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Q: THE CREATION OF MORE PROVINCES IS A PERSISTENT DEMAND FROM SOME CIRCLES IN PAKISTAN. HOW DO YOU SEE THE CREATION OF MORE PROVINCES IN PAK; AS BENEFICIAL OR HARMFUL FOR PEOPLE? EXPLAIN YOUR VIEWS WITH SOLID JUSTIFICATION.

INTRODUCTION

The debate on creation of new provinces in Pakistan has been gaining traction lately. It has been a contested topic among politicians and policy makers. Pakistan ~~was~~ has been divided into four provinces namely Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Baluchistan and Sindh, ~~with~~ ^{with} two other administrative units of Gilgit Baltistan and Azad and Jammu Kashmir. It houses a 220 million population, with Punjab serving as the most ~~populous~~ populous province. The arguments for more provinces are also driven by social, cultural and ethnic factors.

ELEMENTS OF THE DEBATE ON MORE PROVINCES

The core reason for the debate has been the rising inefficiency in

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Governance of provinces. Large areas ~~not~~ controlled by fewer people make governance difficult. Similarly, with the increasing ~~and~~ rates of population, urban areas are being filled beyond capacity, even extending beyond the territories. This makes effective administration of areas difficult. Along the cultural and ethnic lines, the demand comes from following areas:

- (i) South Punjab - a new province for Saraiki population
- (ii) Sindh - Karachi as a province, ~~with~~ due to its large demographic
- (iii) Hazara community in KP

Nevertheless, there are numerous implications of creating more provinces.

BENEFITS SURROUNDING CREATION

1. Closer Governance

Smaller provinces reduce the distance between the government and the citizens. It makes representatives more approachable, and reduces the travel cost of administrative offices.

2. Better Resource Allocation

Areas may receive attention and resources according to their size and importance. For example, Karachi is an important economic hub of the country, but does not receive adequate resources to run it effectively. The funds are divided dis across the whole province.

3. Adequate Representation of citizens

More provinces means greater elected representatives for the regions. It will allow ~~atten~~ greater attention and ~~to~~ focus on needs of the people, especially the minorities.

4. Weakening Political Dynasties

Smaller provinces would break the dominance of the political families that control large provinces through a few zones. It would increase political competition, ensuring elected officials work hard to secure a win, instead of reliance on dynastic dominance.

5. International Precedent

The practice of smaller and multiple provinces is adopted

across the world. One example is of our neighbouring country India, which is divided into 28 states and 8 union territories for better governance.

CRITICISM ON NEW PROVINCES

1. Huge Financial Cost

New provinces entail the creation of separate assemblies, secretariats and offices which incur a huge cost. With the current financial status of the country, it will put a huge burden on economy, widening the budget deficit.

2. Political and constitutional hurdle

The approval of the initiative requires a two-thirds majority in the relevant provincial assembly. It is difficult to get all politicians on board the idea, especially if it involves a reduction in power and influence in a province.

3. Long term Process

The administrative setup including setting of boundaries, governments

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and institutions is a time-consuming and cumbersome process. It will involve numerous disputes surrounding the land and allocation of resources. Therefore, it will be long before the provinces are up and running effectively.

4. May not bring real change
Without effective accountability measures and consensus, the newer provinces may also be plagued with corruption and ineffective governance. Thus, such a heavy cost may turn into a loss for the state, resulting in no real change.

CRITICAL ANALYSIS : AN ALTERNATIVE MODEL

While there are certain benefits to more provinces, its costs on the state are ~~more~~ more severe in nature. A cost-effective solution could be the promotion and strengthening of local governments within provinces. ~~Kago~~ Such a system is closer to the citizens, providing representation at the base level. It is flexible in nature and does not require building new setups and

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~~boundaries~~ boundaries. Therefore, it is an effective way to achieve better governance in an efficient manner.

CONCLUSION

The debate surrounding more provinces is still active but without any concrete resolution. While the benefits to such a proposal exist, its costs are greater. Local government system, on the other hand, provides a better method to achieve the same objectives.