

6 What Pakistan Needs the Most: Effective Local Governance:

Pakistan needs effective local governance more urgently than the creation of new province- while the idea of new provinces is often presented as a solution to inequality and poor administration, evidence from Pakistan's own experience shows that without strong, empowered, and accountable local governments, new provinces will simply reproduce the same problems at a smaller scale-

Why new Province Are Not the Immediate Solution:

The demand for new provinces usually arises from feelings of neglect, long distances from power centers, ethnic identities, or uneven development. However, administrative restructuring alone does not guarantee better governance- Pakistan's existing provinces already suffer from weak service delivery, corruption, and over-centralization at the provincial level- if new provinces are created without fixing governance structures, power will gain concentrate in new provincial capitals, leaving districts and tehsils neglected-

The Case for Effective Local Governance:

Effective local governance means real devolution

of power, resources, and responsibility to elected local bodies at district, tehsil, and village levels. This is where citizens interact directly with the state - for education, health, water, sanitation, policing, and local development.

Strong local government improves service delivery because decisions are made closer to the people. Local representatives understand local needs better than distant provincial officials. International governance theory supports this; political scientist Dennis Rondinelli argued that "decentralization brings decision-making closer to citizens, making governments more responsive and accountable."

Accountability, Participation, and Development:

Effective local governance strengthens accountability. Citizens can question local officials more easily than provincial ministers. It also increases political participation, giving ordinary people - especially youth and women - a role in decision making.

From a development perspective, local governments can prioritize schools, clinics, roads, and water projects based on actual needs, reducing waste and improving outcomes. Without empowered local institutions, development funds often remain centralized, misused, or delayed.

Security and National Integration:

Weak local governance also contributes to insecurity. In areas like KP, Balochistan, absence of local political ownership creates space for non-state actors and militancy. When communities feel represented and services are delivered fairly, trust in the state increases, reducing grievances that fuel unrest. Thus, effective local governance also serves national integration better than redrawing provincial boundaries.

Critical Comparison:

New provinces may eventually help administrative balance, but only after governance structures are fixed. Without empowered local governments, a new province becomes just another layer of elite control. Effective local governance, on the other hand, delivers immediate benefits across all existing provinces without constitutional deadlock.

Conclusion:

Pakistan's core problem is not the number of provinces, but the absence of empowered, democratic, and accountable local governments. Therefore, what Pakistan needs the most today is effective local governance - with constitutional protection,

financial autonomy, and regular elections -
Once governance improves from the ground up, the debate on new provinces can be addressed rationally - Until then, local governance remains the more urgent and practical solution -

3 Introduction:

Muslim nationalism in the subcontinent was not a sudden political development, rather, it was the result of a long intellectual and religious revival. Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi and Shah Waliullah Dehlawi played a foundational role in reviving Islamic Ideology and awakening Muslim to their distinct identity, which later evolved into Muslim nationalism -

Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi (Mujaddid Alf-e-Sani) and Islamic Revival.

Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi (1564-1624) emerged at a time when Islamic identity was threatened by emperor Akbar's religious experiments, particularly Din-e-illahi - Sirhindi strongly opposed religious syncretism and emphasized strict adherence to the Quran and Sunnah - He declared that Islam must remain separate and pure and should not be diluted by other beliefs -

Through his famous letters (maktubat), he revived Islamic thought and strengthened Muslim self-consciousness. He clearly drew a line b/w Islam and other religions. As he stated:

Islam is Islam, and disbelief; there is no compromise b/w the two.

Sirhindi emphasized that Muslim could survive only by maintaining their ideological distinctiveness. Historian I.H. Qureshi rightly observed:

Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi saved Islam in India at a time when it was in grave danger.

Shah Waliullah Dehlawi and Intellectual Awakening:

Shah Waliullah Dehlawi (1703-1762) carried forward the mission of Islam revival during the decline of Mughal power. He believed that Muslims were losing strength due to ignorance of religion, internal divisions, and moral decay. His foremost contribution was the translation of the Holy Quran into Persian, making it understandable to common Muslims.

Shah Waliullah stressed unity among Muslims and presented Islam as a

complete social, political and economy system- He wrote:

The real cause of decline of Muslims in their ignorance of their religion:

Foundations of Muslim nationalism:

Together, Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi and Shah Waliullah revived the Islamic worldview, preserved Muslim identity, and emphasized the separate ideological existence of Muslims in the subcontinent. They highlighted that religion was not merely a personal matter but a basis of collective life.

Allama Iqbal acknowledge their contribution in these words-

The real awakening of the Muslims of India began with Mujaddid Alf-e-Sani-

Their ideas later influenced Muslim reformers and political leaders and ultimately strengthened the Two-Nation Theory, which became the ideological basis for the creation of Pakistan.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi and Shah Waliullah Dehlawi were

the true architects of Islamic revival in the subcontinent - By defending Islamic purity, promoting unity, and awakening Muslim consciousness, they laid the intellectual and ideological foundations of Muslim nationalism - their contributions shaped Muslim thoughts and prepared the ground for future political struggles making them pioneers of ~~national~~ Muslim national identity -