

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between federalism and ethnocentrism with reference to Pakistan. Although some research has been carried out on the issues of federalism and ethnicity in Pakistan, but further study is warranted. By using descriptive and historical research designs, it was found that dysfunctional federalism is the major cause of ethnocentric tendencies in Pakistan.

There is a mutual relationship between federalism and ethnocentrism. The failure to produce viable, well-oiled and equitable federal machinery has led the masses to define their politics in ethnic terms. The failure to realize political, fiscal and judicial principles of federalism multiplied ethnic conflicts among federating units. Extensive political interference of centre in provincial affairs, high level of provincial fiscal dependence and absence of strong judiciary opened Pandora's Box of ethnic conflicts.

Pakistan is a pluralistic society and this need to be recognized and a comprehensive policy in the constitution need to be made to accommodate diversity. The stability of Pakistan is threatened not by ethnicity, but the failure of national institutions to recognize and accommodate ethnic differences and interests. Their resolution can only be found in negotiated political agreements that tackle the roots of the conflicts. The federal writ needs to be institutionalized in the popular political culture. Pakistan should learn the art of ethnic conflict management.

There is an urgent need for institutionalization of ethnic demands for higher political representation in order to promote tolerance culture and peaceful coexistence among ethnic groups. Developed societies have mature institutions of legitimate order, which ensures political stability, continuity of political authority, and established rules for conflict settlement. Federal institutional re-engineering is the only way to build state capacity for ethnic conflicts management and resolution.