Rural Conflicts and Alliance Formation: A Cultural Strategy

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Abstract

Conflict is a form of competition between groups or individuals over incompatible goals, scarce resources, or power making sources to acquire them. In Asia, particularly in India and Pakistan, socio-cultural conflicts exist not only in villages but also urban areas where most of the time dominating biradaries involved in such conflict to sustain their power within the society. Present research is about grouping/alliance formation and its relation with village conflicts in District Lodhran of Punjab- Pakistan. Biradaries/caste?s are observed as the key determinant of such alliance formation. Data of 153 respondents show that biradari plays a key role to develop influences leading to separate groups and factions. Biradari with 66.67

1 I. Introduction

onflict; a terminology refers to clash of ideas, principles, or struggle for threatened resources and, also show of power for such principles or social/physical activities that may not be acceptable in wider perspective by other members of society. Political science defined conflict as a phenomenon that appears when a state encourages differences in system standards or that otherwise weakens from operational functionalism and conservative ideologies. Conflict shows the form of competition of scarce resources among well-developed and emerging groups or one can also explain as the confrontation among different institutions or systems. Noteworthy, "Social conflict also defined as disagreement among individuals and groups on the basis of similar competing benefits, diverse identities and or differing attitudes" (Schellenberg, 2010).

As word conflict comes into one's mind, he might tend to think about sort of fight or violence. Social conflicts may exist in a multiple situations in the various classes of a society. Encountering with conflicts in our lives is a routine matter as we forget soon after as it's happened. Conflict occurs when two or more individuals have the same incompatible objective (James, 2004).

In Pakistan; most of the times different traditional and religious groups are involved in conflicts with other cultural and religious groups. Sectarian conflicts are importantly observed throughout in Pakistan. Pakistani society is divided into different parallel and vertical segmentation, multiple in numbers and based on the ground of beliefs, ethnic distribution, doctrine, social class and language adjacent to the continual gap among haves and have not. Further these stratifications are not only damage Pakistani economy but also causing socio-political instability additionally (Ahmad, 2007).

Previous studies reveal multiplicity of resistance and conflict especially conflict over land are growing due to multiple variables. Many rural families require drawing extra from their land even in the expression of decreasing inputs. Economically stable and retired civil servants and other individuals look at their families and land resource as a key source of food and/or cash cropping. Government and environment specialists trying to explore the distinct conservation areas; and power groups either they are internal and external, strengthen their manipulation of treasurable property, before presenting the cases that expose these conflicts (Pauline, 2004).

Most recurring consequence of social and material conflict is distress groups. This might be observe in various situation like angriness; feelings of unfriendliness, socio-emotional compensation, worry, anxiety, and stress, but at small levels of amount controversialists might be involved in conflict stimulating (Thomas, 1976;Bergman, 1989;Derr, 1978;Chesler, 1978;Ephross, 1993;Retzinger, 1991;Filley, 1978;Robbins, 1978).

Social conflict is a natural general experience observes in all relations and cultures. Conflict is also defined as the socially fabricated cultural phenomena **??**Schutz, 1967). Culture is always transmitted from generation to generation; norm and values emerge, constructed and opted as well, and people with different identities represent their culture. In Africa, most of the traditional associations today appears to be more powerful, were planned" by the complex forces for administrative purposes and have weak roots in precolonial Africa (Jeremy, 2002).

Factions or coalitions are assemblies or groups of a society, living in the same society to accomplish specific objectives or trying to show their power in the community and try to control the basic authoritative positions. Huang further argues that "factions or alliances ultimately plan to control or maximize the power of the supporter, as each individual of a faction or group benefits from a powerful patron (Huang, 2000).

Formation of different groups with key objective to achieve economic benefits with close group bonding that compelled people to take care of each other in case of downfall. **??**alder (1986) further strengthens this point of view through his classic study in which he found that due to the faction or group formation, political control was achieved which further led to the allocation of resources like housing facility, special food and medicare to individuals of personal choice.

The factional system has serious impact on political organization. If factional rivalry becomes intensive and public, the organization may suffer from situations of disunity. Taken one step further, if the conflict is predominantly severe, it may cause ruptures within the organization that seriously affects its efficiency, leading to break-up or collapse of the organization. In village life conflicts are created on the basis of caste, family, status and religious sects. These all are causes of generating local factionalization. This study was concerned to explore the dynamics of factionalization.

2   II. Materials and Methods

Present study was conducted in District Lodhran of Punjab Province. To collect the data on respective topic a sample of 153 was randomly selected and interviewed. To satisfy ethically consideration every respondent was fully informed about the objectives of the study, and after getting their verbal consent with this promise that their personal information will keep secret the information was taken. The data was collected with the help of key informants, from participant observation and from formal, informal interviews and focus group discussion. The purpose was to blend both probability and non-probability sampling techniques. SPSS was used to analyze the collected data. The village has a higher ratio of males than the females according to the voters list provided by the election commission. The census data too was majorly taken from males as the females were either reluctant or could not be approached. Male participation was 77.7%, while female respondents were interviewed 22.3% in present study. Table 2 explains the main variables behind conflicts. When asked the major cause of conflict among communities, 3% of sample choose 'women issues' or issues created by female members of society as the sole reason, 6%were of the view that 'land' is a source of conflict and violence, 5% opted for local power politics', 6% choose 'caste or biradari', while 79% of the sample did not specifically point out any particular cause and choose all the above causes to be behind the conflicts. The causes of grouping as inquired in this study, it was found that following were the major reasons leading to separate groups and factions. Biradari with 66.66% emerged as the major cause behind group formation or alliance, politics with 27.45%is at second position and religion with 5.88 percent. The Biradari structure is very strong in respective area, with people mostly living in joint family systems thus the groups formation are also influenced by the biradaries. **??**alder (1986) believes that factions when formed give not only 'political insurance' but access to various other scarce goods like 'economic goods' and 'policy control'. When respondents were asked, do you think that social ties were effected by the everyday conflicts; the answers were dual, 54/87 percent believed that 'Yes' the social relationships were damaged and severely effected, while 45.12 percent thought the contrary and said 'No'. The females and youngsters were in great favor about the first answer. While the elders majority were belongs to the second category of response, since they looked upon these conflicts as petty issues that are common to all households and do not hold any impact over the social relationships.

3   III. Results

4   IV. Discussion

In Pakistan, especially in Punjab individuals shows their endogamous and inborn ethnic association with their biradari, with special respect to have social status of superior or inferior ranking position in distinction with other specific subdivisions (Chaudhry et al., 2014;Velassery, 2005). In general, Biradari is associated with explicit occupation and, represents social stratification, which makes it endogamous according to Hutton **??**1963). Biradari further characterizes the distinctive attachment and social ranking of one's ancestor belongs to the similar ethnic groups and the composing of different castes. 'Aboriginal' group affiliations repeatedly discussed, including family attachment, kinship relations and biradari/caste association, or affiliation with community groups or factions, play an additionally significant role to determine the voting behavior particularly in the South Asia, than individual's political affiliations (Chaudhry et al., 2014;Mughees, 2006).

In Pakistan, Biradarism played a key role in social organization and daily life of society. Biradari institution affects the social and political structure at community and national level as well. Caste system is more commanding aspect of voting behavior than one's party affiliation, apart from the case if two political candidates

belong to same caste or Biradari (Ahmed et al. 2013; **??**ndrew, 1999). Caste/Biradari system has undergone in Indian subcontinent from centuries. Individuals of different Biradaries are guided and trained with respect to their everyday live by a set of procedures and protocols e.g. in marriages, occupation, pleasure, and aspects of other social spheres (Ahmed et al., 2013;Chaudhry, 2012;Kolenda, 1985).

Caste system is not always seen in a positive or productive way to achieve results and at times criticized as the unjust nepotism and favoritism. On the other hand, it is also observed that still a lot people participate in negative activities such as racial discrimination with obvious lower castes; create conflicts with other caste on land and other social and material issues, also hinder in community development if opponent caste is in power. In Pakistani society, biradari institution plays the role of most important force, authority and power, and significant than religion, cultural or any sociopolitical causes. Political alliances and parties in Pakistan are normally based on biradari system not ideologies. Within Pakistan, in the social system of the Punjab province the main feature is biradarism as reported earlier studies. It affects the political system at the national and local levels. (Ahmed et al. 2013).

By formation of different groups the major purpose achieved or the benefit taken was economical as close group bonding compelled people to take care of each other in case of downfall. Walder, (1986) strengthens this view through his classic study in which he found that due to the faction formation political control was achieved which then led to the allocation of resources like 'housing' facility, 'special food' and 'Medicare' to individuals of personal choice.

V.

5 Conclusion

Present study represents that "women issues", "land", "local power politics, cast (inter caste and intra caste)", and honor" are main reasons behind the conflicts existed within a society. Study also conform that predominantly local groups or faction formed on the basis of biradari to hold and maintain biradaris power and strength by living in a social system. Results also reveal that these social conflicts disturb the social relationship within a biradari and with other biradaries as well. Marx conflict perspective in this scenario explains the finding that shows every person who is on power will try to maintain his power and authority on other even he confront conflicts with others. Group formation was also observed within same biradari/caste, when power making was seen for similar objectives as a result of conflict within a biradari. Conflicts also affect everyday life, not only as a part of biradari but at wider scenario communities also suffers. Group formation of factionization is an important fabric of Punjab power politics. [1]

Figure 1: Figure 1 :Figure

5   CONCLUSION

1

Category	Frequency	Percent
Male	119	77.7
Female	34	22.3
Total	153	100.0

Figure 2: Table 1 :

2

Category	Frequency	Percent
Women Issues	5	3
Land	9	6
Local Power Politics	7	5
Caste	10	6
Honor	1	1
All of them	121	79
Total	153	100

Figure 3: Table 2 :

3

Category	Frequency	Percent
Biradari	102	66.66
Politics	42	27.45
Religion	9	5.88
Total	153	100

Figure 4: Table 3 :

5

Category	Frequency	Percent
Yes	83	54.2
No	70	45.8
Total	153	100

Figure 5: Table 5 :

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