

Past, Present and Future of Pakistan- Some Reflections

By

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In his first message to the Pakistan Constituent Assembly, Qaid-e-Azam advanced the view that religion and politics should be separate from one another (because Islam i.e. faith and religion are two different things, and because the great leader had felt that the cost of adhering to the two-nation theory was colossal in human terms.

The political and other elitist leaders in Pakistan never embraced wholeheartedly the concept of social democracy under which the common man becomes the focus of all social and economic policies of a state.

Most of the political leaders and probably all the civil and military elite subscribed to the view that the best approach, particularly to the economic development of a society, should offer maximum incentives to the prosperous and enterprising individuals. The central element in this strategy was that maximum encouragement of the enterprising elite would yield such rapid and enormous economic benefits and that these benefits would trickle down to the lower levels thus ensuring the wellbeing of all citizens. It should have been obvious that the strategy of trickling down of economic benefits through jobs and other opportunities would be inadequate in reducing social inequalities. In fact, during the Ayub regime, the strategy had resulted in such excessive concentration of wealth that only the top 22 families in Pakistan realized most of the benefits.

Pakistan was established not primarily for negative reasons, namely to get away from Hindu domination, but for positive purposes. An inspiring and exciting social philosophy that the Pakistani leaders should have put forward was that the purpose of Pakistan was to show to the world that the principles of social justice could be established in such a society. Social justice means progressive redistribution of political and economic power to the lower income groups.

Under such a system of social justice, the doctrine of Zakat lays down clearly that the poor citizen has a right on the incomes of the rich. Under such a system of social justice, wealth

and power should be re-distributed that, starting from the lower levels, in such a way that this socially energizing strategy embraces the whole society. Islam suggests that that the society should move from bottom upwards, because concentration of wealth at the higher levels creates greater and greater dissatisfaction and cynicism throughout the society.

The emergence of Pakistan as a independent state has benefited mostly the upper income groups belonging to the feudal classes and industrial and mercantile groups. It is the upper groups who reaped the full benefits of partition whereas the lot of the common man has been hopeless. The civil and military public servants are the other beneficiaries. Pakistan, however, still lags behind the averages for low-income countries.

The record of Pakistan in the distribution of political power is even grimmer. For nearly half of its independent existence, the country has been dominated by the military classes.

At the time of partition, West Punjab received 5.5 million refugees (East Punjab having received 3.5 million). One sixth of the entire population of Pakistan consists of refugees.

The Qaid had declared, "We have achieved Pakistan.... for the masses".

What Pakistanis have to think is what we can do to reduce even by a small degree Pakistan's mounting dependence.

What we need in this world is a more rational and balanced view of what we have hitherto known as national independence or sovereignty.

Note: Your views on this composition are solicited. If you agree, your active cooperation is sought by "Roshni" to disseminate such and other rightful thoughts and ideas.

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