

Politics & Ethnicity in Pakistan (A Case Study of MQM)

Lecture Delivered

By

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Politics of MQM

- The politics of identity in Sindh accentuated ethnic polarization in the province.
- MQM as a great champion of the interests of Mohajir community especially “Civil Service Quota”.
- After 1972 language riots the Mohajir leadership softened its attitude towards indigenous Sindhis.
- They perceived (PPI) as a great threat.
- Tussle between Mohajir and Punjabi – Pukhtun community.
- Relations between Mohajirs and Pukhtuns got strained due to Sohrab Goth incident (1986).

- Incidents of violence during 1987 in these areas Saudabad, Malir and Landhi.
- The incident of Landhi Colony No. 6.
- These incidents brought Mohajirs and indigenous Sindhis closer to each other.
- Mohajirs + Local Sindhis ↔ 1. Punjabis + Pukhtuns
2. Pakistan Peoples Party
- Conflict among ethnic forces in Sindh gave opportunity to army to manipulate.
- MRD, PPP Vs Military rule, MQM and Sindhi Nationalists were more pron to military regime to counter PPP.
- Zia extended quota for another ten years to mitigate Sindhi Nationalism.
- 1985 party less elections escalated ethnic divisiveness.

- Local Bodies elections 1987.
- Mohajirs emerged as a dominant force in the province.
- Altaf Hussain's "Charter of Resolution".
- MQM mayor expressed to extend co-operation to other ethnic communities.
- Shift from separate ethnic group to sub-nationality group.
- But this co-operation could not last long.
- Student's violence started in academic institutions. Two rival groups emerged IJT Vs APMSO. Jamat-i-Islami felt threatened due to the emerging power of MQM.
- 1987 glaring example of student's violence. 20 students were killed.

- NED University and Karachi University were handed over to Rangers.
- Political scenario changed with the death of Zia.
- MQM – Politics of Coalition 1988.
- Mohajir – Sindhi controversy revived due to Pacca Qila incident (1988).
- Two demands were unacceptable for Sindhis:
 - 1- Fifth nationality status for Mohajirs.
 - 2- Repatriation of Standard Pakistanis.
- Alliance between MQM and PPP after 1988 national elections.
- Karachi Declaration.

- Both the parties guaranteed the implementation of the agreement.
- The increasing popularity of MQM also became an impetus for other ethnic uprisings i.e. Saraiki Quomi Mahaz, Baluch Ittehad etc.
- However the MQM – PPP alliance could not last long because the repatriation of Biharies was a critical issue.
- Sindhi Nationalists were against it.
- PPP did not want to loose its vote bank.
- The series of violence continued.
- Dialogue started between the coalition partners but all in vain.

- Federal Placement Bureau in 1989.
- MQM – IJI alliance.
- Another agreement between IJI and MQM.
- It was an opportunity for the MQM to restore the confidence of their workers after the end of the alliance with the PPP.
- 1990 elections.
- Jam Sadiq Ali new Chief Minister.
- Law and Order was the basic issue.
- Weaponization in Karachi.
- The army held responsible the MQM leader Salim Shahzad.

- There was a general perception among the people that MQM had become a terrorist party.
- MQM was also condemned due to its anti-media activities.
- Altaf Hussain defended his party.
- Major Kaleem Case.
- Jinnahpur
- 1992 military operation.
- Emergence of Haqiqi group.
- Dissolution of the government.
- 1993 elections.

- MQM had strong reservation against PPP due to 1995-96 extra-judicial killings.
- MQM also made claims for the compensation of affectees.
- The government paid 100 million in two installments.
- Disagreement between government and MQM over issue of No – go areas.
- Murder of Hakeem Saeed.
- Musharraf's Martial Law 1999.
- First MQM criticized Musharraf but after 9/11 MQM took a U-Turn.