



# Fragmented Identities: Understanding Separatist Movements in Pakistan

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## Abstract

Pakistan has faced persistent separatist movements in various regions, driven by ethnic, political, economic, and historical grievances. This paper explores potential pathways for conflict resolution and national integration in response to separatist demands. It examines key strategies such as political dialogue, economic development, federalism, cultural inclusion, justice reforms, and regional diplomacy. The paper argues that a sustainable resolution requires a holistic approach that balances security measures with political and socio-economic reforms. By fostering inclusive governance, equitable resource distribution, and respect for ethnic identities, Pakistan can address separatist grievances and strengthen national cohesion. The research highlights the need for a shift from military-centric responses to long-term reconciliation and integration policies that ensure peace and stability.

**Keywords:** Separatist movements, Pakistan, conflict resolution, national integration, political dialogue, economic disparity, federalism, ethnic identity, human rights, reconciliation, regional diplomacy.

## I. Introduction

Since its inception in 1947, Pakistan has faced several separatist movements, primarily driven by ethnic, linguistic, economic, and political grievances. Regions such as Balochistan, Sindh, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have witnessed persistent demands for greater autonomy, and in some cases, complete independence. These movements stem from historical factors like colonial-era administrative divisions, post-independence centralisation of power, and perceived discrimination against ethnic minorities. Over the years, the dissatisfaction of these groups has intensified due to economic disparities, political exclusion, and human rights violations, making separatism a recurring challenge for the Pakistani state.

Ethnic and linguistic diversity has played a significant role in shaping separatist movements in Pakistan. The country comprises multiple ethnic groups, including Punjabis, Sindhis, Baloch, Pashtuns, and Mohajirs, each with distinct linguistic and cultural identities. However, policies favouring centralised governance and Urdu as the national language have often led to feelings of marginalisation among non-Punjabi ethnic groups. The East Pakistan nationalist movement of the 1970s, which ultimately led to the creation of Bangladesh, serves as a historical example of how linguistic and ethnic exclusion can fuel separatist tendencies. Similar patterns of discontent continue to persist in regions like Balochistan and Sindh where local communities perceive state policies as a threat to their cultural and political rights.

A major driving force behind separatist sentiments is economic disparity between Pakistan's provinces. While regions like Punjab have benefited from industrial and infrastructural development areas such as Balochistan and rural Sindh remain significantly underdeveloped despite being rich in natural resources. The exploitation of Balochistan's gas, mineral, and coastal resources without proportional reinvestment in the local economy has fueled resentment among Baloch nationalists. Similarly, Pashtun nationalist groups argue that the region has been historically neglected in terms of economic development and political representation. These economic grievances, combined with a lack of autonomy in decision-making have strengthened separatist narratives in marginalized provinces.

The Pakistani government has primarily relied on military operations and security crackdowns to suppress separatist movements. While these strategies have been successful in maintaining short-term stability, they have often led to further alienation of ethnic communities due to alleged human rights violations, enforced disappearances, and restrictions on political activism. Efforts at political reconciliation like the 18th Constitutional Amendment which granted



greater provincial autonomy have provided some relief but have not fully addressed the root causes of separatist discontent. The effectiveness of military strategies versus political and economic solutions remains a key area of debate in conflict resolution studies.

The persistence of separatist movements in Pakistan highlights the need for a long-term, multi-faceted approach to national integration. While security measures may provide temporary control, a comprehensive solution must focus on political dialogue, equitable resource distribution, cultural recognition, and inclusive governance. By studying global examples of successful conflict resolution, Pakistan can explore alternatives to military suppression and work towards a more inclusive national framework that accommodates ethnic, linguistic, and regional identities.

This research paper aims to provide a detailed analysis of the historical, economic, and political factors contributing to separatist movements in Pakistan. It evaluates past and present state responses and explores potential pathways for conflict resolution and national integration. The study underscores the importance of inclusive policies that promote unity without compromising the regional identities and rights of Pakistan's diverse population.

## **II. Methodology**

This study employs a descriptive and analytical methods to examine the factors driving separatist movements in Pakistan and the potential pathways for conflict resolution and national integration. The research relies on secondary data sources, including academic books, journal articles, policy reports, government documents, and media analyses. A detailed study is adopted to analyse separatist movements in Balochistan, Sindh, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, assessing their historical, political, economic, and cultural dimensions. The paper focuses on political grievances, economic disparity, ethnic identity, human rights concerns, and national integration policies. While the research paper is based on publicly available data, potential limitations include restricted access to primary sources and the risk of bias in secondary data. Ethical considerations ensure a balanced perspective, incorporating diverse viewpoints while maintaining academic integrity.

### **Objectives**

The primary objective of this research is to analyse the underlying causes of separatist movements in Pakistan and explore viable pathways

for conflict resolution and national integration. It aims to examine the role of ethnic, linguistic, political, and economic factors in fueling separatist sentiments and assess the effectiveness of government strategies in addressing these grievances. The paper seeks to evaluate the impact of political dialogue, economic development, federalism, cultural inclusion, and justice reforms as potential solutions for mitigating separatist tendencies. By highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of past and present counter-separatism measures, this research provides policy recommendations for fostering national cohesion, equitable governance, and long-term stability in Pakistan.

### **Importance**

This research article is significant as it provides a comprehensive analysis of the factors driving separatist movements in Pakistan and evaluates the effectiveness of state responses to these challenges. By examining the historical, political, economic, and social dimensions of separatism, the paper offers a deeper understanding of the root causes of regional discontent. Unlike existing narratives that focus primarily on security-based solutions, this research highlights the need for inclusive governance, equitable economic policies, and political reconciliation to achieve long-term stability. By drawing comparisons with global case studies of successful conflict resolution, the study presents alternative strategies for national integration beyond military interventions. Policymakers, scholars, and governance institutions can benefit from these insights to develop more effective, sustainable, and peaceful approaches to addressing separatist sentiments. Eventually, this paper contributes to the ongoing discourse on federalism, regional autonomy, and national cohesion, emphasising that stability and unity in Pakistan can only be achieved through justice, inclusivity, and equitable development.

### **Ethnic and Linguistic Identities**

Ethnic and linguistic identities are fundamental in shaping separatist movements in Pakistan, as they define group consciousness, historical grievances, and demands for autonomy. Pakistan is a multi-ethnic and multi-lingual state where the dominance of certain groups in politics and resource distribution has led to tensions among marginalised ethnic communities.<sup>1</sup> The state's policies, including the promotion of a centralised national identity based on Islam and Urdu have often



been perceived as efforts to suppress regional identities further fueling separatist sentiments.

The roots of ethnic and linguistic separatism in Pakistan can be traced back to its formation in 1947. The early state policy of imposing Urdu as the sole national language alienated non-Urdu-speaking communities in East Pakistan. The language movement in East Pakistan in the 1950s and 1960s, which eventually led to the creation of Bangladesh in 1971<sup>2</sup>, highlighted how linguistic suppression could escalate into a full-fledged separatist movement. Although Pakistan learned from this event and later granted official status to regional languages, linguistic and ethnic grievances have continued in other provinces, mainly in Balochistan, Sindh, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The Baloch separatist movement is one of the most persistent and violent separatist struggles in Pakistan. The Baloch people who have a distinct ethnic and linguistic identity have long felt alienated from the central government. Despite Balochistan being rich in natural resources, the local population remains underdeveloped fueling the perception that they are economically exploited by the state. The state's policies like discouraging Balochi language education in favour of Urdu have further deepened resentment. The Balochistan Liberation Army<sup>3</sup> (BLA), Balochistan Liberation Front<sup>4</sup> (BLF), and other separatist groups continue to wage armed insurgencies, demanding either greater autonomy or complete independence. The suppression of Baloch cultural and linguistic identity along with economic and political marginalisation has reinforced separatist aspirations.

Sindhi nationalism has been shaped by a strong linguistic and historical identity. Sindhis see themselves as the inheritors of the ancient Indus Valley Civilization and have historically resisted the imposition of Urdu as the national language.<sup>5</sup> The influx of Muhajirs, Urdu-speaking migrants from India, into Sindh after partition further fueled tensions as Sindhis felt that their political and cultural dominance was being challenged. The Sindhudesh movement, led by G. M. Syed, emerged as a response to the perceived marginalisation of Sindhi culture and language. While this movement has largely remained political, militant groups like the Sindhudesh Liberation Army (SLA) have occasionally engaged in acts of violence against state infrastructure.<sup>6</sup> The continued decline of Sindhi language education and the economic challenges faced by indigenous Sindhis contribute to the persistence of separatist sentiments.

The Pashtuns who primarily inhabit Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and parts of Balochistan have historically had strong tribal and linguistic identities. The concept of "Pashtunistan" was a significant movement in the early years of Pakistan. Although the movement has weakened over time ethnic and linguistic grievances remain. The Pakistani state's military operations in Pashtun regions have led to widespread displacement and human rights violations. The Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM), a peaceful rights-based movement, has emerged to demand justice for enforced disappearances and military excesses.<sup>7</sup> Although PTM does not explicitly call for separatism its demands reflect a deep sense of Pashtun marginalisation. The suppression of Pashto language and cultural identity in favour of Urdu has also contributed to long-standing grievances.

Unlike other ethnic groups in Pakistan the Muhajirs do not have a distinct territorial identity but played a major role in Pakistan's political landscape. Initially dominant in bureaucracy and politics, the Muhajirs later felt politically marginalised, especially after the rise of ethnic Sindhi nationalism in urban Sindh. The Muttahida Qaumi Movement<sup>8</sup> (MQM) emerged as a political force advocating for Muhajir rights. While MQM's demands were initially political some factions later pushed for greater autonomy and a separate Muhajir province. The state's response, including crackdowns and allegations of extrajudicial killings has radicalised some segments of the Muhajir population. Although the movement has weakened in recent years, ethnic and linguistic identity continues to shape Muhajir political aspirations.

Pakistan's approach to ethnic separatist movements has largely been security-centric, relying on military operations rather than political negotiations.<sup>9</sup> However, the suppression of ethnic identities often leads to greater resistance rather than integration. The lack of constitutional recognition for regional languages, economic disparities, and centralised governance have fueled separatist tendencies across different ethnic groups. However, without genuine efforts to integrate ethnic and linguistic minorities into the national framework, separatist movements are likely to persist.

### **Historical and Political Factors**

The rise of separatist movements in Pakistan has been shaped by historical and political factors that have fueled ethnic, linguistic, and regional grievances. Since its creation in 1947, Pakistan has struggled to balance its diverse ethnic



composition with a centralised national identity. Policies of political exclusion, economic marginalisation, military interventions, and linguistic suppression have contributed to separatist sentiments in various regions. These movements, ranging from armed insurgencies to political struggles, are rooted in historical injustices and political failures that continue to challenge Pakistan's unity.

The colonial history of the Indian subcontinent played a significant role in shaping separatist tendencies in Pakistan. The British governed different regions with varying levels of autonomy, and when Pakistan was created many regions were forcefully integrated into the new state without addressing local concerns. The Khan of Kalat, the ruler of Balochistan, initially sought independence but was annexed by Pakistan in 1948, leading to the first armed Baloch uprising.<sup>10</sup> This historical event laid the foundation for repeated insurgencies in Balochistan, as many Baloch nationalists continue to view Pakistan as an occupying force.

One of the earliest political decisions that contributed to separatist sentiments was the imposition of Urdu as the sole national language of Pakistan in 1948. This decision was met with strong opposition in East Pakistan where Bengali was the majority language. The Bengali Language Movement, which began in 1952, was a direct response to this linguistic imposition and played a crucial role in the eventual secession of East Pakistan in 1971. Similar grievances persist in other regions where local languages have been marginalised in favour of Urdu, leading to resentment and separatist inclinations.

Pakistan's governance structure has historically been highly centralised with power concentrated in Islamabad. The early years of Pakistan saw the dominance of West Pakistan over East Pakistan despite the latter having a larger population. This imbalance led to widespread political discontent in East Pakistan culminating in the Bangladesh Liberation War<sup>11</sup> and the creation of Bangladesh in 1971. The centralisation of power has also affected other provinces where demands for greater provincial autonomy have often been ignored. The lack of political representation for ethnic minorities has fueled separatist sentiments, as groups feel excluded from national decision-making processes.

The Pakistani state's reliance on military force to suppress separatist movements has intensified tensions rather than resolving them. In Balochistan several military operations have been

conducted since 1948 to quell insurgencies often resulting in human rights abuses, enforced disappearances, and extrajudicial killings.<sup>12</sup> Similarly, in Sindh, the 1990s saw military crackdowns against the Muhajir-led Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM), which further alienated the community. The Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM) also emerged as a response to military operations in tribal areas, highlighting how state repression has fueled ethnic grievances rather than integrating marginalised communities into the national framework.

Economic disparity between different regions has been a major driver of separatist movements in Pakistan. Balochistan, despite being rich in natural resources remains one of the least developed provinces, with limited infrastructure, education, and healthcare facilities.<sup>13</sup> The exploitation of Balochistan's gas, minerals, and coastline by the central government, without adequate benefits reaching the local population, has fueled the Baloch separatist movement. Similar economic grievances exist in Sindh, where Sindhi nationalists argue that Karachi's wealth benefits the central government more than the indigenous population.<sup>14</sup> The unequal distribution of economic resources has reinforced perceptions of internal colonialism, further fueling separatist tendencies.

Pakistan's separatist movements have also been influenced by regional and global geopolitical dynamics. India has been accused of supporting the Baloch insurgency as a countermeasure to Pakistan's involvement in Kashmir. Similarly, the idea of "Pashtunistan" gained momentum during the Cold War, with Afghanistan historically refusing to recognise the Durand Line and supporting Pashtun nationalist aspirations. The involvement of external actors has complicated Pakistan's internal security challenges, as separatist groups often find external support for their movements, whether in the form of funding, arms, or political backing.<sup>15</sup>

Repeated failures to engage separatist groups in meaningful dialogue have further fueled discontent. While efforts such as the 18th Amendment (2010) granted greater provincial autonomy have not fully addressed long-standing grievances. Insurgents in Balochistan, Sindhi nationalists, and discontented Pashtuns continue to feel excluded from mainstream politics. The state's preference for military solutions over political negotiations has left little room for peaceful resolution, prolonging separatist struggles.

#### **Economic Disparity**

Economic disparity is one of the fundamental drivers of separatist movements in



Pakistan. The uneven distribution of national resources, lack of development in certain regions, and perceived economic exploitation have reinforced feelings of alienation and resentment among ethnic communities. Provinces such as Balochistan, Sindh, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, as well as formerly Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) have long suffered from economic neglect, fueling nationalist and separatist sentiments. The failure of successive governments to address these economic grievances has deepened divisions within the country.

Balochistan holds vast natural resources, including natural gas, coal, copper, gold, and rare earth minerals. Despite these riches Balochistan remains the most underdeveloped province, suffering from high poverty rates, low literacy, and inadequate infrastructure. The natural gas fields in Sui have been supplying energy to the rest of Pakistan for decades yet Balochistan itself faces severe gas shortages. Many Baloch people believe that their resources have been exploited to benefit Punjab and Sindh, while they remain deprived of basic amenities. The lack of industrialisation, poor road networks, and minimal government investment have further alienated the local population. The development of Gwadar port under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) was expected to bring prosperity but many locals see it as another example of economic exploitation.<sup>16</sup> There is a widespread perception that Gwadar's development benefits the central government and foreign investors rather than the local Baloch population leading to protests and attacks by Baloch separatist groups. The economic marginalisation of Balochistan has fueled armed insurgencies, with groups such as the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) demanding independence.

Sindh is the economic backbone of Pakistan. The province contributes a significant portion of Pakistan's revenue through its industries, ports, and financial sector. However, despite this economic importance, many Sindhi nationalists argue that indigenous Sindhis do not receive a fair share of economic benefits. After partition, many Muhajirs settled in Karachi and Hyderabad, changing the demographic composition and economic structure of the region. Economic power shifted from Sindhi-speaking locals to migrant communities, creating tensions between Sindhi nationalists and the central government. Rural Sindh remains underdeveloped with low literacy rates, poor healthcare, and limited employment opportunities. Sindhi nationalist movements like the Jeay Sindh Qaumi Mahaz (JSQM) and the

Sindhudesh Liberation Army (SLA) have frequently raised concerns about economic exploitation and the lack of autonomy over local resources.<sup>17</sup> The marginalisation of Sindhi-language speakers in business, education, and governance has further fueled separatist sentiments.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) has historically lagged Punjab and Sindh in terms of economic development. The province has a weaker industrial base, higher unemployment, and fewer infrastructural projects compared to Punjab. The region has been severely impacted by Pakistan's involvement in the Afghan conflict, leading to economic instability, internal displacement, and destruction of local businesses. The former Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) are among the most underdeveloped regions in Pakistan. Decades of military operations, drone strikes, and cross-border militancy have devastated the local economy. Many Pashtuns feel that their region has been used as a buffer zone for geopolitical interests, while their economic needs have been ignored.<sup>18</sup> The Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM) has emerged as a response to these grievances calling for greater economic investment and political representation.

Punjab enjoys the highest level of industrialisation, infrastructure development, and access to government resources. Cities like Lahore, Faisalabad, and Rawalpindi have benefited from large-scale government projects, while smaller provinces struggle with economic neglect. The concentration of economic power in Punjab has led to resentment in other provinces where people perceive that those federal policies favour Punjabi elites. Major water infrastructure projects such as the Kalabagh Dam<sup>19</sup> have been opposed by Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa who argue that it would benefit Punjab at their expense. Similarly, Baloch nationalists have criticised Punjab's dominance in state-owned enterprises and government contracts, claiming that the wealth generated from Balochistan's resources disproportionately benefits Punjab. This economic disparity has fueled nationalist movements in smaller provinces, as people demand greater control over their economic resources.

The distribution of national resources under the National Finance Commission (NFC) Award has been a source of major contention. The award allocates federal funds to provinces primarily based on population size, which benefits Punjab the most. Smaller provinces argue that other factors, such as economic needs and resource contributions, should be considered in revenue-sharing mechanisms. Federal control over key industries such as energy,



ports, and transportation has limited the ability of smaller provinces to manage their own economic affairs. Balochistan contributes significantly to Pakistan's gas supply, but it receives only a small share of royalties, leading to continued frustration among its people.<sup>20</sup> Despite having Karachi port, Sindh struggles with financial mismanagement and rural underdevelopment.

### Strategies Employed and their Success

Pakistan has faced separatist movements in multiple regions in Balochistan, Sindh, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa due to ethnic, economic, and political grievances. In response, the Pakistani state has implemented various strategies to suppress or integrate separatist elements, ranging from military operations and intelligence-based crackdowns to political reconciliation and economic development initiatives. While some measures have temporarily reduced separatist activities, many grievances remain unresolved, leading to the persistence of these movements.

- The Pakistani state has relied on military operations like Zarb-e-Azb<sup>21</sup> (2014) and Radd-ul-Fasaad<sup>22</sup> (2017) to suppress separatist movements, targeting militant networks in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan. While these efforts have weakened insurgent groups, they have also led to human rights violations, fueling resentment and reinforcing separatist sentiments rather than fully eradicating them.
- Pakistani intelligence agencies have countered separatist movements by disrupting networks, tracking activities, and targeting leaders, weakening insurgent groups.<sup>23</sup> However, these operations often suppress political dissent, further alienating marginalised communities. The emergence of new separatist groups suggests that intelligence crackdowns alone cannot resolve separatist movements' root causes.
- Pakistan's political dialogue and amnesty programs aimed at reintegration of separatists have seen limited success. Reconciliation efforts in Balochistan and engagement with Pashtun activists have faced skepticism as they fail to address economic disparity and political autonomy.<sup>24</sup> The simultaneous use of military force has eroded trust, limiting the effectiveness of these initiatives.
- The Pakistani government has launched development programs like CPEC<sup>25</sup> and economic packages to integrate marginalised regions and reduce separatist sentiments. However, locals feel excluded fearing benefits go to outsiders and the military. Slow implementation and lack of local

representation have fueled distrust, limiting the effectiveness of efforts.

- The Pakistani state has used media control to curb separatist narratives, banning groups from mainstream media, promoting nationalistic messaging, and censoring social media.<sup>26</sup> However, digital platforms have allowed separatists to bypass censorship while restrictions have fueled distrust often reinforcing separatist sentiments.
- The Pakistani government has used legal measures like banning separatist groups and applying anti-terrorism and sedition laws to suppress separatist movements. While effective in the short term these actions have led to political repression and human rights concerns fueling greater resentment and failing to address the root causes of separatism.
- The 18th Amendment<sup>27</sup> (2010) aimed to decentralise power by granting provinces greater control over resources and governance, but many separatist groups see it as insufficient. In Balochistan, federal control over key decisions limits autonomy, and slow implementation has fueled dissatisfaction, making it seem more symbolic than transformative.

### Potential Pathways:

Addressing separatist movements in Pakistan requires a comprehensive approach that goes beyond military responses. A sustainable resolution must focus on political engagement, economic development, cultural inclusion, and institutional reforms that foster national integration while respecting ethnic and regional identities. By addressing the root causes of separatist sentiments, Pakistan can work towards long-term stability and unity.

- Meaningful political dialogue and power-sharing are key to resolving separatist conflicts. Engaging separatist leaders, increasing provincial autonomy, ensuring fair representation, and implementing confidence-building measures—such as releasing political prisoners—can foster trust and reduce armed conflict.
- Addressing economic disparity in regions like Balochistan through fair resource distribution, local economic control, and targeted development can reduce separatist sentiments. Prioritizing local employment, education, and industry in projects like CPEC, along with special economic zones and skill programs, can help integrate marginalized communities into the national economy.
- Enhancing federalism through greater provincial autonomy and stronger local governance can promote national integration. Building on the



18th Amendment, further constitutional reforms, cooperative federalism, and decentralized decision-making can reduce separatist demands while respecting regional identities.

- Promoting cultural diversity and linguistic inclusion can reduce separatist sentiments by fostering national integration. Recognizing regional languages, supporting local media, and including ethnic histories in education can strengthen belonging, while inter-provincial exchanges and cultural festivals can enhance unity.
- Addressing human rights violations through accountability, independent commissions, and reconciliation programs can rebuild trust and encourage political solutions over armed resistance, promoting national unity and conflict resolution.
- Diplomatic engagement, border security, and cross-border economic ties can help reduce external support for separatist movements. Collaborating with neighboring countries and international organizations can aid in conflict resolution and long-term stability.
- A balanced media approach that highlights separatist grievances and state efforts can foster constructive dialogue. Promoting responsible journalism, regional representation, and digital engagement can counter propaganda and strengthen national unity.

### III. Results

The research findings indicate that separatist movements in Pakistan are primarily driven by ethnic marginalisation, economic disparity, political exclusion, and human rights concerns. The analysis reveals that military operations, while effective in temporarily suppressing insurgencies, have failed to address the root causes of separatist sentiments, often intensifying grievances due to allegations of enforced disappearances and excessive force. The study highlights that political dialogue, and greater provincial autonomy can serve as more sustainable conflict resolution mechanisms, as seen in global examples of successful peace negotiations. Economic inequality, predominantly in resource-rich but underdeveloped regions like Balochistan, has fueled separatist demands emphasising the need for equitable resource distribution and inclusive development policies. Cultural and linguistic recognition is also identified as a crucial factor in fostering national integration and reducing alienation among ethnic minorities. The findings suggest that a multi-faceted approach combining political, economic, and social reforms with

reconciliation efforts is essential for long-term stability and unity in Pakistan.

### IV. Discussion

The findings of this research underline the complex interplay of ethnic, economic, and political factors in fueling separatist movements in Pakistan. While military operations have been the primary state response, their effectiveness remains limited as they address the symptoms rather than the root causes of separatist sentiments. The persistent grievances in Balochistan, Sindh, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa highlight the urgent need for political reconciliation, economic inclusivity, and cultural recognition as alternative strategies. By understanding global separatist conflicts suggests that power-sharing arrangements, regional autonomy, and fair resource distribution have been successful in mitigating separatist tendencies. Pakistan's federal structure, particularly after the 18th Amendment, offers a foundation for decentralisation, but further reforms are needed to strengthen provincial governance and local decision-making. Justice and human rights reforms are crucial to rebuilding trust between marginalised communities and the state. Finally, the paper emphasises that a holistic, multi-pronged approach integrating political, economic, and social solutions is essential for long-term national cohesion and stability, moving beyond reactive military measures to proactive conflict resolution.

### V. Conclusion

The persistence of separatist movements in Pakistan highlights the deep-rooted ethnic, economic, and political grievances that have fueled regional discontent over the decades. While military operations have provided short-term stability, they have largely failed to address the underlying causes of separatist sentiments, often aggravating tensions due to allegations of human rights violations and political suppression. The research paper emphasises that a sustainable solution lies in adopting a multi-faceted approach that prioritises political dialogue, economic equity, federalism, and cultural inclusion. Addressing economic disparities, particularly in resource-rich yet underdeveloped regions like Balochistan, through inclusive development policies and fair resource distribution can help mitigate separatist demands. Promoting regional autonomy within a strong federal structure, ensuring political representation, and protecting linguistic and cultural identities are essential steps toward national integration. Drawing lessons from global conflict resolution models, Pakistan can



move away from a purely security-driven response and adopt long-term policy reforms that foster unity, stability, and sustainable peace while respecting the diverse identities of its people.

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