

How should Pakistan manage the equitable distribution of resources among ethnic groups to address historical grievances and promote developments across country. (2024)

INTRODUCTION:-

The unequitable distribution of resources remains one of the major challenges to national integration in Pakistan. It stems from historical grievances, which mainly encompass both political and economic causes. The key causes for unequitable distribution of resources are: Loopholes in the NFC award, unfinished agenda of the 18th amendment, economic grievances, urbanization and water distribution mechanisms. To address these challenges, several steps are needed to be taken that mainly involve revisiting NFC award and water distribution mechanisms, promoting economic self-sufficiency in provinces, reforming institutions, and fulfilling unfinished agenda of the 18th Amendment.

HISTORICAL GRIEVANCES AMONG ETHNIC GROUPS.

1) Loopholes prevalent in NFC award

The NFC award advocates for distribution of resources among provinces based on four indicators: population, GDP, urbanization and backwardness. Consequently, provinces are striving to clinch the greater portion based on what they have rather than focusing on development. For instance, while Punjab leverages population, KPK and Balochistan backwardness and Sindh focuses on provincial GDP. Incentives are needed to be changed to promote development.

2) Unfinished agenda of the 18th Amendment.

The Article 140(A) of the 18th Amendment stipulated the implementation of the local government system. However, provincial governments remain reluctant to maintain stranglehold over resources. Consequently, the peripheral areas of provinces remain devoid of economic growth.

3) Economic grievances of the provinces.

The abrupt devolution of powers to provinces without working on capacity development left them to grapple with economic grievances. Additionally, provinces accuse centre of not granting royalties on resources. For instance, the 50% of revenue of Reko diq goes to China, 48% to centre and 2% to Balochistan. Hence, this economic

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disparity among provinces along with executive overreach contribute to economic grievances.

4) Water Distribution mechanism has flared up interprovincial conflicts.

The Water Apportionment Accord 1992 doesn't address the concern: how to distribute when water availability is less than volume ~~was~~ assumed for distribution.

Secondly, despite setting method for water distribution, Sindh accuses for distributing water based on historical share of provinces rather than WAA 1992 formula.

5) Urbanization has contributed to demographic changes and strain on resources.

Owing to historical grievances in economic development, people are migrating from provinces to provinces for greener pastures. Consequently, the change in demographic ~~etc~~ dynamics along with burgeoning strain on economic resources have contributed to ethnic conflicts.

WAYS FOR ADDRESSING CHALLENGES FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

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1) Revising the NFC award to promote development.

The NFC award should be revised to incentivize the research and development rather than population growth and backwardness. Consequently, provinces will strive to clinch success in these indicators that will contribute to development.

2) Unfinished agenda of the 18th Amendment should be implemented.

The local government system should be strengthened and resources should be devolved to third tier of government. Consequently, economic growth and human resource development will flourish. Although provinces are given their due share equitably under constitution, delivery mechanisms should be strengthened.

3) Revisiting the WAA 1992

To address the grievances over distribution of water, the accord should be revisited in accordance with the current challenges namely climate change and issues over the Indus Water Treaty. Secondly, the provisions of WAA regarding water distribution should be on needs of provinces rather than historical consumption.

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4). Promoting economic sufficiency among provinces.

As per the 18th amendment, the provinces should have more rights over their resources. The revenues generated from projects namely hydel projects, Regoodig, and others should be invested in local development of provinces. The representation of local population should be strengthened by economic opportunities.

5) Ending central overreach in provincial matters.

The centre should stop interfering in provincial matters to maintain federation as per constitution. Although provinces are autonomous, to maintain its stranglehold, the centre should not support unelected officials in provinces namely Sardars, who have impeded economic development for their personal grievances.

6) Reforming process of Senate elections and activating CCI

The direct elections should be introduced for Senate to enhance equitable representation of different ethnic groups. Secondly, Council for Common Interests (CCI) should hold meetings monthly to address challenges. Secondly, the representation for provinces under the CCI should also be reformed to produce

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equitable distribution of resources.

CONCLUSION:-

Pakistan holds strong framework for equitable distribution of resources. However, certain loopholes along with political reluctance for implementation and poor delivery systems have impeded the progress. Hence, political and economic reforms are needed to address the impediments to strengthen national integration. As said by the author in 'Pakistan beyond the crisis state' by Maleeha Lodhi, that national integration can be strengthened through economic development which can trickled down to grassroot level.