

ELITE BARGAINS AND COMMONERS: Revisiting The Two Nation Theory in Pakistan

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Elite dealing to exploit and benefit Pakistan's resources could be termed as "Elite Bargains". This prose explores the existing implications of the elite group and common public of Pakistan, focusing on the socio-economic divide in Pakistan. Elite groups negotiate power and resources for their benefit, often on the tax of the public. This article examines the resulting contradiction and the socio-political dynamics between the elite and commoners by offering a critical perspective on how these elites deal with and shape Pakistan and illustrating the enduring relevance of the two-nation theory in understanding the country's internal divisions.

Elite Groups in Pakistan manifest in five primary shapes; the judiciary, business, military, bureaucracy, and politics. Influence of colonialism in Pakistan, where the only visible change lies in the complexion of the ruling class. It is quite true that Pakistan has been ruled by only a few dynasties.

Rosita Armytage stated in her book "Big Capital in an Unequal World" that in Pakistan the elite class earns around 100 million dollars per annum (Armytage, 2020). In an exclusive interview with Al Jazeera, UNDP's Assistant Secretary-General Kini Wiganaraja said: The Elite privilege consumes US\$ 17.4 billion of Pakistan's economy and the country's corporate sector was the biggest beneficiary of privileges like tax breaks, cheap inputs, higher output prices, and preferential access to capital, land, and services, receiving about \$4.7 billion, according to the report. The second and third-largest beneficiaries were the richest 1 per cent of

the population, who collectively own 9 per cent of the country's total income (Hashim, 2021).

EIGHT KINDS OF THE ELITES:

Elites wield and enjoy the power and share in their circle. There are two types of elites in Pakistan explained by (Haque & Zulfiqar, 2024) for instance the meritocracy and gatekeeping elite.

Meritocratic elite: attains elite status through their merit, talent, and achievements rather than through inherited privilege or social connections. People rise to top positions based on hard work, skills, education, and contributions to society like successful entrepreneurs, accomplished professionals, talented artists or athletes, and top academics or researchers but unfortunately, they distribute wealth, opportunities, social acknowledgment, honour, and power in their circle.

Gatekeeping elite: consists of individuals/institutions that control access to resources, opportunities, or power in society. They influence who can reach positions of authority by setting the criteria for inclusion or exclusion. Examples include political party leaders who control nominations and endorsements.

Nosarbaz Elite: a person or group who is involved in fraud, deceit, crafty, and uses clever but dishonest tactics to achieve their goals (Akram, 2023). Elite capture restricts the governance system, promotes social

inequality, and impedes inclusive developments (Daron & Robinson, 2013).

Legacy Elite: Elites are characterized by wealth, fame, and talent and they can hold it for long and sustained for generations this enduring ability to maintain power and influence also comes under the category of an elite class.

Contractors Elite: The elite often includes contractors from Islamabad and elsewhere who receive government contracts and receive substantial payments. They apply significant percentages to these projects and pocket huge sums without any accountability, as the system is also controlled by elites (Haque, 2023).

Financial Powerbrokers: According to the partner SR law, Saad Rasool: the elite in a democratic constitutional structure is one where individuals gain power and have influence in the local constituency by investing 20 to 50 million rupees in their constituency to become Members of the National Assembly (MNA) or keeps money to has the financial resources. This concentration of decision-making power isolates the elite group from the general populace.

Administrative Elites: one who does not have the formal power and more wealth but access to resources and influence including Superintendence of Police (SP) or District Commissioners (DC), they can file someone and dismiss FIR /any case of their own and take actions that the public cannot.

Patronage Elite: perhaps the most dangerous and worst type of elite, not only hollows and undermines society but even erases the ray of hope of the youth. They do this by posting someone from friends or relatives without ringing a post somewhere where he is entirely unqualified, not eligible, and irrelevant to the field or ministry, thereby eroding the merit system and fairness.

CONCEPT AND HISTORY OF ELITES

The concept of aristocracy was created by the rich to exploit the poor and maintain their status. The power of the state is not with the government but with the rich. According to Karl Marx, it is the efforts of the poor people and the labourers that derive the country's prosperity.

Even the concept of family, introduced by the rich, was designed to ensure that land, wealth, and assets remained under their control, thus preserving their power and the survival of capitalism. This structure

prevented the redistribution of wealth to the poor. The same is the situation in Pakistan; the elite do not move from the equilibrium point and are not ready to sit down for negotiations with the public. As a result, few families are enjoying and making more and more for their families, and the poor are becoming poorer.

According to George Hegel, initially, everyone had the right to money, but little by little few people retained that right to wealth. To support this, Hegel Marx defines six stages of primitive communism. In early human societies, when people lived in groups for protection from wild animals, tools and implements served as currency, accessible to everyone. During this time society functioned on the principles of collective ownership and common rights. In slave society, a few groups owned the tools, equipment, and land used for forming, while most of the people were enslaved and forced to work on land. In the feudalism system where the gap between poor and rich started getting deeper as the land belonged to someone and working by someone else the concept of communism was almost finished. In capitalism, money came into the hands of traders where machines belonged to traders and hard work by laborers. The gap became deeper and deeper in the first four stages. One day this gap will be so big and deeper that all the laborers will unite and there will be a big revolution.

Communism will come again, and the workers will rule the whole world because the number of workers will increase, and a revolution will happen. Money will be snatched from the elite and taxes will be distributed equally. Marx's famous slogan is time for the "workers of the world to unite" and destroy capitalism. In the last stage of Stateless communism where communism will be maintained, everyone will come together and work. No concept of the poor and rich will exist.

CAN WE SURVIVE WITHOUT AN ELITE?

Elite exists in most countries like the United States, England, India, etc. No country wants to bring the elite to zero level, but we must reduce it from 100% as there are only four hundred families in parliament and someone from the public cannot reach that position.

The dynamics of today's era are different. From 1980 onwards rest of the countries were controlling their problems, and problems in Pakistan increased, the elite prospered, educational institutions got worse, PIA and Railways were bankrupted, and the poor could not fight elections.

When a system ignores merit, institutions remain weak and biased. People in power give favors, seats and opportunities to their friends, relatives and close associates, allowing them to gain unfair advantages. It is just not the business class even though this is normal in every department and ministry. Clearly shows that the state is financing underperformance, wealth accumulation, inequity, denial of opportunities, under-development, under-employment, and finally global marginalization which is detrimental to an economy and manifests in the form of limited access to the resources/opportunities and decision-making process.

Pakistan's six big conglomerates are under the five kinds of elites as mentioned above and some of them have US\$ 6 billion assets. 90 per cent of the sugar industry owners are politicians, and licenses, loans, and land are subsidized even subsidies on exports are beneficial and we again import sugar and provide it to the public at high prices (Bibi, 2023).

People are coming rapidly under the poverty line, the unemployment rate for 2022 is 5.6 % with a 0.75 % decline from 2021, industry sectors are declining, government agencies are not growing, and joining elections is purely on a financial base.

When a small elite group controls economic resources and political power, it often leads to widespread corruption, favouritism, and exclusion of marginalized groups. The current situation in Pakistan we are facing these days like declining growth rate, low export & high imports, affordability issues, and political instability, is because of elites. Although we criticize the elite and their illegal and immoral practices, many people secretly long to join their ranks.

Breaking this cycle requires confronting our own psychological biases. Our nation must regain the consciousness necessary to free itself from the tyranny of the elites. Generational change has been shown in Pakistan if we focus on the followers of our politicians as more of our youth do not want politicians of the 80s and 90s anymore.

- So, there is a need for quick reforms and ideas to influence the politicians and government to save the public from dragging further.
- Pakistan should not repeat the same things repeatedly to get different results.
- There is a need for political reforms which require the coordination of politics and society.
- Need for an effective local government system otherwise, politics will be unconfirmed, and the elite families will maintain their status.

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