

## Journal of Peace, Development and Communication



Volume 07, Issue 02, April-June 2023  
 pISSN: 2663-7898, eISSN: 2663-7901  
 Article DOI: <https://doi.org/10.36968/JPDC-V07-I02-02>  
 Homepage: <https://pdfpk.net/pdf/>  
 Email: [se.jpdc@pdfpk.net](mailto:se.jpdc@pdfpk.net)

<b>Article:</b>	<b>Before Grievances Turn Into Ethno-Political Violence: The Case of Gilgit-Baltistan Politics</b>
<b>Author(s):</b>	Dr. Abrar Hussain Lecturer, Department of Politics and International Studies, Karakoram International University (KIU) Gilgit
	Nasir Ali PhD Scholar, Department of Pol Science, University of Punjab
	Muhammad Zuha M.Phil Scholar, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad
<b>Published:</b>	24 <sup>th</sup> April 2023
<b>Publisher Information:</b>	Journal of Peace, Development and Communication (JPDC)
<b>To Cite this Article:</b>	Hussain, A., Ali, N., & Zuha, M. (2023). Before Grievances Turn Into Ethno-Political Violence: The Case of Gilgit-Baltistan Politics. <i>Journal of Peace, Development and Communication</i> , 07(02), 12–25. <a href="https://doi.org/10.36968/JPDC-V07-I02-02">https://doi.org/10.36968/JPDC-V07-I02-02</a>
<b>Author(s) Note:</b>	Dr. Abrar Hussain is serving as a Lecturer at Department of Politics and International Studies, Karakoram International University (KIU) Gilgit
	Nasir Hussain is a PhD Scholar at Department of Pol Science, University of Punjab
	Muhammad Zuha is a M.Phil Scholar at Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad

**ABSTRACT**

Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) is de-facto constitutional and de-jure administrative part of Pakistan. Since annexation of the region with Pakistan in 1947 several reforms have gradually been introduced to uplift the region at par with other provinces of the country, however, still there remain inequalities in terms of socio-economic indicators in addition to constitutional and identity lacuna. Political processes emanate from indigenous (local) and mainstream (Pakistan) political parties. Both simultaneously shape emerging political dynamics that cast deep imprints in minds through political socialization in people of GB. To ensure stable integration of the region into constitution and federation of Pakistan requires concrete political empowerment of the region strengthening democratic culture and inclusive institutions in the region.

**Key Words:** Democratic inclusive institutions, Concrete empowerment, Constitutional lacunas Grievance matrix , Dissent voices, Balawaristan

## **Introduction:**

Although Gilgit-Baltistan's political features are somewhat akin to Pakistan, yet a shadow of grievance is becoming pronounced with the rise of dissident voices in the region. The spread of social momentum following a peculiar political narrative aims to redress long-held grievances.

This paper aims to discuss the contemporary political reflections that are mostly emanating from a set of grievances. It does so by focusing on the agenda, mobilization and manifesto of political party active in the Gilgit-Baltistan region.

The organization of the current paper is as follows. Section one deals with the details of the historical background of the region focusing on political developments taking place since 1947. The implications of developments taken place in this period for the present socio-political structure of the region are also discussed. Section two of the paper is devoted to the case study of Balawaristan National Front (BNF), elaborating on the genesis of this local nationalist political party and its manifesto that addresses the widespread grievances of the region. The last section comprises of critical analysis of the grievance matrix of the region. Grievances are discussed in terms of relative deprivation; the discrepancy between what people think they deserve and what actually they are getting, and; the level of difference in socio-economic and political conditions of GB with reference to Azad Kashmir and mainland Pakistan. This analysis helps to understand overall socio-economic and political conditions of the region viz-a-viz the other four provinces of Pakistan.

## **Historical Background**

Historically, the Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) region has the intersection point and crossroad for traders, travelers, and raiders. Its geographical location has remained the pinpoint of deep impact on local culture and religion of society in the region. Numerous incidents have shaped the rich and dynamic history and position of the region. The region entails a multi socio-political composition. Social diversity of multi-ethnic, lingual and sectarian posture is a unique feature of a small population around 1.8 million people (Sokefeld, 2007).

The GB consists of two main regions: Gilgit and Baltistan. The Gilgit region has five districts with five local different languages spoken among more than six ethnic groups from within three major sects, while, the latter region inhabits predominantly one ethnic group with the same language except in some parts of adjacent to Gilgit region.

During the British rule in the Sub-continent, GB was under occupation of Kashmiri Dogras. As a result of liberation struggle by the locals, the region was liberated in 1947. On November 1st (1947), the "Independent Republic of Gilgit" was proclaimed under the leadership of Capt. Mirza Hasan Khan of Gilgit Scouts (Brown, 1998). The newly independent Republic was formed under a presidential government. A local Raja (Shah Rais Khan) was appointed as President and Capt. Mirza Hasan Khan assumed the post of Army Chief. Proper administrative arrangements under the President and deployment of troops in border areas soon initiated. During this course help was sought from newly independent neighborly Republic of Pakistan through a telegram (Rasool, 1994). The latter sent a delegation who met with the President of Gilgit and it was concluded in favor of Pakistan to have control the administration of Gilgit.

The geo-strategic location of the region enhances its vulnerability of plunging into conflict soon as and when tensions escalate between Pakistan and India over Kashmir. Both states lay claim to Gilgit-Baltistan. The United Nations constituted special Commission for

India and Pakistan (UNCIP) over Kashmir dispute decided Pakistan could continue its administrative control over parts of Kashmir and Northern Areas (now Gilgit-Baltistan) till final decision of Kashmir issue through plebiscite (UNCIP, 1948).

At the time of independence, the GB had a non-democratic political system. Pakistan too continued the governance of the region through the British introduced Frontier Crimes Regulation (FCR). The FCR remained imposed in the region till 1973 when the ZA Bhutto established the Ministry for Kashmir Affairs and Northern Areas (KANA) and transferred the affairs of the region to the Ministry (Usman, 2002).

The Federal ministry established a Representatives Body of 16 members and appointed a representative advisor from the region to the Minister of KANA Division. Elections for members of representative body were held at first time and Pakistan People's Party (PPP) laid down solid basis as first Pakistani political party that gained wide public support. It abolished the FCR and introduced democratic culture in the region (Hussain, 2009).

In 1977, GB too, under the military rule of Ziaulhaq, marks the beginning of a top-down Islamization process like Pakistan. What happened during this period is noteworthy. During this period, religious political parties made inroads into the region that impacted the local culture and paved the way for social divisions on sectarian lines. The sectarian divide permeated in the region after a catastrophic invasion in GB by Sunni population from Kohistan region of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in 1988 (Fayyaz, 2011). Small villages of Shiite population were overrun and they migrated to Shiite majority areas to seek protection. This sectarian divide left traumatic impacts on society.

Thus since partition in 1947, introduction of both mainstream political parties and religious parties have left their mark though in somewhat paradoxical terms. However the imprints of the latter were so deep and intense that even the mainstream political parties found it difficult to shed the sectarian color. An atmosphere of animosity prevailed. The religious political parties based in and operating from main cities of Pakistan could easily extend their support to their local networks. Hence, a great deal of political mobilization in GB region started taking place along sectarian lines.

The general perception prevailing among the populace, as elsewhere, is that despite gaining independence from the British and then Dogras, nothing has substantially changed. First, the rulers sustained their control through the same draconian FCR laws that completely impeded all kind of political activities and political developments. Although, the local political leaders of GB since partition have been concerned about the constitutional and political status of the region, consistent military interventions in Pakistan resulted in curtailed political activities. The independence was voluntarily "sacrificed" to join Pakistan with enough confidence to be a constitutional province of newly independent Islamic State. But complications and reluctance to incorporate the region into constitution, establishment of weak institutional system and development of bifurcated political culture in the wake of Islamic/sectarian fundamentalism during and after the period of Islamization in Pakistan shed water on expectations of people in the region. This aroused sense of deprivation among the populace led to a process of identity search, demand for political rights, eventually a demand for full fledged provincial status, and even separation from Pakistan. The current paper concerns with the latter trend only.

### **The Case of Balawaristan National Front (BNF)**

The rise and proliferation of BNF indicate and is an indicator of a new trend in regional politics. It deals more with slogans and issues of GB nationalism. The joint struggle for political, constitutional and administrative rights had articulated itself in establishing political parties like Karakoram National Front (KNM), Gilgit-Baltistan United Movement (GBUM), Progressive Youth Front (PYF), Awami Workers Party (AWP) and All Parties Democratic Alliance. None of these parties, however, ever demanded for complete independence from Pakistan and were mainly focused on safeguarding provincial rights. The main slogans directing the politics of these parties included such as: constitutional rights, identity crisis, democratic rights, absence of the region from the mainstream politics of Pakistan. None of these focuses on complete separation or independence.

Among the local political figures, Nawaz Khan Naji was the first leader to have initiated political struggle demanding independence for the region. In 1988, he formed a nationalist party named “Balawaristan National Front” (BNF) which initially demanded for an independent state of Gilgit-Baltistan (Nawaz, 1998). His view is that the government of Pakistan had only administrative rights, and the local people have to decide their future political and constitutional position. In 2009, the Chairman of BNF Nawaz Khan Naji participated in elections and won a seat of GB Assembly.

Balawaristan National Front (BNF) is a nationalist political party in GB. It was founded on 28 December 1989 by Nawaz Khan Naji who is a resident of village Sherqilla, District Ghizer. Initially, BNF had no popular support among the masses in Ghizer district but gradually the party attracted people's attention there as well as in other parts of GB. Naji is now an elected member of GB Legislative Assembly (GBLA). He was able to secure his GBLA seat twice: in 2011 and 2015. Previously, the nationalist leaders used to boycott the elections in all constituencies but the exceptional victory of Nawaz Khan Naji during 2011 by-elections paved the way for nationalist leaders to reach the masses.

### **The Origin of Balawar-Balawaristan**

The word “Bala” is derived from Persian word *Baala* which means high, being situated at highest altitude, the region of GB is termed to be a place of heights. Hence, Balawaristan denotes the region at juncture of high mountains of Karakoram, Himalaya and Hindukush. The people living in this place are thus called the “Balawars”. Another explanation of the name Balawaristan relates to the “*Bolor*” empire existed in the region during the period 400 B.C. However, these words “Balawar” or “Balawaristan” have been coined to create a nation consisting of the inhabitants of present day GB.

The main objective behind creation of the notion Balawaristan is to create “unity out of diversity” on the basis of shared geography and history. Balawaristan nationalism in GB is a classic example of what Benedict Anderson has termed “*imagined community*” (Anderson, 2006). The name was first time coined by Nawaz Khan Naji in 1988 and was published first time in a pamphlet titled “Balawaristan”. Although, nationalist political discourse in Gilgit-Baltistan was also introduced by other nationalist leaders yet the name Balawaristan was not properly used to denote the region or to create any precise identity of the region. Nationalist political Parties e.g. Gilgit League, Karakoram National Movement (KNM), Boloristan Quomi Mahaz and Broshal Movement are similar names in history of Gilgit Baltistan that were aimed at uniting the people of region through a nationalist discourse. But the word

Balawaristan has successfully fulfilled the criteria put forth by Benedict Anderson's definition of nationalism.

### **Manifesto of the BNF**

The manifesto of BNF bears three points slogans the principles of nationalist political struggle: freedom, nationalism and democracy. The main objective of BNF is to establish a political identity and entity by uniting the people in the areas where languages such as Shina, Broshahki, Balti, Wakhi and Khawar are spoken. The areas where the just mentioned languages are spoken include the entire present day GB, Kohistan and Chitral districts of Khyberpukhtunkhaw, Aksai Chin (occupied by China since Indo-China war 1962) and the region of Ladakh in Jammu Kashmir. The pointed out geographical areas, as indicated in the manifesto of BNF are under the administrative control of Pakistan, India and China. Thus, the first slogan, "Freedom" implies for the same areas, the parts of which are under the occupation of three states, Pakistan, India and China.

The second slogan, "Nationalism" is to be carved out from among the people of the same areas. As the region inhabits a population with different languages, races and sects, a unified and coherent nationalism in these areas was possible under the geographical and historical context. Political mobilization in these areas under the slogan of Nationalism seemed credible due to peculiar political status of each part under different nation states. The political disputed nature; GB and Azad Kashmir under Pakistan, Jammu and Kashmir under India and Aksai Chin region under China's control, permanently imprints a de-facto position of all regions under each state and the prevailing constitutional lacunas gives a way forward for political unification of its own nature traced from historical and geographical roots. All these areas are under political ambiguity and none of these parts are constitutionally recognized parts of the states under occupation. For the establishment of governmental administrative structure in the region, the BNF manifesto calls for present Gilgit-Baltistan (Balawaristan) to be comprised of three main units or provinces; historical units, named Broshal, Dardistan and Boloristan with politically maintained equilibrium of power among all units.

The third slogan "Democracy" in the manifesto is to maintain political equilibrium in multi-composite society of the Balawaristan region. The BNF manifesto focuses on present day GB first and then it extends its purview towards the regions of jammu and Kasmir and Aksai Chin region.

For the present political situation, the manifesto demands for complete autonomy of the region until decision on Kashmir dispute is reached. The region should be given a complete democratically elected government of public representatives with an independent judiciary established under constitutional shelter. With the resolution of Kashmir issue, the fate of GB should be decided according to wishes of the "Balawar Nation" and relations of the region with Pakistan should be decided by the Balawaristan National Assembly/parliament.

The future of Gilgit Baltistan must be decided keeping in view the will of Balawar nation according to the principles of the International Law under the United Nations Organization (UNO). The region of Chitral, Kohistan and Ladakh will become part of Balawaristan if the people of the regions decide to accede with Balawaristan(Naji, 2015).

### **Grievances Matrix: a critical analysis**

In ethno-political conflicts, when grievances are generated by a certain section/region/ethnicity society, then it is only one step away from transforming into a violent

conflict. The grievances only need then conducive environment and support in which it can propel into a visible conflict. Leafing through BNF's manifesto, it seems the upholders of this party are at the complaining stage: "where do I fall in the constitution of Pakistan? Nowhere! What does it mean? I am not a legal citizen and I have no recognition in Pakistan nor could I file a petition before the Supreme Court of Pakistan". These were the words uttered by Nawaz Khan Naji when asked to explain the "Balawaristan" ideology (Naji, 2015). He goes on further saying "I asked such questions from myself and found nothing but uncertainty and identity crisis" (ibid).

Since partition and under the Pakistani state, to understand the identity formation process in GB, Manuel Castells' three categories may be helpful (Castells, 2010). A *legitimizing identity* is created by governing institutions to maintain rule and state's dominance. This kind of identity is promoted by state of Pakistan in the region that is reflected in establishment of state apparatuses, extension of political parties and provision of a de-facto national status to the region. The second identity is *resistance identity* promoted by certain groups who are in power but devalued by others. These are sectarian identities created by specific groups and loathed by majority of learned people. And the last one is a *projected identity* and it is assumed by actors who construe their role in society by proposing social change. Balawaristan identity falls in the last category as the nationalist ideology is totally aimed at creating a new identity amid at establishing an independent nation by opening a new arena of political struggle.

Not only the identity question is a driving force of nationalist political struggle in GB but there are "genuine grievances" venting out of political, economic and social factors. The phenomenon of grievance is a complex notion that has been utilized to explain conflict by the rational choice theorists who see the relative deprivation, polarization and horizontal inequalities as the seeds of grievances in a particular social setting. Combined together all these phenomenon gives rise to grievance in a deprived segment of society and thus fuel to the conflicts in later stages and in this context, grievance is described as a "justice-seeking motivation" found in deprived segments in various societies (Murshed, 2006).

### ***Relative deprivation***

Existence of relative deprivation in a latent stage in GB can be traced back since the annexation of the region to Pakistan. The aspirations of leaders of GB were very high during the liberation days. They had dreamed of an independent state at first stage but after the liberation achieved, their intention of being part of Pakistan was to have at least a full-fledge provincial status viz-a-viz other provinces. It was revealed during the visit of UNCIP to Gilgit in 1948. Although the local people of GB were not much aware of their future status but leaders like late Johar Ali Khan had gathered and organized some people to meet with the commission to present a written demand for an autonomous province of GB (Hoor, 2015). It is evident that the aspirations of people were high at first stage but achievement was just a de-facto position along with imposition of draconian law of FCR. The transfer of rule from Dogra to FCR shed water on expectations of leaders and thus the sense of deprivation prevailed similar to past time. Existence of relative deprivation in a society provides micro foundations for conflict as it is the "discrepancy between what people think they deserve and what they actually believe they can get" (Gurr, 1970). A significant discrepancy between aspiration and achievements creates a desperate situation at first and if it is continued for a considerable time results in frustration and consequently frustration produces aggressive behavior on part of an individual.

In the same way relative deprivation in a group of people does predict combined political struggle or collective violence.

One comparison is drawn between GB and the Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), the later was given an independent status with autonomous legislative body. The State Subject Rule which gives right of land ownership only to indigenous people is still implemented in AJK. The people of Kashmir have greater accesses to education, quotas and above all an independent state with its own prime minister and president who have control over all its natural resources and revenue generation. Similarly, the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) has also been given their representation in the National Assembly and the Senate. Both AJK and FATA have been facilitated either giving representation at national level or providing independent status but GB is deprived of representation as well as autonomous status. The annual budget allocated for AJK during the year 2015-16 was Rs. 68 billion out of which 11.5 billion or 17 percent would be spent on development schemes (htt). While during the same period, GB government announced a total outlay of Rs 31.921 billion with an allocation of 9.937 billion for developmental expenditures (Tribune, 2015). The territory of GB covers 28000 sq Km while AJK consists only of 4000 sq. km. The developmental expenditures on new roads and infrastructure would necessarily be much slower in GB than AJK.

### ***Horizontal Inequalities***

Horizontal inequalities are inequalities found among groups of people or administrative units of a state and when these differences coincide with cultural, economic and political differences can cause deep resentment in deprived segments of society. Economic horizontal inequalities range from inequalities in access to and ownership of assets, natural resources and inequality in level of income (Stewart, 2009).

Although the ownership of natural resources in GB is a matter of GB Council according to GB Self-Governance Order 2009 and GB Rules of Business. However, the matter regarding issuance of license for exploration and export of precious minerals and metals by the local government came to question when the Department of Gems and Minerals GB issued license to a Chinese Company: "Mohsin Industries" owned by Wang Zungu, a Hong Kong national, for exploration of minerals in the region. Despite the fact that several applications for the same purpose submitted by the local people were refused and kept in pending by the local government after the GB Legislative Assembly and Council had passed a resolution that sought immediate ban on exploration and export of minerals in the region.

However, this resolution was in conformity with the subjects of the Council and the Northern Areas Mining Concession Rules 2003, wherein, the right of mining and exploration of minerals and metals was given to the local government of GB. Yet, restriction of indigenous people from exploration and grant of license to a foreign company was an act of denial of basic rights of people on part of GB government. Consequently, GB Metals, Minerals and Gems Association (GBMMGA) filed a petition in the Chief Court of GB alleging the GB government of facilitating foreign industries and of preventing local companies adopting extra judicial and legal leniency and gross violation of mining concession Rules 2003 (GBMMGA, July 8, 2014).

Ownership of natural resources in GB by the local people has long been a matter of concern. As and when we speak of right of ownership, land acquisition for national mega projects in GB has many times caused raise slogans in public protests. Recently, allotment of more than two thousand kanal land (without award of compensation and consent of local



people) in District Gilgit for CPEC activities by the local government has created a hue and cry situation (Allotment Order, 2016). The Awami Action Committee (ACC) has called a protest on Labor Day, 1<sup>st</sup> May, 2016 where several speeches were delivered against land confiscation, taxation and for specification of GB share in CPEC (K-2, 2016).

### ***Social Horizontal Inequalities***

Social horizontal inequalities include inequalities in access to a range of services such as education, healthcare and housing. The status of education and health is a social horizontal inequality measure that indicates comparatively a regions uplift in social life. The standards laid down in Millennium Developmental Goals (MDGs) are targets that every UN member state pledges to meet through reform agendas in all social sectors.

As for as the state of education in the region is concerned, the literacy rate according to 1998 census was 37.83 percent. (Male 52.62, female 21.65 percent) against national average of 56 percent which means GB lagging behind in literacy. Rate of literacy in AJK is recorded as 62 percent. Currently, the statistical analysis of Education Department in Gilgit-Baltistan indicate access to primary education at 73 percent rate while out of school children ratio is 27 percent. Teacher and student ratio is about 1:23 (one teacher for 23 students (EMIS, 2014).

The number of schools established by the government do not sufficiently provide access to quality education in all parts of GB. The total number of primary and middle level schools (public sector) is 879 in the GB region. The number of high schools is only 149. There are only 03 higher secondary schools not enough for the entire population. Even these schools are not having basic facilities: boundary walls, clean drinking water, toilets and electricity. These facilities are available only in very limited number of schools (600 schools out of 900 schools). GB is having a total number of 20 colleges where 7446 students (both male and female) are enrolled. Technical education in GB is not yet introduced by the public sector. There is only one university in GB established in 2004 named Karakoram International University (KIU) having very limited disciplines and lack of infrastructure and quality education.

In the sphere of social services, health sector in GB is also lagging behind the expectation espoused in MDGs. Healthcare services in GB are provided by public and private providers. However, public or government sector is considered the main provider of curative care and major provider of health services in most of the rural areas. The public sector provides health care services through basic primary to secondary level facilities. Primary facilities include Basic Health Units (BHUs), Rural Health Centers (RHCs), Government Rural Dispensaries (GRDs), Mother and Child Health (MCH) centers, TB centers and First Aid Posts (FAPs). All these facilities are provided at five district headquarter hospitals, 27 civil hospitals and two rural health centers. The number of basic health units is 15 in the whole region. There are total 190 government rural dispensaries across the region with a number of 93 MCH centers (ART, 2012).

Overall condition of health care service in GB can be compared with that of the national statistics. The doctor population ratio at national level is 1:1183 while in GB it is around 1:4100. No availability of doctors and other supporting staff has always been the main hurdle in civil hospitals. Maternal mortality rate is also higher in GB than the national average with 272 per 100000 births compare to 600 per 100000. Life expectancy rate at national level is 65.4 years and it is ten years less in GB with an average of 56.5 years. Similarly, children immunization rate in GB is 55 per cent while at national level it is around 76 percent (AKRSP,

2010). The statistical ratios of all indicators mentioned above prove that the health facilities and overall health conditions in GB are far less than the national level. The condition of services provided at hospital do not adequately fulfill the needs of local people and even patients of general diseases prefer to get treatment in main cities of Pakistan. In many cases the medical consultants in GB frequently refer their patients to Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PMIS) and DHQ Hospital Rawalpindi due to unsatisfactory diagnostic facilities at GB hospitals.

### ***Political Horizontal Inequalities***

Political horizontal inequalities include inequalities among groups in distribution of political opportunities and power including control over presidency, the cabinet, parliamentary assemblies, bureaucracy, local and regional governments, the army and police (Stewart, 2009). In case of GB political inequalities in terms of available opportunities to hold the presidency, number of members in cabinet and parliament are out of discussion due to its peculiar political and constitutional status in Pakistan. As we have discussed that the region of GB is neither a constitutional part of Pakistan nor does the national assembly or parliament reserves any seat for representation of people of region at national level.

However, being an administrative part of Pakistan, the region of GB is governed by bureaucrats from Federal government with a defined share in regional executive. However, some reserve seats for the region in federal government civil services have been kept. Therefore, political inequality in terms of share for GB in federal bureaucracy can be discussed to analyze the inequalities in executive power sharing.

In Civil Superior Services (CSS), the GB does not have a separate quota rather it is attached with Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). Collectively, both the regions have four percent share in CSS reserve seats (FPSC, 2015). Similarly, in general recruitment test for federal government services, the region of GB rarely possess two percent seats. Due to its educational backwardness and lack of educational institutions in the region, very few students appear and qualify such examinations. The net result of this situation is that there is very thin and rare representation from GB at civil bureaucracy of Pakistan.

The GB competitive examinations; introduced in 2000, are held occasionally unlike the other provinces of Pakistan where at least once a year provincial competitive exams are conducted against various vacancies. The posts of civil services, like in civil administration and police service, are filled either through posting of the federal government employees or promotion of local staff from lower grades. According to criteria of GB service structure, the quota against civil service and police service in post of BPS-17 is to be filled by fifty percent promotion and fifty percent by posting from federal servants of superior services. While in fact, most of the posts of BPS 17 in civil administration and police service are occupied mostly by employees of federal services.

The vacant posts of BPS 17 and above in GB Secretariat are filled through posting of Federal Government employees and hence vacancy announcement against such posts is held occasionally. At present the bureaucratic arrangement in Gilgit Secretariat is filled with officers belonging to federal civil services. From grade 17 onwards, posts are occupied by CSS officers who mostly belong to Punjab province. In line departments like education, health and agriculture local officers of grade 17 are appointed from within GB by the Federal Public Service Commission. At higher level bureaucracy, the post of Chief Secretary, Home

Secretary, secretaries of line departments, IGP, DIGs and SPs and the post of Accountant General is occupied by purely federal employees. So far none of a local officer has been promoted to any of higher post mentioned above.

Apart from exclusion of region in bureaucracy, the people of Gilgit-Baltistan have less opportunities to play their role as political leaders in mainstream political parties. Given to its constitutional status, political leaders from the region do not have any significant role and recognition within major political parties at national level.

When we discuss the state of public participation in political activities and exercise of free will to choose political parties, it seems that the people have several hurdles in expressing openly their affiliation with available parties. "I know the ultimate struggle to achieve rights of Gilgit-Baltistan emanates from indigenous/local parties but we have to understand the problems and political expediencies, otherwise, we would be behind the bars! We have to feed our family, we have to travel across Pakistan and we are dependent on Pakistan. If we vote for leftist parties, the mainstream national parties would not give us any budget and GB government would not be able to run its affairs longer". These were the views of Mr. Wali Muhammad, an old citizen from Gilgit, who had participated in political activities and rendered social services during rainy days in the region (Muhammad, 2015).

Political participation by various parties in election is also curtailed and only mainstream political and religio-political parties can muster public support in election campaigns. While leftist political workers are threatened and they are excluded from political participation. Baba Jan, an activist and member of Federal Committee of Awami Workers Party (AWP) and also the Chief Organizer of Progressive Youth Front, told that his campaign was totally carried out by youth of Hunza while he was in jail (Mir, 2015). The people of Hunza had sympathy with him for that he had struggled for rights of victims of Aataabad. Baba Jan campaigned for climate change in GB and with other four activist were jailed with charges under anti-terrorist laws for life time sentences on charges of sedition and allegedly ransacking the police station (Naviwala, 2012). There were strong protests held by progressive parties, students, human right activists and youth organizations all over Pakistan and GB against the arrest. The campaign against arrest of Baba Jan echoed in Pakistan's embassies in several countries and prominent intellectuals like Noam Chomsky and Tariq Ali also endorsed the campaign by signing a petition. The youth of GB portray him in social media as their "Che Guevara" (Kahlon, 2016).

## **Conclusion**

Keeping in view the above mentioned information and analysis it can be safely concluded that the driving forces behind the emergence of nationalist discourse in Gilgit-Baltistan are not only limited to identity questions but there are "genuine grievances" venting out of political, economic and social factors. The phenomenon of grievance venting out of relative deprivation, and horizontal inequalities provide a political base for "justice-seeking motivation." Prevalence of a higher and contrasting degree in socio-economic and political conditions compared to the rest of the country are the seeds of grievances. A political campaign originating from a 'justice-seeking motivation' in a deprived segment of society is naturally more appealing and at least applauded by the youth if not vehemently propagated and voted by all members of the society. Therefore it is the need of time that measures should be taken to address the longstanding demands of the people of Gilgit-Baltistan by providing better health,

education and housing facilities alongwith empowering the local political institutions to legislate on the subjects most concerned with local indigenous resource utilization.

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