

Nationalist Parties in Electoral Politics of Sindh

Muhammad Sajid Khan*

Abstract

Sindhi nationalism emerged with narrative of marginalization, exploitation and threat of domination. The continuous waves of migration since 1947 further sharpened this consciousness, created polarization in Sindh and curtailed the process of assimilation. The ethno-linguistic and cultural identity markers surfaced as an agent in shaping the political landscape. The political actors were forced to use nationalist symbols and idioms to lure masses. The Pakistan Peoples' Party, despite its predominantly centralist character, responded to popular aspirations of Sindhi nationalism and maintained its dual and sometimes conflicting or divergent image of centralist and regional political force to consolidate its popular support base and effectively applied its Sindh card for mass political mobilization. Despite their radical popular appeal and agenda and presence of prominent figures like G.M. Syed, Ayub Khuro and Rasool Bakhsh Paliyo, The Sindhi nationalist political forces failed to translate their electoral support to defeat the MQM in urban Sindh, and its counterparts; the ANP in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the nationalist parties of Balochistan. They did not succeed in evolving an umbrella organization and it

* Ph.D. Scholar, Department of History, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad and Lecturer in Department of History, Govt. Postgraduate College Asghar Mall, Rawalpindi.

remained personal network of loyalist without elaborate party structure. The parties were unable to perform in electoral sphere. They, however, sometimes opted to abstain from electoral process and at times joined electoral alliances with ideological rival centralist or Punjab dominated political forces to counter the PPP. They faced massive electoral defeats in constituency politics by powerful local and tribal influentials supported by the PPP. Their all endeavours discredited them and further restricted their popular appeal in electoral politics. Their failure also undermined their representative character and their claim to leadership and legitimacy of articulation of Sindhi nationalist interest. It also restricted them as an agitation force or a pressure group. Despite all their shortcomings, Sindhi nationalist political forces still remain a powerful political agent in shaping and determining the political discourse in Sindh and a potent threat for its rivals.

Introduction

G.M. Syed¹, considered by many as father of Sindhi nationalism, remarked that "Sindhu Desh was born with the birth of Mother Earth. Our attachment with it, too, is as old and ancient as that."² Sindhi nationalists consider that it is a historically and culturally rooted national identity with distinct region, culture and language of the Sindh region and its tributaries.

Feroz Ahmad claims that linguistically, Sindhi is more developed as compared to Urdu with a written script.³ G. M. Syed considered Sindhi language as "elder sister of Sanskrit".⁴ He also elaborated distinct nature of Sindhi poetry, music, dance and architecture and its rich heritage of

1 Ghulam Murtaza Shah Syed (January 17, 1904-April 15, 1995) was a prominent Sindhi nationalist leader, intellectual, founding father of modern Sindhi nationalism and author of many books.

2 Farhan Hanif Siddiqi, *The Politics of ethnicity in Pakistan: The Baloch, Sindhi and Mohajir Ethnic Movements* (London: Rutledge, 2012), 59.

3 Feroz Ahmad, *Ethnicity and Politics in Pakistan* (Karachi: Oxford, 1999), 51-52.

4 Siddiqi, *The Politics of ethnicity in Pakistan*, 87.

Sufi traditions. Sindhi cultural dresses especially *Ajrak*, served as an assimilating agent.

According to 1998 Census, the province of Sindh comprises 23 percent of the territorial area of Pakistan, while demographically its population is 22.9 percent in Pakistan.⁵ According to Census report of 1998, linguistically Sindh is a divided province. Sindhi population with majority in rural Sindh constituted the largest group with 59.73 percent. Urdu speaking population, consisting of 21.05 percent of total population was generally concentrated in urban areas, while Punjabi speaking 6.99 percent, Pashto speaking 4.19 percent and Balochi speaking were 2.11 percent of the total population.⁶

Sindh's ethnic diversity is most complex amongst Pakistan's four provinces due to major waves of migration especially to its urban centers which radically changed its demographic features. Native Sindhis become minority in urban areas like Karachi, and reduced numerically to 5th largest community and were deprived of economic opportunities offered by industrialization and development.⁷

Sindh witnessed different waves of migration in different periods. At the time of partition of Subcontinent, 80 percent of the refugees were settled in Punjab, and 20 percent in Sindh. Most of the settlers in Sindh were Urdu speaking and this factor also brought a radical change in the demographic composition of the province. Sindhi population was reduced from 87 percent to 67 percent in 1951.⁸ The Urdu speaking population settled in urban centers and gradually became a majority. No assimilation process was required, and they proudly carried their linguistic, cultural identity markers. The state patronage was also provided due to ideological identification, and they became custodians and guardians of

5 Siddiqi, *The Politics of ethnicity in Pakistan*, 75.

6 Siddiqi, *The Politics of ethnicity in Pakistan*, 49.

7 Charles H. Kennedy, "The Politics of Ethnicity in Sindh," *Asian Survey*, 31, no. 10 (October 1991): 93.

8 Ahmad, *Ethnicity and Politics in Pakistan*, 45.

the new state. The native Sindhi population was further reduced to 55.7 percent according to 1981 Census, predominantly a rural population. They complained that they were treated as foreigners in urban centers, which were dominated by refugees. Sindhi people although 'sons of the soil', started considering themselves marginalized and foreigners in their urban areas.⁹

In the post-1947, the Mohajirs in Sindh were a literate community, and 70 percent of them were literate as compared to the 10 percent literate in native population of Sindh.¹⁰ The Mohajir-Punjabi bureaucratic elite dominated and developed an oppositional relationship with local landed political elite. The bureaucratic elite emerged as the custodian of self-defined national interest against regional interest of local political elite. Most of the local leaders extended support to dominant bureaucracy in prospects of sharing power at the center and provinces. Mohajirs captured 33.5 percent of gazetted posts with eight percent of the population, while Sindhis with double the size of population only constituted 2.7 percent of gazetted employees, only 4.3 percent of the secretariat posts and 3.6 percent of executive positions in public owned enterprises, as a stark contrast to the Mohajirs, who got nearly 50 percent of senior positions in public enterprises in 1947.¹¹

This asymmetrical relationship between urban educated, advanced and mobilized community and rural backward, underdeveloped society created a deep-rooted polarization. Farhan Siddiqi highlighted four major grievances of Sindhis i.e. influx of Urdu speaking people, separation of Karachi from Sindh, adoption of Urdu as a national language and introduction of One Unit as sources of Sindhi nationalism during the first decade of Pakistan.¹²

9 Kennedy, "The Politics of Ethnicity in Sindh," 941.

10 Kennedy, "The Politics of Ethnicity in Sindh," 942.

11 Kennedy, "The Politics of Ethnicity in Sindh," 942-43.

12 Siddiqi, *The Politics of Ethnicity in Pakistan*, 81.

Sindhi Nationalist Leaders, Parties and Political Developments

The father of Sindhi nationalism, G.M. Syed, was born at Village Sann on the banks of Indus River in a landowner family of Sindh. He joined politics during Khilafat Movement at the age of 17. Influenced by M. K. Gandhi and Bacha Khan, he nurtured his hatred against colonialism. Syed initiated his political career as a social reformer, opposing the exploitation of *Haris* by the Muslim landlords and Hindu money lenders.¹³

He later joined the AIML and emerged as a prominent political leader. He became the Education Minister of Sindh in 1937. Jinnah encouraged him to play an active role in central politics of League, but G. M. Syed was committed to the provincial politics.¹⁴ He served as member of the AIML working committee from 1941 to 1946, till his expulsion from the League. He also served as a convener of socio-religious reform sub-committee of the AIML.¹⁵ He emerged as a leader of progressive group of Sindhi Leaguers and aspired for the position of provincial president against Khuro, which revived factionalism in League again.¹⁶ Later, he was elected as President of the Sindh ML in 1943 and 1944 after the intervention of Jinnah, and he popularized the League and revitalized its organization.¹⁷

G. M. Syed emerged as a staunch Muslim nationalist and was arrested in 1939 during Hindu-Muslim riots at Sukkar due to *Masjid Manzilgah*¹⁸ affair as a leader of

13 Oskar Verkaaik, "Reforming Mysticism: Sindhi Separatist Intellectuals in Pakistan," in *Islam and Society in Pakistan: Anthropological Perspective*, (ed.) Magnus Marsden, (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2013), 120.

14 M. Rafique Afzal, *A History of the All-India Muslim League: 1906-1947* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2013), 297-98.

15 Afzal, *A History of the All-India Muslim League*, 273, 325.

16 Afzal, *A History of the All-India Muslim League*, 406.

17 Afzal, *A History of the All-India Muslim League*, 406-7.

18 Masjid Manzilgah was a historical building constructed by Mughal ruler Akbar. In 1920's and 1930's a dispute emerged between Muslims and Hindus of Sukkar on the restoration of historical building. gulhayat.com/masjidManzilgahpFull.asp retrieved on April 14, 2017.

Muslims riots. Syed's staunch Muslim nationalism reflected when he reacted to Dr. Latif Scheme in 1941 and wrote to him, "Partition of India' is the only lasting solution of the problem....it is idle to hope for any satisfactory result from attempts at rapprochement between elements that are in their very nature poles apart'.....".¹⁹ The Sindh Assembly passed a resolution on March 3, 1943 with the majority of 24 against three votes, and endorsed the principles of Lahore Resolution on the motion of G. M. Syed.²⁰ Syed, who later propounded the idea of *Sindhu Desh*²¹, emerged as a strong advocate of Muslim nationalism during 1940s.²²

Perpetual political rivalry among local leaders like Ayub Khuro²³, G. M. Syed, and Ghulam Hussain Hidayat Ullah²⁴ ultimately culminated in the expulsion of G. M. Syed from the League on the issue of distribution of party tickets in 1945-6 elections. Resultantly, Syed launched his own group.²⁵ Syed's withdrawal from League transformed his thoughts. He rejected the idea of religious nationalism and supported territorial nationalism based on mutual love for residents of homeland. He became the torchbearer of exclusive Sindhi nationalist identity and promoter of Sufi traditions and poetry.

G. M. Syed blamed that 'Punjabi Mohajir imperialism' had victimized Sindh since partition and undermined their socio-political and economic interest. He also opposed One Unit Scheme, and also extended support to agitation of students of Sindh United Front against the recommendation

19 Afzal, *A History of the All-India Muslim League*. 171.

20 Afzal, *A History of the All-India Muslim League*. 406.

21 He proposed the establishment of Sindhu Desh in 1972 as a separate, independent nation state for Sindhis.

22 Siddiqi, *The Politics of Ethnicity in Pakistan*, 79.

23 Muhammad Ayub Khuhro (1901-1980) was a prominent politician, Sindhi nationalist leader and served as Chief Minister of Sindh 1947-48, 1951, 1954-55. He was a traditional rival of Bhutto family.

24 Ghulam Hussain Hidayat Ullah (1879-1948) was a prominent politician, leader of Muslim League and the first Chief Minister of Sindh (1937-38). He also served as the CM (1942-47) and as the first Governor of province after independence (1947-48).

25 Afzal, *A History of the All-India Muslim League*, 10.

of Federal Educational Commission in 1958, regarding the elimination of Sindhi language as a medium of instruction along with other regional languages.

During the 1966 anti-Ayub movement, Syed's popular charisma provided inspiration and leadership to radical and mobilized student cadres. Most of these young intellectuals later joined Sindh Jiye Mahaz as well.²⁶ After the dissolution of One Unit in 1970, popular currents were taken by Z. A. Bhutto led PPP and G. M. Syed's party failed to win a single seat in Sindh in the 1970 general elections.²⁷

G. M. Syed encouraged by Bengali separatist movement came forward with radical agenda of creation of *Sindhu Desh* and established Jiye Sindh Mahaz at Hyder Manzil Karachi on June 18, 1972.²⁸ According to Syed, "The State of Sindhu Desh shall be established on the basis of secularism, socialism, democracy and nationalism."²⁹ Jiye Sindh slogan emerged as the embodiment of Sindhi grievances; it was countered by *kaho sirf jiye Pakistan* [Urdu: say only long live Pakistan]. Love for Sindh and love for Pakistan emerged as contradictory ideas and sparked antagonism.

In July 1972, the PPP led provincial government of Mumtaz Bhutto³⁰ introduced Sindhi Language Bill. The Bill was introduced by the then Law Minister Syed Qaim Ali Shah which stated: "Sindhi shall be used as the provincial language of Sindh; Sindhi and Urdu shall be compulsory subjects for study in classes IV to XII in all institutions."³¹ The

26 Verkaik, "Reforming Mysticism," 126.

27 Kennedy, "The Politics of Ethnicity in Sindh," 943.

28 Siddiqi, *The Politics of Ethnicity in Pakistan*, 85.

29 Siddiqi, *The Politics of Ethnicity in Pakistan*.

30 Mumtaz Ali Bhutto born on November 28, 1933, an Oxford graduate 'talented cousin' of Z. A. Bhutto. He was one of the founder members of PPP. He served as a Governor and Chief Minister of Sindh several times. He developed differences with the PPP leadership and founded the Sindh National Front on March 1989 as a political party for autonomy and rights of Sindh.

31 Tanvir Ahmad Tahir, *Political Dynamics of Sindh: 1947-1977* (Karachi: Pakistan Study Center, University of Karachi, 2010), 677.

Bill sparked agitation and within three days 22 people were killed and 200 were injured in Karachi. This Bill deepened ethnic polarization and the PPP emerged as custodian of Sindhi interest. The introduction of quota system for jobs further strengthened this perception.³²

Syed's antipathy against Bhutto and the PPP further excluded him from popular currents of the MRD and eventually ventured him in strange alliances with Zia and pro-establishment political forces. This alliance with ideological rivals reduced him and his political party to a constituency level political actor. This dilemma was also shared by other nationalist parties and became probably the most effective roadblock to their electoral success.

Ibrahim Joyo (b. 1915) was another prominent Sindhi nationalist. He was educated at Syed's established school and later on in Sindh Madrassah. Syed sparked the flame of Sindhi nationalism in him. He was also influenced by Marxist ideology during his stay at Bombay for higher education. He joined his professional career as a teacher at Sindh Madrassah. Later on he joined Sindh University Hyderabad and emerged as a leading Sindhi nationalist intellectual. He inspired the coming generations of Sindhi nationalist. His prominent students were Hyder Bakhsh Jatoi³³, the President of Hari Committee and Rasool Bakhsh Palijo³⁴ a leading nationalist political figure. Jam Saqi was the third most important and vocal leader of Sindhi student movement in the late 1960s. Later, he became a leader of the Communist Party.

Awami Tahreek was launched by prominent Sindhi Nationalist cum leftist leader Rasool Bakhsh Palijo on March

32 Tahir, *Political Dynamics of Sindh*, 679-81.

33 Hyder Bakhsh Jatoi (October 7, 1901- May 21, 1970) was a leftist, revolutionary peasant leader and prominent Sindhi nationalist. Sindh Hari Committee of landless peasants was founded in 1930's by G. M. Syed. Jatoi become President of Hari Committee in 1948 and struggled hard for the rights of *Haris*. Verkaaik, "Reforming Mysticism," 125.

34 Rasool Bakhsh Palijo born on February 21, 1930 is a progressive, leftist, one of the most influential Sindhi nationalist leaders.

5, 1970 in Hyderabad and was joined by leftist and Sindhi nationalist writers, intellectuals and activist.³⁵ The Awami Tahreek introduced radical agenda of eradication of feudalism against the PPP's modest agenda of land reforms. Paliyo also differed with G. M. Syed on the issue of independence of Sindh and advocated provincial autonomy. Farhan Siddiqi quoted one of Paliyo's interviews recorded in 2003, "Our first struggle is basically against the feudal lords of Sindh. Why am I against Sindhu Desh? Because I fear that if Sindhu Desh is created, these feudal lords will kill us. Our first struggle is against autocracy."³⁶ After the death of Hyder Bakhsh Jatoy in May 1970, Awami Tahreek emerged as a champion of the rights of peasants.

Paliyo also joined the PPP during the Movement for Restoration of Democracy (MRD) unlike G. M. Syed. Syed's dissociation with the popular pro-democracy movement of Sindh and patronage provided by military dictator Zia to emerge as a counter weight to Bhutto further discredited the father of Sindhi nationalism. Zia encouraged an anti-PPP alliance between the MQM and G. M. Syed.³⁷ Paliyo's Awami Tahreek offered great sacrifices during the MRD agitation in Sindh and faced brutality of military operation. Its workers constituted 13.45 percent of arrested activists.³⁸ But, after the restoration of democracy, due to political consideration in 1988 elections, the PPP abandoned all the parties of MRD including the Awami Tahreek. The party contested elections as an independent entity and even joined political alliance but failed to make electoral fortunes. Presently the party is being run by Ayaz Latif Paliyo (b. November 15, 1968) as a Sindhi progressive nationalist force and a well organized agitation force.

35 Siddiqi, *The Politics of Ethnicity in Pakistan*, 85.

36 Siddiqi, *The Politics of Ethnicity in Pakistan*, 89. See also, 'Biggest Problem is Structural: Paliyo', *Daily Dawn* (Karachi: August 19, 2003).

37 Siddiqi, *The Politics of Ethnicity in Pakistan*, 92.

38 Tahir Amin, *Ethno-National Movements of Pakistan: Domestic and International Factors* (Islamabad: Institute of Policy Studies, 1993), 198.

Another prominent Sindhi nationalist leader Dr. Qadir Magsi (b. December 25, 1962), inspired by G.M. Syed, established his own political party the Sindh Tarqqi Pasand Party (STPP) in 1991. The party was organized throughout the rural Sindh. Hyderabad emerged as party headquarter, with districts of Thatta, Sanghar and Ghotki as major centres of its support. However, the party failed to perform in electoral sphere and operated as an effective pressure group.³⁹

The nationalist political forces of Sindh were divided in many rival factions with two broader groups. One group refused to participate in electoral politics due to various ideological or strategic reasons. This group included parties like Jiye Sindh Qomi Mahaz (Bashir Qureshi group) led by Sanan Qureshi; the JSQM Abdul Wahid Arisar (late) group; the Jiye Sindh Tehreek (JST) led by Dr. Safder Sarki; the Jiye Sindh Mahaz (JSM) led by Riaz Chandio and banned group of the Jiye Sindh Mutahida Mahaz (JSMM) led by Shafi Burfat. Most of these groups considered G. M. Syed as their intellectual leader and establishment of the Sindhu Desh as their objective.⁴⁰

The second group believed in the constitutional struggle for provincial autonomy of Sindh and supported electoral politics. The pro-parliamentary parties were the Qaumi Awami Tahreek (QAT) led by Ayaz Latif Palijo; the Sindh Taraqqi Pasand Party (STPP) led by Dr. Qadir Magsi; the Sindh United Party (SUP) led by Jalal Mehmood Shah and the Sindh National Movement (SNM) led by Ali Hassan Chandio.⁴¹

The PML (F) and the National Peoples' Party were splinter groups of the main stream political parties, organized by powerful local leadership. The PML (F) having a spiritual

39 Mohammad Waseem and Mariam Mufti, *Report: Political Parties in Pakistan, Organization & Power Structure* (Lahore: LUMS, November 2012), 69-70.

40 Muhammad Qasim Sodhar, "Turn Right: Sindhi Nationalism & Electoral Politics," Issue IV (May 2013).

41 Sodhar, "Turn Right: Sindhi Nationalism & Electoral Politics."

network of influence and the NPP with clan support base, played decisive role in electoral victory of respective political parties. Both parties used the card of Sindhi nationalism occasionally to challenge the PPP. But both parties have been family enterprises. They lacked ideological foundations and organizational structures; relying mainly on local network of alliances and influence. These power oriented political forces joined coalition governments with divergent ideological alliances at different times. As in the case of 2008 elections, both parties joined the PPP led coalition government and in 2013 they joined the PML (N), a broad based anti-PPP alliance. They, however, failed to expand from its local base of influence.⁴²

Most of the Sindhi nationalist political forces lacked elaborate organizational structure, rather operated as a personal network of influential leaders. Most of them were without party offices. The personal residence of leadership served as organization's headquarters or intellectual club or meeting point as in the case of Hyder Manzil, the personal residence of G. M. Syed at Karachi and Ibrahim Joyo's residence at Hyderabad. It was partially due to the lack of resources. Whereas parties like the NPP and the PML (F), due to their peculiar nature of personal support base, did not require organizational and party structures. G. M. Syed and many other nationalist leaders idealized a peaceful democratic and popular struggle, but the system in which politics of Sindh operated offered very limited opportunities for anti *status quo* forces. The forces of *status quo* and local power brokers with the state patronage effectively blocked the entry of such forces in the parliament through elections.

Electoral Performance of Nationalist Parties of Sindh 1970-2013

The nationalist parties failed to gain political space in rural Sindh as compared to the neighbouring tribal Baluchistan and urban Sindh. The PPP consistently remained largest political party of Sindh. It outclassed its rivals in rural Sindh, while in the urban Sindh MQM maintained its dominance. Coalitions of divergent anti-PPP forces in Sindh at different occasions created negative

42 Waseem and Mufti, *Report: Political Parties in Pakistan*, 52 and 67.

effect on its electoral performance in the province. The PPP faced some serious electoral challenges by its divided opposition, when that opposition got certain umbrella of establishment. The party in adverse circumstances resorted back to Sindhi nationalism and through effective application of nationalist idioms, or emotional rhetoric outclassed its political rivals. Table 1 reflects the political landscape which is consistently dominated by the PPP in rural and the MQM in urban Sindh, with struggling opposition to survive. The most striking aspect is consistent failure of Sindhi nationalist political forces.

Table 1: ELECTION RESULTS OF PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY OF SINDH (1970-2013)

Election 1970	Election 1977	Election 1988	Election 1990	Election 1993	Election 1997	Election 2002	Election 2008	Election 2013
TGS: 60	TGS: 100	TGS:100	TGS:100	TGS:100	TGS:100	TGS:130	TGS:130	TGS:130
PPP S*: 28 V*: 39%	PPP S: 99* V:*	PPP S: 66 V:44.8%	PDA S: 46 V:35.5%	PPP S: 57 V: 41%	PPP S: 36 V:27.7%	PPPP S: 51 V: 35%	PPPP S: 70 V:42.3%	PPPP S: 69 V: 32%
PML (Q) S: 6 V:12.7%	IND S: 1	MQM S: 25 V: 27%	MQM S: 28 V:28.9%	MQM S: 26 V: 25%	MQM S: 28 V:20.8%	MQM S: 31 V:14.9%	MQM S: 39 V:30.5%	MQM S: 39 V: 25%
MJUP S: 6 V: 6%		IJI S: 1 V: 7%	IJI S: 6 V: 8.5%	PML(N) S: 8 V:15.1%	PML(N) S: 15 V:16.2%	PML(Q) S: 14 V: 9%	PML S: 9 V:12.9%	PML(N) S: 3 V:5.82%
PML(CL) S: 4 V: 5.7%		Others S: 1 V: 5.4%	Others S: 1 V: 4.2%	NPP S: 2 V:0.91%	NPP S: 3 V:2.39%	PML(F) S: 9 V: 7%	PML(F) S: 7 V:6.26%	PML(F) S: 8 V:11.4%
SKMPPM S: 1 V: 1.6%		IND S: 7 V:15.8%	IND S: 19 V: 23%	Others S: 1 V: 4.5%	PPP(SB) S: 2 V:8.32%	MMA S: 8 V:10.3%	NPP S: 3 V:2.05%	NPP S:2 V:2.08%
IND S: 14 V: 29%				IND S: 6 V:13.5%	UNA S: 1 V:2.49%	NA S: 12 V:13.3%	ANP S: 2 V:0.81%	PTI S: 3 V:6.06%
					IND S: 13 V:17.1%	IND S: 4 V: 5.9%	IND S: 0 V:2.32%	IND S: 1 V: 8.7%

SOURCE: *The Pakistan Election Compendium*, Vol. I, II, III: (1970-2008) (Lahore: Church World Service, 2012) & www.ecp.gov.pk (retrieved on April 30, 2017).

In the 1970 elections, economic and ideological polarization played a significant role but at urban centres

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- * Total General Seats.
 - Seats won by party.
 - ♣ Votes received by party.
 - ◆ PPP won 35 seats uncontested. Other seats were won by heavy margin after the PNA boycott.
 - ♥ The ECP did not maintain data due to the PNA agitation and imposition of Martial Law in 1977.

right wing religio-political parties secured support of Mohajir communities. Traditional vote bank of Muslim League was captured by the new Islamic ideologue of the conservative section of its population. Bhutto's populism was effectively countered in urban areas of Sindh and political polarization emerged between rural based PPP as representative party of Sindhi nationalist against urban based religio-political parties supported by Mohajirs. Sindh provincial assembly elections also reflected the trend that Sindhi nationalist political figures were defeated in rural areas. According to Feroz Ahmad, "every anti-Sindhi bigot, who contested from Urdu speaking areas, was elected."⁴³ The competition among educated middle classes of urban and rural background was transformed into a crusade in the name of Islam, Pakistan and Sindh.⁴⁴

The only Sindhi nationalist political party other than PPP contested the elections of 1970 from Sindh was Sindh United Front (SUF). The party contested elections from only one national assembly constituency, and no candidate contested for provincial assembly. The election symbol of SUF was walking stick which truly reflected SUF as electorally a dependent and weak political party.

G. M. Syed contested elections from Dadu and was defeated by the PPP candidate Malik Sikandar Khan.⁴⁵ It was the only constituency where SUF got some electoral support, due to the personal influence of G. M. Syed. It was a personal support base rather than an ideological support base of Sindhi nationalist political parties. In the general elections of 1977, Malik Sikandar was elected unopposed from this constituency. Both, Malik Sikandar and G. M. Syed boycotted the 1985 elections.

M. Ayub Khuro, a leading Sindhi nationalist politician, lost Sindhi nationalist credentials for supporting One Unit

43 Ahmad, *Ethnicity and Politics in Pakistan*, 47.

44 Ahmad, *Ethnicity and Politics in Pakistan*, 47.

45 Malik Sikandar secured 51, 373 votes while runner up Pir Saleh Shah of PML (Q) secured 16, 797 votes against G. M. Syed of SUF who secured only 10,592 votes. *The Pakistan Election Compendium*, Vol. I, 107.

Scheme. In 1970, he joined the PML (Council) under the leadership of Mumtaz Daultana. He contested elections from native Larkana constituency. Although in 1946 elections Ayub Khuro defeated Shah Nawaz Bhutto but in 1970, Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto defeated him and secured 71,554 votes against Khuro's 31,150.⁴⁶ On the other side, Sindh-Karachi Mohajir Punjabi Pathan Mutahida Mahaz (SKMPPMM) contested elections in 1970 from four national assembly and ten provincial assembly constituencies.⁴⁷ Only one provincial assembly seat from Hyderabad was won by party leader Nawab Muzaffar Hussain Khan.⁴⁸

None of the Sindhi nationalist political parties participated in the elections of 1977. Some Sindhi nationalist leaders joined the PPP to participate in polls. Abdul Wahid Katpar, one case in point, a radical student leader and Sindhi nationalist contested elections from Larkana for Sindh provincial assembly and was elected.⁴⁹ He was active in ethnic clashes in Larkana and played an instrumental role in 1972 violence.⁵⁰

Fazil Rahu another prominent Sindhi nationalist leader contested elections for provincial assembly from Badin as independent candidate and was defeated by Abdul Khaliq Soomro of the PPP, who secured 28,115 votes against Fazil Rahu's 5,182 only. In 1977 Elections, three MNAs and six MPAs of the PPP were elected unopposed from Dadu District; the home town of G. M. Syed.⁵¹ The party-less elections of 1985 were boycotted by the PPP and its rival Sindhi nationalists with few exceptions.

In May 1988, two major Sindhi nationalist figures G. M. Syed and Rasool Bakhsh Palijo joined hands and formed the Sindhi National Alliance (SNA) and presented an eight point

46 *The Pakistan Election Compendium*, Vol. I, 105.

47 *The Pakistan Election Compendium*, Vol. I, 169.

48 *The Pakistan Election Compendium*, Vol. I, 176.

49 *The Pakistan Election Compendium*, Vol. I, 326.

50 Tahir, *Political Dynamics of Sindh*, 679.

51 *The Pakistan Election Compendium*, Vol. I, 275 and 330.

Charter of Alliance. They vowed to struggle peacefully against 'gangs of outsiders' in Sindh, opposition to construction of army cantonments, imposition of Sindhi as a provincial language and struggle for release of political prisoners. Before electoral campaign, ethnic violence emerged in Hyderabad between Mohajirs and Sindhis and resulted in many casualties.⁵² In September 1988, G. M. Syed declared the establishment of Sindhu Desh as an independent state and Jiye Sindh workers burnt Pakistani flag at Sukkur airport. G. M. Syed was arrested on these charges.⁵³ The party boycotted the November, 1988 elections.

In 1988, Sindhi nationalist political leadership avoided electoral politics. Most of the leaders did not participate in elections. Some of them entered the political arena from the platform of different political parties. Hamida Khuro contested elections from her home constituency against old family rivals; the Bhuttos. Begum Nusrat Bhutto won the elections with clear majority, and secured 83,449 votes against meagre 4,524 votes of Hamida Begum from PNP. Rasool Bakhsh Palijo, another prominent figure joined Awami National Party and contested elections from NA-182 Thatta and faced electoral defeat.⁵⁴

Mumtaz Ali Bhutto launched his Sindh National Front in March 1988 and presented a fifteen point manifesto with demand of loose confederation.⁵⁵ He portrayed himself as a champion of Sindhi nationalism taking pride of introducing language bill in 1972 as Chief Minister of Sindh but later he deserted the PPP. Mumtaz Bhutto contested elections from Larkana PS-30 against Syed Deedar Hussain Shah of the PPP who secured 21,812 votes while Mumtaz Bhutto bagged 18,634 votes as independent candidate.

52 Siddiqi, *The Politics of Ethnicity in Pakistan*, 94.

53 Talbot, *Pakistan: A New History*, 157-58.

54 Palijo secured 9,813 votes against his political rival from PPP who secured 53,289 votes. *The Pakistan Election Compendium*, Vol. II, 82.

55 Talbot, *Pakistan: A New History*, 158.

Abdul Hameed Khan Jatoi contested elections in 1985 from NA-179 Dadu and became the member of national assembly during Zia era. In 1988, he contested elections from the same constituency and was defeated by the PPP candidate Haji Zafar Ali who managed to get 63,179 votes against Hameed Jatoi's 17,075 votes only.⁵⁶ Hameed Jatoi like Hamida Khuro contested elections on the PNP ticket from his home constituency.

In 1990 elections, four Sindhi nationalist political parties participated in elections namely: Sindh National Front, Sindh National Alliance (Hamida Khuro Group), Sindh National Alliance (Hamid Jatoi Group) and Awami Tahreek (Palijo Group).⁵⁷ Sindh National Front contested elections from seven national assembly Constituencies and secured 51,990 votes which were 0.25 percent of total valid national votes but the party failed to win even a single constituency. The party also contested elections from 26 provincial assembly constituencies from Sindh and secured only 13,211 votes which were 0.28 percent of the valid votes in Sindh. Not a single MPA was elected from the Sindh National Front.⁵⁸ These electoral results reflected the pathetic performance of nationalist forces. Sindh National Front leader Mumtaz Ali Bhutto contested elections from Larkana and faced defeat by the Peoples Democratic Alliance (PDA) candidate.⁵⁹

The Sindh National Alliance (Hameed Jatoi Group) contested elections from one national assembly seat and secured 31,125 votes which were 0.15 percent of the total valid national polled votes. The party also contested for eight provincial assembly seats of Sindh and secured 67,695 votes which were 1.44 percent of the total polled votes. The

56 *The Pakistan Election Compendium*, Vol. II, 82.

57 *The Pakistan Election Compendium*, Vol. II, 233.

58 *Report on the General Elections: 1990*, Vol.I (Islamabad: Election Commission of Pakistan, 1991), 191-93.

59 He secured 16,199 votes and was defeated by PDA candidate Shabir Ahmad Chandio who secured 59, 464 votes in NA 165. *The Pakistan Election Compendium*, Vol. II, 270.

party won one provincial assembly seat.⁶⁰ Abdul Hamid Khan Jatoi leader of the SNA (HJ) contested election from Dadu and was defeated by the PDA candidate.⁶¹ The party got one provincial assembly seat from Dadu, PS-63 and the party candidate was a local influential Liaquat Ali Jatoi.⁶²

The Sindh National Alliance (Hamida Khuro Group) contested election from one national assembly constituency and four provincial assembly constituencies. It secured 139 votes for national assembly constituency and 652 votes for Provincial Assembly. The elections of 1990 did not favour the party. The Awami Tahreek (Palijo Group) received almost similar response during the 1990 elections. The party contested elections from four National Assembly seats and secured 14,307 votes. From twelve provincial seats the party secured only 56,053 votes which amounted to 0.12 percent total votes, polled.⁶³ Comparatively improved organizational structure of the party and favourable circumstances, due to vulnerable position of the PPP with reference to charges levied by the then President of Pakistan could not help Awami Tahreek to get better results.

In 1993 elections, Sindhi nationalist political forces adopted different strategies, in the backdrop of the humiliating defeat of 1990 Elections. The Sindh National Alliance with both its factions (Hameed Jatoi and Hamida Khuro) group joined central political force the PML (N). Hameed Jatoi contested elections from Dadu and secured 33,988 votes but was defeated by the PPP candidate who secured 51,277 votes. Hamida Khuro contested elections from Larkana against Nusrat Bhutto and lost again with

60 *Report on the General Elections: 1990, 190 and 193.*

61 In NA-179 Dadu, Jatoi secured 31, 125 votes against PDA candidate Rafiq Ahmad, who secured 52, 979 votes. *The Pakistan Election Compendium*, Vol. II, 272.

62 He secured 45,213 votes defeating PDA candidate Haji Zafar Ali, who received 18,419 votes. *The Pakistan Election Compendium*, Vol. II, 380.

63 *Report on the General Elections: 1990, 191-93.*

heavy margin. She secured only 8,366 votes against Mrs. Nusart Bhutto, who secured 67, 931 votes.⁶⁴

Sindh National Front leader, Mumtaz Ali Bhutto, developed an unwritten understanding with Murtaza Bhutto⁶⁵ and fielded a number of candidates from different constituencies. They extended support to each other, but failed to achieve substantial results. Both parties were defeated by the PPP in many constituencies.⁶⁶ Mumtaz Bhutto contested elections from PS-30 Larkana as an independent candidate, and won elections with a narrow margin⁶⁷ due to the support of Murtaza Bhutto and the PML-(N). In PS-31, Mir Murtaza Bhutto defeated the PPP candidate with a margin of 2089 votes. Begum Nusrat Bhutto played a role in the success of Murtaza Bhutto from this constituency.

In 1993 elections, the nationalist politics took a significant turn. In opposition to its immediate rival the PPP, nationalists joined hands with their ideological rival the PML (N) which undermined their legitimacy as a representative of Sindhi nationalist interest against the domination of Punjabi influence. Jiye Sindh Mahaz (JSM) under the leadership of G. M. Syed further lost its influence in electoral sphere, although it enjoyed support base in educational institutions of rural Sindh.

In November 1996, Farooq Leghari dismissed his own party government and appointed veteran PPP leader Miraj Khalid as caretaker Prime Minister. In case of Sindh, the choice was Mumtaz Ali Bhutto, cousin of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto.

64 *The Pakistan Election Compendium*, Vol. II, 462.

65 Murtaza Bhutto (September 18, 1954-September 20, 1996) was elder son of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto. During second tenure of Benazir Bhutto, he decided to return to Pakistan after a long exile to participate in politics. He developed differences with his sister and brother-in-law Asif Zardari, and latter on mysteriously killed in police encounter at Karachi.

66 Report of SAARC-NGO Observers, *Electoral Politics in Pakistan: National Assembly Elections 1993* (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd., 1995), 111.

67 He secured 27,538 votes against the PPP candidate Syed Deedar Hussain who secured 25,638 votes.

He got this opportunity after a long political wilderness due to his anti-PPP stance. He took every possible measure to counter the PPP and launched a political alliance of nationalist parties named United National Alliance (UNA). He also developed political understanding with the PPP (SB) and Dr. Qadir Magsi's STPP. Some local effluents also joined the alliance.⁶⁸ In 1997 elections, the PPP (SB) under the leadership of Ghinva Bhutto—widow of Mir Murtaza Bhutto—emerged as a serious challenge to the PPP in some constituencies. The assassination of Murtaza Bhutto created an emotional support base. Few leaders from the PPP and other prominent figures of Sindh switched loyalties towards the PPP-(SB group). Creation of new faction of the PPP by the members of Bhutto family partially damaged the reputation of PPP but failed to converse the myth of Benazir Bhutto in Sindh.

A local influential and a PPP (SB) candidate Mir Hazar Khan defeated the PPP candidate. Although he was defeated by the PPP candidate in previous two elections of 1990 and 1993, yet sympathy vote earned him victory. The PPP also lost elections in Jacobabad against Ilahi Bakhsh Somro and from Nausharo Feroz, Asghar Ali Shah of the PML (N) due to the division of votes between members of Bhutto family.⁶⁹ Abdul Hamid Khan Jatoi also won the native constituency of Dadu from the platform of PML (N) due to the PPP (SB) factor.⁷⁰ Although the PPP candidate defeated senior politicians in the previous two elections, he contested elections in 1990 from Sindh National Alliance and in 1993 after joining the PML (N) again was defeated by the PPP candidate.

68 Saleem Shahid, "Party Time," *Herald*, vol. 28 (Karachi: February 1997), 50-51.

69 *1997 General Elections: Comparative Statistics for General Elections 1988, 1990, 1993 & 1997*, Vol. II (Islamabad: Election Commission of Pakistan, 1998), 188.

70 Jatoi secured 40,156 votes against the PPP's Rafiq Ahmad, who secured 37,165 votes and the PPP (SB) candidate Qazi Shafiq who secured 10,886. *1997 General Elections: Comparative Statistics for General Elections 1988, 1990, 1993 & 1997*, Vol. II, 136.

Ghinwa Bhutto was defeated by a PPP candidate in Larkana constituency NA-165. She secured 24,085 votes against Shabir Ahmad Chandio who got 35,377 votes.⁷¹ The PPP lost both constituencies in the home town of Zardari family in Nawab Shah probably due to Murtaza factor. Again the beneficiary was PML (N). In one constituency Faryal Talpur was defeated by Shoukat Shah of the PML (N).⁷²

Due to Murtaza factor in some constituencies' margin of victory was also reduced as compared to the previous elections. One of such constituencies was NA-166 Larkana, where Benazir Bhutto succeeded. The margin of victory in 1993 elections was 43,646 and in 1997 it was reduced to 24,977 votes. The runner up was PPP (SB).⁷³ In NA-167 Hyderabad, Makhdoom Amin Fahim won with margin of 35,421 votes in 1990 elections while in 1993 elections was returned to the National Assembly as an unopposed candidate. In the elections of 1997, margin of victory was reduced to 22,556 votes which was still a comfortable victory.⁷⁴ In NA-171 Hyderabad, Benazir also won elections against the PPP (SB) candidate.

In 1997 general elections, Jiye Sindh Taraqqi Pasand contested elections under the leadership of Qadir Magsi under United National Alliance (UNA). The Alliance fielded 39 candidates for provincial assembly of Sindh and won only one seat. The UNA secured 91,694 votes which were 2.49 percent of total valid polled votes.⁷⁵ The UNA contested elections from six national assembly seats and the leading vote taker was Dr. Qadir Magsi from NA-182 Thatta. He secured 14,196 votes as runner up against the PPP

71 *1997 General Elections: Comparative Statistics for General Elections 1988, 1990, 1993 & 1997*, Vol. II, 125.

72 *1997 General Elections: Comparative Statistics for General Elections 1988, 1990, 1993 & 1997*, Vol. II, 121.

73 *1997 General Elections: Comparative Statistics for General Elections 1988, 1990, 1993 & 1997*, Vol. II, 126.

74 *1997 General Elections: Comparative Statistics for General Elections 1988, 1990, 1993 & 1997*, Vol. II, 127.

75 *The Pakistan Election Compendium*, Vol. II, 770-90.

candidate who won election with 35,241 popular votes.⁷⁶ The party contested six national assembly seats; out of them three were contested by Qadir Magsi. From NA-177 Dadu constituency, he secured only 219 votes against Malik Asad Sikander, a local influential and old rival of Sindhi nationalism. Malik Asad Sikander won election as an independent candidate. So the local influential with strong local support base and network of influence outclassed the Sindhi nationalist from electoral arena of Sindh repeatedly. Sindhi nationalist stalwarts were defeated by the local influentials; most of whom joined the PPP, while others participated from different political platforms with continuous switch of loyalties.

The second generation of Sindhi nationalists got provincial assembly seats in 1997 elections. Amir Bakhsh Bhutto, son of Mumtaz Bhutto, won from PS-30 Larkana from the UNA platform, although it was the only constituency won by UNA in 1997 despite the presence of Mumtaz Bhutto as caretaker Chief Minister. He won elections with a very close margin of 178 votes against independent candidate Ayaz Soomro, both secured 21,299 and 21,021 votes respectively.⁷⁷

Ismail Rahu son of Fazal Rahu won elections from PS-49 Badin from the PML (N). He secured 17,077 votes against the PPP candidate who secured 11,735 votes.⁷⁸ G. M. Syed's grandson Jalal Mahmood Shah also won elections from PS-59 Dadu with a margin of two thousand votes against the PPP candidate.⁷⁹ After half a century of political experience of Syed family, his grandson entered in Sindh Assembly. The Awami Tahreek also contested elections from various seats but most of its candidates could not secure more than hundred votes.

76 *The Pakistan Election Compendium*, Vol. II, 674.

77 *The Pakistan Election Compendium*, Vol. II, 781.

78 *The Pakistan Election Compendium*, Vol. II, 784.

79 *The Pakistan Election Compendium*, Vol. II, 787.

Sindhi nationalist political parties contested elections only from rural constituencies. From urban constituencies the PPP contested elections as a Sindh nationalist political force and secured votes from urban Sindhi population. Although, the Sindhi nationalist parties had organizational structures in urban areas but they abstained from Karachi's electoral politics. They portrayed themselves as custodians of Sindhi nationalist interest against Mohajir interest, but their absence from electoral contest reduced them to a pressure group and provided political space to the PPP as Sindhi political force in urban electoral sphere. In 1997, the UNA took a significant initiative and contested elections from provincial assembly constituencies from Karachi, for the first time. The party nominated six candidates and the votes polled in favour of all the six candidates were 514 only, which reflected the poor popular appeal of the party at Karachi.⁸⁰

In 1997 elections, the PPP faced serious challenges even in its stronghold Sindh. In provincial Assembly, its number of seats was reduced to 36 from 57 in 1993 elections, with substantial decrease in its vote bank from 41 percent to 27.7 percent in 1997. Although, the PPP (SB) won only two seats but it received 8 percent votes, which proved catastrophic for the PPP. The UNA due to political understanding with the PML (N) and the PPP (SB) avoided to field candidates against these parties. Although, the PPP-(SB) avoided entering in political alliance with the PML-(N) due to political implications but these parties facilitated each other. The major beneficiary was the PML (N) with roughly the same vote bank of 15.1 percent in 1993 and 16.2 percent in 1997; it increased its share of seats from 8 to 15. After 1997 elections, a PML (N) led coalition government was established in Sindh.⁸¹

In 2002 elections, ethnic trends were at their lowest ebb in overall politics of Pakistan. Ethno-nationalist parties

80 Calculated from the results of different PS constituencies. *The Pakistan Election Compendium*, Vol. II.

81 *The Pakistan Election Compendium*, Vol. II, 558-59 &768-69.

suffered defeat. Sindhi nationalist political forces abstained from electoral politics in the 2002 elections. The political landscape of Sindh was a fragmented landscape. New political parties like the MMA, the PML (Q) and new political alliance of local politicians with the name of National Alliances emerged. The political contests were constituency oriented and the pattern was not uniform. The Sindh chapter of National Alliance comprised the NPP, the SNF and the Sindh Democratic Alliance, under Arbab Rahim. The National Alliance fielded candidates in 69 provincial assembly constituencies and emerged as the third largest political force in the province receiving 804,642 votes which were 13.32 percent of the total polled votes.⁸²

A political vacuum existed due to the elimination of Muslim League (N) and marginalization of the PPP. Main beneficiaries of this vacuum were the PML (Q), the National Alliance and the PML (F) simultaneously. A multi-layered and multi-pronged political strategy was adopted for the elimination of mainstream parties in Sindh, especially the PPP, but no political space was offered to the nationalists.⁸³ These political parties evolved an effective strategy of seat adjustments and avoided to field candidates against each other. The MMA also entered political arena of Sindh and posed a serious challenge to the MQM in urban Sindh. The alliance performed well in urban and even in some rural constituencies and captured eight seats in provincial assembly and received 10.3 percent popular votes. The MQM also suffered a lot and its vote bank touched the lowest ebb of 15 percent in its electoral history.⁸⁴

Amir Bakhsh Bhutto, a local influential, joined hands with the National Alliance and contested elections from

82 Author made these calculations from the results of different PS constituencies, *General Elections 2002 Report, Vol. II*, Election Commission of Pakistan, 231-87.

83 Mohammad Waseem, *Democratization in Pakistan: A Study of the 2002 Elections* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 168.

84 *The Pakistan Election Compendium*, Vol. III, 222-23.

PS-37 Larkana against the PPP but was defeated.⁸⁵ Jalal Mahmood Shah contested election as an independent candidate from NA-231 and PS-71 Dadu and was defeated by rival PPP candidates.⁸⁶ So the Elections of 2002 were not contested by many Sindhi nationalist political forces. Poor performance of previous elections also probably played a role in the decision of withdrawal from electoral politics.

Although, the PPP emerged as a leading political force with 67 seats out of 168 Provincial Assembly constituencies, it was unable to form government and a broad based anti-PPP coalition consisting of the MQM, the PML (Q), the National Alliance and almost all other political players joined government under the leadership of Arbab Rahim as Chief Minister. The PML (N), an ex-ruling party of Sindh, was eliminated from the political scene of Sindh and most of its candidates only secured few hundred votes. It secured 73,846 votes (one percent of polled votes) from 74 constituencies of the provincial assembly of Sindh.⁸⁷

The PML (F) also emerged as one of the major political forces of Sindh in 2002 elections. It enlarged its support base and secured three national assembly seats and ten provincial assembly seats of Sindh. National Alliance also won five national assembly seats and 12 provincial assembly seats with 13 percent of total votes polled. The PPP was denied the right of government formation, while the anti-PPP forces were successful to launch a coalition government in Sindh.⁸⁸

In 2008 elections, nationalists failed to launch a joint platform. A few individuals contested elections from

85 *General Elections 2002: Report. Vol. 2, 246.*

86 *The Pakistan Election Compendium, Vol. III, 107 and 243.*

87 *The Pakistan Election Compendium, Vol. III, 222.*

88 Waseem, *Democratization in Pakistan*, 181.

their native constituencies. Later Sindh's electoral landscape was emotionally charged due to the assassination of Benazir Bhutto in December 2007. She was called as the daughter of Sindh. A popular perception dominated in Sindh that *vote Bhuttan jo kariz aa* [Sindhi: vote for the Bhuttos is a debt we owe].⁸⁹ Emotionally charged workers attacked their political rivals and restricted their electoral campaigns. This environment adversely affected the already narrow support base of nationalist parties. Amir Bakhsh Bhutto was defeated from PS-37 Larkana with a margin of 22,000 votes,⁹⁰ while Jalal Mahmood Shah contested elections from PS-71, as SUP candidate and also secured the support of PML (Q). This he did in exchange of his support in neighbouring constituency for the PML (Q) candidate but he was defeated by the PPPP candidate with a margin of 21,000 votes.⁹¹ The SUP received only 0.1 percent for national assembly and 0.27 percent votes for provincial assembly. Almost same was the fate of PPP (SB), which received only 0.24 percent votes for national assembly and 0.02 percent votes for provincial assembly.⁹²

The PPPP substantially increased its vote bank. It secured 2.89 million votes against 1.92 million votes secured in 2002 elections, although the addition in seats was comparatively less impressive. It added only two National Assembly seats but had a substantial increase in provincial assembly seats. From 51 of 2002, it reached the figure 70 in 2008.⁹³ The PPPP captured 56

89 Masood Ansari, "PPP Broom: Sweeps Clean," *Herald*, vol. 39, No. 2, (Karachi: February 2008), 74-75.

90 *The Pakistan Election Compendium*, Vol. III, 527.

91 *The Pakistan Election Compendium*, Vol. III, 538.

92 www.ecp.org.pk (retrieved on May 1, 2017)

93 Ali Hassan and Moosa Kaleem, "A Tale of Two Parties," *Herald*, 39, no. 3 (Karachi: March 2008): 36-37.

percent popular votes in Sindhi speaking areas while the second largest party was PML (Q) with 21 percent popular votes.⁹⁴ The PPP got 43 percent votes in overall Sindh province. Major losers were the MMA, the PML (Q) and the National Alliance. They lost most of the constituencies, while the NPP and the PML (F) were able to survive at their local strongholds. The PPP formed coalition governments at national and provincial levels.

In the general elections of 2013, nationalists aspired for political power again. They launched an agitation movement against the local government Bill of 2012, and vehemently opposed the PPP's policy of appeasement towards the MQM. They also launched a popular movement of Sindh *Bachao* in the backdrop of Mohajir province demand of MQM. The Nationalist parties emerged as a powerful pressure group under the leadership of Ayaz Latif Palijo and Dr. Qadir Magsi. Before the elections, nationalists had been struggling for establishment of broad based anti PPP platform. A ten party coalition emerged with the participation of almost all the rival political forces of PPP under the leadership of PML (N). The nationalist leaders enjoyed support of the PML (N) and most of the anti-PPP forces joined hands. This alliance failed to attract the powerful local influential; most of them joined the PPP which reflected its strong political support base in Sindh, while in other provinces, local leaders left the PPP and joined other political forces.

Some nationalist leaders contested elections from their respective parties, but all their political manoeuvres failed to produce positive results. Ayaz Latif Palijo was

94 Ali Cheema, Haris Gazdar, Muhammad Farooq Naseer and Asad Sayeed, "The Anatomy of an Election: Through the Labyrinth of Ethnicity, Urbanity and Wealth," *Herald*, 39, no. 3 (Karachi: March 2008): 56.

defeated from PS-47 Hyderabad with a margin of 11,219 votes against the PPPP candidate. Amir Bakhsh Bhutto was also defeated from his native constituency with a margin of 4,209 votes. The PML (N) leader Ismail Rahu was also defeated from PS-59 Badin with a close margin of 1,349 votes against the PPP candidate. So the nationalist leaders failed to secure popular mandate, even if they contested elections from major political party.⁹⁵ Jalal Mahmud Shah was also defeated from his native constituency PS-71 with the margin of 15,445 votes against the PPP candidate. The PML (F) with 8 seats and the NPP with 2 seats were able to survive only in their traditional strongholds. Sindhi nationalist like the SUP and the STPP massively defeated and received 0.82 percent and 0.23 percent share of votes of national and 0.68 percent and 0.1 percent of provincial assembly votes respectively. The PPP (SB) also repeated its previous performance and received less than one percent votes.⁹⁶ Although the Pakistan People's Party lost elections massively from other parts of the country but it successfully retained its stronghold of Sindh. Bilawal Bhutto Zardari raised the slogan of Hoshu Shahidee (Sindhi: we will embrace martyrdom), a popular legend of Sindh "*marsoon marsoon Sindh na desoon*" [Sindhi: we will die but will not give up Sindh] and successfully translated it politically.

The PPPP defeated its political rivals in local bodies' election of 2015 despite its poor track record of governance and development. Only the PML (F) and some local politicians in Badin and Tharparkar were successful in resistance. Now all rival political parties inching towards a broad based anti-PPP alliance

95 *The Gazette of Pakistan: Election Commission of Pakistan Notifications*, Part III (Islamabad: June, 2013), 2666.

96 www.ecp.org.pk (retrieved on May 1, 2017).

including nationalist parties under the leadership of PML (F). The PML (N) and this alliance were going to emerge as a potential challenger to the PPP which is inclined to use Sindh card again against its political rivals. Probably, Sindh card is still relevant but Sindhi nationalist political parties have a very limited political scope in future electoral arena of Sindh.

Conclusion

Sindh nationalist identity markers emerged as an effective tool of mass mobilization. The political leaders across the political divide extensively applied these nationalist symbols and idioms. Most of them talked about the grievances of *Haris* and poor of Sindh. They visited Sufi shrines, and paid reverence to claim political capital. They also frequently referred to contributions of these leading Sufis in the development of Sindhi culture based on love and accommodation. They used *Ajrak* (Sindhi Shawl) and Sindhi cap to assimilate themselves with the people. Most of them condemned the construction of large water reservoir likes Kalabagh Dam, while others avoided talk on such irritants before Sindhi audience. They promised the deliverance of the Sindhi population from the clutches of poverty, under development and exploitation of feudal. These political parties assimilated with people but relied on powerful local influential tribal chiefs and feudal, and outclassed the Sindhi nationalist parties. The PPP's opposition emerged as a fragmented, localized, and narrow based; constituency oriented which failed to counter it in successive electoral competitions. The PPP, however, performed well despite all odds while nationalist parties failed to perform well in spite of favourable circumstances in different elections.

Sindhi nationalism emerged as a serious challenge to the state of Pakistan and various political figures and

organizations emerged as the representative of national interest. Although, most of them emerged as influential pressure groups and played a vital role in shaping the political discourse but none of them emerged as a mass based and well-organized formidable electoral force. The failure of Sindhi nationalists in winning electoral support emerged as the most effective roadblock. The cadres were disorganized, decentralized local club of followers that gathered around some prominent personalities with limited localized support base without central organization. In electoral sphere nationalist stalwart leaders faced humiliating defeat from local leaders most of them from the PPP. The PPP actually played dual role of central political force as well as Sindhi nationalist party effectively and reduced its rival Sindhi nationalists in rural Sindh to the margin of electoral politics. They had virtually become only a moral force or self-claimed representative without any electoral mandate.