

# PAKISTAN AFFAIRS 2022

## Question 2

Discuss the role of regional and .....

## Answer Number 2

1

### INTRODUCTION

Pakistan is a federation that aims to have strong provinces and a strong central government. With this dynamic style of government, the political parties of Pakistan are also divided on regional and national lines. Both are essential to the democratic system of Pakistan and have specialized utility. The national parties get to focus on the broader issues that represent state as a whole; while the regional parties represent specific concerns of specific communities. If existing in harmony under a free democratic system, their synergy could greatly benefit Pakistan's democratic process.

2

## ROLE AND UTILITY OF REGIONAL PARTIES

### 2.1 VOICE OF DIFFERENT ETHNICITIES

Regional parties provide an organized platform to different ethnicities. These parties ensure that the ignored voices are given adequate public space to voice their concerns. An organized party structure also ensures the correct mechanism of voicing concerns rather than taking up radical means.

### 2.2 MICRO ISSUES ARE HIGHLIGHTED

Issues that would generally be overlooked in the national arena are brought forward. For example prevalent water concerns of a locality impacting their livelihood would not matter in the bigger picture due to lack of collective impact. However, with the advent of regional parties, these issues also get highlighted.

### 2.3 STAND UP AGAINST DIFFERENTIATION THAT COULD LEAD TO MARGINALIZATION

Regional parties prevent possible marginalization. Before situation reaches extremes, regional parties stand up against it. In recent times the Pashtun Tahafuz Movement through their grand jirga and talks with government voiced their concerns to prevent any further marginalization.

### 2.4 DIVERSE REPRESENTATION IN POLICY ARENA

Regional parties ensure diverse representation in the policy arena. Grassroot level people are given the opportunity to present their opinion from their communities point of view. Pluralism is encouraged. Diverse representation ensures more public buyin. National parties often tend to nominate urban electables from their seats due to their broad scope of work.

# 3 ROLE AND UTILITY OF NATIONAL PARTIES

## 3.1 NATIONAL COHESION

National parties give platforms for national cohesion. These parties represent the country as a single unit and deal like that. People from different regions, ethnicities and provinces fall under one banner for a unified cause.

## 3.2 FOCUS ON MACRO ISSUES

National parties focus on macro issues that concern the state. This element is missing in regional parties as they do not observe and connect to the bigger picture. National parties take a birds eye view approach and form a coherent and collective view.

## 3.3 COLLATE STRONG DEFENSE, FOREIGN POLICY AND EXTERNAL DEALING

Foreign policy, external relations and defence are a few subjects that are handled on

any regional parties' agenda. It is often observed that regional parties often ignore the nuances of international image and external pressures.

### 3.4 CONSENSUS BUILDING ON VARIOUS REGIONAL PROBLEMS UNDER ONE ROOF

Even though national parties have different aims, however, it is true that national parties are also an amalgamation of people from different regions and ethnicities. This shows that people in national parties also voice regional concerns. The positive feature is that since people from different regions from a party together, the element of polarization decreases and people work towards consensus building.

## 4

**IMPORTANCE OF BOTH TO KEEP A HEALTHY BALANCE BETWEEN CENTRIPEDAL AND CENTRIFUGAL FORCES.**

#### 4.1 PROVIDES BOTH ZOOMED IN AND ZOOMED OUT PERSPECTIVES

The varying nature of these parties provides the leaders and policy makers with both zoomed in and zoomed out perspectives. A healthy balance is struck between both ends of the spectrum to ensure adequate attention is given to both.

#### 4.2 BOTH HAVE SPECIALIZED AREA OF EXPERTISE

National parties have manifestos that provide solutions and way forward to national issues. No matter how all encompassing these are, there is always a chance to overlook regional factions. Regional parties on the other hand have the insight to regional concerns, hence they are better equipped to represent them. Both have their area of expertise that could benefit the democratic system.

#### 4.3 ENSURES NO NATIONAL PARTY HIJACKS THE POLICY ARENA!

The presence of regional party ensures

that the national policy arena is not hijacked by a single party. This ensures the smooth flow of democracy.

#### 4.4 NATIONAL PARTIES ENSURE THE PARLIAMENT IS NOT COMPLETELY DIVIDED INTO SMALL FACTIONS

Like regional parties, national parties also play a part in ensuring democracy. The element of national party presence ensures that not all of the system is divided into extremely polarized factions.

### 5

#### CONCLUSION

Regional and national parties both are essential for thriving democracy in Pakistan. Both have their set of strengths that are very important for a diverse society like Pakistan. The country must appreciate and take forward this blend of party system to flourish its democratic tenets.

### Question Number 3

Discuss the federal structure of 1973....

### Answer Number 3

1

#### INTRODUCTION

Pakistan is a country with a federal structured constitution. The country took a rocky road to reach this eventually. 3 constitutions and various amendments later Pakistan stands at this current stage. The constitution of 1973; which is still applicable made Pakistan a federation. The 18th amendment of 2010 proved to be a remarkable strengthening of the federal structure. More than a hundred articles were amended out of 280, there were several subjects devolved to the provinces and their positions were strengthened. Recent criticisms, however, revolve around the argument of maybe extensive decentralization



done without evaluating capacities of provincial structures.

## 2

### THE BUMPY ROAD TO FEDERALISM

The 1956 constitution made the country abide by the one unit scheme, in clear opposition to federalism. The scheme faced opposition by many, primarily Baluchistan and East Pakistan. The constitution was then replaced by a martial law, followed by the presidential constitution of 1962. This constitution kept strong center hold and the system was run by a collage of Basic Democracies. Another martial law and 1971 war later came the current constitution which set in the federal structure. The 18th amendment took place in 2010, it is one of the most important amendments in the country. 18th amendment accentuated the structure of federalism; transformed the into the structure still prevalent today.

## 3

### TENANTS OF FEDERALISM IN THE CONSTITUTION TODAY,

# POST THE 18TH AMENDMENT

## 3.1 ABOLISHMENT OF THE CONCURRENT LIST

The 18th amendment's most impactful action was the abolishment of the concurrent list. The concurrent list was the shared list of subjects by the provincial and federal government, in which federal had the upper hand. All the subjects of the concurrent list were given to the provinces; just three were given to the federal government. This gave provinces much more independence and autonomy than before.

## 3.2 EMPOWERED THE POSITION OF CHIEF MINISTER

The 18th amendment empowered the chief minister. The governor can no longer dismiss the democratically elected chief minister. This strengthened the democratic post and rose the stature of the CM to act independently.

### 3.3 NFC AWARD : FINANCIAL SECURITY - ONLY INCREASABLE PERCENTAGE SHARE

The 18th amendment revised the structure of the NFC award. Provinces are to be given 57.5% share now. This percentage can only be increased now, according to the constitution. The provinces have been financially empowered.

### 3.4 EMPOWERMENT OF COUNCIL OF COMMON INTERESTS

Empowerment of council of common interests is pivotal in strengthening and balancing centre - province relations. The council has membership of the prime minister and all four chief ministers, to share concerns, address them and convene frequent gatherings.

### 3.5 INSTITUTIONS LIKE ECP STRENGTHENED

The success of any democracy and federation lies in the strength of its institutions. This ensures no one oversteps boundaries. Also ensures no environment of mistrust. The 18th amendment

strengthened the ECP, it also limited ECP's intervention in intra party election.

### 3.6 SENSE OF PLURALISM AND IDENTITY REVIVED THROUGH CHANGING NAMES.

• NWFP <sup>became</sup> → Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

Spellings altered:

1- Sind → Sindh

2- Balochistan → Baluchistan

### 3.7 ARTICLE 25-A MADE EDUCATION COMPULSORY IMPORTANT AREA GIVEN TO PROVINCE

The 18th amendment made education compulsory for all children aged five to sixteen. With this, it also gave this extremely important area to provinces.

## 4

### RECENT CRITISIZMS ON 18th AMENDMENT

## 4.1 PROVINCES DONT HAVE TAX COLLECTION ABILITY YET A BIG SHARE GIVEN

The after math of 18th ammendment is still unfolding. Even though delegation is good theoretically, many believe that the provinces of Pakistan are not facilitating tax collection due to inefficient competencies, where as the revenue share they get is pre determined by the NFC award.

## 4.2 CENTER GOVERNMENT HAS PRESUMABLY BECOME WEAK

Commentators believe that the amendment has made the center government weak in terms of finances, revenues and areas of control. Some say the central government has become a toothless bear who has much to feed but no way to do it.

## 4.3 PUNJAB BENEFITS DISPROPORTIONALLY

NFC awards is further divided into provinces. The divisions are done on multiple factors but predominantly it is the population

size: Population size accounts for 80% of the share which benefits Punjab disproportionately.

#### 4.4 CCI BELIEVED TO BE A TOKENIST BODY

It is often believed in academic and policy circles that CCI is a tokenism mechanism. Where in theory problems are to be brought forward and resolved, but in reality no such thing happens.

### 5

#### CONCLUSION

The 18th amendment was a ground breaking happening for the federal structure of Pakistan. However, it is believed that policy makers went too far with decentralization, unsustainable for the country. Instead of reverting federal provisions, the country should work on strengthening institutions and building capacity. In this way, federalism will survive and thrive in Pakistan.