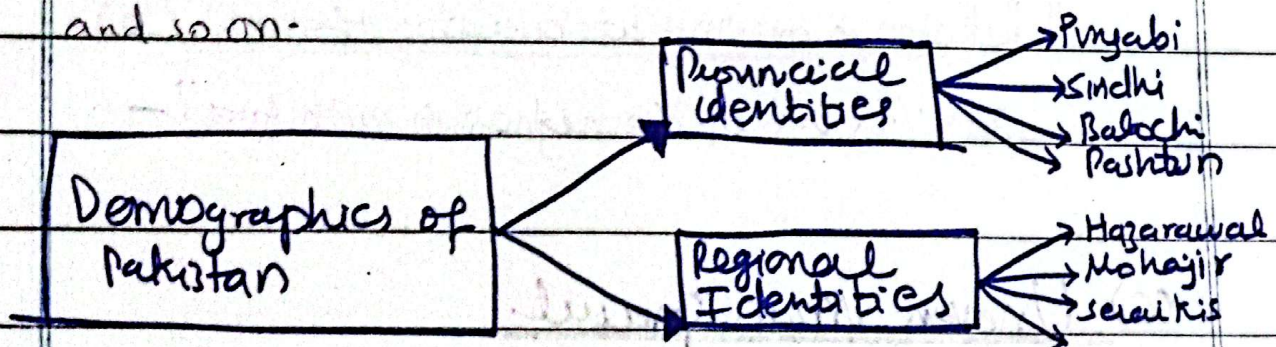


Qno:5 Analyze the demographic and cultural diversity of Pakistan and its impact on national integration and policymaking.

ANSWER:

### ① Introduction

Pakistan is a multi-cultural, -linguistic, and -ethnic country. It has myriad regional and provincial identities adding to the cultural mosaic of Pakistan. Due to the merging of disparate civilizations in the Indus Valley civilization, Persian influences, Greek conquests, Islamic Golden Age, and the British colonial period, it developed distinct culture, languages and traditions and so on.



## ② Demographic and Cultural Diversity of Pakistan

### (a) Burgeoning Youth Bulge

According to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics' 2023 Census, 60% of Pakistan's population is below the age of 30. Pakistan can turn liability into asset.

"Youth population is growing at a rate of 2.7%, higher than the national average" — PBS (2023 census)

### (b) Unprecedented Population Growth Rate

Pakistan's population <sup>growth</sup> rate supercedes that of economic growth rate. It is even greater than the South Asian average.

"Pakistan is growing at a rate of 2.5%, one of the highest in South Asia" —

### (c) Uneven Urban Sprawl

The population of Islamabad has increased threefold in two decades. Similarly, half of Karachi's population (12.5 M) has no

access to basic public services.

### (c) Reducing Fertility Rate

Recently, fertility rate has been decreased from 4.88 to 3.41 childbirths per woman.

Still, it is greater than its regional

peers such as India, Bangladesh and

others.

### (d) Increasing Literacy Rate

According to the 2023 census, <sup>the share of</sup> 20-29 age group, holding a university degree, has increased to 14%, which is more than double the overall adult rate.

### (e) Shrinking Gender Divide in Education

The once growing gender divide in educational attainment is reversing a bit. Women's education rate exceeds that of men by two percentage points (2%).

## (F) Decreasing children Educational Attainment

According to NCFS state of children Report 2024 in Pakistan, 112 M children, making 40% of the population, are malnourished. Also, 26 M children are out of schools.

## ③ Its Impact on National Integration and Policymaking

### (a) Rise in Identity Politics

In case of Pakistan, the demographic and cultural diversity has been more of a liability than an asset. It has exacerbated regional factionalism among disparate identities in Pakistan along cultural, religious, and linguistic lines.

"The politics of regionalism has dented the pluralism inherent in Pakistan's identity." — Malocha Lodhi (Pakistan: Beyond the crisis state)

### (b) Demand for New Provinces

Due to a mix of regional and provincial identities, the demand for new provinces

is growing unprecedentedly in Pakistan.  
Also, sub-national tendencies, too, are  
growing among the citizens.

Demand for  
New provinces

→ Mohajir Province in Karachi

→ Seraikistan in Punjab

→ Hazara in KPK

→ Multan in south Punjab

### (C) Burgeoning Centre-Province Tussles

The rise of sub-national identities has exacerbated  
the centre-province relations. Due to  
cultural, linguistic, and religious differences,  
they dissent from one another along these  
lines.

### (D) Strain on Federation

The demographic and cultural diversity has  
put a serious strain on the spirit of federalism  
in Pakistan. Pakistan is a federal structure according  
to the 1973 constitution, but its multi-ethnic and  
-cultural patterns have fragmented it.

### (E) Lopsided Development across Provinces

Across different provinces and regions, there is an uneven development process. For instance, Central Punjab is more developed than south Punjab. Also, Balochistan is the least developed province despite being the most populous region.

### (F) Politics of Religiosity

Due to religious pluralism across the country, it has also stirred the politics of religiosity among disparate identities. The <sup>curse of</sup> sectarianism has greatly damaged a sense of cohesion among the people.

"Pakistan is facing twin monsters of  
extremism: jihadist militancy and  
Sectarian Violence" — M. Amir Rana

### (G) National Cohesion at Stake

Due to the rise of national and sub-national identities, Pakistan has become fragmented along cultural and linguistic

lines. This has negatively impacted national cohesion among the regions.

#### ④ Effects on Policymaking

##### Ⓐ Little to No Continuity in Policy

When there is a diverse population divided along ethnic and cultural lines, those in positions of power favor certain policies favoring distinct identities at the cost of others.

"Policies in Pakistan create winners and losers by marginalizing certain groups at the cost of others." — Ishaq Hussain.

##### Ⓑ Difficulty in Evidence-Based Decision-Making

Diverse ethnic and cultural communities usually work in silos and do not put trust on one another. This results in short-term fixes with one-size-fits-all approaches to policymaking.

### © Policy Fragmentation along ethnic lines

Most of the policies at the top levels of decision making are captured by elites. They favor certain ethnicities at the cost of others to preserve the status quo.

"Karachi politics has laid bare the faultlines in Pakistan's ethnic mosaic." — <sup>Kaha</sup> Zafar

### ④ Broken Policy Cycle

Multi-ethnic and multi-cultural communities could not follow through policies from formulation to evaluation. This breaks the policy cycle that is based on broad consensus among diverse people in positions of power.

### Conclusion

Thus, for Pakistan, its ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious diversity has been more of a liability than an asset. It has weakened national integration and fragmented policymaking across all levels of government at the cost of public service delivery.