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Local self government is essential for public service delivery in a country. Explain with special reference to Pakistan.

Ans:

Introduction:

Local government is a management model of democratic governance. According to **Stones** local government can be defined as:

It is a part of governance of a country that deals with the issues of population within a defined territory. It does the so-called "housework" making the living affordable for its residents."

In a federal government it is third tier of government but in unitary state it can be second or third tier of government. Pakistan is a federation and has three tiers of government. Local government occupies the third and lowest tier of government.

The local governments were made mandatory for first time under **Legal Framework Order 2001** issued by Pervaiz Musharraf and was enshrined in the Constitution of Pakistan under **18th Amendment** via **Article 140-A**.

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Article 140-A Local Governments:

Each province shall, by law, establish a local government system and devolve political, administrative and financial responsibility and authority to the elected representatives of the local governments.”

It is also protected by **Article 52** of the constitution which reads that:

“Each province has its own local government that enables legislation and ministries responsible for its implementation.”

Importance of local self-government:

Local self government is essential

for its multifarious advantages. As an established model of governance, local governments allow the decentralization and devolution of powers to grass-root level. This devolution ensures local responsiveness through ease of access of local representatives to the citizens. Local acquaintance benefits the public by ensuring local accountability and it also builds public trust. It makes political participation of public possible at grass-root level and thus raises political awareness and provides breeding grounds for future political leaders. It also ensures Public Service Delivery to be effective.

“Governments are most effective when they listen to businesses and citizens, and work in partnership with them for decision-making and policy implementation.”

(World Bank Report)

Local-self government; Essential for Effective Public Service Delivery in Pakistan:

LGI essential for addressing huge population:

Eversince the inception of Pakistan, population growth has been significant in the country. As of 2024, Pakistan stands as the **5th most populous country** of the world. According to **Deprivation Index**, there are at least **80 districts** which suffer from low access to basic needs. Centralized government cannot address the problems of such a large population. Therefore, necessity of local government arises which can address the issues of the people at the place where these are originated.

Easy Access to the Citizens:

Members of National assemblies and Provincial assemblies (MNAs and MPAs) cannot ensure their accessibility to the citizens. Contrarily, the elected representatives of the local government (nazims and councillors) can be accessed easily by ordinary citizens. This provides a sense of ownership to the citizens and thus builds their trust on government.

Aligning Public services with local needs:

Local government ensures the maximum involvement of local populace in decision-making. It makes the public services well aligned with the local needs, thus enhancing the pace, quality and efficiency of public service delivery by locally elected representatives.

Making financial resources available through development funds:

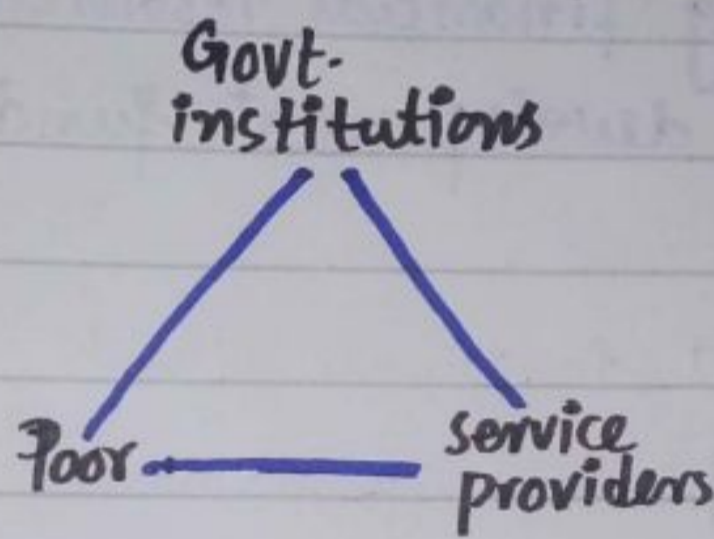
In Pakistan, development funds are placed under the control of local government. The representatives of the local government are well aware with the dynamics of their respective localities and can take decisions to use development funds accordingly.

Improved access of services to the poor:

Local government can manage schools and hospitals efficiently under the oversight of government.

Therefore, services can be directly delivered to the poor through responsible local government system. On the contrary, if the government takes this responsibility upon itself, public spending becomes inconsistent and weak.

Strengthened accountability between the poor, the service providers and government institutions:



Strong local government system bring in accountability among the poor, the service providers and the government institutions. This accountability results in fair distribution of goods and services to the public.

Conclusion:

Local government system is one of the fundamental principle

of democracy where powers of the state are devolved at grass root level. It ensures wider participation of the public in the political and administrative structure of the state. It holds paramount importance regarding effective Public Service Delivery building public trust on government, contributing to the prosperity of the country.

Q
Indian leadership is bent on committing atrocities in Kashmir especially after the abrogation of Article 35A and 370. Discuss the plight of Kashmiris and policy options for Pakistan especially after recent Supreme Court verdict.

Ans:

Introduction:

Kashmir has been a focal point between India and Pakistan. India claims Kashmir to be its integral part and Pakistan rejects India's claim. Kashmir was given special status according to **Article 370** which

is the part of Indian constitution since it was formed and **article 35A**.



Though Kashmiris are facing atrocities for decades, abrogation of **Article 370 and 35A** on **August 5, 2019** by Modi's government piled up the problems. This abrogation **ended** the special status of Kashmir and divided the Jammu and Kashmir into **two Union territories** i.e. Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh.

Indian Supreme Court's verdict regarding revocation of articles 370 and 35A.

On December 11, 2023, announced its verdict on petitions challenging Indian government's measures of August 5, 2019, wherein it had revoked articles 370 and 35A. According to this verdict:

No internal sovereignty of J&K:

The verdict declared that J&K had no internal sovereignty after its 'accession' to India and the region doesn't has the right to govern itself independently from Indian government.

Upholded August 5, 2019:

The revocation of Article 370 and 35A by Indian President was not a mala-fide exercise of power.

Restored statehood of J&K:

The Supreme court directed Union (Council) government to restore the statehood of J&K, means it should be recognized as a state within India again, as opposed to a union territory.

Ordered to hold Legislative Assembly elections:

The court ordered that elections for

the Legislative Assembly should be conducted by September 2024, allowing for the elections of local representatives.

Acknowledged Human Rights violations in IIOJK :

Human rights violations were acknowledged and Justice Kaul recommended formation of Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Response to the Supreme court's verdict:

The Supreme court verdict remained widely unaccepted and unpopular ^{among} political forces of IIOJK, opposition parties of India, Pakistan and international community including China. President of Indian National Congress stated after this verdict that,

"Modi Government has left no stone unturned in betraying the people of Jammu and Kashmir."

Pakistan's stance:

Pakistan neither accepted unilateral actions of August 5, 2019 nor the verdict by Indian Supreme court.

Restoration of statehood, conduct of State Assembly elections or similar steps cannot serve as the substitute the right to self-determination of Kashmiri people.

“Indian judiciary had succumbed to the fascist Hindutva ideology by giving decisions that are suited to the Indian government.”

Dr. Arif Alvi

Verdict's implications for the people of IIOJK:

- Change in demographic structure of IIOJK:

The verdict showed that India will continue to implement on its strategy of turning **Muslim majority into minority**, without any political or legal hindrance. It will continue to encourage non-Kashmiri Indians to permanently settle in IIOJK.

- Occupied mining and trade rights:

It is clear from the verdict that the mining and

trade rights will continued to be awarded to Indian companies instead of local companies.

- Continuation of unabated human rights violations:

The verdict has also means that massive human rights violations will continue unabated and any form of freedom of expression would be stifled with the help of **draconian laws** introduced by Indian government in the past such as Jammu and Kashmir Public Safety Act 1978 etc.

- Onslaught of Kashmiri culture:

✓ In 2020, government ended Urdu's exclusive status and made Hindi, Kashmiri, and Dogri official language.

✓ India attempts to snatch the Kashmiri people of their religious identity through illegal detention of Islamic scholars.

✓ Actions such as Forced singing of Bājan show India's efforts to infuse **Hindutva ideology** in younger

support to Kashmiri brethren for the realization
of their rights to self-determination.

My heart is helpless,
but doesn't mean it is hopeless,
the evening of sorrow is long,
but it is just an evening.

Faiz Ahmad Faiz

