

PROVINCIAL AUTONOMY IS ESSENTIAL FOR NATIONAL INTEGRATION

Outline

A. Introduction

B. An Overview of Provincial Autonomy
and National Integration

C. How Provincial Autonomy is Essential
for National Integration:

i. Provincial autonomy ensures the equitable
distribution of states assets which eliminates
the resentment over fiscal share and
promotes trust on government.

(7th NFC Award)

ii. Provincial autonomy empowers the
provincial government to allocate ample
funds for education which ultimately
prevents the manipulation of citizens
by anti-state factions.

(School Education Reforms of Punjab)

iii. Decentralised healthcare governance improves
human development indicators, reducing

inter-provincial disparities and enhancing social integration.

(Sahat Sahulat Program)

- iv. The provincial autonomy contributes to better resource management which addresses the protesting voices of state-theft and yields confidence on the federal government and system.

(18th Amendment)

- v. Autonomy of provinces strengthens the local government to deliver facilities at grass-root level, fulfilling the needs of diverse ethnic groups within a province and mainstreaming the marginalised sections.

(Article 140-A)

- vi. Autonomous provincial government remarkably manages police and security arenas to eradicate extremism, regionalism and insurgency.

(KP Police Reforms and Community Policing)

- vii. Responsible provincial government is focused on enhancing the agricultural and industrial output which consequently uproots economic disparities and separatism.

stemming out of them.

(Lander System of Germany)

viii. Empowered provincial government can craft area-specific climate strategies, diminishing ecological inequalities and fostering ^{national} cohesion amid environmental stress.

(EPA, KPK; EPD, Punjab)

ix. Provincial autonomy enables government to uplift tourism which brings about cultural exchange within a country, cultivating understanding and mutual respect among people.

(Gilgit Baltistan Eco tourism Initiative)

x. Autonomous provinces aim at installing digital infrastructure in far-flung areas which bridges digital divide and fosters connectivity, dialogue and communication across multiple regions.

(World Bank Report)

xi. Provincial autonomy increases the participation of people in policy-making which nurtures the democratic values of shared responsibility and sense of ownership for land.

(Case Study of Canada)

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xii. Provincial autonomy assists the people in terms of jobs, quotas and recruitments by closely analysing the population density, rooting out centre periphery and inter-provincial discord on employment.

(System of Provincial Management Services)

xiii. Provincial autonomy capacitates government to preserve linguistic, ethnic, cultural and historical nuances and preclude them from being swept away by dominant entities, propelling pluralism, diversity and inclusivity.

(Case study of Spain)
D. Conclusion

The eve of **Dec 16, 1971** marks a tragic turn in the history of Pakistan as the Eastern wing of country proclaimed independence from the central government. Among geo-political tensions, socio-economic disparity and the grievances of Bengal stand out as the most significant causes behind the **fall of Dhaka**. However, the state seemed to learn its most needed lesson in **2010** when it achieved a hallmark of **18th Amendment**. Thus, the devolution of power rectified the wrong historical moves and illustrated that the provincial autonomy is fundamental for national integration accruing to multifarious factors. Firstly, provincial autonomy reduces the disagreements on the distribution of government's resources and money which is central to alleviate economic gaps and income disparities. Alongside, provincial empowerment improves the standard of education making citizens aware of the role of national

integration in growth and development. In the similar fashion, healthcare sector is exceptionally reformed by provincial autonomy which in-turn builds confidence on the state. Furthermore, it cultivates resource-management by provinces to safeguard their rights and satisfy the anti-state groups. Another milestone of provincial autonomy is the empowerment of local government for the efficacious service-delivery to the marginalised communities, winning their approval for a coherent nation-state. Moreover, it better resolve the challenges of extremism and insurgency. Additionally, it increases industrial and agricultural output, promotes policy-making on reducing ecological disparities, fosters cultural exchange by successful tourism, induces dialogue through digital platform and heightens democratic inclusivity. Aforementioned arguments delineates that provincial autonomy is central for national integration as it

outstandingly bridges socio-economic and political differences among various provinces and prevents the proliferation of separatist networks.

Provincial autonomy is a form of government structure in which provinces are autonomous in managing their resources and responsibilities under the umbrella of central government. It makes defense, foreign policy and currency a federal subject while handling over all other subjects to provinces. In this way, provincial autonomy authorises provincial government to accomplish the goal ^{of} socio-economic development. On the other side, national integration entails the coherence and harmony among the diverse ^{racial, religious,} linguistic and ethnic groups. National integration occurs when various distinctive groups show their confidence on their state and government after their basic needs are fulfilled and they are

equally represented in government.

This means that efficient delivery of services at grass-root level is only possible through devolution of power and provincial autonomy. Thus, national integration is closely tied to provincial autonomy owing to numerous factors.

Firstly, provincial autonomy guarantees the equitable distribution of budget and other assets among provinces

which has cascading effect on national integration.

This division carefully takes into consideration the ^{criteria} standards of population, poverty, backwardness and development. Consequently, areas demanding more share and attention being regressive get enough from the federal exchequer. Then, the meaningful development by provincial government pacifies their resentment and cement their trust on state. In this way, mutual trust unifies urban and rural dwellers, minorities and majority groups and centre and periphery.

Its best example is seventh National Finance Commission Award in which factors like inverse population density, poverty^{and} revenue collection were taken into account and the share of Punjab was reduced while of Balochistan was expanded. Resultantly, it proved effective to silence down the separatist voices from Balochistan at that time. Therefore, equitable and fair division of state assets from provincial autonomy consolidates national integration.

Moreover, provincial autonomy regulates education as a provincial subject which levels up the educational standards of citizens to repel the anti-state faction. These rebel groups spread their hateful agenda among the illiterate and unaware citizens. High literacy rate achieved from the efforts of provincial government enlightens the state subjects on the

value of national integration.

Additionally, they do not let the state enemies strengthen their roots and ^{boost their} activities against government by limiting their access to funds, social media ^{outlets} ~~reach-out~~, weapons and technology.

Case in view is Punjab government's school reforms to educate the citizens. Pertaining to high literacy rate, the presence of terrorist and insurgent networks is less effective as compared to Balochistan. Thus, people are ^{well} integrated into state illustrating the significance of provincial autonomy inducing educational reforms and enlightening citizens.

Furthermore, decentralised governance finances healthcare system to improve its outreach, efficiency and effectiveness which builds the trust of people on state, promoting

national integration. When people are provided basic healthcare facilities ^{at home} and they do not have to bear the hardships of journey to megacities for treatment, they approve the sincere working of their state for their well-being. This approval amasses the sentiments of love, veneration and coherence.

Thus, patriotism of citizens instills national integration. A

significant example is of Sehat Sahulat Card provided by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government, which facilitated the poor and sick people belonging to marginalised areas. Subsequently, they proudly felt themselves as part of a government which cares for them. Therefore, national integration stems from provincial autonomy owing to best healthcare reforms.

Additionally, provincial autonomy is a remarkable contributing factor to prudent resource management which effectively negates the dissenting views of state theft and exploitative interests of government. Consequently, the bond between state and citizens get strengthened which fosters national integration. These resources human or natural are utilised by provincial government on development and welfare of its people. This progress not only satisfies the common people but also alleviates the concerns of state critics and separatist groups. Case in point is eighteenth amendment in Pakistan, which safeguarded the resources and interests of provinces, building their trust on state and achieving national integration. Thus, provincial autonomy is testament of national integration.

Provincial autonomy also empowers local governance to deliver the services of state from top to bottom which mainstreams the needs of overlooked entities and brings forth national integration. Local government which is an important component of provincial government is central to the provision of facilities to marginalised communities.

The concerns of diverse multi-ethnic groups ^{within a province} are effectively addressed by local government system.

Moreover, they are provided equal ^{and} social & economic opportunities to grow and improve their life which integrates them with majority and state.

Article 140-A guarantees local government system in Pakistan which has significantly enhanced the effectiveness of service delivery to ethnic, linguistic and religious minorities in provinces. Therefore, provincial

autonomy is paramount for
national cohesion.

Furthermore, autonomous
provincial government efficaciously
manages the politics of regionalism,
extremism and insurgency by
maintaining law and order situation
and policing. It is undeniable that
insurgent groups expand their
activities under the auspices of weak
security and police system. Provincial
autonomy upgrades the security
by spending ample ^{amount of} funds and
incorporating modern surveillance system.
Resultantly, anti-state agenda
is ^{rapidly} identified and dismantled
by security forces. Case in view
is KP Police Reforms, which
brought about Community
policing to control terrorism,
crimes and anti-state foreign
segments. This move gained the

Hust of people on state and heightened their sense of belonging to state. Thus, provincial autonomy is fundamental to curb insurgent groups and promote national integration.

Alongside, strong provincial government focuses on improving agricultural and industrial yield which erodes economic disparities between provinces. In this way, national integration increases. Provincial government with its decentralised local bodies incorporate modern tools into agricultural sector which generates more ^{only} output, optimising the economic condition of farmers. Similarly, autonomous provinces subsidise industries which ^{in turn} employs people into factories. As a result, their income level surges and economic prosperity is gained. **Case in point**

is the Lander System of Germany. As per this system, Germany is divided into sixteen units which are responsible for the taxation and industrial production. Their exceptional working is one of the reasons behind the booming industries of Germany. Therefore, people show their trust on government pertaining to satisfactory economic conditions. In this way, national integration is established when economic disparities are removed by the ^{strong} commitment of provincial government.

Additionally, provincial autonomy capacitates provinces to sincerely work on disaster management and climate change mitigation, a new threat to national integration. Climate change has been ranked as a disastrous non-traditional security threat to state's territory, sovereignty, cohesion

and nationalism. Provincial autonomy enables government to assess the geography, land, climate and potential risks beforehand to design mitigation strategies. Moreover, emergency teams and task ^{which are} forces well-trained for rescue operations can prevent the colossal damage to people's lives. Consequently, they endorse provincial government and feel satisfied with state structure as a harmonised working entity.

For instance, Environmental Protection Authority of KPK approved Billion Tree Tsunami Project considering the landscape of KP. While, Punjab's Environmental Protection Department works on mitigation projects like Smog Emergency in Winters. Thus, provincial autonomy plays a pivotal role in alleviating the climate-induced disintegration, disharmony and mistrust.

Similarly, a proficient structure of provincial government can attract tourism to foster cultural

exchange between different ethnic, racial and linguistic groups, heightening national integration. Tourism promotes an atmosphere of mutual understanding, dialogue and patriotism. To reap these benefits, provincial autonomy serves as a vehicle to reform infrastructure, tourist sites, historical places and cultural exchange avenues. As a result, people coming from other provinces get to know the ^{life and culture} local population. This gives rise to the feelings of love and harmony between citizens and respect for their land.

In this regard, Gilgit Baltistan Eco-tourism Initiative is commendable for its community initiatives to promote diversity and multiculturalism in Pakistan. Hence, national integration achieved from the efforts of provincial government to boost tourism bridges the gaps of ethnicity and racial disparity.

In the similar fashion, provincial autonomy is central to overcome digital divide and enable citizens to participate effectively in policy-making. Digital connectivity is a significant pillar of national integration in this way. Provincial government installs functional internet connections in remote areas which provides an opportunity to connect and mainstream them. Subsequently, they share their experiences, report their problems and take part in reviewing policies. This develops a sense of affiliation and devotion between multitudinous people residing in a state. World Bank also confirms this idea that provincial autonomy is crucial for digital decentralisation and developing ^{strong} connections across the state. Therefore, national integration cannot be separated from digital communications and provincial government has a dynamic role in it.

Provincial autonomy also cultivates awareness in people to participate in the democratic process, giving rise to shared responsibility and national integration. Democracy operates best when all the distinctive people are represented in legislation and policy-making. In this regard, decentralised governance compels local government bodies to engage every section of society in elections, policy-reviewing and billing mechanisms. Furthermore, marginalised communities can better access the provincial government in case their rights are violated by any segment. This yields confidence on state functioning and generates unity among people. Case in view is the exceptional autonomous system of Canada, empowering provinces to dispatch the services and facilities at every level and engage people in democratic process. Therefore, provincial

autonomy brings about national integration by speeding up democratic mechanism.

Moreover, provincial autonomy better assists the citizens by providing quotas and jobs to different communities, eroding centre-periphery and provincial disputes. Recruitment quotas compensate the minorities and integrate them in government machinery. Provincial government ^{closely} evaluates the need, population density and statistics of vulnerable classes. Then, it devises programs to provide them opportunities to serve in different provincial departments. Resultantly, they are financially empowered exhibiting trust on provincial and federal government. In Pakistan, Provincial Management Services facilitates women, minority classes and disable persons through quota system. Thus, provincial autonomy is a milestone in economic integration.

of citizens.

lastly, provincial autonomy plays an exceptional role in the preservation of unique identity of all the groups residing in a state, nurturing the notion of inclusivity and pluralism. It is inevitable that the fear of being erased by an emboldened culture forces people to turn against the central government. To prevent this, provincial government provides room to every section to lead, propagate and excel in accordance with its nuanced religious and cultural values.

Resultantly, people absorb well into the colours of their nation-state having safeguarded their unique sub-identities. Case study of Spain is integral to highlight the role of provincial autonomy in multiculturalism and national

integration. Thus, provincial autonomy is remarkable in the protection of peripheral groups and their cultures, engendering the emotions of devotion and unity.

In conclusion, provincial autonomy is essential for national integration as it plays an important function in the socio-economic uplift of all the people and mainstreaming them. Provincial autonomy fulfills the responsibility of equitable distribution of assets, enlightens citizens on the matter of national integration, remove healthcare differences and effective resource management. Moreover, it improves local governance, manages security situation and enhance agricultural yield for service delivery, coherence and income generation. Furthermore, it diminishes ecological inequalities,

improves tourism and digital designs to nourish dialogue and cultural exchange among people.

Alongside, provincial autonomy augments democratic participation of marginalised communities and shield their inherent culture and values. Therefore, provincial autonomy and national integration are strongly connected to one another. Beyond providing provincial autonomy, governments must ensure the excellent contribution of provincial and local government in executing their duty of assisting the public and fortifying the national integration.
