



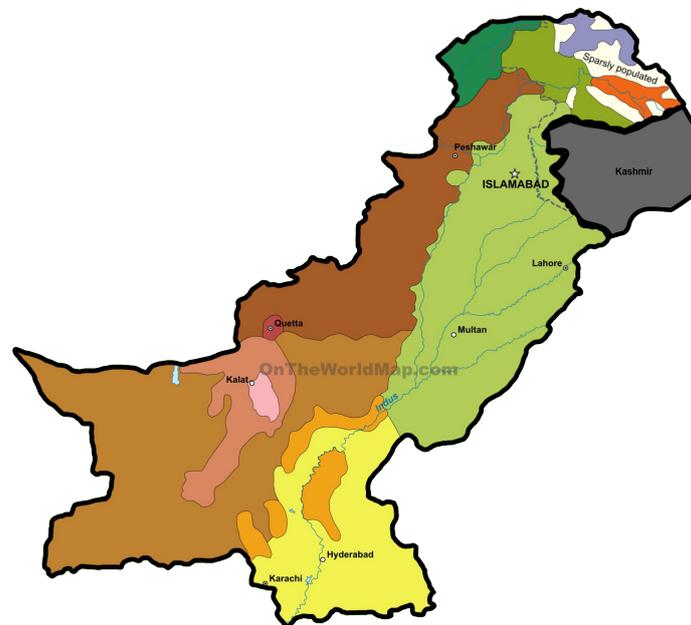
# CSCR

PERCEPTION-REALITY-VISION-SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

## PAKISTAN'S NEW RISING ETHNONATIONALIST FAULTLINES

by Junaid Roshan Tanoli and Jawad Falak

### RESEARCH BRIEF



# Introduction

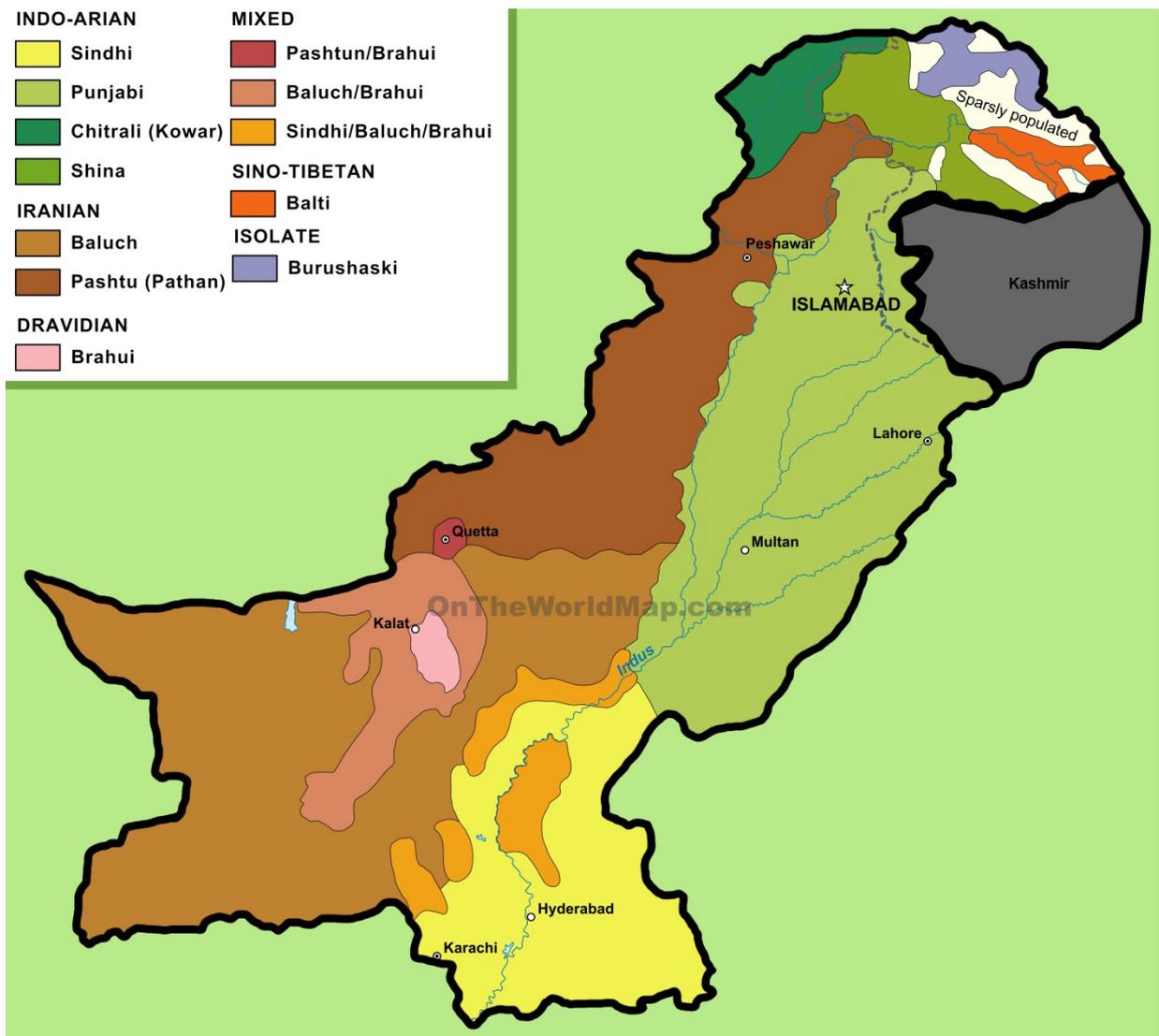
The process of nation building in the greatly pluralistic societies of South Asia remains a challenging task as diverse and manifold ethnic, religious and linguistic groups are sought to be integrated within viable state structures. It is crucial how state co-opt different ethnic groups into political structure of the state by empowering them with decision making.

The phenomenon of ethnonationalism in Pakistan remained in focus for many years and its growing impacts aligned with terrorism has made this a hot topic not only in the region but around the global realm.

India has been accused for the separatism and proliferation of ethnonationalism paving way to terrorism and destabilization in Pakistan. The rival nation exploits the deprivation of certain areas and utilizes it as an apparatus to kindle ethnonational terror which can be tackled only through national integration and development of the particular regions coupled with proper allocation of resources. Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW) sowed the first seed in East Pakistan, which later became Mukti Bahini and undertook subversive activities which resulted in the Fall of Dhaka. Now, New Delhi is trying to pull another Bangladesh out of Balochistan through different proxy wars.

The China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a project of One Belt One Road is an ambitious economic project enabling improved connectivity and economic integration in the region. The corridor is a detriment in the eyes of a few nations and those forces are actively busy in undermining the multibillion project. For that reason, the poison of ethnonationalism is being conspired with terrorism in Sindh, KPK, Gilgit Baltistan and especially in the province of Balochistan.

Pakistan is countering number of ethnonational movements and terrorism as its outcome. In Sindh, Sindudesh revolutionary army, SLA and JQSM have been using ethnonational sentiments in the province for many years. Balawaristan



Movement is promulgated in Gilgit Baltistan and the enemy is flaming the anti-Pakistan attitude among the residents. However, it could not become successful so far. KPK is mainly used as a tool to sabotage the CPEC project through several proxies such as developing route controversy and building a narrative of misallocation of resources under the mega project. Balochistan is the hotbed for ethnonationalism and militant organizations like BLA, BRA and BLF, which are clogging the peace of Baloch people.

On 30th July, 2016 the calm city of Larkana was rocked by a bomb attack targeting a paramilitary forces' vehicle. The explosion took place near paramilitary Rangers' vehicle near Miro Khan Chowk on Saturday. A heavy contingent of police and Rangers personnel immediately arrived at the scene and cordoned off the blast site. According to preliminary investigation, a time-device was planted in a cycle parked on the roadside. The blast killed one officer and injured 13 people.

This was preceded by an attack in Karachi; a failed attempt to take away the life of a Chinese engineer, his bodyguard and his driver on 30th May 2016. A low-intensity bomb went off by the road in Gulshan-e-Hadeed, shattering the windows of the van in which men were travelling. The attack was claimed by an unheard outfit calling itself Sindhudesh Revolutionary Army (SRA).

A pamphlet signed by the Sindhudesh Revolutionary Army, an ethnic Sindhi separatist group, was found at the site, police said. "The world's most plunderous nation has set its eye on Sindh," the pamphlet said, according to a photograph of it seen by Reuters. "They want to attack Sindh and enslave its people." The group was apparently referring to the CPEC, which was announced last year, though it was unclear whether the unidentified Chinese national was working on a CPEC project. CPEC is part of China's "One Belt, One Road" initiative, aimed at easing the passage of Chinese exports to foreign markets by connecting south-western China to the Arabian Sea, through Pakistan.

The SRA is the second known Sindhi nationalist group to use violence. The first was the Sindhudesh Liberation Army (SLA) which became publicly known during 2010 after it claimed responsibility for the bomb blast on railway tracks near Hyderabad. Since May 2012, the group has emerged and attacked on branches of the National Bank of Pakistan (NBP) in different districts of Sindh. The group is currently headed by Chief Commander Darya Khan. It has been asserted that the Jeay Sindh Muttahida Mahaz (JSQM), a political separatist party, has a deep link with the SRA. The JSQM Chairman Mr. Shafi Muhammad Burfat is allegedly operating the SLA from Kabul.

While Pakistan is more in the news for acts of terrorism by religious groups such as the TTP or Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, it has a longer history of being wracked by violence committed by ethnonationalist organizations such as separatist groups based in Balochistan such as the BLA, BRA, UBA etc. The ethnonationalist terrorism phenomenon has entered its fourth phase in Balochistan and seems to be in its death throes with infighting among different groups, mass surrenders and elimination of higher ranks.

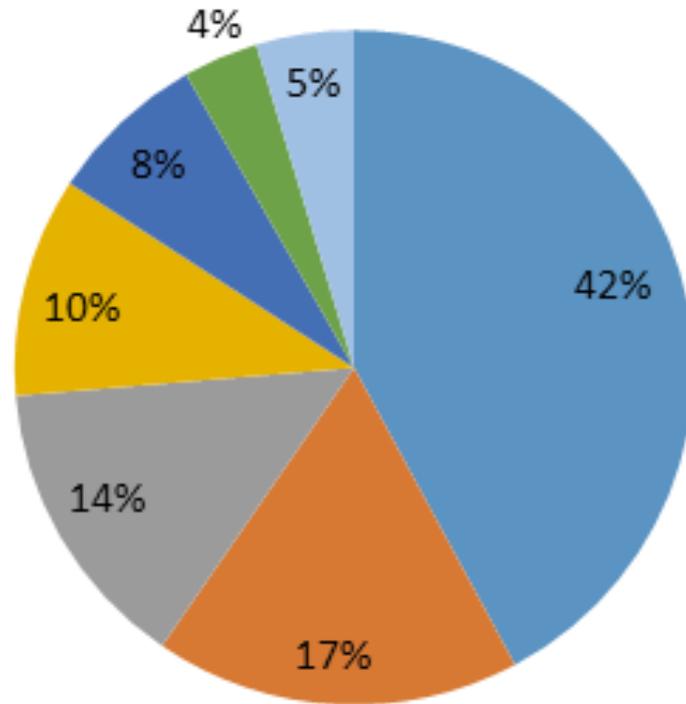
Till date, however the greatest ethnonationalist revolt against the state of Pakistan came in the former East Pakistan, currently Bangladesh. Mukti Bahini supported by India unleashed a wave of terror in the territory often targeting West Pakistanis. The Mukti Bahini was crushed in Operation Searchlight but the resultant consequences provided a favorable ground for a successful Indian invasion leading to a bifurcation of Pakistan.

It would be safe to assert that ethnonationalism is the greatest threat to any pluralist state let alone Pakistan. The reason behind this is not any dissatisfaction or hostility to the main ideology of Pakistan but the realm of security specifically human security. Human security holds that people-centered, multi-disciplinary understanding of security, involving number of research fields including development studies, international relations, strategic studies, and human rights. The United Nations Development Program's (UNDP) 1994 Human Development Report is considered a milestone publication in the field of human security with its argument that insuring "freedom from want" and "freedom from fear" for all persons is the best path to tackle the problem of global insecurity.

Basically, human security states that a plethora of threats in various domains such as economics, health and environment effecting the individual and not the state should be the primary cause of concern for governments. If one examines the various ethnonationalist revolts in Pakistan's history one can ascertain that all had roots in human security. All these militant threats emanate from regions afflicted with a deplorable human condition.

# ETHNIC DISTRIBUTION OF PAKISTAN

■ Punjabis ■ Pushtuns ■ Sindhis ■ Seraikis ■ Muhajirs ■ Balochs ■ Othe



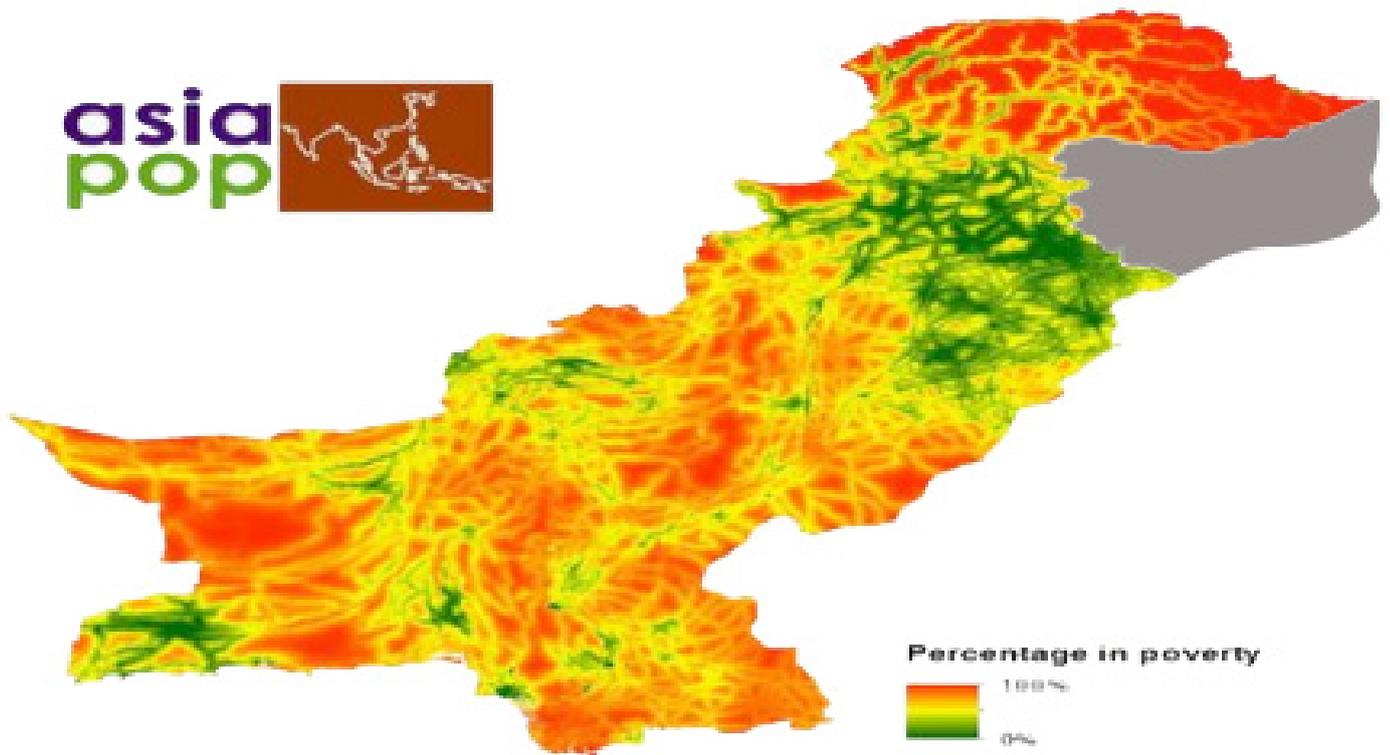
Source: World Atlas

In the case of East Pakistan, an inactive political elite deprived the people of several amenities causing them to turn to Bengali nationalism. The severity of this deprivation can be assessed by the fact that it was in that area where the All India Muslim League, the force behind Pakistan's creation, was formed. While economic and political security had already started a low-level insurgency in the form of the Mukti Bahini aided and vitalized by India, major factors like the environmental disaster of the 1970 Bhola Cyclone and the failure to respect the democratic rights of the East Pakistani public by West Pakistani politicians further aggravated the situation.

Pakistan is facing similar circumstances in its different parts. The conditions of both Balochistan and Sindh are deplorable in terms of human development and are ravaged by one crisis after another like the Thar famine. It is primarily of this factor that violent reactionaries are recruited to carry out acts of terror across the nation. And such weaknesses in Pakistan's human security play out in the hands of its enemies, primarily India.

India's premier intelligence agency R&AW promotes espionage and proxy wars primarily in the ethnonationalist realm. This is evident in the Mukti Bahini and later on the infamous Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka who were put down after a long and bitter conflict. Last year, a R&AW agent Kulbhusan Jhadav was apprehended in Balochistan, who later on confessed his linkages to separatist terror groups. According to reports, New Delhi's plans have changed from disintegration of Pakistan (no longer possible due to a better center of gravity of the nation) to destabilization by "keeping the pot boiling". Jhadav told that his job was to fail projects such as CPEC in order to contain Pakistan economically and therefore prolong Indian hegemony.

Foreign intelligence agencies take part across the world in proxy wars more often to secure the interest of the state. As stated previously the conditions of some areas of Pakistan are vulnerable. Lack of basic amenities and economic



Source: worldpop.org.uk

opportunities as well as ethnic strife sparked by population leads to a fertile atmosphere for ethnonationalist terrorists. Several terrorist activities have been conducted by Baloch ethnonationalists in the last few months which chiefly targeted the law enforcement agencies of the province. Frontier Corps (FC) remain on the hit list of Baloch nationalists. BLA, BRA and BLF have accepted responsibilities for several incidents which are assumed to have a support across the border.

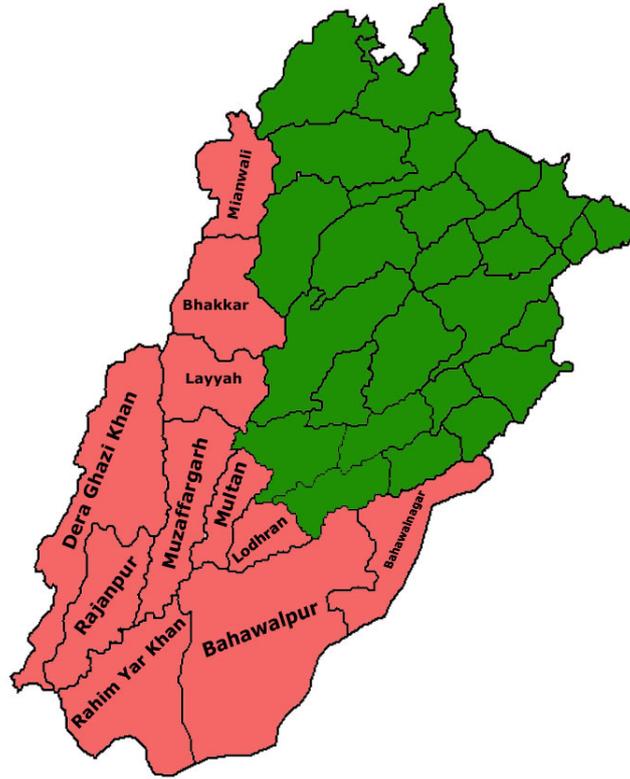
Barahamdagh Bugti and other exiled insurgents of Balochistan welcomed the Indian narrative. India's open support to Baloch ethnonationalists in fanning the flames of militancy is considered as an act of terrorism by Pakistan. The policy of an isolated Pakistan being followed by the neighboring country is now transforming into destabilization of Pakistan after the failure of the previous objective. BLA, BRA and BLF are the top ethnonationalist movements involved in the unrest of the province and have an upper hand in the killings of settlers. Pakistani intelligence agencies found trails of Indian consulates in Kandhar, Jalababad and Afghanistan of providing financial support, covert arms and trainings to these ethnonationalist groups to subvert Pakistan and to undermine the role of China in Pakistan.

Pakistan has hotbeds where human security is abysmal such as Balochistan, Interior Sindh, Southern Punjab and Gilgit Baltistan. The proximity of these areas to India only heightens the terror threat of ethnonationalists.

Southern Punjab consists of three divisions including Bhakar and Mianwali. The common language of this entire region is Saraiki/Seraiki or Multani. The area of Bahawalpur, D.G. Khan and Multan is equal to 6 divisions of Upper Punjab or North Punjab. The combined area of division Lahore, Faisalabad and Gujranwala is less than Bahawalpur division.

Southern Punjab lags behind other sections of Punjab in terms of available health facilities, education, employment opportunities and hence growth. The infrastructure of Southern Punjab is inadequate due to lack of funding. This part of the province is large but the funds provided are very low hence there is high poverty in this region. South Punjab is mostly agrarian land and people residing there do not have alternative employment opportunities which are available

## South Punjab



with center and Northern Punjab. Due to its agriculture outputs Saraiki Waseeb is known as the Cotton Belt of Pakistan but there is not a single agricultural university in the region. Such disparities widen inequalities and hence provoke intense sentiments of the people and become vulnerable to certain elements to use this lot in spreading violence.

**Table-1**

Division	No. of Hospitals	No. of High Schools	No. of Police Stations
Bahawalpur	33	531	72
Multan	31	569	79
Dera Ghazi Khan	32	450	63
Lahore	73	687	131
Faisalabad	41	832	75
Gujranwala	58	1029	115

Source: Punjab Development Index: 2015

Health and education are the key requirements for the sustainable living standard. Table 1 shows a considerable gap in provision of amenities in southern and northern Punjab. Further, employment level in the two regions of Punjab also shows significant differences. Difference between number of registered factories in each of the three divisions of southern Punjab and Lahore, Faisalabad and Gujranwala divisions from rest of the Punjab figures more than double. Subsequently, the employment opportunities are also relatively less in the former part of the province. Economic weaknesses and rise in inequality appears to be causing disturbing growth of ethnonationalism and encourages conflict.

**Table-2**

Division	No. of Registered Factories	Estimated Employment
Bahawalpur	792	34735
Multan	949	60655
Dera Ghazi Khan	446	43556
Lahore	4008	432869
Faisalabad	2256	209732
Gujranwala	2839	110119

Source: Punjab Development Index: 2015

The Seraikistan movement which centers on the Seraiki identity calls for a separate province under the Pakistani federation consisting of Seraiki majority areas. The second one is the Bahawalpur Province movement which seeks to resurrect the old Bahawalpur princely state as a panacea to Southern Punjab's ills.

### Gilgit Baltistan:

The history of Gilgit Baltistan has been influenced by several occurrences and has been a crossroads of travelers, conquerors and raiders. The Dogra regime of Kashmir annexed this terrain around the middle of the 19th century. Baltistan was directly governed by the government of Kashmir. During Mughal era, Gilgit Baltistan remained outside the Mughal Empire although Akbar conquered Kashmir and some part of Baltistan. Gilgit retained its independence until it came under Dogra rule. In 1947, Gilgit Baltistan got independence after fighting for their right against Maharaja of Kashmir and acceded for the administrative control of Pakistan.

Indian espionage has attempted to remove Pakistan as a South Asian power by depriving its regions of Balochistan, and Gilgit Baltistan and igniting terrorism inside the country. Indian intelligence agency, R&AW has been involved in crafting anti-Pakistan narrative in Gilgit Baltistan. A vast network is active in GB to sabotage the multibillion dollar project CPEC. The network is also active in seeding the anarchy and strife in the province. Six R&AW agents have been nabbed from the area that were operating to sabotage CPEC and provoke anti-state actions. Narendra Modi, Indian Prime Minister in his Independence Day speech conveyed Indian intentions of a separate Gilgit Baltistan from Pakistan but Pakistan responded befittingly for the people of Gilgit Baltistan who stood up with Pakistan, and sent a clear-cut rebuttal to India. R&AW organized several nationalist groups in the area such as Gilgit Baltistan Democratic Alliance (GBDA) and Gilgit Baltistan United Movement (GBUM). India supported Balawaristan National Front, claiming Chitral and Kohistan as integral parts of Balawaristan. Gilgit Baltistan police arrested 12 BNF workers in January 2017 and recovered weapons from their possession. These workers were supposed to carry out terrorist activities in different regions of Pakistan. Two more terrorists were detained by law enforcement agencies of Pakistan from Gilgit Baltistan who intended to trigger a terrorist activity linked to a plan hatched by Indian intelligence. India termed Gilgit Baltistan "unacceptable" as Pakistan's province. India stood on the opposing front of Pakistan attempting to declare Gilgit Baltistan as its fifth province since it is bordering the Occupied Kashmir.

Ethnonationalism and terrorism can be controlled by spreading general awareness about such elements so that people do not allow anyone to use them against the state. Education plays a very crucial role in developing the sense of unity and national integration among the citizen. Education is either way a key factor in the process of development and economic prosperity.

**Literacy Rate (10years and Above)**

Province/Area	2013-14			2014-15		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
<b>Pakistan</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>60</b>
Rural	63	36	49	63	38	51
Urban	81	66	74	82	69	76
<b>Punjab</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>63</b>
Rural	65	43	53	65	45	55
Urban	82	71	76	82	73	77

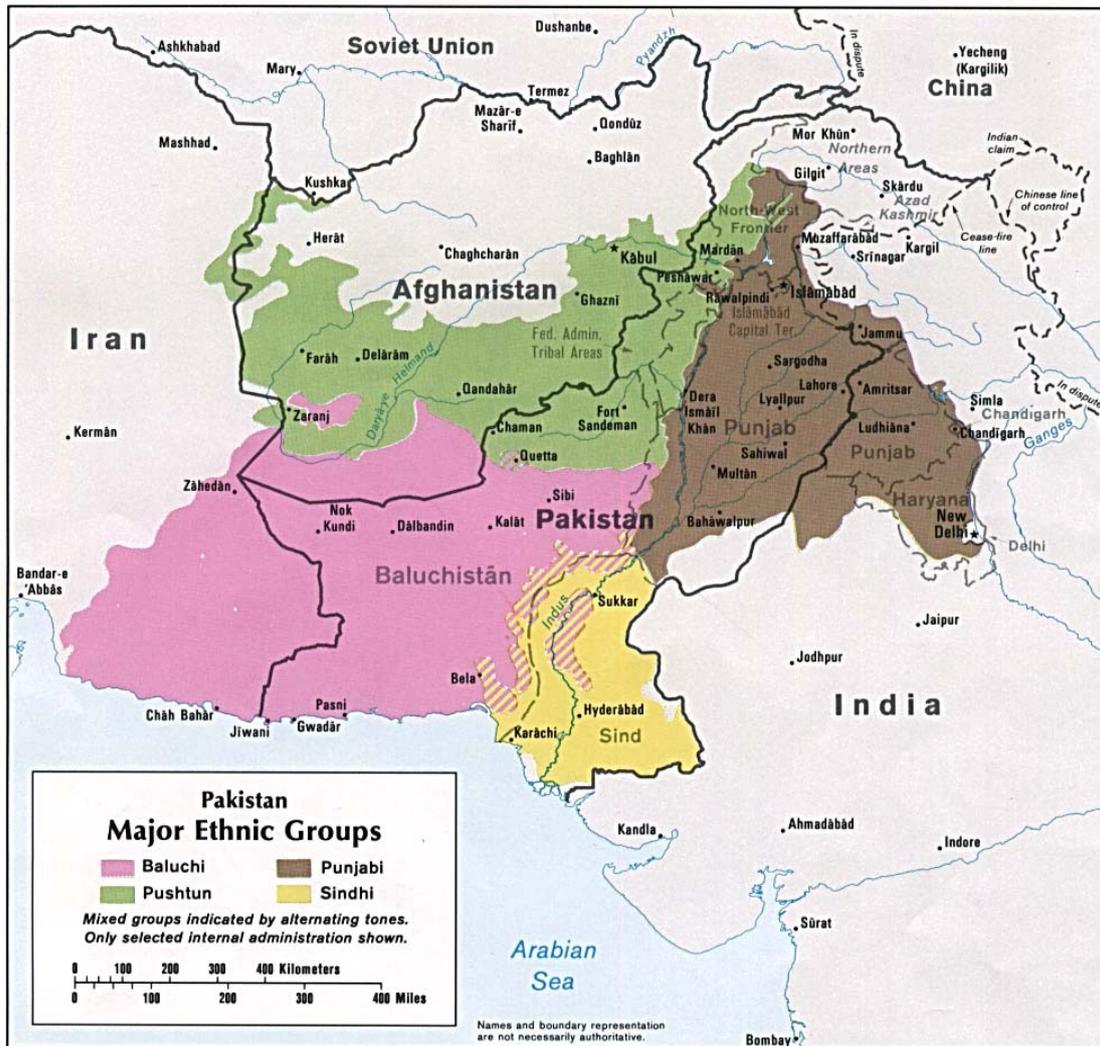
Province/Area	2013-14			2014-15		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
<b>Sindh</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>60</b>
Rural	53	21	37	55	24	40
Urban	80	63	72	82	70	76
<b>KPK</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>53</b>
Rural	70	32	49	63	21	50
Urban	81	55	68	80	52	66
<b>Balochistan</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>44</b>
Rural	54	17	36	54	17	38
Urban	74	45	59	78	42	61

Source: Pakistan Social and Living Standards Measurements Survey, 2014-15

**Pashtun Ethnonationalism:**

Pashtuns are Pakistan’s third prevalent ethnic group, totaling around 30 million of nation’s 200 million people. Pashtuns are the predominant ethnic group in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, province of Pakistan. They also dominate the northern side of resourceful province Balochistan. The force of Pathan character, the bravery of the Pathan soldier and the shrewdness of the Pathan assessments of political realism are the glorious tags that Pashtuns have put on. They present a classical example of national integration through economic modernization, and political democracy.

The reality of the independence of Pakistan stunned Ghaffar Khan, a Pashtun nationalist, and considered it as an act of



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Source: Khyber.org

treachery by the British Congress. The Pashtun nationalist movement led by Ghaffar Khan, followed by his son Abdul Wali Khan instigated political acrimony which lasted for more than two decades. Ghaffar Khan and his son Wali Khan continued to champion the cause for a separate state inside Pakistan namely Pashtunistan and this demand inhaled strong support from India, Afghanistan and the Soviet Union. The Pashtun nationalism was characterized by lack of direction, though the government had to take seriously because of the support it was grasping from India and Afghanistan.

Pakistan Army launched Operation Radd-ul-Fasaad after the terror wave in the country. Pakistan decided to execute Radd-ul-Fasaad after a destructive terror wave jolted the nation and took 129 lives with 365 people injured. The Operation is underway without any racial or ethnic discrimination spreading all over Pakistan. However, some Pashtun nationalists are projecting the targeting of Pashtun community in Radd-ul-Fasaad which refutes the on ground reality. A fraction of people in Pakistan depicted their concerns on the return of Afghan refugees. Asfand Yar Wali, the Chief of Awami National Party (ANP) contacted the Federal Government complaining about the arrest and harassment of Pashtuns and Afghan refugees in Punjab. Pashtuns are misleadingly alleged to be involved in the previous terror wave in Pakistan. It is broadcasted that racial profiling is being practiced in Punjab in the wake of surge in terror attacks which has no sound basis. The profiling in Punjab and the Federal Capital is not restricted to Pashtuns and Afghan refugees or the low-income communities, rather it is spread broadly around the area where as such no racial profiling is done in Radd-ul-Fasaad by military or any civilian authority. Some elements are stimulating the distrust of Pashtuns among other ethnic groups in the country and for that these elements use false propaganda to accelerate their motives.

Many anti-Pakistan lobbies wish to sabotage CPEC as the broad-based benefits are clear to them and they are well aware that this multibillion dollar Sino-Pak project would help Pakistan to usher into the era of prosperity and progress. These lobbies are using Pashtun nationalists against the suave completion of the project. A UK based Kashmiri politician Dr. Shabbir Chaudhary is seemed to be actively operating to create differences among the people regarding CPEC. R&AW of the neighboring state fueled this distractor.

The mission commander of Pashtun Liberation Army (PLA), Umar Daud Khattak has been quite active making many declarations against the Pakistan army for committing "atrocities" on Pashtun people. Besides, this tool is being used by the enemy nation to sabotage CPEC which completely is an economic project. Another instrument they are utilizing is Said Alam Mehsood's and his movement Pakhtunkhwa Ulasi Tehreek (PUT). It is conceived by many sections of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) that CPEC will benefit only Punjab and PUT has made this unsubstantiated projection among the people. PUT on different fronts kept on befuddling the people of KPK on CPEC whether it was through route controversy or by playing with the sentiments of Pashtun people in the wake of resource allocation. However, KPK is not neglected in the corridor. CPEC routes include Gilgit Baltistan, eight districts of KPK and tracks from Punjab and Balochistan as well as many projects that are under development in the Pashtun dominant areas of KPK and Balochistan.

Corridor Front, a group of different political parties and civil society organizations keeps on denouncing the progress being made in KPK under CPEC without any sound base. They along many other movements spreads a sense of insecurity among people regarding the economic corridor. Corridor Front under the lead of Dr. Said Alam Mehsood who is also heading Pakhtunkhwa Ulasi Tehreek (PUT) launched forceful protests against CPEC. They also threatened to protest before Chinese Embassy. All such ethnonationalist movements and activities can be considered as economic terrorism and such false paradigms and erroneous narratives should be countered as it would curb the on time and smooth completion of the developmental projects, and may develop abhorrence among the Pashtun community of the country.

### **Ethnonationalism in Punjab:**

Punjab is the most developed province of Pakistan having population of 101.4 million (2015) with comprehensive ethnic diversities and it is rich in agricultural and industrial production. Punjab has the greatest representation in civil services and is the largest ethnic group in Pakistan army (60-65 %). Punjab has made incredible expansions in business and industry. The notion of ethnic nationalism is absent in this part of the country and there are material reasons for Pakistani nationalism in Punjab. The intellectual and political milieu of Punjab has not been amiable to development of Punjabi nationalism. However, literacy rate is continuously increasing in Punjab and a growing figure of Punjabi educated people have espoused Urdu as their first language both in urban and rural Punjab as they feel speaking Urdu as superior and as a symbol of literate status. Recently the "extinction" of the Punjabi language is being used by certain

leftists to highlight “oppression of the Punjabis” at the hand of the Pakistani State. However, there seems to be a small audience for these protestations as various social factors play against the formation of Punjabi ethnonationalism.

**Conclusion:**

Ethnicity based contestations in Pakistan have not only been increased in recent years but have also captured the imagination of broad spectrum of stake holders. Ethnonationalist terrorism is a multifaceted planned proxy war imposed on Pakistan which has responded befittingly. Therefore, Pakistan should now start focusing more on aspects of human security in order to not only combat ethnonationalist terror but other forms as well. It is a widespread assertion that terrorism thrives in places where human security is compromised and the same is true for the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

The prevalence of this nuisance is high in some parts of the country and absent in others but both civil and military leadership have pursued appropriate policies and eradicated the threat. National integration, counter-radicalization policies and adequate allocation of resources would help Pakistan’s success against ethnonationalist terrorism. Fragmented Baloch nationalism, surrendering of leaders of ethnonational movements, notable decrease in terrorism after the launch of Operation Zarb-e-Azb followed by indiscriminate Operation Radd-ul-Fasaad are the omens of triumph Pakistan has achieved so far in such a short span.



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