



A Panoramic Study of Pakistani Literature: The Zeitgeist of Trends, Literary Excellence, Pakistan's Soft Image and Definition of National Identity

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Abstract- In a sense of the popular cliché that literature is the mirror of society, this study tries to highlight Pakistani literature's position in terms of addressing core issues of the people of this country. This study explores the struggle of Pakistani literature in defining and depicting the national identity and portraying the social, cultural, economic, psychological, religious and linguistic realities of Pakistani people. It throws light on various aspects contributing in terms of literary trends of the region. It highlights Pakistan's literary tradition struggling to attain the status of Pakistani fiction and leaving behind the image of a literary offshoot of Indian literature, in its ultimate pursuit of defining the national identity of first ever state established on the name of Islam. By highlighting the cultural, geo-political, socio-political, religious and psychological trends of Pakistani people, it examines the role of all these factors in the shaping and making of the genuine Pakistani literature which can stand out in its full peculiarity among the literatures of the region. It also sheds light on Pakistani fiction's renowned literary stature on the global literary arena for its capacity in dealing and addressing international geo-political, socio-political and cultural issues.

Keywords: Literature, Trends, Cultural, Contemporary, Identity

I. INTRODUCTION

We are living in an age of countless developments in all walks of life. The rapid change in everything has resulted in many twists and turns in people's beliefs and trends. Such remarkable themes have grasped the attention of contemporary writers. Pakistani Urdu and English writers are also struggling to address the contemporary themes and new trends in literature. In such an environment of diversified literary competition, it becomes pertinent to carefully sketch the newly emerging developments so that the readership, which mostly comprises of young generation, should not be misguided or derailed. Pakistan is inflicted with many social, psychological, cultural, economic, religious and geo-political odds and challenges. The young readers and knowledge seekers want to know about their national identity situation. They are concerned to know whether identity is a social construct or a fixed phenomenon. They want to know their position among the nations of the world. They want to analyse the role of their Urdu and English literature in debating national issues and in defining national identity with its relation to religion and cultural traditions. This concern is not only related with Pakistani youth but also the youth of Pakistani diasporas living abroad especially in the USA, Britain and Western Europe. Jacobson (1998) analysed the correlation of religion and identity among British Pakistan youth, tries to explore in these words, "Of these sources of social identity available to them, why does religion appear to have an especially strong appeal?" (p: 1). This study provides a panoramic picture of the role of Pakistani literature in portraying the above mentioned issues and in educating the youth of Pakistan. Present day Pakistani milieu introduced many intricacies related with sentimental and emotional aspects of national issues. This study aims at catching the attention of the readers to help them understand fluctuating responsibility of the literature of country. It also throws light on Pakistani literature's gaining of literary excellence and wide ranging readership.

II. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Pakistani fiction is peculiar among the regional literatures. At the time of Pakistan's independence in 1947, the literature of the region called the Indian Subcontinent was known as Indian literature. After the independence, Pakistani literature started its journey with a new dawn of recognition in its dual responsibility. The term 'Pakistani' emerged as a political identity after 1947 independence and it invited many writers to explore its psychological and territorial implications too. Cilano (2013) argues that the "nation" of Pakistan represents, in part, the territorialisation of the idea and also the articulation through official nationalist discourses of what it means to be Pakistani. (p: 3). With the advent of Pakistan's literary tradition, it also had to leave behind the inscription of Indian literature. It was not an easy course as Indian

literature had already been enjoying the position of an established fiction among the literatures of South Asia. Pakistan chose Urdu as its national language and in this way the country inherited Urdu literary tradition from Indian literature and English literary tradition from its colonial masters, the British. Pakistan has a diversified and vibrant cultural heritage with various regional traditions and languages. Apart from Urdu, Pakistani literature also includes the literature produced in the regional languages such as Punjabi, Pashto, Balochi, Sindhi and Seraiki. Another important incorporation has to be for English fiction produced by Pakistani writers living in Pakistan and abroad.

The first phase of post-independence literature remained under controversy; for most of the writers focused on the negative elements related with the Partition. In the newly established state of Pakistan, which was formed on the name of Islam, Pakistani society had high expectation that the country's indigenous literature would strive to get rid of the umbrella term as Indian literature. It was also expected to portray the 'case of Pakistan' in terms of socio-political, religious, geopolitical, socioeconomic and cultural facets of this distinctive Muslim state. The literature produced immediately after the independence did satisfy the public surmise and belief. Pakistan's political history of 1950s and 1960s reveals much about that phase. Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan, took office as the Governor General of Pakistan with huge arena of challenges. Apart from administrative challenge of settling down millions of refugees, he had to mould the concept of Pakistani nationhood or national identity. No one can doubt about his capacity, vision and stature that he had the resolve and determination to fulfil his dream but, unfortunately, he passed away in 1948. His untimely death gave an unbearable shock to the nation and it created a political vacuum which in turn affected almost all walks of life. Early politicians, artists, intellectuals, media and also religious figures started groping and grappling for their vested interests which revolved around material gains. No section of society spent energies in fulfilling the dream left by the founder of the nation. All the factors especially cultural, political, economic and religious, contributed in forming a framework of the trends which can be found in early literature of Pakistan, broadly speaking the literature of 1950s to 1970s. Both English and Urdu literature of this period will be discussed separately.

III. TRENDS IN PAKISTANI ENGLISH LITERATURE OF 1950S TO 1970S

Present day Pakistani English literature is an independent and established genre. To know about its 'success story', let us peep into the background conditions and the literary figures who owe the credit. In a country established on the name of Islam, the only example of its kind in the world, and having Urdu as its national language and lingua franca, writing in English was not an easy task. The reasons of this being; 1) English being the language of the former colonial masters (the British), 2) scarce presence of English readers in the country, 3) maintaining the literary and intellectual standard to attract the attention of international readership and 4) establishing Pakistani English fiction as an independent (of Indian fiction) genre. It was a huge task on which many critics shed light. Kachru et al (2008) quote Anwar Dil, the founder of Linguistic Research Group of Pakistan, expressing his concern in 1962, "Pakistani linguistics today is not an organized discipline." (p: 26). But Pakistani English writers did not succumb to the hard situation and they stood out as pioneers of standardised English fiction in the country. It is interesting to note that English was chosen as official language of Pakistan. There is a list of English writers of this period but let us mention some key figures along with their trends and themes. It is interesting to note that Pakistani fiction's roots are not in post-Partition writings but they started sprouting in pre-Partition time of 1940s when the Freedom Movement was in full swing. The manifestation of the quest for (separate/independent/pure/national/Muslim) identity can be found in the fiction written by Shahid Soharwardi, Daud Kamal, Zulfikar Ghose, Mumtaz Shahnawaz, Taufiq Rafat, Maki Kureishi and Ahmad Ali, not very well-known names for the present Pakistani generation. Their fiction presents a type of vague trends which are a blend of developed and undeveloped expressions of a complex nature. It reflects the turbulent political situation of the time. It also reflects Pakistanis' socio-economic struggle and the cultural formation in the pursuit of the national identity which was promised in the Freedom Movement.

IV. TRENDS IN PAKISTANI URDU LITERATURE OF 1950S TO 1970S

Urdu is the national language and lingua franca of Pakistan. It is one of the recognised languages in India, widely used in Afghanistan and considerably understood in Bangladesh and Nepal. It originated during the Mughal colonial time (13th century to early 16th century) mostly by the sophisticated gentry in Northern parts of India. Generally, Urdu was patronised by almost all Muslim rulers of the past like Afghans, Turks and Persians. The effect, impression and influence of such a diverse background is obvious in present day sophisticated Urdu in terms of thought, linguistic formation and cultural heritage. It started flourishing in

the country right after the independence mostly in the form of verse or poetry. The most popular forms have been ghazal (غزل) and nazam (نظم). Soon it started expanding in other forms too like novel, drama, autobiography, short story and criticism. The first psychological challenge before Urdu was to clarify the wide social misconception that it was a language of telling traditional love stories and the tales alluding to lovers' affection and beloved's beauties. Rauf Parekh, in his article in Dawn newspaper expresses that Literature is influenced by social and political bearings... a number of factors influenced Urdu literature created in the early phase of the nascent country. (2016). Post-independence Urdu writers did not have to take much effort in shedding the misconception by producing serious works which addressed wider political, cultural, social and economic themes in both verse and prose. There is no denial of the fact that the poetry of Mir Taqi Mir, Momin Khan Momin, Firaq, Ghalib and many others revolve round lover and beloved but it is not fair to attribute Urdu literature only with love poetry. The heritage of Urdu cultural tradition presents substantial amount of serious poetic and prose works in the form of the literature of Jihadi movements of early 19th century, Aligarh Movement, War of Independence and the Freedom Movement. The events related to pre and post-independence time influenced major representation in the literature of that time. Urdu literature, being the literature of the national language of Pakistan, realised the responsibility of having the readership of millions of Pakistanis, instantly bifurcated from the image of the Urdu literature of pre-Partition India. It has had to portray the aspirations, sensibilities, beliefs, sentiments and expressions of Pakistani people. The task was pivotal in enhancing and strengthening the new national identity of the people of this country. Urdu, however, faced the challenge of presenting a balanced literary mood, rather than giving the impression of the language of Muslims only. It is because Urdu was originated, flourished, promoted and enriched by all communities including Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs and seculars. Early Pakistani Urdu writers have had to consider all such thin lines in determining Urdu fiction's right position without any imprint of prejudice and bias. All such background factors contribute in giving a general outlook of Urdu literature as an all-embracing language and fiction including religious, classical, liberal, modern and secular subjects. Urdu festivals are held both in Pakistan and India. Early trends of Urdu literature after the independence mostly cover geo-political, cultural and historical events. The massacre and mass migration on both sides of the border were spotlighted. The question of what exactly would be Pakistani culture, Pakistani literary tradition and Pakistani identity could not be answered because of different prevalent perspectives about these subjects. The core issue between Pakistan and India i.e., the Kashmir issue, could not gain apt position in early literature.

V. PROGRESSIVE WRITERS' MOVEMENT

There are some interesting facts related to the origin, progress, reformation and decline of the Progressive Writer's Movement. After the independence, All Pakistan Progressive Writers' Association was established in 1949. But it was not a new literary movement. It was a legacy of Progressive Writers' Movement of pre-Partition India. In 1935, some anti-imperialist and leftist literary figures (from British India), like Jyoti Ghosh, Mulk Anund, Sajjad Zaheer, Pramond Sengupta and Muhammad Taseer established a responsive literary movement in London with the name The Indian Progressive Writers' Association which later in 1936 started operating in India with the name The Progressive Writers' Association.

Indian movement, after the partition, lost its momentum in volume and spirit. The deterioration of socialist voices in India is considered the major cause of the decline of the movement. But Pakistani Progressive Writers' Movement got momentum in the early years and it established a publishing company named The Progressive Papers Limited. The company took responsibility of publishing books, journals and newspapers. Soon after its early recognition, the movement in Pakistan also lost its position and in 1954 it was banned. The military regime of 1958 forced the movement writers to work under different names. In the time of socialist minded Zulfikar Bhutto's government in 1971, the movement tried to regain its literary worth under the name Awam Adbi Anjuman. The movement continued working facing multiple challenges until 2007 when it was reorganised in many cities of Pakistan. In the present day Pakistan, not many people know about the movement because it does not operate as a vivid literary platform but the likeminded writers focus on occasional meetings and discussions on work produced by them.

Apart from the fact that The Progressive Writers' Movement of Pakistan has not been able to gain considerable acclaim and recognition among masses but it produced well known figures and recognisable works. There is a long list of famous writers of the movement but some famous names are Faiz Ahmad Faiz, Hameed Akhtar, Mirza Adeb, Kaifi Azmi, Rajinder Singh Bedi, Krishan Chander, Habib Jalib, Sahir Ludhianvi, Josh Malihabadi, Sadat Hassan Manto, Prem Nath and Munshi Premchand.

The Movement was not the only literary movement at the time of the Partition but there was another serious literary circle named Halqa-i-Arbaab-i-Zauq (Circle of the Men of Good Taste), which was also established

before Partition, in 1939 in Lahore. Halqa was different from the Movement in the framework and outline of objective. It was based on 'art-for-the-sake-of-art' principle which represented the writers of 'good taste'. Some high profile writers like Qayyum Nazar, Meeraji and Noon Meem Rashid belonged to the Halqa. Some people considered Halqa as the Movement's rival but the historical facts reveal that they were not inclined to any sort of literary rivalry with anyone. They promoted new styles, modes, themes and trends in Urdu poetry and prose influenced by Western modernist literature. They reflected beyond classical theory and they were not inclined to any political faction. On the other hand, the Progressives were politically motivated and their literature, both in prose and poetry, portrayed political philosophy with an impression of being leftist and Marxist. They were also traditional in prose and poetry. The Halqa, in its move to welcome the writers of classical and traditional trends, welcomed and included writers from the Progressives too. Its writers and poets are credited with high acclaim in Pakistan, India, Europe and other parts of the world where Urdu speakers are living. Its popularity and progress can be attributed with its non-political agenda and inclusion of writers of various literary trends. In this way, they produced a huge volume of literature that revolves round the topics of common man. On the contrary, the Progressives could not gain footing in masses though they still exist as a weak literary movement. Critics have pointed out many causes of the Progressives' rejection by the masses. Asghar Ali Engineer presents two main causes. He maintains that one of the causes was within their own structure. A great and appealing literature can never be produced by commands or party dictates. He also maintains that the writers may not have any clear blue print for change (2007).

Their political philosophy affected the production of literature which should address wide-ranging issues of the people. The main social reason of the 'rejection' of the Progressives is considered to be their opposition to the idea of religious Pakistan. Urdu and Islam have no direct relation or common history but Urdu was considered as related with Islam. As Beecroft (2015) argued about language affiliations in pre-Partition India that "Urdu was more closely aligned with Islam and Hindi with Hinduism...." (p: 210).

For the Progressives, true independence means liberation of society from feudal lords, industrialists and elite class. In general, Pakistani society does not like the leftists and socialists. For a large section of society, being a radical in religion and belonging to leftists were same as negative sentiments. The Progressives tried to display their loyalty to the religion but their themes portrayed negation to religious philosophy in connection with politics and state affairs. They also tried to represent the people's optimism in the newly established motherland. Their writings, both in prose and poetry, portrayed the serious issues like migration, violence on both sides of the border, communal riots, challenges faced by Pakistani administration, settlement of the migrants, Pakistani nationalism or national identity formation and cautious portrayal of religious radicalism.

The difference of religious, social, cultural and political philosophies among the literary circles gave birth to several big and small literary movements. One notable movement, The Anti-Ahmadi Movement, founded in 1952, stressed that Pakistani identity meant only Islamic identity. It was highly influenced by the Objectives Resolution of 1949 and it raised its voice effectively in declaring Ahmadis as non-Muslims. It is believed that the Movement's emphasis was given due importance in the adoption of 1956 and 1973 Constitutions. Some other mentionable literary movements include Halqa-i-Adab-i-Islami Pakistan in 1948, inspired by the religious philosophy of Maulana Maududi, Pakistani Literature Movement demanding for loyalty to Pakistani values, culture and identity and Islamic Literature Movement demanding for loyalty to the state of Pakistan. Not only all that, the Movements, other than the Progressives, helped, incited and triggered the conditions which resulted in the interdiction of Communist Party of Pakistan, in 1954.

VI. POST-1980S PAKISTANI LITERATURE

Pakistani literature remained engaged in entangled in the themes and subject of early independence years until 1970s. Socio-economic and geo-political changes during 1980s influenced the literature to take a shift to address new issues. It was partially because people were no more interested in post-independence topics which had repeatedly been highlighted in all forms of fiction. Influenced and infused by new socio-political situation, all genres of literature provided critical approach to all important contemporary concerns. Some notable issues included fragmentation of the society on the basis of religious sectarianism, regionalism, internal and external terrorism, polarisation of social classes, power politics, neo-nationalism (in the wake of 1971 fall of Dhaka) and feminism. The newly emerged socio-political milieu gave way to provide a sort of trio of post-colonial, modern and postmodern literature. May be because of such new literary environment, many critics believe that Pakistani literature has evolved into a Janus-faced nature. There is no denial of the fact that it has been performing a double responsibility. On one hand it tackles those serious indigenous subjects which cause destabilisation of social and state institutions. It also has to confront the

negative portrayal of the country in international fiction and media. It has to produce a considerable volume of discourse that presents Pakistan as a peaceful, modern, democratic and stable country. Pakistani writers have to perform like political commentators in their endeavour to display soft and beautiful image of the country on international literary platforms. The production of such a counter-narrative has its weight because of anti-Pakistan narrative which is influenced and financed by the prejudiced Indian and Western discourse.

Contemporary Pakistani literature has already turned a shift from traditional to modern. The aftermath of colonialism and early independence time issues are described only for reference and the central focus is highlighting contemporary national and international matters in society, (ever changing trends in) nationalism, politics, religion and economy. Political rulers, industrialists, feudal lords and elite class have been held responsible of destabilising factors. The military rulers and Martial-law administrators have also been held responsible (though cautiously by most of the writers) of maligning the country's position in the international community. The issue of national identity in the wake of socio-political and economic chaos has further aggravated and it has been highlighted by the writers of high profile and international acclaim. Their international exposure and diversified literary experience helped in presenting the negative impact on people's aspirations and the sentiments of nationalism. It is interesting to note that a major section of the contemporary literature gives a general impression of rejection of the notion that British colonialism has been the main cause of present time problems of Pakistan. On this verge of new literary responsibility, English writers of Pakistan are seen ahead of the writers of other languages including Urdu. The scope, appeal and impact of their writings are beyond the country's borders and among international readership. The special destination of the themes of their writings is English speaking and western European countries where the soft, moderate, progressive and modern image of Pakistan and Pakistanis is highly needed to be presented.

The post-1980s trends and moods of Pakistani literature saw a remarkable swing after the 1990s. The writers of the decade before the millennium and post-millennium displayed a considerable shift from their predecessors in terms of thought, themes, content and linguistic variations. They have addressed national and international issues, incidents and developments in almost all spheres of life. The most highlighted areas have been social, political, economic, military and religious. Post-1990s Pakistan has been in the quagmire of political mayhem, economic crisis, social metamorphosis, religious extremism, radical beliefs and mistrust in political institutions and state machinery. So-called War on Terror (as a result of American aggression on Afghanistan in (2001) has been a notorious and most instrumental factor causing destabilisation and fragmentation in society. It gave birth to an Islam versus West or Islam versus Capitalist America dogma and a doctrine of hate and pandemonium in Afghanistan with direct and most considerable impact on Pakistan. Pakistani writers, alongside media, have been spontaneous in producing prompt response in their fiction. They have introduced the critique which helps to explore that national history and national identity which detaches it from any Indian perspective. The definition of national identity has been presented by confronting the paramount and hegemonic Indian and Western versions. The post-millennium Pakistani literature has detached itself from traditional post-colonial fiction in terms of portraying emerging trends, depressed and passionate moods, modern modes (like online and internet sources), young readers' literary quest and people's psychological tendencies. To some extent, they have served as a prism to display contemporary realities but they have preserved traditional, historical and colonial past for reference and source of past history. There are many names who won international acclaim in literary excellence, thought and content. Some notable figures are Fatima Asghar, Mohsin Hamid, Kamila Shamsie, Soniah Kamal, Hanif Kureishi, Fatima Bhutto, Nafisa Haji, Uzma Aslam, Mohammed Hanif, Daniyal Mueenuddin, Nadeem Aslam and Bapsi Sidhwa.

VII. QUEST FOR TRUE IDENTITY

Pakistani literature is Janus-Faced in nature. On one hand it has been serving the purpose of a literary tradition of the country. On the other hand it has served as a platform of debate, discussion, definition and shaping and reshaping of the national identity. Pakistan's 'case' is different from other countries that won independence from their colonial masters. Pakistan was carved on the map of the world as a Muslim state, the only example of its kind. It was the part of the Indian subcontinent. It was created in two fragments, East Pakistan and West Pakistan. East Pakistan was separated in 1971 and became Bangladesh and the West Pakistan remained as the present day Pakistan. Pakistani people have been in a continuous quest for a true identity which should be an identity of a Muslim and independent Pakistan. The term Pakistani is a political term which separates the people of Pakistan from their former status of Indian identity. As the country is a religious state in its ideological framework and its constitution, the question of a Muslim identity is still

under the mist of perspectives. For common understanding the Muslim identity is already there in the constitution with relation to the past Muslim history. It makes Pakistan a legacy of Muslim cultural and traditional code.

The present world of technological advancement and globalisation is a time of changing beliefs, modern trends in all walks of life and also a time of unpredictable and fragile political identities. Identities have assumed critical dimensions with new meanings. Modern literature has investigated the notion of identity beyond political perspective by including sociological, psychological, historical, cultural, regional and literary perspectives. The notion of a fixed or concrete identity has become a multidimensional phenomenon and debatable character. Pakistani literature has been in the seminal segment of identity. The literary debate on nationalism and national identity had already started with the advent of decolonisation in South Asia before the middle of the 20th century. Pakistani Urdu and English writers continued the legacy of identity debate by detaching it from Indian identity. They added the cultural, traditional, social, political and religious 'flavour' in the national literary process of identity definition for 75 million Pakistanis. A population of 42 million, out of total 75 million, again detached in 1971 in the wake of Bangladesh independence. The identity debate took a new turn for the remaining 33 million population of (West) Pakistan. The twists and turns in the identity discourse for the newly born nation were felt as tremors in political, military, social, psychological and religious course in post-independence milieu. Pakistani literature spotlighted this important national debate in Urdu, English and other regional languages. It is interesting to note that pre-1980s literature seems struggling with a fixed or concrete nationality imprint. It is because of the political slogan which gathered the Muslims of the Indian Subcontinent to achieve a Muslim state, Pakistan. Pakistan ka matlab kia, la ilaha illallah (Urdu: پاکستان کا مطلب کیا اللہ الہلا what does Pakistan mean? There is no God but Allah) was not only a political slogan and a couplet in pursuit of independence but it served as the basis for national identity formation.

The progressive writers in general and many other writers of post-1980s and contemporary Pakistani literature see globalisation as a foray against the spirit of independence. The young writers, especially those with international exposure, see it as an opportunity to revise and redefine national identity. They do not perceive it as a threat to nationalism. New writers believe that the 'fixed' aspect of identity is a social construct which would not go anywhere. National curricula, media, literary movements, official position and state institutions can safeguard it as the national and social construct. The need of the time is to think beyond fixation of ideals to the extent that it might become archaic for the future generations. In today's fast moving world, trends and needs are also changing rapidly. American and Western European economic dominance, neo-political developments, emergence of free trade economy, emergence of China as future super power, tremendous shift of paper money to digital wealth and bitcoin economy and many more contemporary developments call for revision of national identity characteristics. Hundreds of millions of migrants merge into Western European and American social set up. They adopt the host culture and they do utmost in adopting the traits of host identity. They leave behind the changeable aspect of their original identity and retain the 'fixed' aspect of it.

Contemporary Pakistani writers have highlighted such developments but they have also highlighted the social, political, psychological and cultural issues related with the adoption of new identity in host societies. The huge influence of identity issues has been one of the central points in diasporic literature. It does not seem likely that this debate would come to an end because the changeable part of identity is a process which would continue with the protraction of human migration and struggle in life.

VIII.

CONCLUSION

The birth of the concept of identity, its formation, reformation and its gaining new meaning in different times is not a modern day development. Since the start of civilisation, migration and identity have been the subjects of debates in literatures of the world. Especially the literatures produced in colonial continents give immense importance to this debate. By the end of colonisation in the 20th century, the debate of identity and new features of national identity in newly established countries have been in the limelight. Pakistan is also one of the examples of decolonisation. Pakistani literature not only discussed psychological, emotional and sentimental perspective of identity but also dealt with national language versus national identity. State of Pakistan declared Urdu as sole national language with ignoring Bengali as equally important. East Pakistan (Bangladesh) was more populous than West Pakistan but its Bengali language was not only ignored but Bengali regional identity was humiliated by West Pakistan dominated society, political elite and state institutions. The situation resulted in resentment among Bengalis including the emergence of Bengali Language Movement, demanding for Bengali's official status like Urdu. The role of language cannot be ignored because it communicates nationalism, safeguards heritage and promotes identity. The state of

Pakistan denied the demand and it became one of the salient factors in the breaking of East Pakistan to become Bangladesh. As fiction and society are interwoven elements, Pakistani fiction presented all important issues including language controversy between East and West Pakistan. The impact of hasty and wrong political decisions during the first two decades after independence can still be found in present day Pakistani literature. Apart from linguistic and social factors, there are undeniable statistics and facts holding the (West Pakistan) political elite responsible of debacle of Pakistan in 1971. Government of Pakistan's official record shows (Nyrop, p: 75-76) that 1962 constitution recognised Bengali as national language like Urdu. The record reveals that 1956 constitution gave English the status of official language only for twenty years. And a commission would study, in 1972, the feasibility of English as the official language. All these revelations and the discussion portrays a grim picture of political dishonesty, vested interests of influential land lords, political elite, misuse of religion by mullaism and fabricated information in the national curricula contaminated the general picture of national identity.

The researcher would like to present the following quote by Edward Said as an end note reminding the reader about importance of national identity. It also throws light on how national identity works in an individual's existence and in a nation's heritage.

"No one today is purely one thing. Labels like Indian, or woman, or Muslim, or American are not more than starting-points, which if followed into actual experience for only a moment are quickly left behind. Imperialism consolidated the mixture of cultures and identities on a global scale. But its worst and most paradoxical gift was to allow people to believe that they were only, mainly, exclusively, white, or Black, or Western, or Oriental. Yet just as human beings make their own history, they also make their cultures and ethnic identities." (1994, p: 78)

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