (Jahan, 1972, pp. 28-29).

It is apparent from the preceding that the Central Government of Pakistan was not sincere and willing to redress the genuine grievances of Bengali-speaking people East Pakistan. Instead of redressing the pressing problems and genuine grievances of East Bengal, Pakistan’s ruling elite kept on sermonizing Bangalees to become more of Pakistanis. The Central Government of Pakistan imposed Urdu as the only State language of Pakistan in the formative years without any regard to the fact that “Bengali” was spoken and written by an overwhelming majority of the total population of Pakistan. The hidden anti-Bengali agenda of the Punjabi and Mohajir dominated political elite of Pakistan became clear when Dhirendranath Datta’s request for allowing “Bengali” to be used as one of the official languages of debates in the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan (CAP) was characterized as anti-state activity on the CAP floor on February 25, 1948. In fact, the imposition of Urdu as the “only” State language of the new nation of Pakistan had signaled the death knell of Pakistan in the minds of Bengali-speaking of the then East Bengal.

Concluding Remarks

Although the Indian Act of 1935 had provided for some kind of semblance of the federal principles and features, the governmental systems that existed in British-India between 1937 and 1947 can’t be characterized as fully developed “federal systems”. The 1935 Act (as amended in 1947 and 1948) provided for “federal system” and a British type of Parliamentary system both at the Center and Provinces in Pakistan. Yet, no federal system had emerged after Pakistan came into being on August 14, 1947. The crux of the problem is that both M.A. Jinnah and the authoritarian rulers who succeeded him in the formative years of Pakistan had conveniently substituted the word ‘federal’ for ‘unitary’ system of government.

After independence, M.A. Jinnah had preferred the word “federal” governmental structure even though the centralization process was taking its roots in Pakistan. The unequal relationship between the Central level government and Provincial

Governments had rendered the professed claim of the “federal system” to be a mockery. In fact, the centralizing features of 1935 Act were replenished after independence was achieved.

For instance, the Governor of a Province used to be appointed by the Governor General of Pakistan. A Governor of a province could be disciplined and removed from the office by the Governor General of Pakistan. The Governor of a province was expected to act as an agent of the Central Government. In fact, provincial Governors did or could hold office only at the pleasure of the Governor General. In fact, the authoritarian ruling elite of Pakistan governed the country (from 1947 till the adoption of 1956 Constitution) through the use of a centralized system of government. Of all the provinces of Pakistan, East Pakistan took the worst brunt of the centralization process. Of all the Governors of East Bengal in the early years of Pakistan were from recruited from outside East Bengal. All of those non-Bengali Governors used to administer the province like colonial Governors. In fact, A.K Fazlul Huq was the first Bangalee who held the office of Governor of East Pakistan.

Various instruments such as the Emergency Powers, section 92(A) and Governor’s Rule, and PRODA were frequently employed by the Central Government of Pakistan to control or thwart the provincial governments. The Central Civil Service of Pakistan was also routinely used by the Central Government as one of most effective instruments for browbeating or controlling the provincial administration. The strong Central Government of Pakistan dictated the terms of reference of the subservient Provincial Governments. The very idea of integrating various ethnically diverse regions of Western part of Pakistan through the imposition of “One Unit Scheme” was at variance with the fundamental purposes and principles of true federalism. The imposition of the so-called “one Unit” plan on the various regions of Western part of Pakistan was clear violation of basic tenets of democracy. The tactics of blackmails and threats which were employed by the ruling elite of Pakistan for the passage of the “One Unit Scheme” by the Provincial Assemblies of western Pakistan were not acceptable democratic norms.

The adoption of “one-unit scheme” was designed to achieve “parity” in representation between East and West Pakistan in the national legislature of Pakistan. In other words, the implementation of one-unit plan paved the way for imposing ‘parity formula’ on the then East Pakistan. Based on the so-called “parity formula,” East Pakistan was denied the numerical superiority in the national legislature. If democracy means a government of the people and for the people, the representation should have been invariably based on the number of “population.” The representatives in a true democratic form of government represent “people,”

not the mountains, not the meadows and trees. Therefore, the concept of “parity principle” was against the rudimentary principles of democracy.

The 1956 Constitution provided for a ‘federal’ type of government. However, it has been widely emphasized by a host of credible scholars that all of the ‘centralizing’ features, instruments and practices of the preceding years were being carefully cropped and incorporated into the 1956 Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. For example, both the infamous provisions of Emergency Powers and section 92(A) were retained in the new Constitution of 1956. The tailor-made 1962 Constitution of Ayub Khan, the self-declared President of Pakistan, had unilaterally introduced one of the most centralized forms of government that had virtually rendered the provincial governments into administrative districts or divisions of the Central Government.

Given the profound cultural, ethnic and linguistic variations between East and West Pakistan and the cultural differences even “within” the various regions of West Pakistan, the “federal” form of Government would have been the only way to keep these diverse cultures and regions together under the umbrella of one Pakistan. The Punjabi-Mohajir dominated West Pakistani ruling elite and their die-hard East Pakistani collaborators had a façade of a “federal system.” The truth of the matter is that a “centralized” form of government was installed from day one of independent Pakistan. The fusion of centralization with authoritarian mode of administration was like mixing gasoline with fire.

In sum, both the 1956 and 1962 Constitutions had professed to have instituted a federal governmental structure in Pakistan. Yet, in reality, like the formative years from 1947 to early 1956, Pakistan had continued to be governed under a centralized and rigid unitary system of government during the period from 1956 through 1971. The facades of federalism in Pakistan did not depict the true nature of unequal relationship between the strong Center and the weaker provinces of Pakistan. Doubtless, Pakistan essentially had remained a test case of a unitary (centralized) system of Government from the early years of its existence.

There is no denying the fact that the distinct gap between the people of West and East wings could be bridged through the adoption of genuine federating features and principles in the governance structures of Pakistan. The ruling elite of Pakistan miserably failed to narrow the gap between two wings in the early as well as later years. In fact, the imposition of centralizing features as a preferred mode of governance widened the gap between the constituent parts of Pakistan especially between Western and Eastern wings. The emergence of Bangladesh on December

16, 1971 from the womb of Pakistan can be traced back to the glaring failures of the Punjabi-Mohajir dominated ruling elite of the Central Government of the then Pakistan to redress the genuine grievances of the people of East Bengal. Thus the failure of national integration in Pakistan can be characterized as the blatant and epic failures of the centralized form of governance and authoritarian modes of administration in Pakistan.

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