

Current Affairs

Question no. 2.

18th amendment and 7th

NFC Award

Introduction:

The 18th constitutional amendment enacted in Pakistan 2010 and the 7th NFC award 2009 marked a significant shift in country governance structure by devolving power to provinces. However, the true devolution empowering local governments remained unrealized because of inadequate resources and under staffing, dependency on provincial governments for funds, Delay in fund transfer, poor coordination between institution, trust deficit and political tension, low fiscal allocation to local government and incapability of local employees due to proper training. To achieve genuine devolution several reforms

like effective fiscal devolution, financial allocations, Overcoming political control, adequate staffing granting authority to local government are essential.

2. Concept of devolution of power

Devolution is the transfer of administrative and political authority from federal to regional tiers (District, Tehsil, Union council). Its aim is to strengthen democracy, improve governance and ensure local people participation.

3: 18th Constitutional amendment

The 18th constitutional amendment was passed in April 10, 2010. It devolved administrative powers to provinces granted them with more autonomy affection than 36% of constitution of Pakistan. The ministeries that

were devolved under the 18th amendment include ministries of education, health, environment, population welfare, social welfare, zakat and ushr, tourism, support, culture, women development, local government, youth affairs, minorities labor and special education. The amendment made it mandatory for the provinces to take the district level bodies in development projects. It also strengthened council of common interest for intergovernmental coordination.

4. 7th NFC Award

The 7th National Finance Commission award revised the formula of resource distribution. The share of provinces increased from 47.5% to 57.5% and federal share was 42.5%. It was given by President under Article 160 of the constitution of Pakistan.

5: Reasons for the poor implementation of powers to the district level

The true devolution of power to the district level remained unfulfilled due to the following reason:

5.1: Inadequate resources and understaffing

Local government faces financial constraints despite the promises of fiscal devolution under the 7th NFC Award.

Provincial governments often delay or limit the release of funds leaving districts unable to maintain public services such as health and education. Moreover, devolved institutions suffer from understaffing especially in administrative and technical posts.

5.2: Financial dependence on Provincial governments

Local governments

heavily dependent on provincial governments for funds which undermine their autonomy and decision making capacity. District councils rarely have the authority to generate local revenue forcing them to rely on provincial aids. This dependence creates uncertainty in planning and developing projects at local level.

5.3: Poor Coordination and Administrative inefficiency

After devolution, district level governments face weak coordination with provincial department and other devolved institutions. Administrative inefficiency is compounded by a lack of clear communication channel, proper monitoring system and accountability structures. The absence of standardized procedure further hampered effective

governance at local level

S.4: Trust deficit and political interference

Lack of trust between provincial governments and local authorities is barrier to effective devolution in Pakistan. Political interference at district level limit their autonomy in decision making process and resource allocation. This also affect appointment, transfer, promotion and project approval which further weaken local government. Citizens participation is reduced that further weakens governance.

S.5: Frequent dissolution of Local governments

Provincial government often dissolve local bodies before completing their term for political reasons. This creates instability and disrupts service delivery at the district level.

6: Recommendation ^{to strengthen} ~~for~~ devolution of power at district level

Various Strategies should be taken to strengthen devolution of power at district level.

6.1: Strengthen Article 140A Implementation

Article 140A ensures that elected local governments are fully functional with clear administrative and fiscal powers. This allow district to make independent decision on development projects.

6.2: Regulate provincial finance commissions

Provincial finance commissions should be institutionalized to ensure timely and fair distribution of funds to districts. They should also promote transparency and

planning at the local level.

5.3. Introduce public accountability mechanisms

Provincial government introduce citizen charters, digital transparency and social audits to hold local governments accountable. Accountability mechanism prevent corruption and mismanagement. They empower citizens to evaluate service delivery at the grassroots level.

5.4. Capacity building and proper training

Local representative must receive training in planning, budgeting and governance. Capacity building enhance efficiency, quality of service and accountability. without proper training, devolution remains only formal not functional.

6.5. Local revenue generation

Local administration should be empowered to collect taxes and non-tax revenues with their districts clear guidance for revenue collection should mobilize efficiently.

7. Conclusion

18th amendment and 7th NFC Award have historic milestones in Pakistan's journey toward federalism. but they represented partial devolution only. True empowerment requires transferring power beyond provinces to district level. without proper implementation country development will remain fragile.

Question no. 3.

Pak-Afghan Relations

1. Introduction:

Pakistan and Afghanistan relations have historically been complex shaped by ethnic, security and geopolitical factors. Despite several mediation efforts by China tensions persist particularly over border, management, terrorism, political instability external influence, refugees and humanitarian issues. The relations between both countries can be improved by diplomatic dialogues, counter terrorism, border management trade engagement and cultural exchange.

2. Prisoner dilemma in Pakistan Afghanistan relations

Prisoner dilemma is a terminology of international

relations. This terminology helps to understand conflicts, mistrust between the two states and cooperation of missed chances. This is the dominating idea in Pakistan-Afghanistan relations. It means two prisoners accused of crimes and are doing separately interrogation. The relations between both countries are:

If

	Afghanistan Cooperates	Afghanistan defects
Pakistan Cooperates	Peace, trade border stability wor for counter terrorism if both countries cooperates	Infiltration, exploitation, cross border terrorism, Smuggling issues Pakistan peace disturb
Pakistan defects	Intense relations, Afghanistan betrayal feeling	Blame game cross border attacks

3: Major factors contributing to tension between Pakistan and Afghanistan

when Pakistan wants to cooperate with Afghanistan, at the same time Afghanistan government support anti-Pakistan elements resulting in tension between both countries.

3.1: Border and territorial issues

The Durand line remains a longstanding dispute as Afghanistan has never officially recognized it as the international border. Pakistan considers it settled while Kabul views it as an imposed colonial boundary dividing Pashtun tribes. Frequent cross border infiltration, militant movement and smuggling have worsened mutual distrust. Border clashes between security forces often interrupt fencing and checkpoint disputes reflecting deep mistrust.

3.2: Cross border terrorism and security concerns

Pakistan accuses Afghanistan of harboring TTP militants who launch cross border attacks on its soil. These militants often exploit the porous border and weak Afghan State control in frontier regions to plan and execute operations. Pakistan demands that the Afghan Taliban government take decisive action against such elements. On the other hand, Afghanistan accuses Pakistan of maintaining ties with groups like the Haqqani network and use them as a tool in Afghan Affairs.

3.3: Political instability in Kabul

Frequent political Transitions have disrupted the

continuity of Pakistan Afghanistan relations. After 9/11, Afghanistan considered that Pakistan defect Afghanistan and support US. With the Taliban's return to power in 2021, initial relations emerged as hope for stability and security. However, growing concern over TTP Strained ties again Regime Shifting have made it difficult to establish a stable relationship" between the two neighbors.

3.4. Refugees and Humanitarian losses

Pakistan has hosted over three million Afghan refugees for decades providing shelter, education and employment opportunities. However, the prolonged stay has caused social, political and

economic strains including pressure on resources and security concerns. Recently, Pakistan's policy of repatriating undocumented Afghan ~~ref~~ refugees has sparked tension with Kabul condemning it as unhumane. This issue worsened bilateral relations.

3.5: External Influence

Afghanistan foreign policy has been shaped by external power. India's growing presence in ~~Pakistan~~ Afghanistan through infrastructure and intelligence cooperation is viewed by Pakistan as a security threat. US and western involvement during and after the war on terror influenced Kabul stance towards Pakistan. China has tried to mediate through tri-lateral dialogues and economic initiatives ~~as~~ under CPEC and

BRI framework. Deep rooted rivalries among regional powers continue to hinder lasting peace and mutual trust between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

4. Way forwards to improve relations

There are several way forward Some of which are

4.1: Counterrorism cooperation

Pakistan and Afghanistan need to establish a joint Counterrorism mechanism for coordinated actions against TTP and ISKP Collaborative efforts under international monitoring could ensure transparency and mutual accountability reducing the blame game over militant sanctuaries.

4.2: Enhanced border management

Both countries should implement border patrols and surveillance system along the Durand line to prevent cross border infiltration and smuggling.

4.3: Diplomatic dialogue

Political engagement through structured dialogues is essential for bilateral relations. Both countries should enhance diplomacy through regional forums like SAARC, SCO and OIC promoting trade and cooperation on refugees issues.

4.4: Economic and trade engagement

Both countries should expand bilateral trade routes and cross

border economic projects especially by integrating Afghanistan into CPEC project. This project link will not only enhance regional connectivity but also generate share economic benefits.

4.5: People to people and cultural exchange

Pakistan and Afghanistan should actively promote educational scholarships and cultural programs to foster mutual understanding and counter stereotypes. Pakistan should manage Afghan refugee issues with clear policies and human treatment.

5: Conclusion

Pakistan Afghanistan relations are influenced by historical mistrust, security

threats and external matters while china's mediation provides a platform for dialogues. Sustainable improvement requires consistent cross border security, counterterrorism cooperation, ~~trade~~, and build trust as international level