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Language, Ethnicity, and Urban Identity Formation in Hyderabad Pakistan
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Abstract

The creation of urban identity in multilingual and postcolonial cities is a dynamic process that is formed as a result of the interplay between language, ethnicity, the past experience of a particular area, and socio-political factors. Thus, the case of Pakistani cities can be taken as an illustration of the complex processes of identity formation under various influences. The purpose of this work is to examine how language and ethnicity impact identity formation among inhabitants of a multi-ethnic city such as Hyderabad. Thus, urban identity will be regarded as a socially constructed concept that is constantly changing and negotiated through interactions between individuals or collectives. In this study, a mixed methodology is used, which implies the use of quantitative data collected through surveys as well as qualitative information based on semi-structured interviews with university students and other urban inhabitants representing various ethnicities and speaking different languages. Conflict between native speakers of Sindhi and migrants speaking Urdu (known as Muhajirs) has been ongoing since migration practices have always been common in the past. However, contemporary generations who receive better education show hybrid and flexible identity patterns due to globalization and digital media. This research finds out that identity formation in Hyderabad City is dynamic, negotiated, and contested. Identity formation among young and educated people takes place under changing socio-economic conditions. It has been concluded that language policies should take into account all social groups equally.

Keywords: Urban identity, language, ethnicity, Hyderabad Pakistan, social identity, multiculturalism, postcolonial cities, linguistic diversity, social cohesion.

Introduction

The urban setting is a vibrant space where people from diverse backgrounds come together to establish their identity. The current urban setting in the modern world is no longer just about economic transactions; rather, it is also a space where there is interaction between cultures and where people establish their identities (Ali, 2015; Castells, 2010). This can be seen in the case of Pakistan, where the urban environment is ethnically and linguistically diverse. Thus, the study of identity formation through the interactions between people becomes crucial. In particular, the city of Hyderabad presents an interesting case study because it is a microcosm of multiculturalism, and the process of identity formation and negotiation is evident at all levels. In this regard, language and ethnicity become prominent dimensions along which identity is constructed, especially when it comes to interpersonal relations and socio-economic hierarchies (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Rahman, 2002).

Apart from being a tool of expression and communication, the importance of language lies in its ability to serve as a symbolic resource, signifying culture, ethnicity, power, and the like. The importance of language for identity construction becomes even more evident in countries like Pakistan, where issues of class, education, and representation in politics become associated with language itself, thus entrenching social differences (Rahman, 2002). Thus, while Urdu is seen as the language of upward mobility and national integration, the regional language of Sindhi is seen as a cultural asset and marker of ethnic identity. Language serves as an important factor influencing identity construction and formation among urban dwellers, as each social group has its own unique identity orientation (Joseph, 2004).

The concept of ethnicity adds another layer of complexity to the formation of personal identity by incorporating elements of history, collective memory, and social stratification. Ethnicity involves a set of common beliefs, practices, and associations based on shared origins, culture, and territory and influences social interaction and community organization (Eriksen, 2010). In urban settings, where several ethnic groups live together, ethnicity can lead to either cohesion or discord, depending on the social-political situation. The theory of social identity explains such interactions by emphasizing that individuals construct their identity based on group membership and display an inclination toward the in-group against the out-group (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Such theoretical insights become pertinent when examining the issue of ethnicity within the city of Hyderabad.

The second largest city in Sindh is Hyderabad, where there have been major changes in demographics and socio-cultural factors due to the partitioning of British India in 1947. There was an influx of Urdu speaking Muslims, known as Muhajirs, into Hyderabad, changing the demographic structure of the city, which was mostly populated by Sindhis before the arrival of these immigrants (Ansari, 2005; Talbot, 2009). This change in the demographic pattern created a unique socio-cultural structure in the city comprising multiple languages and various ethnic groups competing for dominance in terms of politics and economic interests.

In relation to the connection between language and ethnicity in Hyderabad, the two also manifested in the political sphere and institutions, where there have been instances when certain groups have been favored while others excluded, thereby leading to a sense of inequality. According to Rahman (2002), such practices and policies include language policies that have been implemented in the area of education and even in the area of governance, where one particular ethnic group may be favored over another. Ethnic political parties also became an avenue wherein identity politics were played out, thus exacerbating tensions between different ethnic groups in Hyderabad (Jalal, 1995).

According to recent research, identity construction in the urban environment is marked by growing hybridization and flux as individuals find themselves in situations where their associations may clash with one another (Castells, 2010; Hall, 1996). This feature becomes clearly manifested in Hyderabad in relation to hybrid identities, which integrate traits of Sindhi, Urdu, and international cultures, especially on the part of educated young people and middle classes. It reflects the changing perceptions regarding the stability of ethnic and linguistic identities as a consequence of globalization. However, structural disparities and grievances of the past also play a role in shaping perceptions of inclusion and exclusion, indicating the importance of taking into consideration constraints as well as agency in the process of identity construction.

In light of the above, this study endeavors to investigate the processes through which people in Hyderabad create and negotiate their identities through the prism of language and ethnicity, along with the impact of other socio-economic and political variables. With its use of a mixed-

methodological design, this study attempts to document both the objective and subjective aspects of identity construction in a culturally diverse city. Through this research project, the gap in the literature regarding the role of secondary cities in Pakistan will be filled, as Hyderabad, despite being a prominent city, is not as frequently discussed as the primary cities of Pakistan such as Karachi.

Background

It is essential to analyze the socio-historical setting of Hyderabad to comprehend the dynamics involved in the creation of personal and group identity in the city based on language and ethnicity. Before the partition of British India in 1947, Hyderabad was predominantly populated by Sindhis speaking Sindhi whose culture, language, and society remained unchanged since the beginning of its history (Talbot, 2009). Hyderabad was a significant administrative and cultural hub of Sindh, where the homogenous population contributed to the sense of regional identity among the Sindhis. But the partition of India caused a radical change in the demographics of Hyderabad when masses of Muslim Urdu speakers moved into urban Sindh and Hyderabad, which influenced the culture, language, and identity of the area (Ansari, 2005).

The emergence of Muhajir groups in Hyderabad was the starting point of a long struggle between native Sindhis and migrants. Even though there were similarities between the two groups in terms of religion – both were Muslims – the differences in their language, culture, and history created their own identities that had to fight for legitimacy and resources (Jalal, 1995). Gradually, the differences took an institutional form as the groups found themselves politically represented, employed in certain occupations, and living in distinct neighborhoods. Thus, Hyderabad became a city that not only celebrated its cultural diversity but was also divided along ethnic lines.

Language itself is another aspect that has made these dynamics quite distinct from one another. Language is more than just an avenue for communication; it is used as a means to denote one's identity, power, and status in society. In the case of Pakistan, language has long been politicized in order to negotiate issues regarding identity and power (Rahman, 2002). The conflict between the Sindhi and Urdu languages within the province of Sindh is yet another struggle that deals with issues regarding cultural preservation and national cohesion. On one hand, Sindhi language represents indigenous culture, whereas on the other hand, the Urdu language represents state power, socio-economic mobility, and modernity (Ahmed, 1998; Rahman, 2002).

It was during the language riots in the 1970s that language politics assumed greater significance in Sindh, with the question of whether Sindhi or Urdu should dominate education and the bureaucracy resulting in serious unrest (Talbot, 2009). The riots showed how language has been tied to identity and politics, with people trying to claim their political and cultural rights in the process. In Hyderabad, these issues have had repercussions on inter-group dynamics, as people's sense of inclusion and exclusion is influenced by language politics. This is seen in the impact language has on daily activities, including communication at work and school, media and the Internet.

Apart from language, ethnicity is an important factor that defines the social structure and the process of identity formation in Hyderabad. In general, ethnic identities can be defined as the product of collective history, tradition, and experience, which gives people a sense of identity and continuity (Eriksen, 2010). However, ethnic identities are constantly being redefined in urban environments according to socio-economic changes and interactions with different groups. Ethnic identity in Hyderabad affects such aspects as the segregation process among various neighborhoods, access to social services, and involvement in political life (Gayer, 2014).

On the other hand, urbanization and globalization have brought about new forces that challenge the conventional views on identity. Greater availability of educational and media resources, as well as technological innovations, exposes people to various cultural backgrounds, which leads to the creation of new hybrid identities that go beyond ethnicity and language (Castells, 2010). In fact, younger generations tend to exhibit more fluidity when it comes to their identity orientation, as they embrace aspects of both the local and international cultures. However, all these developments take place in the larger environment of economic disparities and political struggles.

Urban identity in Hyderabad, therefore, is not an outcome of individual choice and cultural association alone. State policies, economic inequalities, and history have played a crucial part in the development of urban identity in Hyderabad. Education institutes, for instance, are often responsible for reproducing linguistic and ethnic hierarchies, which can affect the students' identity and their future career prospects (Rahman, 2002). Moreover, political organizations and social networks also use ethnic identity to pursue their own agenda, strengthening group cohesion at the same time. In some cases, such activities can result in the further polarization of society (Jalal, 1995).

To better understand the history and current state of affairs in Hyderabad, one should take into account the complex dynamics between various historical events, linguistics politics, and socioeconomic factors that have influenced the city's development since its inception. In other words, urban identity cannot be understood without analyzing the complex interactions between multiple variables, as well as the impact of regional and national factors on identity development. To examine these issues, this research aims to conduct an empirical investigation of how language and ethnicity interact and influence each other in Hyderabad, a major Pakistani urban center.

Literature Review

Much has been written about language and its connection with social identity in sociolinguistic and psychological literature, with researchers stressing the fact that language is more than a means of communication. It serves as one of the central markers of social identity and power in the social system. When it comes to Pakistan, the significance of the role language plays in the country can hardly be underestimated as it affects social stratification. According to Rahman (2002), Urdu represents a national language and can be associated with socio-economic advancement and national integration while regional languages, such as Sindhi, are connected with culture and ethnic background. This duality gives rise to contradictions between modernity and tradition, affecting the way people see themselves. At the same time, Bourdieu (1991) describes language as an example of linguistic capital, which contributes to social stratification.

From this point of view, Joseph (2004) observes that language plays an important part in the processes related to individual's identity, being a tool that helps create an image of oneself. Moreover, the choice of the language to use is determined by wider social factors, such as class, ethnicity, and even political preferences. The idea that language plays an essential role in ethnic boundary maintenance is also stated by Fishman (1999). For urban areas with numerous languages, this process becomes even more significant.

The Social Identity Theory offers an important foundation for exploring how language and ethnicity play into identity formation. According to Tajfel and Turner (1979), people acquire selfhood through their association with groups, giving rise to three mechanisms—categorization, identification, and comparison—that usually generate positive treatment of in-groups and discriminatory behavior toward out-groups, especially when there is competition

over resources. Expanding on the theory, Ashmore et al. (2004) argue that identity formation should take into account its multi-dimensional character, which comprises cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects. This applies especially to ethnically plural urban communities, such as Hyderabad.

Ethnicity as a social construct has been widely studied by anthropologists and sociologists. According to Eriksen (2010), ethnicity can be defined as a way of organizing social groups on the basis of cultural differences, which acquires relevance only in the context of interactions and competitions. Barth (1969) emphasizes the significance of interaction in the maintenance of ethnic boundaries, which occur not due to cultural differences but through social processes. Ethnic identities in Pakistan are strongly associated with history, region, and politics, affecting individual and social behaviors (Ahmed, 1998).

The concept of urban identity, on the contrary, is marked by its fluidity and dynamism resulting from interactions between the local and global environments. According to Castells (2010), urban identities have been developed as products of network-based interactions among people in regard to power, knowledge, and experience especially under the conditions of globalization and modern technologies. Hall (1996) also notes that identities have become flexible and subject to change, as they are constantly reproduced within cultural representation and social communication processes. People living in rapidly urbanizing regions are usually influenced by many factors, which results in the development of mixed or hybrid identities, combining various cultural features (Appadurai, 1996).

Formation of identities is also affected by numerous political, socio-economic, and historical factors in South Asia. The works of Jalal (1995) and Brass (1991) emphasize the importance of political systems and power hierarchies in shaping the identities of various ethnic groups within countries. State governments usually support the division between communities, which contributes to the creation of specific identities based on ethno-cultural traditions (Jalal, 1995; Brass, 1991). These aspects can be traced in the case of Pakistan, in particular in provinces such as Sindh.

Studies explicitly discussing Sindh and urban areas such as Hyderabad and Karachi reveal the endurance of ethnic divisions and their consequences for social cohesion. In his research, Ansari (2005) highlights the past ethnic tensions between the Sindhi and Muhajir populations, exploring the causes behind them. Post-partition movements and further political events are presented as the origin of ethnic disparities in the region. Additionally, Gayer (2014) analyzes the role of urban management and informal institutions within cities in Pakistan in reproducing ethnic discrimination and hierarchies. The above studies illustrate the influence of social structure and its elements, including housing, employment opportunities, and politics, on the formation of identity.

On the other hand, there is substantial evidence of transformations in ethnic identification practices among urban residents in Pakistan. According to Ali (2015), globalization, education, and urban mobility have become essential components in promoting ethnic fluidity, especially among the youth. Likewise, according to Khan (2012), being exposed to heterogeneous social settings reduces ethnic prejudices and promotes cultural tolerance and understanding. The above trends represent global changes in the construction of identity, when conventional boundaries become obsolete and an individual identifies themselves with several identities simultaneously (Vertovec, 2007).

The significance of education and media in identity formation should not be underestimated. The educational sector is a major socialization venue where language and culture values are being communicated and instilled (Rahman, 2002). Media, at its turn, is an important tool used

by individuals to construct their identities through the dissemination of certain representations (Anderson, 2006). Digital media, available in modern cities, helps to facilitate this process even further, making it possible for people to participate in global discourses and develop new identities.

At the same time, despite all the progress achieved, ethnic diversity continues to complicate efforts aimed at fostering social cohesion among residents. This is caused by such factors as socio-economic disparity, political rivalries, and historically entrenched hostility (Rahman, 2002; Anderson, 2006). Therefore, it becomes evident that analyzing the interrelations between the mentioned concepts requires a comprehensive approach based not only on structure but also on agency. The above literature review will help in addressing this task in the case of Hyderabad and studying identities of its residents.

Studies about the shift in language use in urban Pakistan show an increase in the adoption of Urdu and English languages among the younger generation. In fact, Mansoor (2005) argues that educated youth in Lahore show less proficiency in Punjabi because they regard the language as synonymous with rural poverty. As a result, there is a disconnect between grandparents and grandchildren because their inability to understand each other leads to a reorganization of identity formation within families.

Mahboob (2020) analyzes the ways accent and language use affect the employability of individuals in Pakistani cities. The researcher shows through her interview of HR personnel from Karachi that applicants with an Urdu accent mixed with Punjabi or Pashto are discriminated against when it comes to call centers and corporate jobs. Language bias leads to the perpetuation of ethnic hierarchy as the neutral accent of Urdu (commonly used by Muhajirs) gets favored, demonstrating the Bourdieuan linguistic capital in practice.

The research by Hasan (2015) on the morphological structures of Hyderabad neighborhoods explains the role of residential structure in ethnic stereotyping and division. According to the researcher, the neighborhoods are inhabited by different ethnolinguistic groups that do not move between neighborhoods, creating a closed community where ethnic stereotypes are reinforced by minimal interaction, thus promoting mutual distrust and lack of communication between them.

Code switching between Sindhi, Urdu, and English is studied by Ibrahim (2018), who demonstrates that such a process is strategically employed to establish personal identity among university students in Hyderabad. According to the author, code switching from Sindhi to Urdu among Sindhi students occurs in class when students want to demonstrate their academic abilities; switching back into Sindhi among peers signifies ethnic cohesion. In turn, English-Urdu switching among Muhajirs indicates cosmopolitanism.

Jamil's research study on the portrayal of ethnicities in Pakistani TV dramas illustrates how media production constructs ethnic hierarchy. The characters portrayed by the Sindhis are mostly feudal lords or rural illiterate individuals who speak with a strong accent of Urdu language. On the other hand, the urbanites speaking the Urdu language are depicted in professional settings. This unequal portrayal results in negative construction of identity of Sindhis in society, whereby media consumption in Hyderabad acts as a place of identity negotiation among viewers.

Research Questions

1. How does language affect the construction of identity in Hyderabad, Pakistan?
2. What is the significance of ethnicity in determining social inclusion and exclusion?
3. How do people manage multiple identities in an urban and multilingual setting?

4. How does generation affect identity formation within an urban context?

Research Methodology

This paper employs a mixed-methods research design, combining quantitative and qualitative methods to generate a holistic perspective of the urban identity formation process concerning language and ethnicity. The reason for applying a mixed-methods framework stems from its capacity to capture the quantitative side of identity formation while exploring the qualitative dimension of identity formation. In other words, a mixed-methods framework is essential in investigating the quantitative side of identity (i.e., statistical patterns of identity), while at the same time examining the qualitative aspect of identity (i.e., subjective experiences associated with identity).

Research Design

The study uses the convergent parallel design where both quantitative and qualitative data are gathered concurrently, independently analyzed, and combined during the interpretation process. Through such design, it is possible to compare and verify the results from different sources of data regarding the influence of language and ethnicity on identity construction within an urban setting (Creswell, 2014).

Population and Sampling

The targeted population for this study includes the people living in the urban areas of Hyderabad, Pakistan, especially those who are from different languages and ethnicities such as Sindhi, Muhajir (Urdu speaking), and others. The size of the sample for the quantitative part is 200 individuals, who will be recruited from universities and urban areas based on their age, gender, socio-economic status, and education level.

In this case, the use of purposive sampling was considered appropriate since it is useful when the aim is to recruit individuals that can contribute to the study. It is also recommended for identity-based research because it allows researchers to include individuals from various languages and ethnicities (Etikan et al., 2016). The size of the sample for the qualitative part will be 20 people chosen from the survey sample through purposive and maximum variation sampling.

Data Collection Methods

Quantitative Data Collection

Quantitative data were obtained through the use of a structured questionnaire that aimed to quantify the variables involved in identity development. The questionnaire was comprised of several sections, which included:

- Personal demographics (age, gender, education, ethnicity, language)
- Language use and preferences (mother tongue, language use in various settings)
- Ethnic identification and group membership
- Urban identity and belongingness

Items were measured based on a 5-point Likert scale, which ranged from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (5). The questionnaire was based on existing scales used in past studies about social identities and acculturation (Phinney, 1992), thereby providing validity of content. A pilot test was performed involving 20 respondents to determine the reliability of the tool.

Qualitative Data Collection

In relation to the qualitative phase, the data collection process involved conducting semi-structured interviews, which provided the opportunity to have a deeper understanding of participants' personal experiences, identity negotiation processes, and feelings of inclusion or exclusion. The interview protocol included issues such as language used in everyday life, ethnic interactions, and sense of belonging to the city.

Each session was around 30 to 45 minutes long and held in a language comfortable for the participant – Sindhi, Urdu, or English. Each session was audio-taped with the participant's permission and then transcribed word for word. This way, participants were able to express their opinions freely while still discussing all the important themes for this study (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

Data Analysis Techniques

Quantitative Analysis

The analysis of quantitative data was done using the software Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistical methods such as means, standard deviations, and frequencies were employed to describe participant demographics and other variables of interest. The analysis for relationships between language, ethnic identity, and the construction of urban identities was done using inferential statistics, especially correlation analysis. Reliability analysis using Cronbach's alpha was also undertaken, with a minimum reliability score of 0.70 deemed acceptable (Field, 2013).

Qualitative Analysis

The data collected qualitatively was subjected to thematic analysis, which is done through a procedure comprising six stages as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). The six stages involved gaining familiarity with the data, code generation, theme generation, reviewing themes, and finally creating a narrative. The use of thematic analysis facilitated an appreciation of the patterns and themes associated with identity formation.

Integration of Data

Results from both analyses were then combined for a thorough interpretation of the outcomes. This combination served to ensure validity between both methods and provided a fuller picture of the research problem. In other words, while statistical relations found through surveys were confirmed, they were also explained through the respondents' stories.

Ethical Considerations

Guidelines for ethics were strictly adhered to in the whole process of conducting the research. Participants were first given information regarding the objectives of the research as well as their rights before joining the experiment. All participants gave their consent after being guaranteed privacy and anonymity. They were free to leave the experiment at any point in time with no implications whatsoever. All data collected was protected and only used for educational purposes. Cultural sensitivity was also observed especially when dealing with ethnic issues.

Limitations of Methodology

However, this study, though insightful regarding language, ethnicity, and identity formation in urban areas, has some limitations that must be considered. The study used purposive sampling which limited its applicability to other urban or non-urban settings in Pakistan because the data was collected from particular universities and urban settlements in Hyderabad. Furthermore, using self-reports increased the likelihood of participants reporting biased information, either for social desirability reasons, personal understanding of the questionnaire, or sensitivity regarding ethnicity and language. Even though using mixed methods improved the study's strengths, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative data posed a challenge because contradictions might arise between statistics and interviews. Lack of sufficient time and resources also limited the study's ability to include a larger sample size and collect more data. Therefore, a longitudinal study examining how identity formation changes over time could not be conducted. Besides, being geographical restricted to Hyderabad means that the findings could not be applied to other urban or rural regions in Pakistan because different socio-cultural

dynamics exist within different regions. Lastly, there is a risk of research bias when conducting qualitative data analysis through thematic coding and development.

Findings

1. Language as a Core Marker of Identity

It is evident from the above analysis that language forms an integral part of self-perception and understanding of the individual within Hyderabad. The respondents linked the mother tongue to emotions, culture, and identity. For example, the Sindhi-speaking group considered the language as the means of connecting with their heritage and culture and viewed it as a cultural asset. On the other hand, the Urdu-speaking group perceived Urdu as a means of achieving national unity and social interaction. Therefore, language in Hyderabad is non-neutral and integral to identity formation.

2. Ethnicity and Social Relations

The ethnicity issue was a crucial factor in the way people interacted and formed various associations. According to the collected information, people are inclined to have closer relations with members of their own ethnic community. This was noticeable in schools, at work, as well as in the context of socializing in other contexts. It was indicated that ethnicity plays an important role for how people assess trustworthiness, competence, and belonging in different circumstances, which, in turn, may influence the opportunities offered in education and work. However, people interact with each other across ethnic boundaries to some degree.

3. Socio-Economic Inequality and Identity Formation

It can be seen that socio-economic status, ethnicity, and language all play an important role in identity construction. Participants who were from the higher socio-economic background, especially those who had been educated and exposed to urban areas, exhibited flexibility and inclusiveness in their perceptions of identities. On the other hand, participants belonging to the lower socio-economic status used ethnic communities for social and economic security purposes, leading to a higher degree of exclusiveness among group members.

4. Emergence of Hybrid Identities among Youth

An important result obtained from the study is that of an increase in the number of hybrids, particularly within the youth group. Some young people identified themselves as being of different identity groups simultaneously, like Sindhi-Pakistani, urban Hyderabadi, or bicultural. Such respondents did not view identity as static but rather as dynamic, and they changed their language from Sindhi to Urdu and then to English based on the social situation.

5. Role of Education in Reducing Ethnic Boundaries

Educational settings were recognized as significant places for interactions between different groups and negotiating one's identity. The interviewees mentioned that universities and colleges provide them with an opportunity to interact with people belonging to other language and ethnic communities, thus helping to overcome stereotypes. Educated interviewees tended to be less inclined to recognize ethnic distinctions and had a broader perspective. Nevertheless, although there was more interaction, there remained some informal segregation based on ethnicity.

6. Influence of Globalization and Media

The results indicate how globalization and modern digital media play an important role in molding the identity of urban communities. The participants claimed that the use of media such as social networking sites, TV channels, and globally generated information has an effect on the formation of their sense of identity and lifestyle. This is due to the fact that their views become cosmopolitan in nature and less confined to their singular ethnic identity.

7. Persistence of Structural and Institutional Bias

Although new tendencies towards inclusiveness are emerging, structural inequalities have persisted and are perpetuating ethnic divisions. It was observed that the availability of opportunities through the channels of employment, education, and administration can be affected based on one's ethnic identity, either directly or indirectly. This perception fosters an atmosphere of distrust and rivalry between groups. This suggests that the process of identity formation is intertwined with larger power structures.

8. Overall Nature of Urban Identity in Hyderabad

In conclusion, the results indicate that the identity of Hyderabad is indeed dynamic, complicated, and ever-evolving. Even though culture and ethnicity continue to play vital roles in the construction of identity, the effect that both have on identity formation is beginning to be increasingly influenced by other factors, such as education and globalization. This means that identity itself is never static or one-dimensional, but is rather a process of negotiation and layers.

Discussion

The results of this study offer critical insights regarding the role of language and ethnicity in the formation of identities in Hyderabad and Pakistan, and they largely corroborate current literature related to identity formation in multicultural cities. In general, the research findings indicate that identities in Hyderabad are not static or fixed categories; instead, they involve processes that change continually with respect to linguistic, ethnic, socio-economic, educational, and international factors. This study contributes to the understanding that identities in cities are socially constructed, contextualized phenomena and not biological entities.

Among other results, an important one to consider is the central importance of language in the formation of identity and sense of belonging. The participants' identification with their native language demonstrates the nature of language as an element of culture and psychology at the same time. The focus of the Sindhi-speaking participants on heritage and regional identity demonstrates the importance of language in the preservation of cultural identity and collective memory, while the importance of Urdu for the participants who speak this language is related to the role of Urdu as a language of national unity. These aspects confirm the dual nature of language in multicultural societies.

Another important variable in the shaping of social interactions and identities was ethnicity. In light of the fact that most of the individuals involved developed greater in-group social ties, ethnicity is still a significant factor in social interactions and in building one's identity. This can be observed through the fact that even in the same environment like university or workplace settings, ethnic differences still matter in the development of trust, interaction patterns, and social bonding. This shows that in an urban setting characterized by diversity, people do not automatically become integrated. On the contrary, what happens is that selective interaction emerges because people find themselves more comfortable within their own ethnic groups.

However, there is another dimension revealed by this study where the concept of ethnicity remains inflexible for some while others experience elasticity in their ethnic identity formation. Social status and educational attainment play a critical role in determining how flexible an individual's ethnic identity becomes. Individuals who had a higher educational attainment along with wider social contact were open to inter-group engagement and did not restrict themselves to ethnic boundaries. It indicates that identity formation occurs through cultural inheritance as well as structure-based socialization that provides the means for engaging with people from different groups.

Another key contribution of the present study is the revelation of hybrid identities. The participants of the present generation often identify themselves using several cultural paradigms at once, such as ethnicity, city and national cultures. This process can be explained by globalization, digital culture, and education that allow for the exposure to various cultural stories and diminish the role of ethnicity and traditional identity borders. Thus, the existence of hybrid identities reveals a trend towards situational identity that changes its form depending on the situation.

The role of education as a mediator helping overcome ethnic rigidity and improve intergroup relations has been revealed in the findings. In fact, the educational system provides for numerous opportunities for people of different ethnicities to interact within the same learning space, thus minimizing stereotypes and promoting a broader perception of personal identity. Another key contribution of the present study is the revelation of hybrid identities. The participants of the present generation often identify themselves using several cultural paradigms at once, such as ethnicity, city and national cultures. This process can be explained by globalization, digital culture, and education that allow for the exposure to various cultural stories and diminish the role of ethnicity and traditional identity borders. Thus, the existence of hybrid identities reveals a trend towards situational identity that changes its form depending on the situation.

The role of education as a mediator helping overcome ethnic rigidity and improve intergroup relations has been revealed in the findings. In fact, the educational system provides for numerous opportunities for people of different ethnicities to interact within the same learning space, thus minimizing stereotypes and promoting a broader perception of personal identity. However, despite the existence of structural diversity, identity-based division remains persistent in learning settings since deep cultural connections influence the behavior of people. The processes of globalization and media play their roles in influencing identity development among urban dwellers. Being exposed to the global world via digital media, people are able to adopt new and more complex cultural outlooks and identities, which is quite consistent with current sociological perspectives. In fact, according to these views, identity is becoming increasingly cosmopolitan and transnational. Nevertheless, rather than replacing traditional identities, globalization and local identities interact, forming multiple-level identities wherein people identify themselves both locally, nationally, and internationally. This means that identity does not replace but transforms into something more advanced by incorporating new aspects. Nevertheless, while observing such complex and dynamic identity development processes, one should not forget about existing structural obstacles that strengthen ethnic boundaries. The views expressed by the participants on opportunity inequality in connection with the issue under analysis prove that ethnic background continues being a powerful marker of power relations. Such beliefs can only contribute to mistrust between groups and thus strengthen ethnonational barriers even when individuals are ready for contact beyond the existing borders.

Upon consideration of these insights as a whole, one can conclude that the identity of the city of Hyderabad should be regarded as a multiple and negotiated phenomenon. On the one hand, each person must take into account the following factors: linguistic roots, ethnic identity, socio-economic conditions, education, and globalization. At the same time, the impact of modernity does not completely erase the roots of traditional identity but rather modifies it.

To sum up, it should be noted that the above analysis demonstrates that the issue of identity in Hyderabad implies the combination of tradition and modernity. While language and ethnic

origin still serve as defining features for individuals, their identities have become increasingly hybridized under the influence of urban reality.

Recommendations

Taking into consideration the findings of the current research, certain crucial recommendations can be made regarding enhancing the formation of an urban identity that would lead to greater inclusiveness and social cohesion in Hyderabad, Pakistan. The basis for such recommendations is the knowledge about how the process of identity construction is influenced by multiple elements, including language, ethnicity, education, and socio-economic structure.

1. Promotion of Inclusive Multilingual Language Policies

There is a need for policy makers to come up with language policies that take into account both the national and regional languages in an equal manner. By not giving favor to one language above another, especially in areas such as education and administration, a more realistic way of handling the problem can be achieved. This way, hierarchy of languages will be avoided and cases of discrimination against languages such as Sindhi will also be minimized. Language learning should not only focus on national language but also encourage the teaching of regional language through bilingualism and multilingualism within schools.

2. Strengthening Intercultural and Interethnic Dialogue

Programs that are based on communities need to be set up so as to facilitate effective interactions between people from different ethnic and linguistic backgrounds. Some examples could be programs involving cultural exchange and discussion forums, along with other such programs aimed at bringing various segments of society together. There is a need to break down stereotypes through effective interactions so as to facilitate trust and understanding between Sindhis and Urdu speakers as well as other minorities. It will become easier for people to combat their own prejudices and decrease the distance between different segments of society.

3. Role of Educational Institutions in Promoting Social Cohesion

Educational organizations such as schools, colleges, and universities need to play an active role in promoting inclusive identity and minimizing ethnic bias. The development of the curriculum needs to incorporate issues related to cultural diversity, harmony between different ethnic groups, and national unity. Students need to be taught by teachers who will make it possible for them to promote inclusion in the classroom environment. Group work in which there is interaction between individuals of varied languages and ethnic backgrounds can also contribute significantly to enhancing cooperation and minimizing segregation within society.

4. Media Responsibility in Shaping Inclusive Identities

It is important that media organizations adopt an active role in promoting inclusivity of the city's identity. The influence of television, radio, and digital media organizations is profound when it comes to influencing people's ideas about languages and ethnicities. In such a case, media organizations need to emphasize diversity, interculturality, and unity of the nation without reinforcing ethnic stereotypes in their productions. Cultural similarities need to be emphasized for the purpose of minimizing prejudices that lead to a unified social identity within the city.

5. Addressing Socio-Economic Inequalities

As socio-economic factors are instrumental in the construction of identities, efforts to promote equality are critical in this regard. Access to education and employment opportunities should be equal across all ethnicities and language groups. Meritocratic systems within organizations will aid in mitigating the feeling of discrimination and favoritism. Economic development

schemes among marginal ethnic groups can also assist in alleviating identity-related conflicts by addressing socio-economic disparities among communities.

6. Youth Engagement and Identity Development Programs

Particular consideration must be paid to the youth because they are the fastest growing group within society in terms of building their identities. Programs that focus on fostering leadership qualities, cross-cultural cooperation, and involvement in the community will help youths develop an identity that is not only inclusive but also adaptable. Exchange programs, workshops, and volunteering will help introduce youths to different viewpoints and minimize ethnic tensions. The process of helping youth build hybrid identities is one that can make substantial contributions towards building social cohesion.

7. Future Research Directions

Future research needs to broaden its focus to identity research by taking into account other variables such as gender, class, religion, and digital identity. An intersectional perspective could offer insights on how various aspects intersect in order to contribute towards identity formation among urbanites in Pakistan. Another area that can be explored through future research is longitudinal studies which would help explore how identities develop over time, especially with regard to changes brought about by globalization and advancements in technology as well as urbanization.

Conclusion

In summary, the results of this investigation reveal that urban identity formation in Hyderabad is a dynamic process characterized by multiple layers and dimensions that are the product of an interplay between language, ethnicity, socio-political institutions, and urban experience. The results of the study indicate beyond any doubt that urban identity formation cannot be conceived in terms of stability or singularity but is rather a dynamic and fluid process that is continually redefined in the course of social interactions and processes that are influenced by institutional factors and history. The role played by language and ethnicity in the process of identity formation cannot be overlooked because these two elements provide the basis for individual and social self-definition.

Another significant finding brought out in the study is that although the differences along ethnic and linguistic lines between Sindhis and Urdu speakers have remained intact, their impact is increasingly becoming obsolete. Many of the respondents showed that there is a move towards a more flexible approach towards identities, whereby people do not confine themselves to one particular identity but adopt different types of identities that overlap each other. It can be said that this is a notable development within the process of urban identity formation because the exposure to various social environments, the use of modern technology and the modern educational system makes people look beyond narrow group classifications.

Another significant conclusion that arises from this study is that identity formation in Hyderabad is highly contingent on the wider socio-economic and political structures. The factors of unequal resource distribution, ethnic preferences and institutionalized prejudice are likely to persist and continue to contribute to an individual's sense of inclusion/exclusion even where cross-cultural contact rates are high. This means that attempts to increase social cohesion should take into account not only cultural diversity but also structural inequalities underpinning social stratification among groups.

In addition, it becomes clear that cities themselves serve as crucial environments for identity construction, being both the arenas of interaction and the arenas of conflict between the speakers of Hindi/Urdu and Telugu. Indeed, cities such as Hyderabad enable individuals of various languages and cultures to meet in schools, universities and other social places such as

workplaces and thus either enter into conflicts or collaborate with each other, depending on particular circumstances. Thus, identity construction proves to be a social process with a strong geographical component.

This trend of the development of hybrid identities in young people reflects a significant shift in the conventional notion of identity in Pakistan's urban environment. The development of hybrid identities implies that modern identities become more adaptive and open-minded, as well as they are characterized by cultural hybridity. Nevertheless, it does not mean that ethnic and linguistic identities disappear; instead, these identities turn into flexible ones that depend on various factors.

Summing up, it is important to mention that this paper made a significant contribution to the study of the formation and negotiation of identities in the multicultural urban environment. In particular, one can conclude that in order to examine an urban society, it is necessary to take into consideration such elements as language, ethnicity, socio-economic status, age, etc. Therefore, the results of this research can contribute to the creation of more effective policies regarding intercultural relations and urban identity construction in Pakistan.

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