ROLE OF MUHAJIR QAUMI MOVEMENT IN THE POLITICS OF PAKISTAN

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Abstract

This paper examines the Muhajir Quami Movement (MQM), a political party established in 1984 to address the socio-political challenges faced by the Muhajir community, who migrated to urban Sindh after the 1947 British India partition. The party aimed to represent the rights and interests of the marginalized Muhajir community, but over time, it evolved into a more inclusive political organization representing the urban population. The MQM has played a significant role in Pakistani politics, particularly in the cities of Hyderabad and Karachi. This study explores the party's origins, leadership, evolving tendencies, electoral participation, and impact on Pakistani politics. The MQM's leadership, notably Altaf Hussain, has been instrumental in shaping the party's ideology, tactics, and organizational structure. The party's slogan, "Rights for All," reflects its commitment to social welfare and inclusivity, symbolized by the kite emblem, representing freedom, resilience, and progress. This research contributes to a deeper understanding of the MQM's complex dynamics and its impact on political discourse, policies, and the socio-political environment in Pakistan.

Keywords: Muhajir Quami Movement, Genesis, leadership,Ethnicity, impacts, Pakistani politics.

INTRODUCTION

The Muslim Muhajirs who came to Pakistan from India were dispersed throughout the provinces of Sindh, Punjab, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The homes, lands, and jobs of those who had immigrated to India were given to them. On the basis of this idea, immigrants on both sides ceased to be Muhajirs. With the exception of Karachi (Sindh), there was harmony between natives and immigrants throughout the nation. Due to socio-cultural, political, and linguistic differences, the Muhajirs of Karachi refused to integrate into the native Sindhi language. Muhajirs were not a problem in Punjab or anywhere else because immigrants and native Punjabis shared the same language and culture with only minor variations. However, the situation was different in the province of Sindh. A diverse group of immigrants with distinct cultural

backgrounds, histories, and social mores settled among people with distinct histories and lifestyles. The partition of the Indian subcontinent into the new states of Pakistan and India in 1947 marked the beginning of the Sindhi-Muhajir controversy. While migration had occurred in Bengal and Punjab as well, the majority of the Muhajirs in Karachi were from the Deccan, having migrated from Delhi, Lucknow, Bhopal, and Hyderabad. The influx of immigrants into Karachi was so great that the native Sindhis became marginalized. Muhajirs had priority access to all resources, including employment and education, for their own development.[1]

There is diversity among the Muhajirs and Sindhis both historically and culturally. However, Pakistan as a whole is multilingual, multiethnic, and multicultural (Nuri, 2012). In Sindh, we have a problem that is unlike any other place in Pakistan in terms of severity. The Muhajirs were not prepared to integrate with the native Sindhis, nor were they later persuaded to do so. The rights and demographics of the indigenous Sindhis in their own province worried them. The government had given the Sindhis different quotas for jobs, schools, and colleges; these were something the Muhajirs opposed. In the end, the Sindhis in their own province were reduced to a minority and aliens. Nationalists' views regarding the Muhajirs were reinforced by the turmoil and bloodshed in Karachi, and vice versa. Thus, the leader of Sindhi was putting Sindhi's case before the court. One of the many tragedies we face is that a portion of our people adore slavery and detest independence. I now reject those components in the name of the Sindh spirit. Should I fail to comply, it will be deemed that I have breached the sacredness of Sindh's spirit of independence (Amnesty International, 1996). Politically and socially, Muhajirs began to organize themselves at different levels since they were more watchful and knowledgeable than the Sindhis in the area. The Muhajir Quami Movement was the name of the newly formed party. "Altaf Husain founded the All-Pakistan Muhajir Students Organization (APMSO), which in turn gave rise to the Muhajir Quami Movement 18th march, 1984. Muttahida took the place of Muhajir later in 1997. For Sindh's indigenous population and nationalists, this development was concerning.[2]

This occurred under General Zia-ul Haq's regime, when political gatherings were prohibited. Rather, through a door-to-door mobilization campaign, young MQM members attempted to win over Muhajir residents in Karachi's large Muhajir-dominated neighborhoods like Federal B. Area and Liaquatabad. Muhajir activists were thus compelled to carry out their activities among the lower-middle-class segments of the migrant population after being expelled from the Karachi University campus. This proved to be a pivotal moment in the history of the MQM movement as it set the stage for its eventual rise to prominence. The MQM has always portrayed itself as a popular and populist party since its founding in 1984, mobilizing not only the educated population that aspired to white-collar jobs, but discovered its actual power base in Hyderabad and Karachi's lower classes. The MQM, therefore, was not only an ethnic movement but also an emancipation movement for the poor, denouncing the elitism of the traditional political class and the "feudalism" of rural landlords. Party leader Altaf Hussain quickly adopted the moniker "friend of the oppressed" (mazloomon ka Saathi), which is reminiscent of how PPP founder Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto had described himself as the impoverisher's defender in the 1970s (the distinction being that Bhutto

came from a wealthy landlord family, while Altaf Husain was raised in an urban lower middle-class family).[3]

Although there was a very chilly reception of party foundation at first, over time Karachi and Hyderabad used to see a rise in popularity for this organization. The bulk of participants in APMSO were young people, but in MQM, older people also joined the group. Most MQM members came from middle-class and lower-middle-class backgrounds. Proud of this development, the MQM leaders asserted that their party represents common people, not the feudal class. Their position was that the Muhajirs should be able to form organizations just like the Sindhis, Punjabis, Saraiki, Baloch, and Kashmiris could. They were entitled to self-organization. As members of Sindh's oppressed class, the Muhajirs sought the following rights:

1. *The influx of people from neighboring provinces led to a daily increase in the population of Sindh, particularly Karachi. For Muhajirs, it was a serious concern. Therefore, these individuals ought to be sent to their respective provinces. Government land that the Punjabis and Pashtuns had been occupying illegally ought to be returned.*
2. *They felt that they were not receiving their fair share in all spheres of life, be it the bureaucracy, the police department, or anything else.*
3. *They insisted that only Sindh's natives, not immigrants from other provinces, should be granted the ability to vote.*
4. *Additionally, locals should be given preference when it comes to jobs.*
5. *The population ratio should be taken into consideration when observing the quota system.*
6. *It is imperative that educational institutions consider the preferences of local students when making admissions.*
7. *In order to ensure that the local population has access to adequate health facilities, the budgetary share allocated to the health department needs to be raised.*
8. *KESC ought not to be a part of WAPDA, and employment opportunities ought not to be granted to individuals from other provinces.*
9. *The Sind government ought to be authorized to collect sales tax.*
10. *Only Muhajirs and Sindhis should be granted licenses to carry arms. The issuance of weapons licenses ought to follow straightforward protocols.*

These were the main Muhajir Quami Movement(MQM) demands that brought the Muhajir community together and fostered harmony.

MQM first concentrated on Hyderabad and Karachi, the two largest cities in Sindh. There is no denying that numerous other organizations were fighting for the rights of Muhajirs prior to the MQM's founding, but they lacked the organization's eventual power.Initially, MQM exclusively represented Muhajirs and consistently cultivated sentiments of racism and regionalism. It later declared itself to be the party of all oppressed people in Pakistan, but the Muhajir title excluded it from the list of national parties in Pakistan.[4]

MANIFESTO OF MUHAJIR QAUMI MOVEMENT

Inclusion and Representation: *The movement aims to provide the Muhajir community with political representation in Pakistan's political system. It has pushed for increased Muhajir participation in national institutions, government agencies, and decision-making procedures in order to guarantee that their concerns are taken seriously and that their rights are upheld.*

Social and Economic Justice: *In order to address problems like unemployment, poverty, and limited access to necessities, the MQM has championed the cause of social and economic justice for the Muhajir community. The movement has worked to give Pakistan's marginalized communities, including the Muhajirs, the chance to advance socially and economically.*

Rights to Culture and Linguistics: *The MQM has been a strong voice in support of the promotion and preservation of Muhajir culture and the Urdu language. It has aimed to safeguard the Muhajir community's linguistic and cultural identity, highlighting the value of cultural diversity and the freedom to honor and preserve one's ancestry.*

Rule of Law and Security: *The movement has placed a strong emphasis on maintaining the rule of law and making sure that every citizen, particularly those who are members of minority groups, is safe and secure. To ensure that the Muhajir community can live in safety and prosperity, the MQM has demanded strong law enforcement as well as steps to combat crime and violence.*

Empowerment and Education: *Education and empowerment have been central to the MQM's vision for the Muhajir community. The movement has advocated for greater access to quality education and opportunities for skill development, aiming to equip Muhajirs with the tools they need to succeed in various fields and contribute to the progress of Pakistan.*

Political Empowerment: *The MQM is an advocate for the Muhajir community and other marginalized groups in Pakistan to have more political clout. This involves making attempts to guarantee equitable representation in government agencies, legislatures, and other decision-making forums. The party wants to provide all citizens, regardless of background, with opportunities for political representation and involvement.*

FLAG, SYMBOLAND SLOGANOF MUHAJIR QAUMI MOVEMENT

When the Muhajir Quami Movement (MQM) was first established in 1984, its flag included a design of colors and symbols that were deeply symbolic to the party and its original members. In addition to reflecting the ideals and tenets of the MQM as a political group, the flag was created to represent the hopes, identity, and solidarity of the Muhajir community.The tricolor scheme of the flag included the hues red, white, and green. Every hue had a unique meaning that spoke to the Muhajir community and captured the spirit of the MQM's goals and objectives.

When the Muhajir Quami Movement was founded, the kite served as its symbol. Over time, it evolved into a recognizable and iconic symbol for the organization. The kite, which represents freedom, aspiration, and an adventurous spirit, reflects the party's goals for the Muhajir community and its dedication to their rights and representation in Pakistani politics. The party's goal of advancement, development, and Muhajir people's empowerment is reflected in the kite symbol, which also represents the idea of reaching great heights.

When the Muhajir Quami Movement (MQM) was established in 1984, it chose a catchphrase that would capture the goals, objectives, and aspirations of the Muhajir community in Pakistan. The catchphrase had a lot of weight and was intended to inspire

the public to support the party's goals and causes while also raising awareness of them."Imaan, Etihad, and Tanzeem" (Faith, Unity, and Discipline) may have been the exact slogan used by the MQM at the time of its founding in 1984. The core beliefs and ideals that the MQM attempted to inculcate in the Muhajir community and those who supported it are reflected in this slogan.

CHANGING TRENDS IN MANIFESTO

The political, social, and economic rights of the Muhajir community were among the main concerns addressed in the MQM's early manifesto. The party sought to address the complaints of the Muhajirs, who were frequently subjected to marginalization and discrimination in a variety of contexts. The MQM worked to address problems like unemployment, infrastructure development, and access to healthcare and education, as well as to increase Muhajirs' political representation. But as political conditions and obstacles changed over time, the MQM's platform and strategy also changed. One notable change in the party's strategy has been its shift from concentrating only on the Muhajir community to adopting a wider, more inclusive platform that aims to represent the rights of all marginalized communities in Pakistan.

The party has also modified its platform to cover current concerns that Pakistan faces, such as national security, economic growth, and governance. The MQM has placed a strong emphasis on the necessity of measures to address security concerns, foster economic growth, and advance social development in addition to transparent and accountable governance.

The MQM has shifted its attention in recent years to supporting the rights of urban populations, tackling problems like infrastructure development, urban planning, and the delivery of essential services in urban areas. The party is aware of Pakistan's increasing urbanization and the need to address the unique issues that urban populations face.

A change in the MQM's political approach is also reflected in its evolving manifesto. In order to further its goals, the party has formed alliances and coalitions with other political parties in an effort to appeal to a wider audience than its traditional base of support. The party's manifesto has changed as a result of this strategic change, with a more inclusive and diverse set of policy priorities.

ROLE OF LEADERSHIP IN PARTY

The role of leadership in MQM has been multifaceted, influencing not only the party's internal dynamics but also its relationship with the broader society and political landscape. An early form of the MQM was the All-Pakistan Muhajir Students Organization (APMSO), which Altaf Hussain founded. His goal in doing this was to give the Muhajir community, whom he believed was being marginalized and stigmatized in Pakistan more and more, political representation. The Muhajir Quami Movement was elevated to the status of a political party in 1985.

Altaf Hussain is its ideal leader. The ability to energize a society's core is what gives charisma its power. That is, the numerous emblems of authority that envelop the charismatic individual. Therefore, a charismatic figure gets his appeal from the symbols of power that are associated with him. To Hussain, anthropologist Oskar Verkaaik applies this definition. Hussain has the capacity "to transform himself into a living symbol of the Muhajir nation." Hussain did not become the MQM's main motivator or its leader when hepresented himself as a man devoid of moral qualities. Hussain, on the other hand, accomplishes this in large part by projecting his personal

qualities. Hussain connects with and embodies every level of Muhajir society; however, his political shrewdness and dexterity are what make him unique and cannot be separated from them. Hussain uses his speeches as a platform to carry out his political ideology, which is precisely why they have become so important to MQM discourse.

In 1989, four years after the formation of the MQM, Hussain's core political ideology social justice and the eradication of corruption was in full swing. Hussain then contrasts these lofty assertions by stating, "I am the biggest example," positioning himself as an inspiration to follow. I don't own property. I'm telling you; you don't have to come from these [landed elite] classes to be a leader in government. I'm not. In just one year, Hussain's story expanded to include speeches to minorities in general rather than just Muhajirs, and we saw him imprinting his vision on MQM doctrine in an effort to reach a wider political base.

Hussain demonstrated his capacity to comprehend and make use of the political and social environment he operates in during a different speech in Lahore. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank introduced the Structural Adjustment Programs (SAP) in 1989–1990 with the goal of simplifying the economies of developing nations. These policies reduced Pakistan's social services, which disproportionately affected the country's impoverished population. Hussain yelled, "MQM firmly believes that this country can be maintained in the way it should. I don't care if people like what I say or not." That is, when the middle class and impoverished nationwide reach the same status as the impoverished did under the MQM. Altaf Hussain is also aware of Pakistan's recent past, where socialist ideals have gained traction. "All these people talking about Leninism and socialism," asserted Hussain. This country's communists denigrate Islam; do you want to witness true socialism and Islam? Do you wish to discuss the living conditions of the impoverished in our nation? Take a look at the MQM and the way we take care of our employees and clients. Such language demonstrates a recurrent theme in Hussain's capacity to identify patterns and unhappiness in Pakistani society and suggest MQM as the remedy.[5] The MQM rose to prominence as an advocate for the rights and issues of the Muhajir community under Altaf Hussain's direction. The party concentrated on tackling problems like prejudice, inequality in the economy, and Muhajirs' lack of political rights. His ability to lead and speak effectively was instrumental in mobilizing the Muhajir community.

PARTICIPATION OF MUHAJIR QAUMI MOVEMENTIN ELECTORAL PROCESS

The MQM began its political career with the local elections. With the slogan "Jia Muhajir," this organization ran for local government in 1987 for the first time during the Zia era and won a sizable majority in Hyderabad and Karachi. The MQM leaders proclaimed it to be a referendum in support of Muhajirs. They have always favored local government politics because they believe that the greatest possible representation should be guaranteed. The Muhajirs helped the MQM win the elections, and the party declared that they were the only legitimate representatives of the Muhajirs. However, Altaf Hussain, who was detained in Central Jail in Karachi at the time, told the elected consuls to disregard the events that had transpired of the past and provided the services to the general public without showing bias. He declared that it was irrelevant whether or not any Punjabi, Pakistani, or Sindhi people resided in Muhajirs.

The Jamaat-i-Islami and its allies, the IJI, were defeated by the MQM in the

national elections of 1988 and 1990. Encouraged by its successes, the MQM took the position that, in order to defeat the perceived Punjabi hegemony in the federal government, an alliance between the Muhajirs and Sindhis was required, and they made the decision to collaborate. A deal was reached between PPP and MQM. However, because of the intelligence agencies' involvement, it was unable to continue, and in October 1989, the accord collapsed. Violent conflicts spread throughout Sindh's urban areas as a result of this breakdown. There is a widespread belief that the intelligence services contributed to the ensuing ethnic division by utilizing the MQM to topple Benazir Bhutto's administration and appoint Nawaz Sharif as Pakistan's prime minister.

The army began its campaign of persecution against the MQM in 1992. Altaf Hussain, the MQM leader, fled the nation and relocated to London, where he currently resides in self-exile. Throughout the operation, the army used a dueling strategy. Following the arrest of the MQM's leaders and militants, a public campaign was launched against the organization. However, the organization's torture cells were made public, and other strategies were employed to make its supporters believe otherwise. And in the second stage, the army backed an uprising against the Altaf leadership by a breakaway faction of the MQM (MQM – Haqiqi), led by Afaq Ahmed. However, the MQM Haqiqi's acceptance of military support cost it credibility with the general public. The PPP and MQM won the 1993 elections and took power. However, the Bhutto administration routinely violated human rights while carrying out the previous administration's policies and using coercion to crush the opposition.

After winning a second term in 1997, Nawaz Sharif forged an alliance with the Muhajir Quami Movement. However, the peace in Karachi was not also restored by this alliance. Following their release from prison, MQM activists became enraged and a string of tit-for-tat shootings broke out. The government gave the security forces broad new authority in response to the violence that had been increasing in Karachi. This included the ability to execute suspected terrorists immediately upon discovery and to expedite court proceedings.

The Jamaat-i-Islami won power in 2001 as a result of the MQM's boycott of the 2001 municipal elections, but in the 2005 local elections, the MQM took back control of the local government apparatus. The MQM ran in the 2002 general elections and won the majority of Sindh's urban seats. The MQM's elected members were appointed to high-ranking ministries at both the federal and provincial levels after they joined the coalition government.[6]

ELECTION RESULTS

Table: 1

Electoral history and performance of MQM					
1988	*5.37%*	*1,068,868*	*13 / 207*	*Imran Farooq*	*General elections*
1990	*7%*	*1,172,525*	*15 / 207*	*Altaf Hussain*	*In alliance with PML-N/In Opposition*
1993	*Non-*	*–*	*0 /*	*Altaf*	*See: Operation*

Votin

Electoral history and performance of MQM					
	participant		207	*Hussain*	*Blue Fox*
1997	*4.0%*	*764,207*	*12 / 207*	*Farooq Sattar*	*In alliance with PML-NIn Opposition*
2002	*3.1%*	*–*	*13 / 272*	*Farooq Sattar*	*In alliance with PML-Q*
2008	*7.4%*	*2,507,813*	*25 / 272*	*Babar Ghauri*	*In alliance with PPP*
2013	*5.41%*	*2,456,153*	*24 / 272*	*Faisal Sabzwari*	*In Opposition*
2018	*Non-participant*	*–*	*0 / 272*	*Altaf Hussain*	

Source: *https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muttahida_Qaumi_Movement_%E2%80%93_London*

Table No. 2: PARTY POSITION IN SINDH ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS OF PAKISTAN 1988-2013

Party	*Number of Party Seats Won In 1988*	*Number of Party Seats Won In 1990*	*Number of Party Seats Won In 1993*	*Number of Party Seats Won In 1997*	*Number of Party Seats Won In 2002*	*Number of Party Seats Won In 2008*	*Number of Party Seats Won In 2013*
MQM	*31*	*28*	*Boycott*	*28*	*42*	*51*	*37*

SOURCE: http://www.ecp.gov.pk

IMPACT OF MUHAJIR QAUMI MOVEMENT ON PAKISTANI POLITICS

The MQM has had a significant impact on Pakistani politics, both at the national and local levels. Here are some of the key impacts of the MQM on Pakistani politics:

Muhajir Identity and Representation: *In Pakistan, the MQM has served as the main political organization for the Muhajir community. A community that has historically experienced marginalization and discrimination now has a voice thanks to the MQM, which has given Muhajir political representation a platform. The party has tackled issues pertaining to Muhajirs' political, economic, and social inclusion as well as their rights.[7]*

Urban Politics: *The MQM became a significant political force in urban areas, especially in Pakistan's largest city, Karachi. The politics and power structures of Karachi have been greatly influenced by the party's influence in the area. The MQM has been able to influence policies and decision-making in urban centers because it has been able to mobilize support from urban communities and has a strong presence in local government institutions.[8]*

Coalition Politics: *In the country's coalition politics, the MQM has played a significant role. The MQM has influenced federal policymaking and been a member of ruling coalitions in a number of national governments. The party has influence and a stake in*

national governance due to its capacity for coalition building and negotiation with other political parties.

Disputations and Tendencies toward Violence: *The MQM has been linked to disputes and claims of violence, including claims that it employs coercive measures to hold onto power in Karachi. The history of the party has been characterized by violent and contentious episodes, which have damaged the party's reputation and drawn attention from the media and other political players.[9]*

Election Performance: *In Karachi and other cities, the MQM has been a significant electoral force. The party has been successful in galvanizing its constituency and securing a sizable number of seats in local and national legislatures. The distribution of power and representation in Pakistan's political institutions has been impacted by its election results.*

Changes in Political Alliances: *Over time, the MQM's political allies have changed to reflect the shifting political conditions in Pakistan. At the national and local levels, the party's capacity to form, break, and realign alliances with other political actors has an effect on power dynamics and the negotiating of political interests.*

All things considered, the Muhajir Quami Movement has had a big impact on Pakistani politics, especially in big cities like Karachi and Hyderabad. The political landscape in Pakistan has been shaped by its involvement in national coalitions, influence over urban governance, and advocacy for Muhajir rights. Its internal dynamics and controversies have also added to the complexity and diversity of the nation's political landscape.

CONCLUSION

The Muhajir Quami Movement (MQM) was founded in 1984 with the slogan "Jia Muhajir" (Long live Muhajirs), catering exclusively to Urdu-speaking migrants from India. For over two decades, the party prioritized Muhajir rights, with leadership positions reserved for Urdu-speakers. This narrow focus led to a decline in acknowledging the presence of Pashtoon and Punjabi communities in Urdu-speaking regions. Despite claiming to represent Pakistan's underprivileged, the party's ideology remained rooted in Muhajir identity.

The party's demands, such as the repatriation of non-Muhajirs to their home provinces, hindered its ability to become a national political force. This conflict also reflected class divisions, as most MQM supporters came from lower-class or lower-middle-class backgrounds. They believed that the wealthy elite controlled the country's resources and saw political activism as a means to challenge this status quo.

Despite its limitations and controversies, MQM maintained support due to a perceived lack of alternative parties that truly represented the marginalized. Altaf Hussain, the party's leader, played a crucial role in shaping MQM's political identity and rhetoric over the past three decades. This paper explores the historical context of the Muhajir community since 1947 and Hussain's significant contributions to the party's evolution from a marginalized group to a significant player in Pakistan's political landscape.

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