

THE 'MINORITY COMPLEX' OF THE MAJORITIES AND THEIR IDENTITY CLAIMS: A CASE STUDY OF INDIA-PAKISTAN PHENOMENON

Dr Shanthikumar Hettiarachchi*

Abstract

There is an inherent socio-political and religio-cultural need for communities to claim their identity, even though there are ambiguities in its definition. However these groups seem to have hegemonized their claims above the rest. New socio-cultural camps have unprecedentedly engaged in a process of 'othering,' resulting in politically untenable agendas, socially futile situations, conflict, contestation and even engaging violent extremism. Even though there is validity in claiming a certain 'identity' for a specific group, socially or religiously, exclusive claims lead to unfavorable demands and are detrimental to the survival of the "other." The 'minorities' too are made up of a socio-political or a religio-cultural 'other' like the majority. Yet desire parity, honour and space for themselves, and their identities are set resolutely to nothing less than the status and claims of a 'majority.' Hence, what both claim arguably is a socio-political or a religio-cultural affirmation of a subliminal 'tribal identity' to reconfigure their own 'individual identity' as 'a truth claim' now juxtaposed unknowingly with multiple layers of identities. This social complexity has challenged the traditional forms of social and political stability, desperately leading to irreparable social decay. The focus of this deliberation is the 'India-Pakistan phenomenon case study.' This article raises new questions for the reader - imagination to search for answers alongside opinion makers and influencers in both nations to move from the incumbent stalemate and redesign a possible shared future.

Keywords: *Majority-Minority Discourses, India-Pakistan Relations, 'Otherisation', Identity Politics, Survival Adaptations, Peace-Possibility.*

* Dr. Shanthikumar Hettiarachchi is a visiting fellow at Christian studies and Contextual theology, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka. Email: Shanthi.hettiarachchi@gmail.com

Preamble

A socio-anthropological perspective and, more arguably, an evolutionary description of the human search for the 'new. Let us consider them for the current work as 'three leaps of humankind.' Firstly, the invention of fire, which led to meat cooked before consumption by the hunter-gatherer tribes, which could be the origin of tribal consciousness.¹ Secondly, these hunters and gatherers attempted their next leap after a few thousand years in the formidable discovery of the wheel. This leap de facto transformed their lives. History of transportation commences from the 'game site to the cave site' on the wheel evoking new horizon of 'being human.' The next several millennia they struggled, developing reasoning, intelligence, making progress on these two primal discoveries of 'fire power,' and the 'wheel mobility' to most modern scientific explorations. However, the third leap has revolutionized every global landmass and intense social mobility, thinking patterns, behaviour and conduct. The discovery of the 'chip' has brought human knowledge to limitless domains with information into cyberspace, transforming economics and trade, cultural and social settings, politics and governance.

This paradigm change is driving its way with multilayered - knowledge to space exploration to the intricate organs grown in genetically altered animals to be transplanted into humans, and even willingness to 'engineer evolution,' which the textbook states as evolution by natural selection, revolutionizing the Darwinian theory. These changes continue to shift the traditionally known world from Lima to London, Lagos to Lahore, Beijing to Bonn, and Aberdeen to Auckland, linking everyone in life and practice.

With this prologue, let's consider a histo-civilizational, geo-political example of a landmass, a people, and an expansion of a polity that significantly continues to impact identity politics, non-negotiables, mutual resistance and peace-possibility, security and growth in South Asia. Moreover, as the Indo-Pacific maritime connectivity evolves with Beijing as its epicenter, a definitive collaboration is seen with Pakistan, while India is yet to constructively engage in it. India's post-2024 election foreign policy is taking a new direction with renewed links with the Middle East and Moscow.

¹ I would like this specific view of the human origin and its correlation to their growth and development into contemporary history even though they assume that they reached a pinnacle of progress comparatively. I will provide due references to the later paragraphs to this concept of *tribe* and *tribal psyche* even in Aberdeen (being Scots) to Auckland (being Mauri) in postmodern thinking and living.

Pre-Partition India

Pakistan today is approximately a 4000 + year-old civilization, especially the Pakistani-Punjab and also known to be Indus Valley based cities of Harappa (to the Northeast of the Indus)², and Mohenjo-daro (Southwest of the river),³ The ancient Persians described (today's Iran, Iraq) people in the region to the East of the river *Sind* as the *Sindus* in Persian - who subsequently named the river *Sindu*,⁴ which later became Indus and the people on the East came to be known as Indians. Except for Nepal, which was an ancient independent kingdom, Bhutan, Bangladesh, and Pakistan were all part of a massive landmass from Ladakh to Kanyakumari, but the island of Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) also remained an independent kingdom(s).

The land further extended to the hinterlands of Chittagong and Sylheti in the deep Southeast of what is now Bangladesh and to the Northeast of India, to Arunachal Pradesh to the North and Mizoram to the Southern part of Northern East, bordering Northern Myanmar, all this was *Maha Bharat* once. Whether the history of these balkanizing effects change India or whether India and Pakistan changed region's history is a provocative premise to debate. The objective of the discussion is neither the history of India nor Pakistan, but what lessons are enigmatic and candid to any geopolitical discourse on South Asia especially the Indo-pacific debate with the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) underway.

The geopolitical relations between India and Pakistan remain openly contentious in their encounters. From the unfinished Kashmir crisis or the dissolution of East Pakistan into a sovereign state of Bangladesh. India's border disputes with China, and the irritable relations with the smaller independent states like Bhutan and Nepal remain loud and clear. India has also developed sour relations with Sri Lanka⁵ because of its strategic maritime location and China's investments in interests. Its such geopolitical irritability is 'a politico-psychological complex of a majority' due to a 'civilizational loss of Punjab' and further afield is what India desperately wants to satiate ever since the partition. India seems not recovered from this single geopolitical loss and if there is a counter

² Currently the Province of Punjab.

³ Now the Province of Sindh

⁴ Tony Joseph, *The Early Indians: The Story of Our Ancestors and Where They Came From* (New Delhi: Juggernaut Books), 2013, 20.

⁵ Delhi-Colombo relations are dependent on this island nation's relations with Pakistan and China, a very temperamental. However, it must be said that during the 2022 uprising tied up with the country being declared bankrupt, it was Delhi that continued its fiscal support which provided some breathing space for the ailing economy. See: Dimuthu Attanayake, "India Sees A Chance To Make Sri Lanka 'A Virtual Province' Amid Its Rivalry With China," *South China Morning Post*, May 21, 2024. <https://www.scmp.com/mynews>.

narrative to this premise then it could be a great basis for a serious initiative for series of discussions on the 'two conflicting big brothers of South Asia,' a substantial (dis) reputation that both have brought upon themselves disregarding the availability of obvious and mature politico-diplomatic strategies.

The solution to this 'decades-old debacle' is definitively on the political will of the 'then 'one nation' but now 'two states'' because they must resolve it for any foreseeable stability in the South Asia region. Unless they negotiate for an amicable 'live and let live' policy, the region will continue to be unstable and insecure for its economic wellbeing with its teeming millions in epochal and abject poverty and lack of basic amenities, a matter for colossal concern globally.

Post Partition India

Gandhian tactical devices and their creative ability to mobilize and motivate the people⁶ of the 'British Raj' were many: 'Dress like an Indian, eat like an Indian, think Indian',⁷ the popular slogans of the freedom struggle for *Swaraj* (self-rule) did infuse and cultivate a common quest for freedom between and among the ethnic, religious and the tribal masses of the so-called sub-continent of India,⁸ which does not exist today. The moment India freed itself, the 'new identity claims' hitherto submerged and inundated in their individual quests in the struggle to be free from the 'colonial rule' resurfaced in different manifestations. Some of the struggles separatist in agitation and by agenda were more vociferously and robustly articulated with a definitive political objective in mind.

These were more vigorous in the religion-led Pakistan that juxtaposed with the independence of India in 1947: ethno-religiously motivated but abortive *Khalistan* separatist struggle of Punjab, the ethno-Tamil-Saivite but drastically fractured Tamil Nadu separatism, the less motivated but separatist Northeastern Nagaland campaign. However, Delhi neglected Tamil Eelam⁹ of the violent Tamil Tigers of Sri Lanka are some of the painful aspects of the India's post 1947 political landscape.

⁶ An interesting analyses is provided by M. Kibriya, see his *Gandhi and Indian Freedom Struggle* (1999), 344.

⁷ H.A. Jack, (1994), page 458 for an extensive description on the Gandhi's political ethics and his process of social mobilization that de-schooled the possible all British tactical politics nearly 200 years in South Asia, particularly in India as it was their hub even to the far East proxy operations.

⁸ The concept of an Indian subcontinent is a cliché in South Asia Studies scholarship, hence be revised to make the region more geopolitically intelligible as the 'Subcontinent of South Asia' or simply as South Asia.

⁹ "Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE)," *South Asian Terrorism Portal*, <https://www.satp.org/terrorist-profile/srilanka/liberation>.

This sense of balkanization was infectious and unstoppable once the floodgates were opened in the post-partition of India.

Post Partition South Asia

Pakistan has several political-historical issues post independence, with East and West Pakistan being declared, which had ripple effects on the region of South Asia. The tension between three nations and with the other small nations having fresh difficulties to relating formally to Two nation Theory (India) but now turned three with obviously new rules of engagement, foreign policy and trade agreements, and people-to-people relationships did change too. Edward Said classically observes in his magnum opus *Orientalism* that the Orient 'is constructed and represented in the binary opposition against the Occident, as the 'Other''. In many respects, the Orient is seen by European values, assumptions, cultural codes and as the Occident's 'other'¹⁰ He was right that the circumstances and more importantly the post-colonial identity crisis of ethno-religious and nationalist quests that were subsumed by the centrally controlled colonial project were no longer operational. The 'common quest' for freedom between and among the ethnic, religious and the tribal masses of the so-called sub-continent of India (which does not exist today).¹¹ The moment India freed itself, the submerged claims of new identities and their individual quests in the struggle to be free from the 'White Rule' did resurface unprecedentedly.

The All-India Muslim League leader, Muhammad Ali Jinnah was sufficiently formidable, and a creation of a new state was obvious. The Congress leadership had a most difficult task when it was not in agreement for a partition, but the wave was on for the creation of a nation-state. It was inevitable that a new nation was being birthed, may be with old symbolisms and icons yet was to have its socio-political, religio-cultural, economic, trade and fiscal implications were to affect the smaller countries of South Asia.

¹⁰ See his *Orientalism*, Penguin books, London. 1978. His Introduction (pages 1–28,) or Chapter 1, where Said outlines the fundamental structures of the binary between the Orient and the Occident. An interesting discourse on identity politics which is applicable to our discussion in this article.

¹¹ I am of the view that the 'Orientalist prescription' of this notion and the reality existed when Bhutan, Nepal, Bangladesh and Pakistan were all part of that which was called *Maha Bharat* – while some others called 'Indian sub-continent'. I will agree in scholarship rather to identify this landmass instead, as the sub-continent of South Asia, which can also include Afghanistan. If Bombay became *Mumbai*, Calcutta became *Kolkata* then shall our proposition of the Sub-continent of South Asia in a dignified way describes itself as a collective. Also, these are the same nation-states that are part of the SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) – A perfect description without colonial residue too.

These were more vigorous in the religion-led Pakistan, and language-led Bangladesh, which was to be East Pakistan. The ethno-religiously motivated but abortive Khalistani struggle of Punjab with the assassination of Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, the charismatic preacher of the Akhali Dal Party. The Punjab *Khalistani* and the Sri Lanka Tamil Eelamist, both separatist campaigns took away the lives of India's first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru's daughter Indira Gandhi and his grandson Rajiv Gandhi were disturbing assaults on India's 'Gandhi politics' with family moorings and the legacy of Mohandas Gandhi.

The cost for India was immeasurable in terms of the Operation Blue Star of Amritsar (1984) and the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) into the North and East of Sri Lanka (1987) as if to 'tame the tigers' indeed both indicate a phenomenon with 'blowback' effects¹² on the nerve centre of power of the Congress party, assassinating two of its prime ministers.¹³ The losses have been too many for a country amid complex diversities any nation could hold together without further being disintegrated, chaos and rendering instability. India went through all of it within a short span history since 1947.

Pakistan is debatably another country that has failed to establish stability; neither its national founder, Muhammad Ali Jinnah (1876–1948), nor its ideological philosopher, Allama Iqbal (1877–1938), were able to witness the country's founding beyond the horrifically violent transition that was unprecedented in South Asian history. Unfortunately, the politicized religious sentiments were at the heart of the cause for the resentment, vengeance, and perennial suspicion among the formerly one land, one nation became neighbours now turned enemies as if a precursor to what later happened in Bosnia in the Balkans in the 90s. Also, at least religiously motivated objectives that finally led to those heinous crimes against humanity, particularly the Srebrenica massacre, which sent shock waves around the world in the 1990s, and the Hutu-Tutsi 100-day mass

¹² The word blowback was originally coined by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to mean a move that was not advantageous to the US. Eg. after US helped overthrow the elected government of Iran in 1953 to install Shah who tyranny eventually led to the 1979 Iranian revolution that put Ayatollah Khomeini in power. In summary it is a situation where the X meddles in a covert fashion in a country Y, the consequences of that meddling which is messy comes back to bite back the country X. See. Goodweekend, the Supplement, The Age, 26 June, 2004 p.13

¹³ The incumbent PM Indira Gandhi was assassinated in her own backyard (Oct. 1984) by her own Sikh bodyguards after just eight months later since the Operation Blue Star (June 1984), Rajiv Gandhi former PM was assassinated (May 1991) by suicide striker planted by the Tamil Tigers. In both cases have been separatist politics of *Khalistani* militants for a Khalistan and by the Tamil Tigers for Eelam in Sri Lanka

murder, was perhaps a historical repeat of callous treatment of human beings that communally happened in 1947 at the partition of India.

Post 1947 Pakistan

The creation of Pakistan has had several politico-historical converging data circumstances.¹⁴ The centrally controlled colonial project more obviously had subsumed the native identities. However the post-colonial identity crisis evoked by ethno-religious and nationalist quests were prominently and robustly displayed in varied manifestations.

Religious sentiments cannot be trampled permanently as the natural rebellion would emerge in most unknown moments in history. Both the Sikh and Hindu revivalist movements supported first by the Portuguese and then by the British in the later colonial period are classic social assaults on the hegemonic manifestation that was being felt and even supported by the people. It might have been the same story for the creation of Pakistan where the Muslims felt that they have been belittled and their freedoms and beliefs have been undermined among the large Hindu population.¹⁵ Hence, the politics of majority-minority and its gamble for governance and contest for space is an old story repeated in modern narratives even in this century. These human sentiments and emotive reactions might have led Choudhary Rehmat Ali (1897-1951) to create Pakistan movement and the All-India Muslim League leader Muhammad Ali Jinnah along with other partners to embark on a formidable force within the freedom movement, first against the colonial rule and subsequently to frontier another strategic movement also to be free from the 'Hindu Indian hegemony' and to create a new state, was obvious and perhaps was historically inevitable.

The politics of majority-minority and identity affirmation became commonplace, as demonstrated by Gandhi's "quit India" campaign and Jinnah's "exit India" campaign. There are intriguing similarities, but distinct justifications for the goals and majority-minority politics that underpin both the "Gandhian quit" and the "Jinnahine exit." There is a wealth of scholarly and fascinating literature available on "the Quit and the

¹⁴ An early political activist Choudhary Rahmat Ali is credited with creating the name Pakistan for a separate homeland in South Asia and is generally known as the originator of the Pakistan Movement. It is said that he adopted the suffix *Stan* from Baluchistan and proceeded with the first letters of (P)unjab, (A)fghania, (K)ashmir and (S)ind. It looks a thoughtful devise to create a name for a country, however there are other narratives related to the name creation.

¹⁵ See Review by C. H Philips and M. D. Wainwright on *The Great Powers and Asia* and other works of V. C Hodson Vol.24, No. 4, (Fourth Quarter, 1971) Pakistan Institute of International Affairs pp. 80-82 (3 pages) Pakistan Institute of International Affairs for a fine analysis and a thought-provoking insight into the subject under discussion.

Exit" techniques of the twin fathers of two states that went on to become big brothers via rivalry and aggressive political division.

Jinnah Factor

Muhammed Ali Jinnah in 1935 led the Muslim League to proper constitutional arrangements for Muslims within India done with the British Raj as he maintained a Universalist understanding of nation state alongside thinkers like Maulana Abul Kalam Azad.

But it was mainly in the 1940s that he began to campaign for a Muslim state, with the argument that Hindus and Muslims were 'two separate nations' and that they cannot live together especially under a Hindu majority.

The majority-minority chasm was already in its seminal form early in the struggle. But Maulana Azad continued with his notion of 'composite nationalism,' which included a vision of the community as synonymous with the global brotherhood (*ummah*). Muhammad Ali Jinnah had to give into the majority's claims within the League and the parity of nationhood for a Muslim majority statehood. The understanding of the provincial disparities among the Punjabis dominated over Sindhis, Pashtuns and Balochis¹⁶ and the other miscellaneous diverse groups as well as religious minorities and ofcourse a divided Punjab had an insignificant impact on this decision. This arguably could be considered a precursor and fodder for Khalistan for the Sikhs who de facto called themselves 'a nation by religion.' Yet they based it on a politically volatile motif of Punjab divided between Indian and Pakistan neither Gandhi, Jinnah nor Nehru foresaw.

Muhammad Ali Jinnah could hardly live¹⁷ to see the new nation he helped create even though he was inspirational to the people to reclaim their identity. The post partition stability for this new nation has been perennially troublesome and unpredictable, and the neighbours both from the Western border with Afghanistan as well as India to the East and South have been incalculably burdensome, particularly with the Jammu &

¹⁶ See Ayesha Jalal (1993), *The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League and the Demand for Pakistan*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press for an extensive discussion of the pros and cons in her analysis of the complexity of the partition.

¹⁷ He passed away within a few weeks of the partition of great pain of a population uprooting themselves to abide by with the political decision, as some might argue forced upon themselves. Yes, to democracy but even democracy must see it's utility value without being utilitarian but being democratic in practice. Because utility, or the Greatest Happiness Principle, holds that actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness. Hence, social democracy must seek that balance between governance and its utility to people.

Kashmir a 'disputed partition,' the longest conflict zone that South Asia has inherited from its colonial past.

Hence, the two neighbours remain inimical but with hot and cold war cameos being orchestrated by both from an international debate to a game of cricket,¹⁸ to a simple chit-chat between an Indian and a Pakistani ending with almost a dispute of spiteful proportion. The Jinnah-Nehru factor may not necessarily be responsible for such protracted disputes to be passed on to generation after generation. But in fact a reality that had crept into the psyche even among the fourth and fifth generation from both sides.

However, it would have been certainly interesting had Quaid-e-Azam and Pandit Nehru met in the post partition era for a negotiated settlement on the infamous disputed territory, then the history of South Asia might have taken a different direction with a humongous population over 1.94 billion creating a South Asia proud of its heritage.

Jinnah's enigmatic legacy in the leadership of strategy though valuable and worthy of historical notice, with his demise on 11 September, 1948 which also was overshadowed with the shocking assassination of Gandhi in January 1948. The death of both leaders took with it the one nation by 1971 led also to the third nation state, Bangladesh.

Pakistani & Indian Identities

Pakistanis like in any other polity are attached to its national identity¹⁹ and claim their sovereign character as a nation-state with all its affiliations to the United Nations (UN) as well as the South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC). However, Pakistan as a polity also struggles with certain socio-cultural deficits from a socio-anthropological perspective. Being a young nation, there is a absence of a

¹⁸ As this article being written Pakistan beat India in Cricket of the 2021/T20 World Cup in the United Arab Emirates, and the global Pakistanis as well as the natives are elated, as if what they cannot gain in geopolitics with India could be gained at least in an international cricket pitch. So much is of the national psyche and its dynamics which I have described in the subtitle below under 'Prognosis'. It's the same analysis for the Indian national soul and its agony of defeat even in cricket to Pakistan. This is a naturally emotive to these two big brothers of South Asia.

¹⁹ The 2021 T20 World Cup Cricket series though Pakistan lost at its semifinals (11 Nov. 2021, Dubai) to Australia, yet their sporty and the fighting spirit with the exuberant spectator-compatriots conveyed an affirmation of their self-worth as a young nation in the face of power blocks that tend to belittle them whether in geopolitics, in business or in cricket. A public loss or a defeat becomes both a personal and a national defeat and a loss. My observation via television picture cuts of the spectators at the stadium at the above semifinals and the active players at the pitch displayed that 'any defeat or victory of theirs' is 'both personal and national.'

specific 'sense of history' that could have been owned by this nation-state so that it can relate to this land mass that had been populated with diverse cultures, traditions, customs, beliefs, folklores, tribes, castes, agnostic views nearly over a millennium. The previously known to be 'Indian Muslims.'²⁰ now having to call themselves 'Pakistani Muslims' have rendered them culturally as if 'a people in a state of limbo' an eighty-year-old country. They neither can relate to the Arab world culturally except for the strictly religious affiliation nor can they relate to the largest Muslim country in the world, Indonesia.²¹ Yes, they indeed can relate to both these regions and other Muslim populations by way of religious identity and even call them belonging to a house of Islam (*Dar al-Islam or the Ummah*) Where else do then 'Pakistani Muslims' belong to? The answer might be that they are 'Pakistani Muslims'. The next question arises, what does it then mean to be 'Pakistani Muslims now'? Would that mean to be connected to the Moghuls who happened to be Muslims who governed the then India and have had two millennia of rule? Would it be historically fair to say that they belong to a non-Islamic past of *Pashupati*²² but later dominated by the *Sramana* movement²³ and the Buddhist ethos of the

²⁰ These Muslims belong to several Muslim revivalist movements like the *Deobandi* which is an Islamic revivalist movement within the Sunni Islam (*Hanafi* school of thought) that formed during the late 19th century around the *Darul Uloom* Islamic seminary in the town of Deoband, India, from which the name derives. And the *Barelvi* is a movement also hails from the *Hanafi* school of jurisprudence, with over 200 million followers in South Asia and in parts of Europe, America and Africa. It is a broadly Sufi-oriented movement that encompasses a variety of Sufi orders including the *Chistis*, *Qadiris*, *Soharwardis* and *Naqshbandis* both in India and Pakistan. This movement arose also in opposition to its contemporary revivalist Deoband and Ahli-Hadith movements. It was under the leadership of Sufi scholar Ahmed Raza Khan *Barelvi* (1856–1921) around 1870-1890.

²¹ Aitzaz Ahsan, *The Indus Saga and the Making of Pakistan* (Oxford University Press, 1996), 45.

²² The Harrappans and others might not have had such thing like 'religion' at that time but they may have entertained various belief and worshiped mother nature in many manifestations. However, the numerous excavations of the Indus valley indicate with a strong hypothesis that *Pasupathi* (Sank. Lord of Animals) rituals might have been developed into the systematized recognition of Shiva of the Hindu *Trimurti*. It may be a possible representation of a *yogi*, a sage or proto-Shiva figure. Interestingly the Saivites call the Lord Shiva as *Pasupathi* in their religious parlance.

²³ Several *Sramana* movements are known to have existed in Indian the 6th century BCE. It's also called the movement of the mendicants. It brought about ascetics who renounced worldly life to search for truth about life and the Universe. They rejected the authority of the *Brahmins* (priestly caste) and the orthodoxy of the *Brahmanas* (set of authoritative texts). The Buddha (Buddhism) and Mahaveera (Jainism) are two prominent medicants.

Gandhara civilization. It became the obvious epicenter of learning in Taxila on the Eastern bank of the Indus with the subsequent Greek influence²⁴ especially during of reign of emperor Kanishka of the Kushan period (03-375 CE), making *Parushapura* its lush capitol city on the North Western banks of the Indus which today perhaps is Isa Khel area of the Khyber region, totally in the state of Pakistan. Hence, the identity issue for Pakistanis at large is still a perennial quest. What it means to be a Pakistani in this historically unique region of a world civilization of Harappa and Mohenjo Daro is certainly pre-Islamic and even pre-Christan, in that sense these people remain soundly South Asian with their diversities.

A Tribal Saga

Modern India and Pakistan both seem to be experiencing symptomatic 'identity claims' but in a crisis the others' identity is still relevant. A deeply inflicted historical scenarios of two modern nations struggling in their 'collective psyche' to be a nation with a distinct character trait. Basically, what does it mean to be Pakistani? For some, it is de facto to be anti-Indian and for an Indian, it is to be anti-Pakistani, as witnessed. An Indian and a Pakistani claim self-worth 'being anti-other' even in simple social settings. It has been observed that the rest of the people must mind their words and behaviour so that they neither antagonize the Indian nor the Pakistani colleagues. Least they know that their public behaviour has been 'simply tribal' to claim each of their identity over the other. Yet they speak to each other in Urdu, Saraiki, Hindi, Punjabi, Pashtu, Pahadi, Gujarati as their shared tongue with varying dialects. But the new name in the 'post 1947 identity of the 'Indian-ness' and the 'Pakistani-ness' has provided them as if a 'code name to dislike each other'. This has been in their communal and social psyche for so long and they are not aware of any alternative 'to treat each other with civility and decency.' It must be remedied, and it can be remedied even though the scope of this paper is not for that purpose per se.²⁵ However, the attempt here is to analyze 'the folly' of such compartmentalization and the

²⁴ There is clear evidence of the Gandhara artifacts of Buddhist art with heavy Greek featuring if one were to carefully study the large collection of statues well stored of the Buddha and also Mahaveera (both 5 BCE. movement founders, Buddhism and Jainism) at the Lahore Museum and similar evidence can be found at the national Museum in Karachi too.

²⁵ The purpose of this paper is aware not to find solutions but to highlight the inner dynamics of the two polities since the partition. This discussion identifies some of the salient reasoning, of the behaviours of the two as people. However, there is no such need for the new generations to subscribe to that painful past and become the pathways to reconciliation and create a roadmap for common growth as a people.

deliberate 'otherization' to the extent that one devalues 'the other' and even wishes no-approach non-discussion, and worst of all is that each desires noncompliance hardly at any level.

A Psycho-Social Prognosis

My prognosis in psycho-sociological terms is that Delhi since Advani- Vajpayee era with the diversified and sometimes even militant frontiers of the *Bharatiya Janatha Party* (BJP) and the *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh* popularly known as RSS have forged a 'distinct narrative' to gain 'new significance' as the voice of the 'majority' within India and the region. This same political significance is well articulated and even takes equally a militant manifestation in the Diaspora Hindu communities.²⁶ The slogan is that 'India is a Hindu nation', but none can place one's finger to define what it does really mean to be an 'Indian Hindu', because as it can mean multiple strands to multi layered understanding of Hindu Dharm (*Sanatana Dharm*) as a living tradition. Ethno-nationalism is fundamentally divisive as being proved in history repeatedly, especially since the 'end of colonialism' and the 'end of Cold War' with which the incumbent affiliations were ruptured. Hence, new rootedness became urgently indispensable for an identity that was neither colonial nor USA-USSR satellite.

An Indian Hindu is neither monotheistic nor polytheistic. For a Hindu monotheism might be to restrict the 'immensity of God'. This is how a Hindu mind works, and they see no harm in it at all. With such an open-ended theological understanding on the important fact of intense diversity within their tradition and the ability to wrestle with the Hindu pantheon is remarkably clear and theologically courageous. If so, why then in politics the same Hindu mind fails to realize the similar diversity of cultures, languages and beliefs of other fellow Indians who are not Hindus is the core of Delhi's political insecurity, even though a majority but seems to function as a minority. There is yet another interpretation that has crept into the Hindu psyche or could be of any other cultural or social majority which is that it must create 'the other.' That they perhaps devise a yardstick to define 'self' which then automatically creates a perfect 'us and them phenomenon' that Ambedkar 'did not wish' in the Indian constitution, Gandhi never 'dreamt' and Nehru 'never practiced' or perhaps was 'not in Jinnah's lexicon.'

²⁶ What started as a group of Hindus in the city of Leicester in the Midlands in August/ Sept. 2022, marching to a 'Muslim area' ended with groups of Muslims following them to the city's 'Hindu area' – Belgrave Road, about 1.5 miles north a lively high street of jewelry shops and restaurants. By the time night fell, fights were breaking out. One of the clearest ethno-religious contestations for space in the Diaspora and a manifestation of the tensions 'back home'. See. *Leicester Attack On Hindus*, INSIGHT UK, 17 September 2022.

The BJP and the RSS with their ideological campaigns there is a feeling that they must compensate the 'cultural loss to Pakistan' is deep inside its national psyche. Hence, they desire to reassert their identity perhaps through religio-cultural claims as the 'last resort to be Indian' together through the so-called '*Hindutva* religious axiom' as if a final chance to be proudly Indian.

There is an absolute and desperate socio-political, psychological, hold, to cherish and enhance that which remains Hindu-Indian and to mobilize as a majority but with a feeling of an 'inner fear of a minority' to salvage its soul from the 'challenging adversaries' both inside and outside. So, this 'national feeling of the Indian psyche' a physical majority yet 'impulsively act like a minority' and wishes to resort to some type of a 'political glue' to market the ideology among its population. The recent election campaign (Jan. 2024) was full of it even though 'the wave' they predicted was a sobering wind, allowing the other political voices to survive in that vast land. These results clearly indicate that the BJP and the RSS offer little to the masses in terms of development and prosperity other than to arouse the 'religiously motivated path finder,' institutionalize Hindu-ness as a viable political force, and create a power base to face up to the 'enemy inside' and the 'enemy outside.'

The deepest psychological deficit or the social malady, whether individually or collectively, is the fundamental insecurity within, which invariably creates 'the other,' then considered as inimical to self-existence. Hence, religiously motivated institutionalizing architecture in the recent past has led to the 'presidential political power concentration' in Delhi and is a deliberate act to orchestrate regional power. The 2024 election results derailed this objective, which the BJP popularly attempted to market during the campaign.

This collective trauma of display of majority power disbursement has led Delhi and other power bases especially 'to suspect' the 14% Muslim population of India as well as other minorities as 'being un-Indian,' 'not Indian enough' or 'unworthy of being Indian.' There is a political expediency that for one to be Hindu is to be truly Indian. The issue Delhi faces may arise from the fact that even RSS is unable to answer the question of what it means to 'be "a proper Hindu and Indian" if people were to pause and consider what form of Hinduism they wish to adhere to. Such is the complex nature of this subject under discussion. India though economically flourishing as the largest democracy is yet to prove whether is willing to create space for its physical minorities to own a shared future as Indians themselves.

Navigating *Hindutva* Politics and its Challenges

The infamously known *political Trimurti* in India, Vajpayee-Advani-Modi and their frontline manifestation, the RSS and other

incarnations of the confrontational politics, and its highly motivated strategies to infuse nationalist agenda had been successful inflicting fear in the minority communities within. Deployment of *Hindutva* ideology never grew just because of the above *Trimurti* alone as such would normally find their natural breeding ground when internal insecurities step in and in socio-political vacuums and deficits. The actual balkanization in 1947 (primary rupture)²⁷ and then in 1971 (secondary rupture)²⁸ were colossal to the *Bharat Maata*, also as noted earlier have had several disintegrating moments and the unfinished debacle of Jammu & Kashmir continue to burden Delhi with its historical dilemma living adjacent to it. Muzaffarabad and Srinagar – “to be or not to be” is a crisis ever renewed with every move by each side of the border.

There are three challenges that the *Hindutva* ideology will have to face up to in the next decade without exception whatsoever.

- i) The growing power of Beijing and its presence via the Road and Belt Initiative (BRI) covering over 70 countries and international organizations associated and linked into an Indo-pacific regeneration of trade and business route with a cluster of ports populated in the Indian Ocean into the Gulf of Oman touching at Gwadar in Baluchistan, creating the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).²⁹ The latter operation makes Delhi deeply uncomfortable, and there is hardly anything that Delhi could propose except to seek allies bordering the Indian Ocean, but whose bridges India perhaps has politically burnt or disjointed. Secondly, Beijing and Islamabad are the direct negotiators

²⁷ My designations of balkanization patterns in South Asia as early as 1940s. Historically still painful and remain a primary cause for current tensions of all kinds with their ripple effects globally.

²⁸ This secondary rupture is most volatile with the Mass unrest has rocked Bangladesh in July, as students and others demonstrated against quotas for state jobs, and the government responds with deadly repression that led to massacres terminated the Hasina regime. The current situation is still vulnerable with children, women and Rohingya refugees are among those most impacted by escalating insecurity in Bangladesh. The continuous mass protests exacerbate the humanitarian needs of refugees exacerbated by the extreme flooding that impacted 11 out of 64 Bangladeshi provinces in August 2024. <https://www.rescue.org/article/crisis-bangladesh-what-you-need-know-and-how-help>. Retrieved 11.09.2024.

²⁹ The July 2021 suicide attack on the bus carrying the engineers and worker to the construction site in upper Kohistan in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan with several Chinese nationals killed working under the auspicious of the Chinese Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has raised new doubts for Beijing for the first time of a possible upfront opposition on the \$65 billion infrastructure being built in the KP region. The Islamabad ISI suspects the attacked has been mounted by the *Tehrik-i-Taliban* Pakistan (TTP) linked to Al Qaeda and IS ideological groups. even though there are several but acting ‘cold war’ of Chinese presence in the India-Pacific region.

- of the US \$65 billion project that is underway for which Delhi could attempt hardly any maneuvering except to watch the connectivity development from Gwadar harbour via Baluchistan all the way to Ladakh and, of course, into Tibet and then its Sino territory. Basically, CPEC connecting to Lhasa, Shanghai as well as Beijing all the way to Karachi.
- ii) The Muslim population is 14% of India's entire 1.4 billion (2024).³⁰ Yet, Pakistan, next door to the Middle East, has ambivalent relations with Delhi except for the newest diplomatic relations with high-ranking visitors from the Middle East³¹ and also with Ankara, which have amplified Delhi's concerns of its majoritarian status. India, basically, has created diplomatic relations as if 'an in-between situation' because of a perennial geopolitical suspicion by its neighbours. So, it's natural and obvious to tighten the internal institutional network when the outside forces tend to impact upon the inside arrangements. India has had most challenging moments as a polity with the bitter assaults from the radicalization trends of certain Islamo-political resurgences alongside other politically motivated groups, especially since 9/11 and the list of atrocities is shockingly long within India.
- iii) Currently the 'politically lame' Congress Party did make a soft comeback in the January 2024 elections, even though the 'brand name Gandhi' in Indian politics is arguably withered away especially under the current leadership. The 'Modi wave' was not a gush at the 2024 general election as was being predicted as a landslide. The Modi regime and the BJP could be further challenged on the celebrated constitutional grounds for undermining the 'secular nature' of Ambedkar inspired 'original constitution of India'. The Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) which is now passed (Dec. 2019) terminates the secular fabric of India's constitution by making 'religion used as a criterion for citizenship'. People all over India protested in a peaceful and unique way, like the nostalgic Gandhian times, this law amended (CAA) to protect the constitution and particularly the Muslim community. Unfortunately, targeted communal violence backed by the

³⁰ Astha Rajvanshi, "The Controversy Over a New Population Study From India," Time, May 10, 2024 <https://time.com/6976854/india-population-study-controversy/>

³¹ Prince Mohammed Bin Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, Crown Prince & Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to India (September 09-11, 2023) and the most recent visit of the Sheikh Khaled bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, crown prince of Abu Dhabi to India (9-10 September 2024). These indicate new relationships that India seems to have evolved with the Middle East. <https://www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/38277>. Retrieved on 10.09.2024.

ruling party unleashed a counterattack to the uprising was abhorred by many quarters.

Let India be India

It's a fact India is a majority Hindu polity by religion but that does not mean that other non-Hindu minorities are not Indian. India cannot be defined by the monosyllabic *Hindutva* religio-political doctrine alone as such would make the 'Indian socio-political experiment'³² null and void. India can only be India not because of its majority Hindu population but by the sheer conglomeration of traditions, customs, cultures, languages, world religions, primal religions, other divergent beliefs, intense folklore-based historiography, castes, costumes, variety of food patterns, snowy hill tops, parch lands and the litany of diversity can continue. Hence, an attempt to 'homogenize India' by any essentialist doctrine, be it *Hindutva* or the BJP policies is a pathway towards destroying the very 'unique character of India'. So 'let India be India' – the 'land of contrast and plurality' as it has remained a learning ground for the rest of the world.

Another Perspective

The warring factions nearly over 30-year war (1618-1648) between the Holy Roman Empire with the Protestant Traditions and the 80-year war (1568-1648) between Spain and the Dutch republic, Central Europe and Southern Europe in bitter battles. The famous Westphalia Treaty in 1648 put an end to it. It finally brought the parties to a deal of peace by diplomatic relations and even by certain negotiated compromises to create a new system of 'political order' upon the Westphalia concept of 'coexistence and the 'interstate aggression,' to be held in check by a balance of power.

The people are here now in the third decade of the third millennium of the CE where both India and Pakistan today seem to define each of their cultural identity as nations predominantly Hindu and Islamic. The problem is what does this mean to the rest in both countries? Neither Delhi nor Islamabad had seriously considered except to say that they treat the 'rest as fellow citizens', but in practice 'the rest feel otherwise' deep down in their daily living and perhaps even feel insecure in their own country.

Both majorities (in India & Pakistan) on the question of Jammu & Kashmir they could have found a solution, yet they seem to protract and defuse in all possible areas as to why it cannot be resolved. The

³² As designed in the social democratic thinking of another different *trimurti* Ambedkar, Gandhi and Nehru. Their experiment for India to be a secular state with each community live with their own religio-cultural identities towards a shared future.

psychological glimpse in the ethnic or religious majority tend to be extraordinarily self-protective because there is an intrinsic fear that the minorities would finally team up, rebel and take over the 'majority claims' of certain ownership, inheritance or an undesignated heritage. The majority tends to feel that it's a moral duty to be the guardian of all. However, what lies beneath is the civic hegemony which de facto is a 'deep insecurity of the majority,' its own fear of becoming the 'other' or be pushed to the receiving end. It's a legitimate collective inability or a feeling of not wanting to be a 'minority themselves'. It's a perfect 'minority complex of the majority' on the cutting-edge of self-denial. It is a self-motivated dislike of the 'other' because there is the assumption that the minorities by their very presence indicate that they are 'here to stay' which also substantially and repugnantly irritates the majority and so is the case for obvious and a poignant majority-minority conflict.

Conclusion

Institutionalization of an ideology, be it with political or religious objectives finally ostracizes the weakest, the vulnerable and in the case of this discourse, it is bound to be the minorities. This does not mean that the minority groups are 'law abiding citizens,' more than the majority. But it's just that the state apparatus cannot function in an institutionalized selective discrimination just because they (minorities) happen to be the obvious 'other'. Belittling 'the other' and 'otherizing processes on the 'basis of difference' is a grotesque injustice. It's an incomparable ill treatment of the 'other' that does not belong to the 'us category' but a 'them categorization' - this socio-political, religio-cultural bifurcation of 'us and them' is hegemonic in all its manifestations.

Hindutva no doubt is a 'socio-political glue' well 'marinated with religious overtones of the core teachings of Hindu historico-cultural nuances enhanced by the 'primacy of duty' as a 'karmic moment' of a moral imperative over any other private or public affiliations. India's loss in the past, she thinks never to be repeated, hence the Jammu & Kashmir will remain union territories under the 'newest interpretation' of the Indian constitution.³³ An interpretation that Islamabad refuted on the basis that the recent Indian court ruling on the status of Indian-administered Jammu and Kashmir, under international law, cannot deploy

³³ The Jammu and Kashmir Reorganization Act, 2019 is an act of the parliament of India containing provisions to reconstitute the Indian-administered state of Jammu and Kashmir into two Indian-administered union territories (UTs) called Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh. Such become effective in October 2019.

domestic legislation and judicial verdicts to determine its final status of an 'internationally recognized disputed territory.'³⁴

India's unpronounced collective psychosocial national trauma is politically sharpened by the creatively programatized *Hindutva* ideology and works well for Delhi to justify that the 'trauma of loss,' of the most fertile land and people consequently disintegrating East-West Pakistans, into Bangladesh and Pakistan with two distinct languages (Bengali and Urdu) as their *lingua franca*. It was not just a diplomatic loss, but a landmass and a people permanently forfeited for *Maha Bharat*.

Hindutva ideology perhaps is India's last resort to seek a new socio-political niche in the popular religion of the land and its institutionalization had to be orchestrated as a formidable and sharply defined 'political product and a tool' primarily to counterpoint Pakistan. If religion is weaponized by any group or groups within and in the neighbourhood, then the 'Hindu India' would openly be advocating the institutionalization of the weaponized *Hindutva* political ideology. This is what might be or will be the politics of South Asia unless there is political will both by Delhi and Islamabad to be counterculturally pragmatic.

South Asia might need an '*Eastphalia*'³⁵ Peace Treaty' if the region is to be a peace zone, and currently such is hardly in the distant future. Hence, it is likely that the 'majority-minority' conflict in South Asia seems natural unless India and Pakistan step up as 'real states of diplomacy and economic regeneration' in view of a possible Indo-Pakistan Peace Treaty (IPPT).³⁶ Such can be done with the caliber of their conventional wisdom of the Persian-Afghani- Indus-Gandhara ethos of the ancient past and revisiting them with a new understanding and civility towards one another, instead of carrying the 'burden of history' which is full of vendetta and a code of retaliation on the 'other' that each has created could be terminated for a new beginning.

³⁴ See <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/asia-pacific/pakistan-rejects-indian-court-ruling-on-kashmirs-status-says-it-cannot-be-resolved-under-domestic-law/3084506> Retrieved on 09/09/2024

³⁵ The word is devised by the author as 'a possible diplomatic-political roadmap' that could be mobilized, first to learn and study the concepts and perspectives of the 'Westphalia treaty' (1648) marked by civility and maturity of governance. Secondly to seek new paradigms of coexistence despite the stark differences the communities go through over which they have had no choice in the South Asian region which includes India and Pakistan. Westphalia is a region of Northwestern Germany and of the historic parts of the state of North Rhine-Westphalia. Today the cities of Arnsberg and Münster are located in this region.

³⁶ This 'proposition' is purely by the author staying non-partisan as a South Asian himself and has historical and academic interest both in Pakistan Studies, Indology and broadly South Asia Studies.

They say that in politics there are 'neither permanent friends nor enemies', if so, why there is much animosity with a sense of superiority, and this oddly placed supremacy and competition further balkanize the internal arrangements and cripple the progress of all and the whole. Hence, the two big brothers (India-Pakistan) of South Asia must generate new tools of engagements with each other as the rest in the region are smaller nations (Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka and Maldives) and alongside their sister-nation, Bangladesh do look up to them.

The wisdom of the Vedas and the religio-social movements evoked by the sages of *Sanatan Dharm*. The Quranic teachings, the practice of the prophet of Islam and his companions alongside thousands of Islamic scholars and the Sufi mystics could find 'a people-prioritized-road map.' India and Pakistan, now as two independent states, work negotiating on the 'hard to agree on positions hitherto held' in the name of the millions of lives and their future generations towards the 'stability of the region'.

Such pragmatism could even abandon the mutually suspicious socio-political cankers (SPC, acronym mine), held in history and iron out the collective psychological deficits and able to work towards 'a shared future' for the two countries, for the region and its people. The culturally imbedded many religions should be able to motivate their adherents for the public good and wellbeing of all and the whole. It's still doable and achievable with individuals of statesmanship, creative leadership and obsessed with imaginative leaps for a future that humans dream all the time and people of Pakistan and India deserve that dignity of a citizen of a free world.

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