

Discuss the crisis of integration in Pakistan from a Sociological Perspective - Highlights its causes and suggest remedies.

Introduction:-

Social integration is the process through which different groups within a society develop a sense of unity, belonging and shared identity. It is the foundation of national solidarity and social cohesion, ensuring harmony among diverse ethnic, linguistic, religious and regional communities.

In Pakistan, however, the process of integration has remained incomplete. Despite having a common religion (Islam) and shared struggle for independence, the country has experienced deep divisions based on ethnicity, language, class, and region. The persistent tension between the centre and provinces, and between various ethnic and sectarian identities, reflects a serious crisis of integration in Pakistani Society.

Concept of Integration in Sociology:-

Emile Durkheim's View of Integration.

Emile Durkheim, one of the founders of sociology, saw social integration as the key to social order. According to him, society functions like a living organism, its parts (institutions, norms and individuals) depend on each other. Integration is what keeps these parts

connected.

- In his book "The Division of Labour in Society" (1893), Durkheim explained two main types of social integration;

- 1- Mechanical Solidarity - Found in traditional societies where people share similar views, beliefs and lifestyles. Integration comes from likeness and collective conscience.

- 2- Organic Solidarity - Found in modern industrial societies where people perform different jobs but depend on each other economically. Integration here comes from interdependence, not similarity.

Durkheim also linked lack of integration to anomie (a state of normlessness). When social ties weaken, people feel isolated and social disorder increases.

Karl Marx's View

Karl Marx had a more critical view. He saw modern capitalist society as poorly integrated because it is divided by class conflict.

- The capitalists control production, while the workers are exploited.

- This leads to alienation and loss of unity.

Marx believed true integration could only be achieved in a classless society, where resources and powers are shared equally.

Major Causes of Integration Crisis in Pakistan

1- Political Disintegration

- Frequent military interventions, weak democratic traditions, and elite-dominated politics have eroded national consensus.
- Political power has been concentrated in a few provinces, creating feelings of relative deprivation among others (a concept by Ted Gurr).
- Lack of participatory democracy limits the people's sense of ownership in the political system.

2- Ethnic and Linguistic Fragmentation.

- Pakistan's ethnic mosaic includes Punjabi (45%), Pashtun (15%), Sindhi (14%), Saraiki (10%), and Balochi (4)% populations. (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2017).
- Instead of strengthening pluralism, ethnic identities often clash with national identity.
- The Bengali language movement (1952) and Baloch Separatist movements are examples of identity-based disintegration.

3- Economic Inequality

- Unequal resource distribution between provinces has created resentment.
- Punjab enjoys industrial dominance, while Balochistan remains underdeveloped despite its mineral wealth.

- According to the Pakistan Economic Survey (2023), poverty in Balochistan is twice that of Punjab.
- The resulting class conflict and regional deprivation hinder social cohesion.

4- Centralisation of Power

- Historically, the state adopted a highly centralised model inherited from colonial administration
- Provinces had little autonomy in planning or spending resources.
- Although the 18th Amendment (2010) increased provincial autonomy, implementation issues persist, particularly in fiscal matters like the NFC Award.

5- Sectarian and Religious Divisions.

- Despite a common Islamic identity, sectarian intolerance (Sunni - Shia, Deobandi - Barelvi) has grown since the 1980s.
- Extremist ideologies challenge state authority, weakening integration at the social and ideological levels.

6- Role of Media and Globalisation

- The rise of ethnic media channels and regional political narratives has strengthened provincial nationalism.

- Globalisation has created cultural dislocation, especially among youth, who often feel detached from indigenous values.

7- Institutional Imbalance

- Dominance of the military and bureaucracy over civilian institutions distorts democratic balance.
- Provincial voices are often sidelined in policymaking, fueling alienation.

Sociological Analysis:-

From a sociological lens, Pakistan's integration crisis can be explained through three key theories:

- 1- Durkheim's Theory of Social Solidarity - Pakistan suffers from mechanical solidarity based on religion, but lacks organic solidarity that arises from interdependence and functional cooperation.
- 2- Conflict Theory (Karl Marx) - The ruling elite controls resources, exploiting the working and peripheral classes, resulting in structural inequality.
- 3- Functionalist Perspective (Parsons) - Weak social institutions (education, family, politics) fails to perform integrative functions, leading to social imbalance.

Consequences of Integration Crisis :-

- 1- Weak National Identity - Regional and ethnic loyalties overpower the sense of Pakistani nationhood.
- 2- Political Instability - Frequent tensions between provinces and the federation.
- 3- Economic Underdevelopment - Lack of cooperation blocks national planning.
- 4- Security Challenges - Increased Insurgencies and Separatist tendencies in Balochistan and tribal areas.
- 5- Erosion of Social Trust - Increased intolerance, corruption, and social alienation.

Measures for National Integration:-

- 1- Strengthening Federalism
 - Ensure genuine autonomy to provinces and equitable resource distribution.
 - Implement NFC Award transparently.
- 2- Inclusive Development Policies
 - Prioritise backward regions (Balochistan, South Punjab, Gilgit - Baltistan) in national projects.
 - Promote Job creation and infrastructure in neglected areas.

3- Promoting Cultural Pluralism

- Recognise linguistic and cultural diversity as national strength, not threat.
- Introduce regional languages and literature in education.

4- Civic and Moral Education

- Foster tolerance, patriotism, and democratic values among youth.

5- Strong Democratic Institutions

- Strengthen Parliament, judiciary, and local governments for balanced governance.

6- Media Responsibility

- Encourage media to promote unity, inter-provincial understanding, and cultural exchange.

7- Elimination of Extremism

- Counter sectarianism and ethnic hatred through national curriculum and inter-faith dialogue.

Conclusion:-

The Crisis of Integration in Pakistan is not a failure of diversity but a failure of management. Sociologically, integration depends on justice,

participation and equal opportunities. If Pakistan ensure these through democratic governance, equitable development and social inclusion, unity in diversity can become its strength rather than its weakness.