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Q No-6

What Pakistan needs the most; new provinces or effective local government? Take a stance and answer your arguments?

Introduction

For Pakistan, the most practical and cost-effective route lies in empowering local governments, ensuring fiscal decentralisation, and experimenting with metropolitan governance.

Over the years various political parties and social groups have raised demands for reorganisation of the federal structure, ranging from Punjab division into multiple provinces to creating administrative units in Hazara, South Punjab and Urban Sindh.

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Need Analysis of New Provinces

Supporters of new provinces
cite several reasons:

Governance Efficiency

Large provinces like Punjab and Balochistan cover vast areas, making it difficult for provinces to govern or to deliver services effectively.

Equitable Political Representation

For 56% of Pakistan's disproportionate National Assembly weight and influencing the federal decision making. Smaller provinces could balance representation and reduce perceptions of Punjab's dominance.

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Ethnic Accommodation

Though Pakistan already has provinces reflecting major ethnic groups, sub ethnic identities like Seraiki, Hindko and Muhajir occasionally demand recognition. Creating provinces could symbolically acknowledge their identities and reduce alienation.

Associated Risks with creating New provinces

1- Economic Costs

Establishing new assemblies, high courts, secretariats, and ministries would require billion in expenditure. For an economy already struggling with fiscal deficits, such costs could worsen financial instability.

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2- Political Gridlock.

Constitutionally, the creation of new provinces requires approval by two-thirds of the concerned provincial assembly and both houses of Parliament. Securing such consensus is difficult and risks deepening inter-party hostility.

3- Administrative Disruption.

Division of assets, allocation of civil servants, delimitations of constituencies, and legal disputes over boundaries could paralyse governance for years.

4- Ethnic Tensions.

Drawing new boundaries is a sensitive issue in a diverse society. Perceived injustices could spark ethnic mobilisation, protests and even violence.

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International case study

Many countries across the globe have recognized the value of bringing governance closer to the people and have implemented reforms to strengthen local governments.

Latin America

Many nations in Latin America have made concerted efforts to decentralize power away from historically strong central presidencies.

Bolivia

Bolivia is often cited for making significant progress in enhancing the power and autonomy of its local municipalities. Reforms have aimed to give local governments a greater say in public policy and resource

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allocation, fostering more direct citizen participation.

Broader Regional Efforts

Countries like Mexico, Brazil, Guatemala and Peru have participated in regional agreements committing to decentralization and strengthening municipal administrations as a key part of fortifying democracy.

Bangladesh

The country has been actively working to strengthen its local government tiers, particularly the Upazila (sub-district) and Union Parishad (rural council) levels.

Europe.

Following the fall of centralized communist regimes in central and Eastern Europe,

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many countries in the region prioritized the creation of strong, autonomous, and democratic municipalities. This was seen as an essential prerequisite for building a stable, modern democracy.

Recommendations

Strengthen Local Governments

Amend Article 140-A to give LGs constitutional protection, financial autonomy, and defined responsibilities.

Fiscal and political Decentralisation

Ensure 30-40% of provincial revenue is allocated to Local Governments through transparent Provincial Finance Commissions. political decentralisation

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involves ~~decide~~ transferring decision-making authority to local levels.

Avoid Hasty Reforms.

prioritise economic recovery and stability first; pursue structural reforms once conditions allow.

Conclusion.

The idea of creating new provinces in Pakistan reflects genuine concerns over governance, equity, and representation. However, at present, the risks—financial, political, and ethnic—outweigh the benefits. International experiences show that success requires careful planning, consensus building and strong institutions.