

# Language as a Fundamental Source for National Integration: The Case of Pakistan

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## Abstract

*National integration has become a main clause and challenge for the post-colonial developed societies of Asia and Africa. Many strategies were adopted to grow national integration, but solutions remained complex. In Pakistan, a third-world plural society that is a multi-ethnic and multilingual state, national integration faces constant challenges. Pakistan has consistently used centralizing and oppressive policies to establish national integration as a federal state. The state's authoritative policies turned ethnic and language riots into politics. This paper mainly enumerates the role of the Urdu language as a primary source for nationalism and national integration. In the past, the separation of East Pakistan in 1971 was the outcome of language riots. Recently, the National Language (Urdu) became a fundamental source for national integration to establish regional harmony and communication among provinces and different ethnic groups of Pakistan. Urdu serves as a tool for national integration, as it is an amalgamation of multiple languages from the past and present.*

**Keywords:** National Integration, Ethnicity, Urdu Language, Nationalism

## Introduction

Language as a key source for spoken, written, and communication has existed for about 6000 years (Baji, 2019). It is also considered a key object for national integration. As a developing state, Pakistan has been facing many socio-political and economic challenges that create hurdles for its national development. Along with different social issues that create hurdles for national unity, language plays a prime role in national integration. Pakistan is a multilingual state and Urdu as a national language plays a vital role in national integration. Before discussing the contribution of Urdu to federal integration, it is important to understand the origin of the Language and terminology of national integration.

## What is Language?

Language is related to words used by humans (Kottak, 2005). It further refers to a relationship between the words and the things they stand for. Language development is a system of communication in which words and their symbols are combined. Language is also considered a code through which ideas about words are represented. We can link Language with codes, pictures, conventions, communication, and systems to explain them. Language is the most frequently used and highly developed form of human communication (Crystal, 1985).

## National Integration

In order to discuss the phenomena of national integration, it is essential to define the core object of 'Nation' 'integration' and 'national integration' individually.

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"**Nation**" is a community of people with the same ideology, language, religion, culture, customs, norms, values, feelings, and common objectives for national development. The Nation is an entity (Shah & Ishaque, 2017).

"**Integration**" means various communities within a state have similar rights and are equally legally privileged irrespective of their financial, social, and educational status or regional associations (Nye, 1971). *Integration* is a process under which all state institutions work to provide equal quality and opportunities to their residents regardless of their race, origin, and creed. Integration is a continuous process, and its prime objective is to strengthen national reconstruction (Tabassum et al., 2020).

"**National Integration**" means bringing people together in a state by sharing ideas, culture, traditions, religion, and language without discrimination of caste, ethnicity, race, and regional boundaries (Jahan, 1972). According to the National Education Commission Report, "National Integration includes a confidence in nation's future, a continuous rise in the standard of living, development of feelings, values, and duties, at good and impartial administrative system with mutual understanding."

Pakistan has been a state facing the problem of national integration since its inception. As a result, the separation of East Pakistan also occurred. This article points out major hurdles for national integration and the Urdu language role in Pakistan's national integration (Tabassum et al., 2020).

### **Significant Challenges to the National Integration of Pakistan Culture**

Culture can be based on a specific group of people's norms, beliefs, language, art, and music at a particular time frame. *Culture* can be defined as a way of life adopted by a specific group of people. Pakistan has cultural diversification. In multicultural societies, establishing national integration is also a significant challenge because socio-cultural differences are created in complex societies and decrease uniformity (Khalil, Cultural impact of Pashto on Pakistani Languages, 2007).

### **Ethnicity**

Ethnicity is a significant challenge factor for national integration. Pakistan is a state where different ethnic groups exist, and every group is very peculiar about its identity (Alavi & Harriss, 2011). However, every group has an equal existence without discrimination on a state level. So, it is also the responsibility of different ethnic groups to stand united for the mutual cause of national unity and organization.

### **Lingual Dispute:**

Pakistan is a multilingual state and this diversity has been a major obstacle in attaining national integration. Historically, after the partition of the sub-continent, Bengalis were deprived of political and economic rights, and Bengali language riots also took place. Jinnah himself supported Urdu as a single national language among other regional languages. The Bengali community opposed this decision, and being the majority, they demanded Bengali be recognized alongside Urdu as a national language (*Rahman et al. in Pakistan, 2011*). Later, they started a proper movement for the Bengali language and compelled govt. To give Bengali status as the national Language along with Urdu. Hence, as a result, in the 1956 and 1962 constitutions, we have both languages as national languages. Unfortunately, early clashes increased differences between East and West Pakistan. The language problem was solved, but the hatred in the hearts of the Bengalis did not go away, eventually leading to Dhaka's fall.

### **Role of Urdu for Nationalism and National Integration in Pakistan**

Urdu is the national language of Pakistan, along with other regional languages. In Pakistan, Urdu is the mother tongue of a tiny community. *Urdu* is a single language that connects different multilingual provinces and develops national harmony. Although Urdu is not the mother tongue of the majority of the population, it is widely understood by most people because it is part of the educational syllabus from grade 1 to 12 and the medium of instruction at the primary level in many schools, which makes it a neutral language, which can claim to be the official Language (Zaman, 1984). Benjamin Lee Whorf stated, "A nation cannot stand united in the absence of a single mode of communication."

Urdu has played a colossal role in forming national and cultural integration in Pakistan. Being a lingua Franca which is widely spoken and understood across ethnic groups and throughout the region and has not only been a language of the media and entertainment industry but also recognized and employed as a language in educational and governmental institutions.

Urdu became a language of resistance and mobilization during the struggle for a separate Muslim state in the Indian Subcontinent. Writers, Poets, and Muslim leaders used this Language to build communal identity and spread messages for independent states throughout British India.

Eventually, Urdu was adopted as a national language after independence, and again, it was espoused and advocated as a language of the Muslims of Pakistan, which inspired millions of Indian Muslims to create Pakistan.

Urdu is not merely a language of literature and writings; it has become a medium of instruction in educational institutions and a channel for governmental correspondence and legal proceedings. Urdu has also been one of the most popular languages of media communication in Pakistan, making it a language of cultural expression and the entertainment industry. Eventually, it aided in endorsing a sense of shared cultural identity among Pakistanis across the board.

Regardless of being a source of national integration, Urdu has also been delimited and surrounded by controversy. East Pakistanis felt that endorsing Urdu as a sole national language marginalized their language, and their culture was overshadowed by an alien cultural hegemony, which resulted in substantial socio-political unrest in Pakistan and the dismemberment of East Pakistan in 1971.

Despite all controversies, Urdu, a language spoken and widely understood, has retained central importance in Pakistani nationalism and identity.

### **Evolution of Urdu and the Role of Provinces**

The state of Pakistan is based on different regional or provincial divisions. Every province has close relations with the development of the Urdu language. We will explain the individual relationship of Urdu with other regional languages and how Urdu became a prime source for national integration.

### **Role of Sindh in the Development of Urdu**

Today, Urdu is considered an important language, but there is still a big question about the origin of Urdu. Some scholars argue that the origin of the Urdu language is from Sindh. One of the famous scholars of the sub-continent, Syed Suleman Nadvi, supported this theory in his book *Naqoos-e-Sulemani*. He argued that Sindh was the first place Muslims came and settled; thus, the Urdu language also developed in Sindh province (Rahi, 1985). Syed Suleman Nadvi further stated that most Arab and Persian Muslim traders came to the ports of Sindh and after 712 A.C., Arab Muslims conquered Sindh. He argues that the local languages of Sindh and Multan were mixed with Arabic and Persian. Later, the Dehli language became a part of them, and a new language, Urdu, was created. Currently, Urdu is a mixture of all these

languages. Pir Hisam ud Din Rashidi also supports this viewpoint that Urdu originated in Sindh when Muslim troops came and settled here after the conquest (Rahi, 1985). Rashidi opined that various words are commonly used in the Sindhi language and are also derived from the Arabic language. After the Muslim conquest of Sindh, various Hindu *pandits* visited Baghdad. Over there, they interacted with Arab scholars and even translated different books into the Sindhi language. Through these kinds of intellectual exchanges, we can witness that various Arabic words became part of Sindhi literature and were commonly used in Sindhi poetry and literature (Rahi, 1985).

However, various scholars contradict this viewpoint. The Father of Urdu, Moulvi Abdul Haq, stated that although Sindh is not the origin of Urdu, no doubt Sindh is where Hindu and Muslim civilizations coexisted for centuries, ultimately laying the foundation for a synthetic culture where Urdu flourished immensely (Vesrio, 2009). One cannot disassociate the impact of the Sindhi language on Urdu as, indeed, it was the region of Sindh where this amalgamation of diverse languages ultimately started taking place for the convenience of immigrant Muslims of Middle-East and Central Asia.

During the Urdu-Hindi Controversy in the Subcontinent, the Muslim intelligentsia of Sindh made a substantial stand on this controversy by supporting the Urdu language. Many prominent Muslims advocated for the Urdu language. They made it clear that Muslims of India would never bow down before such petty tactics to malign their religious identity, which was synonymous with downgrading or insulting the Urdu language. Pir Hisam-ud-Din Rashidi narrates in his work that during that era, when Urdu-Hindi Controversy was at its peak, Sindi Muslims used to declare Urdu instead of Sindi as their mother tongue in the census surveys (Vesrio, 2009).

1937 Urdu Day was celebrated in Karachi, and a seminar was arranged at Khaliq Dinya Hall. This Seminar was Presided over by Allama I. I. Qazi. During this seminar, he made his observations and remarks regarding Urdu very clear that one cannot disassociate Urdu from the Muslims of the Indian Subcontinent and that the intentional attempt to malign and negate Urdu will have very adverse impacts on the society and politics of India (Vesrio, 2009).

During the Muslim Nationalist Movement of Khilafat and the decisive phase of the Pakistan Movement, Muslim leaders and students conducted various seminars and events from Karachi to Sukkur as the enthusiasm was on its peak. Still, the noteworthy thing in this regard is that Muslim leaders delivered speeches in Urdu alongside Sindi during all those conventions and seminars. Urdu became a symbol of national unity during that phase. Once, a Muslim Educational Conference occurred in Karachi, and Molana Hali, a prominent Urdu poet and writer, was also present there. Most speeches were made in Urdu during that conference, although most participants spoke Sindi (Vesrio, 2009).

Although the association of Sindi Muslims with the Urdu language was not new, the Muslim graduates of Aligarh University played a vital role in popularising Urdu in the political scenario of the subcontinent (Vesrio, 2009). It was indeed evident during Muslim political rejuvenation in the early twentieth century. Hence, one cannot deny that Sindh and Sindi Muslims played an enormous role in the development of Urdu and elevating its status on the social and political front during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

### **Role of Balochistan in the Development of Urdu**

Balochistan is a place where many people speak more than one Language. In Kalat and Makran, people mostly speak Balochi and Brahvi, whereas, in western Balochistan, most people speak Balochi and Pashto. In southern and eastern Balochistan, Sindhi and Brahvi languages are widely spoken and understood by people. Siraiki, Balochi, and Pashto are widely spoken and understood in Balochistan's northern and eastern parts.

Quetta, as a center of culture and politics of Balochistan, holds a unique place where almost everyone understands and speaks at least two or more languages like Brahvi, Balochi, Pashto, Persian, Urdu, Siraiki, and Punjabi. In the region where most of the people are multilingual, adopting Urdu for communication was relatively easy for the people of Balochistan.

Historically, Balochistan was the first region that came under the influence of Islam. During the Caliphate period, expansions were swiftly taking place in Central Asia by Muslim Arab generals. Some social scientists and researchers opined that because of this influence and interaction, the people of Balochistan were introduced to the faith of Islam. As the Arab and Persian preachers and traders started preaching and steeling in the newly conquered territories, they responded positively and convivially. Ultimately, this interaction impacted the development of the Urdu language, considered a more convenient and effective form of communication with non-Baloch people in the region.

The advent of the British in the subcontinent and their expansion towards the north gave rise to nationalism in India, and the case of Balochistan was not different at all. Being a tribal society that takes pride in its freedom and culture, it was doubtful that these Baloch tribes would easily surrender to the imperialists. There is a violent history of resistance, clash, and subjugation in Balochistan during the British Era. Although the British ultimately succeeded in occupying Baloch lands, there was constant fear and threat of upheaval from the Baloch people. Baloch also used poetry during this colonial period to express their anger and anguish. They also used it to build a narrative for achieving ideals of freedom and tranquillity.

Many researchers believe that most Balochs speak Urdu and Balochi, their mother tongue. It is partly because Urdu and Balochi coexisted during the colonial period and the first half of the twentieth century. In some of the earliest Baloch writings from *Faryad Balochistan* and *Shams Gardi to Mehrab Gardi*, Urdu was chosen as a language of expression. Even Baloch nationalist organizations like *Anjuman-e-Ittihad-e-Balochan*, *Qallat National Party*, and *Baloch Haq Tawwar* used Urdu in writing their political poetry, declamations, essays, and letters.

There are numerous Baloch poets and writers who used Urdu as a way to express resistance and Muslim nationhood during this period. Among them, we can see the names of Mullah Muhammad Hassan Brahvi, who made a very lasting impact on the Urdu language. Various other poets like Syed Ghulam Ali Almas, Abdul Haq Zaboora, Sardar Yousaf Khan, Yousaf Popalzai, Mir Gul Khan Naseer, Nabi Baksh Asad, Imdad Nizami, Riyaz Qamar, Ataa Shaad are also noteworthy (Kausar, 1985).

The central point in the poetic works and compositions of Gul Khan Naseer was filled with protest, revolution, and anti-imperialist themes. He composed resistance poetry all his life and opposed class conflicts and even poetical oppression. He was also at the forefront of the Baloch nationalist movement and was most active between 1935 and 1980. He also wrote poems in English, Urdu, Balochi, Brahvi, and Persian, inspiring generations. He was also a very close friend of Faiz Ahmed Faiz. He was the author of several books and translated works from other languages into Balochi and Urdu.

In 1962, when the USSR government decided to award Faiz Ahmed Faiz with the Lenin Prize, they also wanted to present Mir Gul Khan Nasir with the Prize, but because of his differences with the Ayub Khan Regime of that time, he was not allowed to go to Moscow. Mir Gul Khan Naseer, for his literary services, was posthumously awarded *Sitara-i-Imtiaz* in 2001.

Another very prominent name is Atta Shad, who started his career in Urdu poetry as a disciple of Faiz Ahmad Faiz but soon felt the need to evolve his style. His unique style made him prominent in the literary quarters (Dawn, 2011). During his lifetime, Atta Shad published two collections of Urdu poetry (Baloch, 2013). His Urdu poetry accurately echoes the Baloch culture and landscape of Balochistan. He added a new poetic essence to Urdu poetry through his poetic style by versifying specific Balochi folklore, romantic sagas, and proverbs (Baloch, 2013). He wrote poems like "*Mahnaaz*," "*Shah Mureed aur Haani*," "*Wafa*," and "*Lori*." They

represent different aspects of Balochi culture and talk about the psyche of the typical Baloch society.

Another significant fact regarding Urdu in Balochistan is that only two newspapers were published in English during the Colonial period. One was "*The Monthly Balochistan Advertisers*," and the other was "*Border Weekly News*". Apart from these two, Urdu remained a dominant press in Balochistan. Many weekly, fortnightly, and daily newspapers were published in Urdu (Sadeed, 1985). It shows how Urdu was widely read and considered a symbol of Muslim integration and defiance against imperialism.

Apart from that, many educational institutes published their annual magazines. Unsurprisingly, a large portion of it was published in Urdu; this legacy even continued after the creation of Pakistan. After the creation of Pakistan, prominent institutions like Government College Quetta, *Anjuman-e-Taraqi-e-Urdu*, Writers Club, and Iqbal Youth Council also played a prominent role in the national integration and development of the Urdu language (Sadeed, 1985).

### **Role of Punjab in the Development of Urdu**

Although most language experts agree that Urdu received its ultimate status and prestige in the Deccan region, there is no denying that this language was introduced to them by the people who migrated from the ancient province of Punjab. The Muslim warriors from various other regions under the command of Mahmood Ghori reached Delhi. Most of the people in his command came from the Punjab to Delhi and later settled there permanently. So, this Language traveled from the northern parts of India to Delhi. According to Hafiz Mahmood Sherani, "Urdu was not the ancient language of Delhi. It traveled with the Muslims to Delhi" (Sadeed, 1985). S.K. Chatterji, one of the Indian language experts, states that when "Turko-Afghan conquerors came to Delhi, there was a large number of Punjabi soldiers with them, and they use to communicate in the language which was well spoken in the northern areas at that time. This language ultimately became a commercial language for these new settlers and in due course of time gained the status of an opposite philological countenance in the region" (Sadeed, 1985), Which can be in the period of Later Mughals when Urdu became a symbol of Muslim expressionists, poets, and scholars. Most of that time's literary and poetic works are evident in how deeply Urdu was entrenched in the capital of the Mughal Empire, i.e., Delhi. It was one reason that Urdu was directly associated with the Muslims and was conceived as a threat to British Imperialists in India, ultimately leading to a lethal linguistic controversy of the millennium.

Alongside all these historical developments, the Muslims of Punjab patronized Urdu and even preferred the Urdu language over Punjabi. We find numerous Urdu poets, composers, writers, and scholars in Punjab. Undoubtedly, the Urdu language has taken primary importance for Punjabi Muslims. During the previous century, Punjab stood out in the services rendered to develop the Urdu language in the Indian Subcontinent. Lahore, a traditional, political, and cultural hub of Punjab, also became a literary hub for Urdu. We can see that plentiful influential Muslim writers and reformers belonged to this region. Who not only played their part in Muslim politics but also used the Urdu language to reform and rejuvenate Muslim nationalism in Muslims. The most prominent were Prof. Hameed Ahmed Khan, Dr. Jameel Jalaibi, Muneer Niazi, Ahsan Zaidi, Amjid Islam Amjid, Kishwar Naheed, and Allama Muhammad Iqbal. Apart from them, many Urdu novelists of Punjabi origin like Ishfaq Ahmad, A. Hameed, Agha Babar, Farkhanda Lodhi, Sadiq Hussain, Bano Qudsia, Jamila Hashmi, and many others are worth mentioning here who played a significant role in the development of Urdu language and also contributed to the social uplift of Muslims (Sadeed, 1985).

During the early twentieth century, a magazine named *Makhzan* started publishing in Lahore, and its publishing was considered very constructive for the Urdu language. The publishing

of *Makhzan* brought forward many noteworthy Urdu poets and writers like Alama Mohammed Iqbal, Kushi Mohammed Nazir, Zafar Ali Khan, Maluk Chand Mahroom, Hafeez Jalandhri, Shaikh Abdul Qadir, Ghulam Bhaink, and many more literary figures who belonged to Punjabi households but because of their labor of love for the Urdu language rendered valuable services to Urdu. *Makhzan* occupies or holds a unique place in the history of modern literature, sustained an excellent position for such an extended period, and was equally appealing to all classes of people in Lahore. It covers the topics of Urdu poetry, fiction, history, and criticism. *Makhzan* began in April 1901 in Lahore and was published in May 1951 (Makhzan (1901-1951), n.d.).

During the Pakistan movement in Punjab, Urdu gained momentous importance and was directly associated with Muslim Nationalism and Muslim Nationalists. Even Jinnah endorsed and recognized the importance of Urdu. It was evident that he wanted Urdu to be the national Language of Pakistan, which, according to him was the identity of Islam and the Muslim brotherhood (Sadeed, 1985). Moreover, the services Urdu has rendered to Islam in the previous centuries have undoubtedly impacted Indian Muslims in what was considered inseparable culturally, literally, and politically.

### **Role of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in the Development of Urdu**

Pashto also has a very close connection with Urdu historically and grammatically. Generally speaking, Urdu is a language that has a strong tendency to absorb and engross other languages; therefore, the claim made by Pashto intellectuals about influencing Urdu and its development can also be witnessed historically.

Many Pashtoon scholars and writers traced and developed close links between Urdu and Pashto literature in history. First of all, Farigh Bukhari, a renowned scholar, discussed this link with the help of different arguments. He debated that Pashto is one of the most ancient Indian languages, as Afghan civilization is one of the most ancient civilizations in north India. The region where Afghan tribal society grew and lived was one of the trade routes connecting India with Central Asia. It allowed many traders and even invaders to cross Khyber Pass to move to and fro for commercial or political purposes. During medieval times, many Afghan and Central Asian conquerors crossed into India via this ancient trade route, and ultimately, a complex type of acculturation took place in this region. We can also witness several ethnicities residing in this region with different linguistic backgrounds. Hence, this region is where many cultures, ethnicities, and religious groups live together and directly or indirectly influence each other socially, culturally, economically, and politically. The story of Pashto's influence on Urdu starts with the invasion of Muslim invaders from the north when they, in a quest for political hegemon, crossed Khyber Pass and ultimately got control of Lahore and Delhi.

Farigh Bukhari further argues that Urdu was not only born and bred on Afghan soil; these Afghans used it to communicate with people of other ethnicities (Rahi, 1985). Interestingly, Urdu vocabulary has almost fifty percent of Pashto words. Urdu was spoken throughout the Pashtoon region for centuries and was widely used in trade, communication, and official and educational purposes. This adaptation and usage of Urdu have very positively impacted society and Pashtoon culture. Apart from the Pashto language, Hindko is another language that also holds a significant place in the central cities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. However, Hindko, Pahari, and Gojri dialects have certain similarities with the Pashto language, but the latter is the most impactful historically in the region. These were the main arguments due to this; many Pashtoons claim that Urdu originated from Pashtoon society (Khalil et al., 2005).

Certain writings highlight Pashto's importance and influence on Urdu, but unfortunately, they are rarely available. One of Pashto society's most famous spiritual leaders and saints, Bayazid Ansari, popularly known as 'Peero Khan', is widely read. One of his most significant writings, *Khair-ul-Biyan*, is about religious matters and was written in four different languages.

First, the author wrote this book in Arabic, then in Persian, then in the Pashtoo language, and finally in Indo-Urdu. This book is considered one of the rarest books and one of the handwritten copies of it is well preserved in the India Office Record at British Library. The presence and writing of this book are self-evident about the importance of Urdu in the Pashtoon culture and society (Khalil et al., 2005).

The oldest Urdu composition, *Tafseer-i-Hindi*, is present in the Peshawar Archives. Although the initial pages and the date of publication are missing, according to language expert S. M. Jaffer, the type of page and writing suggests that it is almost six hundred years old. In this way, it is the oldest and the first *Tafseer* (explanation) of the Holy Quran in the Urdu language in the Pashtoon region (Rahi, 1985).

In one of the historical writings, *Makhzan-i-Afghani*, we find the name Shaikh Essa Mishwani. It is narrated about him that he was a Pashto and Urdu writer and was a contemporary of Sher Shah Suri. Prior to this, Urdu was usually referred to as Hindi by intellectuals and writers, but what is interesting here is that Shaikh Essa Mishwani is quoted as an Urdu writer and poet; thus, it became evident that during the time of Sher Shah Suri, Urdu was generally referred to as Urdu rather than Hindi.

Furthermore, two famous and major Pashto poets, Kushaal Khan Khattak and Rehman Baba, used Urdu-Hindi words in their poetic compositions, showing Pashto's influence on Urdu and vice-versa. There is another very famous Pashto poet who was a contemporary of Kushal Khan Khattak and Rahman Baba, and his name was Maaz-Ullah Khan, who used Persian and Urdu by, his penname 'Afghan' for his poetic compositions. Some of his Urdu compositions are still preserved. After him, another very prominent name in the annals of Urdu-Pashto literature is Qasim Ali Khan, born in the eighteenth century at Kohat. Two of his *dewans* are present in the library of Islamia College Peshawar, whereas Persian and Urdu compositions are also found (Rahi, 1985).

With the advent of the British in the Indian Subcontinent and, subsequently, in the Frontier province, various educational institutes were established. Urdu, Persian, and English were compulsory in the curriculum. Urdu was usually used as a medium of communication for general teaching and instruction, which ultimately strengthened its roots in the Frontier province. We can see that in the official gazetteers and publications alongside English, Urdu was also written. This thing gave rise to a very energetic youth whom Urdu admired. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, several Pashtoos used Urdu to express their emotions, national pride, history, and resistance against the Colonial power in the Frontier province. In 1903 the first literary organization, '*Bazm-i-Sukhan Peshawar*,' was established. The names of those who were associated with this organization are Ahmad Ali Sain Peshawari, Agha Majdi Shah Khadam, Farigh Khawri, Mohammed Khan Assi, Ghulam Hussain Masgar, Syed Jigar Kazmi, Khalis Makki, Riffat Bukhari, Z.A. Bukhari, Abdur Rab Nishtar, Syed Sherazi, Jaffar Ali Jaffry, Syed Zia Jaffry, Mir Abbas Mir, Malik Amanat Ali Amanat, Agha Mohammed Shah Bark, Malik Nasir Ali Khan Nasir are noteworthy.

During the same period, Shaukat Wasti established a literary organization named '*Urdu Sabha*', further strengthening Urdu in the Frontier. One of the very significant developments on the part of *Urdu Sabha* was that the first All India Urdu *Mushaira* was organized under the patronization of this organization, and many famous Urdu poets of the time like Jigar Murad Abbadi, Allama Tajoor Najeeb Abbadi, Ehsan Danish, Roshan Siddiqui, and many others participated in it.

In 1945, *Anjuman Taraqi-Urdu Sarhad* was established under the presidency of Justice Malik Khuda Baksh, and the Secretary was Dr. Nazeer Mirza Barlas. These developments showed that Urdu has a deep and significant relationship with Pakhtoon society, and many noteworthy Urdu poets belong to the Pashtoon background. However, they still adopted Urdu to connect with the masses and express their feelings and associations through this channel.



### **The Urdu Bengali Controversy**

The Urdu-Bengali language controversy was one of the prominent and crucial reasons which led to the tragedies in East Pakistan and, ultimately, its separation in 1971. Pakistan's Government's decision to impose Urdu as a sole national language without considering the sensitivities of the Bengalis, who were in the majority, led to the unfolding of a crisis of great magnitude. Bengalis feel that their socio-cultural rights are cramped, and despite comprising the majority, they are marginalized by the people in power.

Movement for the Bengali language started in the 1950s, and the tragic incident at Dhaka University in 1952, which claimed the lives of numerous Bengali students who were protesting against the imposition of the Urdu Language, proved to be an extreme blunder on the part of Pakistan's ruling elite at that time. This incident not only gave rise to the movement of Bengali language but also to Bengali nationalism. Awami League, which demanded autonomy for East Pakistan, was established in the same year. Although in the constitutions of 1956 and 1962, Bengali was declared the national Language alongside Urdu, things had gone rough till then.

The elections of 1970 proved to be a clear verdict from the people of East Pakistan that they demanded their autonomous status, and any forceful implementation of non-Bengali culture or language would not be accepted. Pakistan's establishment again made an erroneous calculation. It refused to allow the Awami League to form a government, which led to civil disobedience in East Pakistan, resulting in military operations, the loss of millions of innocent lives, and, ultimately, the creation of Bangladesh.

Even historically, the Urdu-Bengali controversy gives us an insight into the challenges and miscalculations of policymakers trying to enforce the Urdu language at all state levels. One major challenge and need was to balance the needs of different ethnic groups. Pakistan is a country of diverse ethnic and Language groups. More than 60 different languages are spoken, so it is essential in the first place to respect and accept their social variances and then try to promote the use of the Urdu language to abridge social differences and promote a homogenous cause of national unity and Muslim nationalism.

Another challenge is to make sure that the Urdu language is accessible to all Pakistanis in order to embed a substantial cause of unity. This cause can be attained by maintaining Urdu as a medium of education, promoting it as a proper discipline, and continuing it as a significant means of communication in government institutions and media.

Last but not least, Urdu must be made a dynamic, vibrant, and pulsating language so that people enthusiastically learn and adopt this language. It can be achieved by encouraging modern ways of employing Urdu in popular culture, arts, and research. Pakistan's Government has taken a few steps to promote Urdu by introducing specific reforms for its development. Establishing the National Language Authority to develop and implement Urdu language policies is one of the examples; other initiatives in education and media are also of significant importance.

However, policymakers need to do more to balance the needs of various ethnic groups and acquaint and make Urdu accessible to all Pakistanis by making it an adequate, dynamic, and vibrant Language.

### **Discussion on Qualities of Urdu Language**

In Pakistan, Urdu has another advantage of being developed by the regional languages already discussed. Every province tried to establish a close relationship with Urdu and contributed towards developing the Urdu language. It also has the tendency and capacity to absorb words from other languages. *Urdu* is a language that has collected verbs and pronouns from local languages of India, as words and phrases from Arabic, Persian, English, Portuguese, Turkish, and many other Indian languages and dialects. It could serve as an excellent medium of

instruction, administration, political dialogue, and connection among Pakistani provinces (Rahman et al. in Pakistan, 2011).

National Language is the identity of a nation. Every nation is very conscious of its national language. Abroad, our language is our identity, and we can see that every nation gives respect and importance to its national language. Today, English is an international language most widely used by different countries. If we quote the example of China, it has a scientific approach to the Chinese language and tries to grow it as an international language.

Urdu, as a national language in Pakistan, also plays a role as a medium of instruction in many schools at the primary and secondary levels. Along these, Urdu plays a source of expression and communication of feelings and thoughts. People from different areas can easily communicate and understand each other. Urdu also served as a strong binding force between Pakistan's provinces and regions. People living in different provinces understand that despite speaking different languages, they have adopted one national language, which is the heritage of all.

The people of Pakistan are one nation; therefore, it is essential for the state's prosperity, brotherhood, and unity that everyone adopts Urdu as a national language and respects it as a national identity. In this way, Urdu plays a crucial role in Pakistan's national integration.

The process of uniting people from diverse backgrounds and upbringings into a single realm or Nation is called 'National integration.' National integration encompasses a shared sense of Identity and belonging among citizens, and it plays a significant role in promoting social cohesion, economic development, and political stability.

Urdu, a widely spoken and understood language, can be an indispensable source for national integration. Below are some examples of how Urdu promotes national integration in Pakistan.

- In almost every educational institute, Urdu is used to teach students about the history, culture, and values of Muslim nationalism in the Indian Subcontinent and the role played by the Urdu language in unifying Muslims for a more significant cause of a separate Muslim state.
- Urdu is the language that is used in governmental institutions and as well as in courts for legal proceedings which ensures justice for ordinary citizens.
- In media, from information to entertainment, Urdu is a primary language that plays a significant role in propagating national integration.
- Urdu is one of the most popular forms of cultural expression used by almost every form of art and in the entertainment industry to endorse and encourage a shared sense of Identity and culture among Pakistanis to strengthen national integration.

Despite all these efforts and the role of the Urdu language in national integration and building a sense of national identity, some challenges are deeply rooted and need to be tackled effectively and with significant consideration. The challenges of Baloch and Sindhi nationalists are of prime importance. The state needs to implement policies in which their nationalistic ideologies are accepted and catered to, and they do not feel marginalized or relegated. Another challenge is the uneven and irregular educational approaches, making it difficult for students from various regions to understand and learn Urdu compared to students from other regions. The policymakers need to address this unequal understanding of the Urdu language to guarantee an effective national integration policy and strategy.

## Conclusion

Urdu, a language spoken and understood by people from almost all ethnic groups and regions in Pakistan, has proved to have great potential as a binding force for national integration. Historically, after the creation of Pakistan, the promotion of Urdu had a diverse impact on the indigenous languages and cultural sensitivities, which was the result of narrow understanding

and lack of empathy towards these ethnic groups, which, to a great extent, led to irreversible political and social troubles and misfortunes.

The state has always promoted Urdu as a national language since its inception. This cause has been carried out through various policies by the Government in the public sector. It makes Urdu a compulsory subject in educational institutes and implements it as a language in all administrative, governmental, and legal correspondence and proceedings. At the same time, promoting Urdu in all forms of print and electronic media and making it one of the most potent sources of expression in art and entertainment has helped Urdu to become a symbol of national unity and integration.

This preferment of the Urdu language for attaining national integration by the state has, to a great extent, played a significant role. Indeed, Urdu has become a lingua franca that is comprehensively spoken and understood by people from all ethnic and regional groups and people from all walks of life.

However, this promotion of the Urdu language has limitations, as it also led to the marginalization and ostracism of some indigenous languages and cultures. The Urdu-Bengali controversy is one example of that case. Even though, after the fall of East-Pakistan the challenges are not over yet. The state of Pakistan needs to acknowledge the cultural feelings and limitations of Baloch and Sindhi ethnic groups, which think that the imposition of Urdu will marginalize their culture and language. They have also debated that promoting the Urdu language has given Urdu-speaking Pakistanis, who comprise less than 9 percent of the population, an unfair and partial advantage in government and education.

This relegation of indigenous languages and cultures had various undesirable consequences. Not only has it caused the decline of these indigenous languages, but it has also made it quite challenging to preserve their cultural heritage and has contributed to the sense of bitterness and alienation among certain ethno-linguistic groups.

The State of Pakistan has adopted some policies to address such concerns of different groups; for example, the government has established provincial language authorities to promote, protect, and preserve regional languages through education and media. Other initiatives to promote indigenous languages in popular art and culture are also adopted.

However, more initiatives should be adopted to preserve and promote indigenous languages and their cultural identity through research and development. Furthermore, the government must launch programs to raise awareness regarding the importance of indigenous languages and cultures.

The promotion of Urdu, to some extent, had relatively impacted undesirably on some of the indigenous ethnolinguistic groups:

- Balochi is a language of over 10 million in Pakistan, still not recognized as an official language. On the other hand, promoting the Urdu language has led to a decrease in the use of Balochi, especially among young Baloch.
- Over 50 million people in Pakistan speak the Sindhi language, but it is not as widely used as Urdu in Government and education, making it challenging to preserve and conserve.
- More than 30 million Pashtuns in Pakistan take immense pride in their Pashtoo language. However, at the state level, it is not justly promoted in media, which has made it difficult for Pashtoons to access information and entertainment in their language.

It is noteworthy to acknowledge that the promotion of Urdu on indigenous languages and cultures has not been uniform and consequently resulted in uneven impact on some of these ethnic groups compared to others.

Arguably, apart from promoting the Urdu language at the state level, other factors contributed to the marginalization and ostracism of different ethnolinguistic groups. These factors include the migration of Urdu-speaking people to urban centers with more significant economic opportunities, which result in the economic dominance of Urdu-speaking communities and the

lack or nonexistence of government support for those who need to speak or understand the Urdu language.

This ostracism or marginalization of indigenous groups is a multifarious concern with no simple solutions. The government needs to balance between promoting national unity and Identity and preserving the culture and languages of different groups, which will ultimately aid in a much smoother national integration, unity, and co-existence with tolerance and diversity.

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