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Q no 1: What are the political and social implications of 18th amendment?

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## Introduction:

At the heart of Pakistan's governance lies its constitution, a pivotal document that shapes the nation's laws, institutions and democratic principles. In that constitution, 18th amendment has a crucial role that led Pakistan towards true federalism. One cannot neglect the momentous of 18th amendment and its implications on the political level as well as on societal level. The political implications are multidimensional ranges. From strengthening democracy, provincial autonomy, better relation between center and provinces, NFC, supremacy of parliament, independent judiciary, to restored parliamentary form of government. There are societal implications of 18th amendment as well, that are creation of jobs, poverty eradication, women empowerment, health and transparency and accountability. The implication has a very positive affect on the democracy of Pakistan and it has strengthened federalism as well.

## 18th Amendment:

A cursory glance at the 18th amendment reveals that it is one of the most important amendment in the history of Pakistan. Since 1973, there has been only 27 amendments in the constitution of Pakistan. But the most lengthy and momentous is the 18th amendment. The 18th amendment altered about a third of Pakistan's constitution. It was passed by the National Assembly of Pakistan on April 8, 2010.

There are numerous implications of 18th Amendment on political sphere of life. Some of them are given below.

1- Strengthened democracy in Pakistan:  
 18th amendment has strengthened the democracy in Pakistan. Since independence, Pakistan has seen several martial laws by the military dictators, which has weakened the democracy in Pakistan. 18th Amendment not only amended Article 6 but also made it clear, unequivocal. It has also reversed 17th amendment which was the ruin of martial law. It has thus made the constitution and parliament supreme.

2 Provincial autonomy to the federating units:  
 18th amendment is also called mini constitution. Because it has changed the third of the constitution. It has given provinces the autonomy, the autonomy which was long due on the center. 18th amendment has abolished the concurrent list and gave all the remaining departments that are not in the federal list to the provinces. Hence, provinces got various departments. For instance, Health, education etc. There is one list now i.e. federal list. It contains two parts, the first part has federal subjects and the second part has the subjects which would be shared between the center and province.

3- Restricted the use of emergency:  
 18th amendment has restricted the use of emergency. It has amended several articles regarding emergency. For instance, Article 232 states that the President can impose emergency but on the advice of PM, after the approval from joint session of both houses. Article 234 - In case of provinces, the president can declare emergency after a resolution passed from the provincial assembly then approved by the parliament.

#### 4. Improved center provincial relations:

18<sup>th</sup> amendment has tremendously improved the relationship between the center and provinces. There was a platform of Council of Common Interest but 18<sup>th</sup> amendment has increased its role so that it could be more efficient and productive. The council of Common Interest is headed by the PM along with provincial chief ministers and three members from the federal government. The council would address the grievance of the province in a proper manner.

#### 5. Establishment of National Economic Council:

National Economic Council was set under article 156. It is headed by PM and has provincial representation. The main task of this council is to formulate plans for financial matters of the country. It submits its annual report to the parliament. This council helps the nation with financial matters with keeping the provinces in the loop. This has increased the harmony among the provinces and with the center too.

#### 6. Establishment of National Finance Commission:

National Finance Commission was set under article 160. Within six months of the commencement day, President appoints its members for 5 years. This is a pure financial body having the finance ministers of all provinces and center. This commission carefully scrutinizes the financial related matters and submits its report to the parliament.

#### 7. Enhanced supremacy of the Parliament:

18<sup>th</sup> amendment has enhanced the supremacy of the parliament. It has stripped the President of its powers.

to dissolve national assembly with remedy article 58 2b. 18<sup>th</sup> amendment also reversed 17<sup>th</sup> amendment. The role of parliamentary checks are increased and now the executive cannot take arbitrary decisions without consulting parliament first. The role of senate was too increased. The executive cannot issue any ordinance if senate and national assembly are in session, according to article 89.

8. Restored parliamentary form of democracy:  
The Presidential form of democracy was the result of dictatorships, so it had to be undone. In order to revitalize the spirit of the original constitution of 1973, 18<sup>th</sup> amendment restored the parliamentary form of democracy. It has reduced and capped the powers of President. Now PM is the head of the government.

## Social Implications of 18<sup>th</sup> amendment:

1. Creation of Jobs:  
18<sup>th</sup> amendment unlocked a great potential of provinces. Jobs in various sectors in provinces were introduced. The people of the provinces were given first priority. Various aspirants from the provinces took the golden opportunities and thus the unemployment issues were addressed at some level.

2. Poverty eradication:

18<sup>th</sup> amendment amended the clause of NFC award. Now, according to the 7<sup>th</sup> NFC award there is a quota for poverty and backwardness too and thank  
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quota is 10.3%. Balochistan is now getting 9.09% of NFC award. This will reduce the backwardness and poverty of Balochistan. Now they would have funds for developmental projects.

### 3- Women Empowerment.

Women Empowerment issue was always kept on the back burner. But 18th amendment has increased resources to provinces to work on women empowerment. This will decrease the gender disparities prevailing in the society.

### 4. Health:

The need of proper health care system in every district of Pakistan is direly needed. As the concurrent list was dissolved by the 18th amendment, provinces can now deal with the health care system more efficiently. The downtrodden areas of Balochistan would now get attention from the government.

### 5. Accountability and Transparency:

18th amendment has increased the phenomenon of accountability and transparency. Now the funds given to the provinces ~~are~~ properly scrutinized and checked by the provincial executives.

### Conclusion:

In a nutshell, 18th amendment is a monument in the constitution of Pakistan. It has a lot of positive political and social implications. To fully harness the potential of 18th amendment, the center and provincial needs to work together and implement all measures given by 18th amendment.