

# 21st Century and Pakistan's New Narrative for National Stability

Qamar Abbas Cheema\* and Taimur Shamil\*\*

## Abstract

*Throughout the course of history, states and non-state actors have developed themes, values and ideas to promote their visions. Such deliberate and well-constructed ideologies are termed as narratives either to face the challenges or to run a rules-based national and international system while looking their goals and power apparatus. A national narrative is constructed in a way that identity, history, ideology, geography, culture, foreign policy and other national discourses become components of it. Pakistan, since its independence in 1947, has been in search of a comprehensive narrative that should suit the fabric of the state. The existing narrative has been unresponsive to the needs of people and becomes outdated for several reasons. A new narrative for identity construction, political maturity, educational growth, strong security, economic prosperity, good governance, religious reorientation, innovative skills, media maturity and ethnic unity is required which can establish a new societal architecture for a strong and resilient state and society. Building of such a new narrative is a strategic imperative which could bring national stability in Pakistan in the 21st century.*

**Keywords:** National Security, Narrative, Strategic Narrative, Sovereignty, Pakistan, Democratic Institution.

## Introduction

States develop themes, values and ideas to promote and protect their long-term goals. Such well-crafted ideologies are called narratives. The narrative

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\* The author is a Phd scholar at QAU and is a faculty member at the National University of Modern Languages (NUML), Islamabad.

\*\* The author is a Phd scholar with a study background in Media, National Security and Foreign policy.

is a sense-making story of events and a cognitive model<sup>1</sup> which are connected logically and presented either in written or oral form. It is considered as a tool of war in irregular war.<sup>2</sup> A war of minds and nerves, where a person is engaged either it could be a friend or foe. Narratives serve as a guide to define our identities, goals and objectives. Simultaneously, it constructs the identity of a state and the society. It strengthens shared values and beliefs which the state has inherited in correlation to its policies and strategies. In relation to the organisation of a state and the establishment of its institutions, the narrative depends on an organisational hierarchy, whose proponents lobby for their perspective through their available resources.

Since its creation, Pakistan has faced many challenges and tried to construct a narrative that could unite the nation and bring internal stability. Though Pakistan's narrative has changed with every civil and military regime. Pakistan itself has been adapting to the regional and international situations. With ever-changing political and security landscape, a new strategic narrative for Pakistan is long due. A new narrative should be on the premise that our long-term national interests are achieved to bring prosperity and security. It should be aimed at framing long-term policy decisions regarding identity crises, ideological fissures, resources distribution, political paralysis, economic stagnation, governance crisis, civil-military imbalance, flawed regional approach and immature international vision. Conspiracies against the fledgling state marred by its staggering economic development coupled with political instability and uneven economic growth. All the stakeholders in Pakistan should play their part in building the new narrative.

### **International Strategic Narrative**

One can cast an eye on the international system that how narratives have been constructed at the global level. Starting from the Greek era to incumbent western-backed Capitalist system, different narratives have prevailed at the global stage with different rules and mechanisms that suit the governing class. The US, with its strategic partners, has been the most dominant country influencing the international system in the current times.

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<sup>1</sup> Jerome Brunner, "The Narrative Construction of Reality," *Critical Inquiry* 18, no. 1 (1991): 6, [http://criticalinquiry.uchicago.edu/past\\_issues/issue/autumn\\_1991\\_v18\\_n1/](http://criticalinquiry.uchicago.edu/past_issues/issue/autumn_1991_v18_n1/).

<sup>2</sup> Lawrence Freedman, "The Transformation of Strategic Affairs," *Adelphi Paper* 379.

The global governance through the United Nations (UN) started affecting states in the post-World War II era. The global corporate firms came up with the idea of the global governance so that they can influence international architecture. Carnegie Corporation that was made from profits of the Carnegie Steel Company and J D Rockefeller that was made from a stranded oil company started working for corporate philanthropy.<sup>3</sup>

The land on which the UN's New York building is standing was funded by US\$8.5 million by a private organisation, Rockefeller Foundation, which is owned by J D Rockefeller, who believed in corporate philanthropy.<sup>4</sup> The Rockefeller Foundation and other private organisations like the Carnegie Foundation funded many influential organisations including the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the Council on Foreign Relation (CFR), a foreign policy pressure group for enhancing the American foreign policy values. Among the 68 Foreign Secretaries of the US, 23 were members of the CFR.<sup>5</sup> In the steering committee that worked for the UN was having five members from the CFR. All the 11 members of the World Bank were also the members of the CFR, except George Woods, who was a trustee of the Rockefeller Foundation. The Ford Foundation, another group which aims at supporting political movements at a national and international level, works closely with the US State Department and supports and finances the Research and Development Corporation (RAND), a military think tank that works for weapons research for US armed forces.

Similarly, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB), the major components of the Bretton Woods System, wanted that the US dollar would be the reserve currency for the world so that global capital to penetrate and standardised business practices are applied in an open market.

Internationally, many strategic narratives have affected the global political landscape. The Cold War was one such narrative which polarised the world on a politico-ideological basis. Both, the US and the former Soviet Union enhanced and protected their ideologies and promoted Capitalism and Communism. Similarly, after 9/11, which is considered as the first strategic shock of the 21st century, the US changed the global

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<sup>3</sup> Arundhati Roy, "Capitalism: A Ghost Story," *Outlook*, March 26, 2012.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

political and security environment. The US lobbied around the world to convince other countries, by using its political and military power that their existing political and security arrangements were insufficient to deal with this unconventional warfare, in which non-state actors had become the biggest threat to the state's territorial integrity and sovereignty.

The former US Defence Secretary, Donald Rumsfeld, talking about the war on terror said "in this war, some of the most critical battles may not be in the mountains of Afghanistan or the streets of Iraq but in newsrooms in New York, London, Cairo and elsewhere."<sup>6</sup> Another regional development that has affected the international politics in general and the politics of the Middle East, in particular, was the construction of narratives around the Arab Spring. Youth with the power of social media brought down the old unresponsive orders like Egypt, Yemen, Tunisia, Syria, Libya and many others and tried to erect new orders which have mix stories of success and failures.

This was how the political, economic, security, ideological and foreign policy narratives were constructed by philanthropist corporate lobbies and powerful states. All major discourses around the world be it media, education, entertainment, culture, sports, information technology, health and social media have been incorporated into the international system by the powerful politico-corporate lobbies through international regimes and institutional frameworks.

### **Analysing Pakistan's Old Narrative**

National narratives are also constructed keeping in view the domestic and international vision of the state that evolves over the period of time. A national narrative is constructed in such a way that identity, history, ideology, geography, culture, foreign policy and other national discourses are all a part of thought construction process of the state. Pakistan, since independence, has been in search of a master national narrative to drive its state and society. For a long period of time, the country failed to write a constitution and the first two constitutions, it

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<sup>6</sup> Joseph Nye, "What is Power in Global Affairs?," *The Future of Power* (New York: Public Affairs, 2011), 24.

had, were not with consensus. The institutional failure has been a great loss to the state and society.

The Indian institutional strength and visionary leadership also tried to jell the whole country to deal with all post-independence challenges. However, it still facing number of challenges like the rise of Hindutva ideology, gender issue, poverty, secessionist movements etc. The Indian leadership emerged as identity entrepreneurs for the country, whereas, in Pakistan poor institutional structure, early death of top leadership and absence of consensus constitution created chaos. So the narrative that was to come from modern and democratic forces those who pleaded for Pakistan could not come from conservative Muslims. It is believed this was not the destination for which Pakistan was created.

There has been confusion in Pakistan that what should be the way forward. Immature political leadership, weak political parties, ambitious confessional parties, untrained civil servants, feeble governance and civil-military imbalance led Pakistan not to construct a healthy narrative for state and society. Pakistan was not able to construct following narratives and those which were constructed were half-baked.

Defining Pakistan's identity has long been an issue of contention. Either Pakistanis are part of a nation-state system or they are part of a pan-Islamic movement. Are we Muslims or Pakistanis? What comes first? All these questions remained unanswered, which have confused the nation. The second narrative is about political system and governance. Do we have to have a democratic system of government, dictatorship or rule by shariah law? How can incompetence, autocracy and corruption be eliminated? Until now the nation is confused and an air of unreliability persists.

The third narrative is about education, how an English-Urdu 'apartheid' was created and how could it be eliminated. Madrassah education as an alternative to general education and jihadi indoctrinisation created ripples among the youth.

The fourth narrative is about the economy and how Pakistan could have an active and resilient economy. In the absence of a stable political system, it was hard to have economic stability. Constant dependency, resource

scarcity, stagflation, borrowed growth and mass impoverishment led to the weak economy.

The fifth narrative is about foreign policy that how foreign policy objectives have not been achieved. Why has there been foreign policy failure on many fronts? Either due to weak political system or leadership. Isolation, conflict and estrangement have been the source of foreign policy failure.

The sixth narrative that has not been much highlighted is demography. This narrative talks about the youth bulge, class volatility, viral diseases and religious conservatism.

The seventh narrative is about civil-military relations. The two most important themes are that the army is dominant and that civilians do not have the capability to govern the country. This narrative has long plagued the state and led to political instability, marred by dictatorships and a form of 'patronage' democracy.

The eighth narrative that has been ignored is urbanisation. Due to the lack of a census, the state did not have figures but now with the census in 2017, figures have come which will be analysed in this paper. So the slums, criminalisation and ethnic warfare have been on the rise. This has given rise to urban warfare and terrorists have taken refuge in urban zones.

The ninth narrative that has been one of the most important and neglected one is about law and order. It has a direct link with the public and maintaining peace and stability in society. It has been plagued by the failure of organs of the state and constitutional gridlock.

The tenth and last narrative is about terrorism and radicalisation. Violent extremism, sectarian terrorism and ethnic separatism have brought national crises. One of the most serious crisis nation is facing and yet all efforts are to be done to counter it.

### **Constructing a New Narrative for Pakistan**

There has been enough debate above that Pakistan's existing narratives have been unresponsive in constructing a resilient society and making

strong Pakistan. So a new narrative is needed, whereby, the people can have direction regarding what is the future course for them and state and how the state would have to compete with the rest of world. All the ten narratives discussed above would be unfolded here in this section for remedial measures.

The first narrative that needs overhauling is about identity. With start of decolonisation and rise of institutional structures like the UN, the universal bonds got faded. States got independence from colonial masters on the basis of their local identities. Constructing local identities remained a hallmark of the colonial powers that created in-group and out-group.

Insiders and outsiders, this led them to divide and rule.<sup>7</sup> Pakistan is the exception which got independence on the basis of ideology. Although local identities remained, in the presence of bigger identities, for the sake of national cohesion, they either had to be sacrificed or sideline.

Islam has been a political and social force. It has been used for every purpose, be it nation building or security matters. The Islamic narrative has been hijacked by certain groups who have been using it for diverse gains from extending political influence to territorial power. Such powers confused the people and the real themes of the Pakistani nationalism remained weak. Certain Islamic groups remained to hammer themes of pan-Islamism which turned out to be flawed and ignored the utility of the nation-state system.

Such ideas became confusing, with people still believing there would come a time when something extraordinary will happen that may bring together the Muslim world notwithstanding the fact that this has never happened either in the Muslim nor the Christian worlds. The states which failed to understand the western international order of nation-state system and themes like sovereignty lost the most. People of Pakistan must understand the concept of power in an era of nationalism and even before

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<sup>7</sup> Muhammad Mujeeb Afzal, *Bharatiya Janta Party and the Indian Muslims* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2014), 3.

that which is the fundamental desire of every human being.<sup>8</sup> Powerful ethnic identities dominate the society.<sup>9</sup> It will be good for all sections of Pakistani society to understand the importance of nationalism, rather than confusing themselves on other identities.<sup>10</sup> The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) which is a multilateral organisation among Muslim states is a so-called uniformed face of the Muslim world, which understands the international system but has failed to address the miseries of Muslims. Islam must be channelled as progressive force and Islamic values must be part of Pakistan's state structure but manipulation of such values must not be allowed.

The second narrative, which is about democracy and good governance, needs revision. Neither democracy nor democratic culture has been fully evolved in Pakistan. Nation has seen revolving-door democracy. With deep-rooted democratic culture and sustainable democratic tenures issue of governance and political instability would end. This would usher in a new era of growth and stability and good governance. Although powers have been devolved to provinces with the 18th Amendment, full-scale implementation of those powers is still needed as few are still on the way to develop capacity building for that. Similarly, the Seventh National Finance Commission was introduced with consensus among provinces under President Asif Ali Zardari's government. But until and unless the Local Body representatives are empowered and provincial finance commissions are announced, democracy and good governance cannot penetrate the state system.<sup>11</sup> The Local Body elections have been conducted but administrative and financial powers have not been given to the representatives. Only the empowered institutional architecture can transfer powers at a grassroot level which can bring satisfaction and stability. This new narrative is direly needed and can bring much awaited good governance in the state if throughout the country. For this, media and civil society need to pressurise provincial governments and especially political parties so that parties can have legislation, which can genuinely empower local representatives.

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<sup>8</sup> Saadia Toor, *The State of Islam: Culture and Cold War Politics in Pakistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2011), 2.

<sup>9</sup> Owen Bennett-Jones, *Pakistan: Eye of the Storm* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002), 108.

<sup>10</sup> Toor, *The State of Islam*, 2.

<sup>11</sup> Maleeha Lodhi, "Beyond the Crises State," In *Pakistan: Beyond the Crises State*, (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2011), 158.

The third narrative is about education. The parallel education system has created serious socio-economic disparity. Public, private and madrassah education system all are imparting education with a different curriculum, hence, providing a breeding ground of the competing worldviews.<sup>12</sup> English-Urdu 'apartheid' was created because of these competing educational systems. State's inability to expand the network of the public educational system gave space to private and madrassah education system. The above-discussed apartheid can only be ended if the state starts giving education to children and all parallel educational systems will end with the passage of time. The state may give curriculum to all educational institutions which are below intermediate. 12 years broad-based education must be given to all students. After 12 years, all students must have a choice to go for specialisation in their preferred subjects. By this way, the whole country will be on the same page because all students would be studying the same curriculum which will be prepared by the government. By this way, the damage done by the madrassah education system, which remained a breeding ground for jihadis, may not let society polarise.

The fourth narrative is about Pakistan's tattered economy. Unstable political regimes, oligarchic elite and the country's reliance on borrowed growth have created economic difficulties. Sustained and accountable political tenures can improve the health of the economy. Until and unless the state enlarges its tax pool, it would not be possible to have a stable economy. Less than one per cent of Pakistan pays direct tax.<sup>13</sup> Strong tax culture needs to be brought which must have incentives. The country's fiscal crisis is deep and needs serious attention. Pakistan's effective tax-to-GDP ratio would have to be increased. Since the last decade, tax-to-GDP ratio has been below 10 per cent.<sup>14</sup> Whereas, in India and China tax-to-GDP ratio is about 17 per cent. That is why the Indian and the Chinese economies are performing well. Reforms in tax administration

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<sup>12</sup> Hassan Abbas, "Pakistan 2020: a Vision for Building Better Future," *Asia Society*, May, 2011,

[http://asiasociety.org/files/pdf/as\\_pakistan%202020\\_study\\_group\\_rpt.pdf](http://asiasociety.org/files/pdf/as_pakistan%202020_study_group_rpt.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> Mubarak Zeb Khan, "Less than 1 per cent of Pakistanis Pay Tax," *Aboard the Democracy Train*, <http://www.aboardthedemocracytrain.com/less-than-1-percent-of-pakistanis-pay-tax-survey>

<sup>14</sup> "Economic Survey 2014/2015: Tax to GDP Ratio Remained between 8.5-9.7 Per cent during Past 10 Years despite Revenue Increase," *PK Revenue*, June 5, 2015.

can only make Pakistan's economy to perform well and this will end structural economic problems and will bring stability in the state.<sup>15</sup>

The fifth narrative is foreign policy correction that needs to be constructed in order to promote important short and long-term national objectives and to get back lost strategic space. Pakistan would have to adjust foreign policy objectives and must use all possible diplomatic tools in an anarchic global environment. Peace in Afghanistan must come with a local political settlement where Pakistan's concerns must also be addressed. With regards to India, Pakistan must maintain a Minimum Credible Deterrence. Pakistan must raise Kashmir's issue on all international forums and must help Kashmir in gaining the right of self-determination according to their legitimate aspirations. While trade and economic relations must be started because the gravity of trade stresses that trade with neighbours must be to a maximum extent. Strategic and economic partnership with China must achieve maximum benefits with a tilt of Pakistani exports to China to reduce import bill. Since the US has withdrawn forces from Afghanistan, Pakistan must maintain a stable relationship with the US, where Pakistan's legitimate political and security concerns must be addressed. But the US President, Donald Trump's South Asia policy has almost isolated Pakistan in the region. Pakistan will have to adjust itself to compete for in an anarchic environment. The sovereignty of Pakistan must be respected and Pakistan should use all diplomatic channels if there is any violation. Its historic relationship with the Gulf States, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Egypt and other Islamic states must be revived. Few Islamic states have not played a positive role in reshaping Pakistan's socio-religious fabric, which must not be allowed in future as Pakistan is still fighting to weave that fabric.

The sixth narrative that needs to be constructed for national stability is about demography. Pakistan, being a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural state, is facing demographic challenges. Pakistan is also one of the largest refugee-hosting state in the world since long.<sup>16</sup> The country conducted 6th population and housing census in 2017, which has shown that population growth rate is 2.4 per cent whereas, in the whole of South Asian region average growth rate

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<sup>15</sup> Sakib Sherani, "Tax Reform Suggestions," *Dawn*, January 9, 2015, <http://www.dawn.com/news/1155752>.

<sup>16</sup> "Pakistan World's Largest Refugee Hosting Country: UNHCR," *UNHCR*, June 22, 2014, <http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/refdaily?pass=52fc6fbd5&id=53a7b7df8>.

is 1.3 per cent.<sup>17</sup> Pakistan's fertility rate is 3.5 per cent whereas, South Asia as a whole has 2.4 per cent. More than 60 per cent of Pakistan's population consists of youth.<sup>18</sup> Pakistan must start population planning programmes which must educate and guide married couples. Challenges like culture and religion in checking childbirth must be addressed. The state needs to pay serious attention to the outcomes of early marriages, proper birth spacing, better health care of child and mother, whilst respecting the belief that children are a gift of God, and taking note that birth control is prohibited in Islam. Other Muslim countries have successfully taken measures to control birth. For example, Bangladesh lowered its population growth to 1.6 per cent by taking proactive measures.<sup>19</sup>

The seventh narrative is about civil-military relations. There has been an asymmetric relationship between elected and non-elected institutions. This imbalance comes from Pakistan's colonial heritage since Pakistan's democratic institutions were absent and weak so bureaucracy, actually, controlled daily affairs. So civil-military establishment has been dominant on weak political institutions. The Muslim League's leadership which came from India needed a civil-military bureaucracy to compete with the indigenous political elite. Now after 70 years, there is a marked improvement in Pakistan in civil-military relations. For the first time in the history of Pakistan, the military helped the political leadership to complete five years tenure from 2008 to 2013, in a way that democratic set up had to face fewer conspiracies and former dictator, General Musharraf's legacy demoralised military's confidence. Military leadership understands that they can only perform well if democracy survives. Only political stability would let military complete its military operations. Political leadership must deliver and must not drag army into politics. The military must devise a mechanism where, those who are involved in conspiracies against the political government, must be brought to justice. Politicians must work for spreading democratic culture and intra-party elections must be free and fair

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<sup>17</sup> Tim Worstall, "Pakistan's 6th Census — 207 Million People Still Stuck in Malthusian Growth," *Forbes*, August 26, 2017, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/timworstall/2017/08/26/pakistans-6-th-census-207-million-people-still-stuck-in-malthusian-growth/#83ee76b17949>.

<sup>18</sup> Asiya Mahar, "Pakistan's Youth Bulge: Human Resource Development (HRD) Challenges," IPRI, December 10, 2014, <http://www.ipripak.org/pakistans-youth-bulge-human-resource-development-hrd-challenges/#sthash.NdmotpQn.dpbs>.

<sup>19</sup> Shahid Kardar, "Managing Population Growth," *Dawn*, September 12, 2014, [http://epaper.dawn.com/DetailImage.php?StoryImage=09\\_12\\_2014\\_008\\_005](http://epaper.dawn.com/DetailImage.php?StoryImage=09_12_2014_008_005).

so that democracy to prevail at a grassroots level. Good governance must be improved so that the military's rhetoric that politicians do not perform is negated.

The eighth narrative is about urbanisation which is one of the most neglected issues and Pakistan has not been able to have population census since 1998, because of the lack of political will. The Population Census of 2017, says there are more than 36 per cent people in the urban areas. According to the World Bank, 34 per cent of the population is living in eight cities which will rise to 50 per cent by 2030.<sup>20</sup> Because of floods and earthquakes, many people have shifted to cities looking at managerial faults in saving life, property and livestock. Zulfiqarabad, a new city, was raised to accommodate flood hit people of Thata district in 2010.<sup>21</sup> During 2012-13, 25 billion rupees were allocated for urban development at federal and provincial level.<sup>22</sup> Most of the money went towards sanitation, housing, water supply and road infrastructure. Since a national housing policy was established in 2001, there has been no new housing policy, which is urgently needed as the urban population is increasing rapidly. A new national resettlement policy must be made in all provinces and at a federal level, earlier policy has been made seven years ago. A national water policy is also needed as Pakistan is one of the most water-scarce countries.<sup>23</sup> Water needs at urban centre is not at par with rising urban population, which has given birth to water mafia in main cities. Similarly, national sanitation policy must be implemented in letter and spirit to avoid urban mismanagement. Proper implementation of the above discussed policies will help end the criminal activities in the cities. This needs to be done for good governance. So, unless a new narrative regarding urban issues is introduced, which involves public participation, there are chances of grave social disorder.

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<sup>20</sup> "50 per cent of People will be Living in Cities by 2030," Urban Resource Centre, July 1, 2013, <http://www.urkarachi.org/Facts & Figures JULY 2013.HTM>.

<sup>21</sup> "Coastal Cities: Chinese Company Comes Forward to Build Zulfiqarabad City," *Express Tribune*, August 25, 2011, <http://tribune.com.pk/story/238848/coastal-cities-chinese-company-comes-forward-to-build-zulfiqarabad-city/>.

<sup>22</sup> "50 per Cent of People will be Living in Cities."

<sup>23</sup> Simi Kamal, Pervaiz Amir and Khalid Mohtadullah, "Development of Integrated River Basin Management," WWF, 2012, [https://www.wwfpak.org/publication/pdf/irbm\\_2013.pdf](https://www.wwfpak.org/publication/pdf/irbm_2013.pdf).

The ninth narrative that needs to be reconstructed is the rule of law. The institutional tussle and failure have affected rule of law. A stable political system with proper checks and balances and distribution of power to local government level will bring the rule of law. Powerful organs of state must not step over each other's powers. Conflicts within the power structures are hardly for the good of the state, instead, they serve the narrow personal interests of people sitting there. Due to poor rule of law, state had to pay the heavy cost and this had created an uneasy relationship between elected and unelected quarters. Implementation of the 18th Amendment and the National Finance Commission (NFC) of 2010, would let all departments to work by enjoying their mandate. This institutional arrangement will give sufficient funds to provinces to fulfil their needs, where the rule of law could be strengthened. In case of poor, the rule of law of unelected quarters tries to create their space. For instance, Karachi has rangers to make rule of law better as crime has been politicised there and politics has been criminalised.<sup>24</sup> So, such kind of poor performance reduces efficacy and credibility of civilian institutions and this creates space where people start ignoring democratic norms and values for their poor delivery. Punjab, being a largest province in terms of population, is considered stable as compared to other provinces. But rule of law has not been maintained where terrorist organisations operate freely for this Punjab government had to face criticism. The attack on Gulshan-e-Iqbal park in Lahore on March 27, 2016, which killed about 73 people has brought serious fissures between civilian and military leadership.<sup>25</sup> There were pockets of terrorists in Punjab which were not targeted so army raided and killed many terrorists. This was the job of civilians to maintain any sort of law and order but for some reasons they ignored. There are rumours that Punjab may have to have the assistance of the Rangers to maintain law and order as Karachi and Islamabad have. Although the Punjab government has denied that there is no need of Rangers.<sup>26</sup> However, what is necessary that law and order must be maintained at every cost and federal and provincial governments must develop a comprehensive narrative in this regard.

The tenth narrative that is most important and needs the complete attention of the state and society is about terrorism and extremism which

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<sup>24</sup> Abdul Wajid Rana, "Sindh's Faltering Governance," *Express Tribune*, October 26, 2013.

<sup>25</sup> Afrasiab Khattak, "The Deepening Divide," *Dawn*, April 02, 2016.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

includes sectarian terrorism and ethnic separatism. The National Action Plan (NAP) which is a twenty point plan chalked out after the attack on the Army Public School in Peshawar on December 16, 2014, has a complete remedy for all issues discussed above in this narrative and there has been a sharp decrease in terrorist activities in 2015 with a recorded 48 per cent reduction.<sup>27</sup> What is still needed, however, is a civil-military effort to a united front. The Pakistan Army has very serious concerns that points related to political leadership in the NAP are not being addressed. For instance, effective laws in the execution of terrorists since the army complains that although they arrest terrorists, invariably they are released because of the absence of strong laws of evidence. Strengthening and activation of National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA), which is established to coordinate among government departments for countering terrorism is vital for coordination but it is facing challenges as both military and civil leadership ignores its mandate in using it. The police are not tough on those who use hate speech and spread hate literature although there has been significant progress on it, although more than 9,000 people were arrested and more than 9,000 cases were registered regarding hate speech.<sup>28</sup>

Madrassah registration and checking their curriculum is a distant dream and as a result, extremist trends are being generated. Punjab and Sindh have done geotagging of madrassas but Baluchistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) are yet to do so. Political reforms are yet to come to the Federally Administrated Tribal Area (FATA), the tribal region that comes under federal government but is adjacent to KPK. FATA needs to be mainstreamed for reducing challenges of extremism and terrorism. Monitoring of social media is one of the significant tasks so that terrorists are not able to use it as a tool to send their message. Although the government has closed more than 900 Uniform Resource Locator (URL) and about 10 websites, much needs to be done.<sup>29</sup> Banned organisations are running social media accounts which must be blocked in order to strengthen the NAP. In conclusion, in order to control extremist trends, it is necessary to monitor social media rigorously.

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<sup>27</sup> Anwar Iqbal, "Statistics Show Marked Drop in Terrorist Attacks" *Dawn*, September 5, 2016, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1282160>

<sup>28</sup> Zahid Gishkori, "Over 9,000 'Hate Preachers' Arrested under NAP," *Express Tribune*, October 23, 2015, <https://tribune.com.pk/story/977902/sectarian-strife-over-9000-hate-preachers-arrested-under-nap/>

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

## **New Narrative and National Stability**

National stability is direly needed as the state has been passing through a critical phase. A strong bond of nationalism must be there for national stability. It is the only idea which is beyond biases and can connect people from all ethnic backgrounds at one platform. For national unity, the political system of the state must not be derailed. National stability will come as all stakeholders will be part of the system. Similarly, governance pattern must be the state-of-the-art so that marginalised sections must not face isolation. Good governance and sustainable democratic culture will bring national unity in the state. For national stability, the same curriculum must be adopted so that all the sections of the society must have the same approach for state and society. People from Karachi to Gilgit must think along common lines, which will bring ideological and intellectual cohesion among the masses.

For national stability micro and macro-level economy must perform and that can only be if democratic political setup remains on track. A very strong narrative on foreign policy can bring national stability if all stakeholders from political parties give their input. The Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs must be involved in foreign policymaking as it will have the institutional backing and will make comprehensive and coordinated foreign policy. Demographic imbalance can create national instability because resources are not multiplying as compared to population increase. So timely planning and focus on population control can lead to national stability. Asymmetric power relation between elected and non-elected needs to be corrected for national stability. Politicians feel aloof and isolated when they feel their mandate is not being respected. Excess of power on either side can lead to national instability. National stability lies in accepting mandate and every one to work on its given space in the constitution.

Excessive urbanisation without urban planning will lead to national instability where criminalisation, ethnic imbalance and class war can be dangerous for social fabric. For national stability, the urban planning is needed. Strong rule of law ensure safety and security of the citizens. Insecurity in few parts of the country and security for few may create sense of frustration among masses against political elite. Strong rule of law is dire need for national stability so that state's promise to protect

land and property of its citizens to be fulfilled. Terrorism and extremism has destabilised state. Pakistan has never been in such a hard time. NAP needs to be implemented for national stability. With much delay but a ray of hope is there. All sections of society are disturbed with ongoing terrorism and extremist tendencies so national stability could be achieved if state take these matters seriously.

## **Conclusion**

While undertaking this study, it has become clear that a newly revised discourse of state needs to be introduced. The existing narrative needs to be overhauled since it failed to reflect the contemporary ground realities. Successive governments have ignored the ground realities in shaping a modern and progressive future for Pakistan. The incumbent political structure has faced a difficult environment where they ignored institutional strength and power. The power lies in the hierarchy and not in a personal relationship when dealing with state matters. Our leadership would have to utilise hierarchical power for gaining long-term objectives for national cohesion. National unity must not be ignored as it undermines democratic values and any narrative created in hurry could be counter-productive. A new narrative which has the characteristics of inclusiveness must be part of the state architecture and which has a general consensus from all stakeholders. With the rising challenges to the state, the different sections of Pakistan's society have serious legitimate concerns which can only be addressed if a new narrative is made part of the state to bring structural stability. Those who have been out of the national political and administrative loop and who are not in the mainstream have been either exploited or have grievances. A new narrative should be carefully drafted taking into account the global realities.