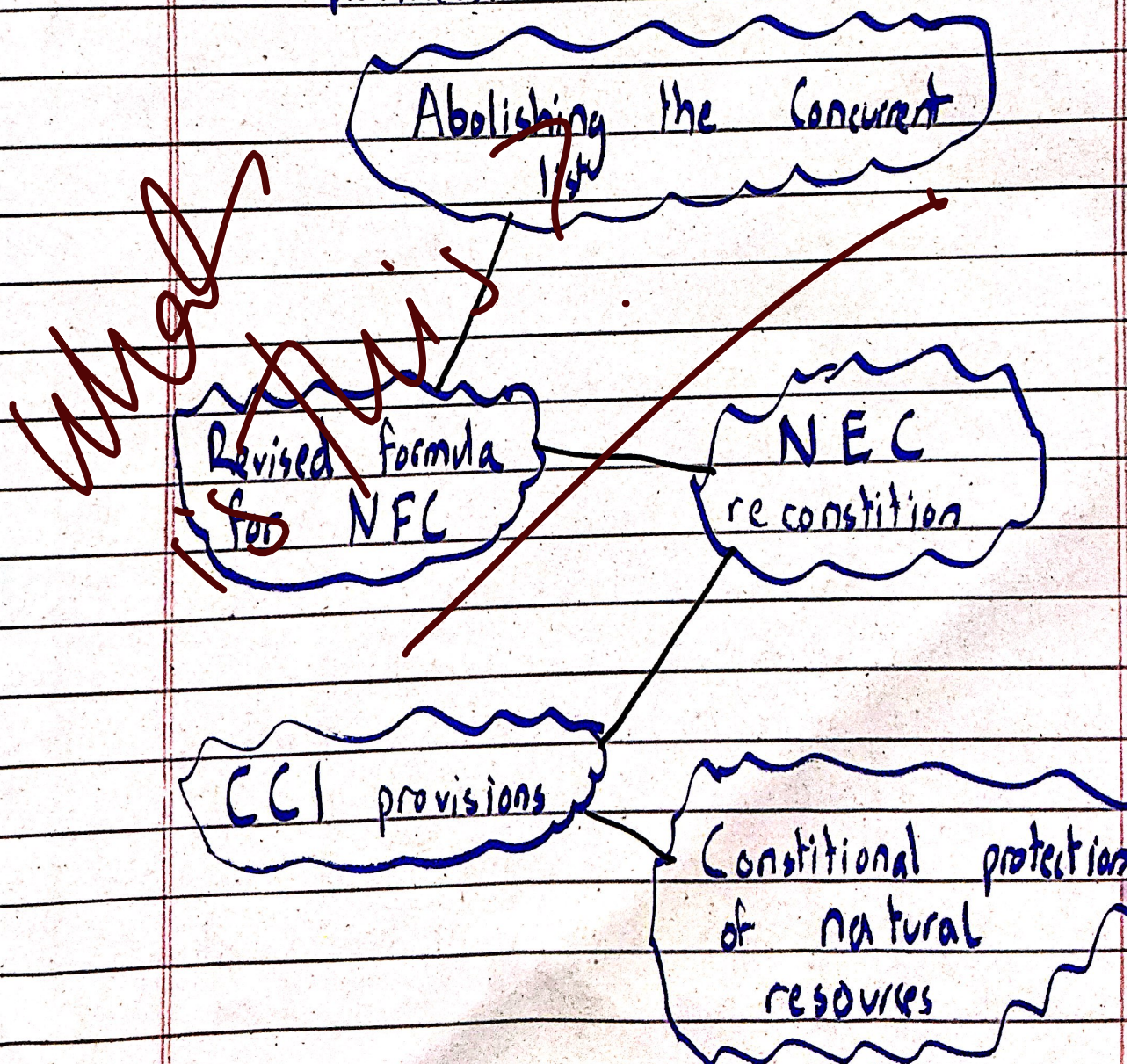


Question no. 2

Devolution of power from top to bottom is the hallmark of democracy. Pakistan has experimented with a centralized and decentralized government since 1947. Being a federal state, devolution of power was always a necessity for the effective functioning of the country. In this context, 18th Amendment was passed in 2010. It brought in many changes vis-a-vis centre-province relations. Abolishing the concurrent list, strengthening of the provinces, recalculating the ~~shares~~ of all the federating units led to a strong federation - in theory. Practically, the local governments were not empowered thus, power was not devolved to the district level. However, pragmatic measures need to be adopted to make the federation of Pakistan a true federation in spirit. These include making local governments autonomous, conducting free and fair elections at local level, and establishing a constitutionally mandated role of local bodies.

~~4th~~ 18th Amendment and 7th NFC:
Major step towards devolution of
power

The 18th Amendment brought in
a true federation and decentralized
powers. The restructuring of the National
Finance Commission also empowered
the provinces.



1. Abolishment of concurrent list; made federating units more autonomous

The dual responsibility of centre and provinces was done away with. As a result, the federating units became ~~autonomous in matters related to health, education, marriage laws, licesense etc~~

2. 7th NFC; Revision of formula and empower empowering the provinces.

The previous resource allocation was based on the basis of population. Resultantly, the most populous province Punjab was given the lion's share. This share was reduced by reconstitution of the formula

Revised share

Punjab ~ 49.5%

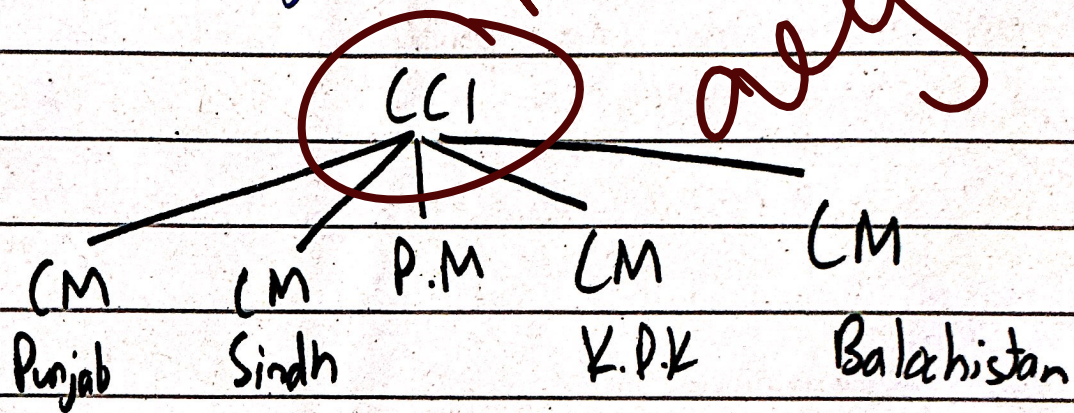
Sind ~ 25%

KPK ~ 15.5%

Balochistan ~ 9.09%

3. Council of Common Interests, CCI was established as a constitutional body thus, protecting the provinces.

According to Article 160 the CCI was designed to have a permanent secretariat and meet atleast after every 90 days



4. Constitutional Protection of Natural Resources; Article 156.

This clause meant natural resources found in any province would be deemed inherent to the province and would receive a royalty as a result from federation. Due to this, the feud of Baluchistan vis a vis natural gas was deemed to be settled.

Devolution stopped at Provincial Level; Districts remain at mercy of Provinces

The devolution was not made to local government level.

1. Article 140 A : devolution to local government - only on paper

Despite the amendment to article 140, local government have ~~to~~ not been made functional. This lack of devolution means provinces still hold the power in contrast to the local governments.

2. Lack of elections at local body level indicates their relegation in government agenda

The last elections to local bodies were held in 2015 in Punjab. Similarly, the electoral process of local bodies remains confined to paper only. This denotes the lack of interest of government with regards to functioning of local government.

3. Unclear responsibilities secondary to ambiguity in constitutional provisions.

The abolishment of concurrent list meant all those powers were delegated to the provinces. Yet, of those what powers were delegated to local government is unclear. Therefore, local governments do not have a clear ~~list~~ of responsibilities.

Way forward: How to ~~ma~~ ensure devolution to local governments

1. Holding of timely elections to local bodies

The election commission must hold timely and constitutional ~~elections~~ to the third ~~to~~ tier of government. Local governments must be elected so that devolution of power can take place. Consequently, regular elections are need of the hour.

2. Ensuring fiscal autonomy of local governments

The third ~~tier~~ can function properly when they are unanswerable to the federation.

or the provinces. A share from the annual budget would induce fiscal autonomy. Public service delivery would increase and the federation would improve.

3. Incorporating the local government plan 2001 in letter and spirit.

The 2001 plan empowered the districts. With 33% seats reserved for women, the plan was truly democratic and hailed by the masses for its effectiveness. Hence, implementation of the local government ordinance is likely to improve governance.

4. Learning from successful local government models of US and France

The local bodies of New York is very effective in local administration. Similarly, the local bodies of Paris are immensely popular for their public service delivery. Fiscal autonomy and completion of tenure are the main reasons for their success. Such lessons need to be learnt to make Pakistan's local bodies more efficient.

Conclusion

The 18th Amendment and 7th NFC

ushered in a new era for
devolution of power. It was a landmark
move, however true devolution can take
place if local governments are empowered
and made autonomous. If the mentioned
steps are taken, the federation will be
strengthened and become prosperous.

Thank you

Question no. 3

Introduction

Pakistan is a prisoner of its geography. The hostile eastern neighbour India has been ideologically opposed to Pakistan since inception. However, the Pakistan's Western neighbour Afghanistan has proved to be a bitter neighbour despite the shared faith and supposed Muslim camaraderie. Post 2021 US withdrawal, the Taliban came to power. When Afg-Pak relations began to sour, China mediated and merely a few days later, matters escalated. The major factors that have contributed to the tense Pak-Afghan relations include Afghan patronage to non-state actors, the indifferent attitude of Afghan Taliban regarding Pakistan's repeated raising of this issue, and the growing romance between New Delhi and Kabul. However, the situation can be improved by prioritizing trade, Afghan commitment to Doha Accord, and adopting track-2 diplomacy to ease the burgeoning tensions.

2. Pak-Afghan Relations: A troubled history

Kabul and Islamabad share a tumultuous history. Kabul's refusal to recognize Durand line and insistence in UN during 1947 had a bitter start in relations. In 1980s, Pak supported Afghanistan in its Jihad against the Soviets. Post 2001, Pak fought against Afghans in War on Terror.

3. China's mediation between Kabul and Islamabad; futile in the contemporary time

Post Taliban takeover in 2021 and US exit, a vacuum was created in Afghanistan. The rogue elements took advantage and terrorist attacks in Pakistan peaked in 2023. Beijing's mediation to solve the issue went in vain. Kabul is currently under India's ambit.

4. Major Factors that have led to tense Pak-Afghan Relations

1. Durand Line

2. Pashtoonistan Movement

3. Indian interest in Kabul

4. Increase in terrorism post Taliban takeover

5. Afghan hatred regarding Pakistan's Afghan Refugee Expulsion

6. Extreme conventional government of Afghanistan

7. Unfulfillment of Doha Accord Pledges

1. Afghan refusal to recognize Durand Line as international border

The Afghan Taliban continue to refuse the recognition of Durand Line as the international border. This threatens Islamabad's territorial integrity and sovereignty. Thus, relations between the two are sour.

2. Pashtoonization of Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa; Afghan impetus to instill disunity among Pakistani Federation

The Taliban continue to awaken the nationalist sentiments of Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa. By trying to increase the centrifugal tendencies of KPK, Kabul is trying to weaken the Pakistani federation.

3. Renewed Indian interest to wreak havoc for Pakistan via Kabul.

~~major factor~~ After India's defeat in May 2025 ~~largest~~ conflict with Pakistan, New Delhi is seen to become proactive in Kabul. Its investment and support to the Taliban regime is increasing every day.

4. Spike in terrorism post 2021 Taliban Takeover

Pakistan faced a sharp spike in terrorist activities post 2021. This is attributed to Afghan Taliban patronage to proscribed groups like Tehrik Taliban Pakistan, TTP and Balochistan Liberation Army, BLA.

5. Afghan hatred to Pakistan's forced expulsion of Afghan refugees

To pressurize the Afghan Taliban, Islamabad adopted the policy of expelling the illegal Afghan refugees in Pakistan. The Taliban view this as an unfriendly and un-Islamic action of a fellow neighbour.

6. Radical government in Kabul; Fear of Talibanization of the frontier

The style of governance in Afghanistan is very radical and orthodox. The establishment of the Ministry for Prevention of Vice and Promotion of Virtue, ban on women education are worrying Islamabad for the spill over effect they will have on the frontier; Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

7. Unfulfillment of Taliban pledges in Doha Accord

The Doha ~~pledge~~ Accord of 2020, Taliban agreed to not provide sanctuary to any rogue terrorist entity. It has failed to implement it. Training grounds of TTP and BKA have complete patronage of the Taliban.

Way Forward: How to improve

Pak-Afghan Relations

Several steps can be taken to improve the relations

1. Taliban stop patronage to TTP; using Refugees as a trump card.

Pakistan can continue to press the issue of expulsion of Afghan refugees. Kabul already has very limited financial resources. Any increase in its domestic population by millions is set to create problems for Kabul. Hence, Islamabad can strong arm it into submission.

2. Using Kabul as a transit to Central Asia

After the issue of state patronage to TTP has been addressed, Kabul can be used to act as a transit for energy rich Central Asian Republics. Landlocked Afghanistan is likely to benefit

3. Track-2 Diplomacy ; Breaking the ice with cricket and culture

Friendly cricket matches and sending of Islamic preachers (like Nomaniz visit in 2021) can be arranged to lower the warm environment between Kabul and Islamabad.

4. China's role of mediation : Adding Kabul to CPEC ; Joint stakes of Kabul and Islamabad

Formally recognizing Afghanistan as a member of CPEC will join the stakes of both Kabul and Islamabad. Beijing can take the role of mediation in this venture. Beijing will likely engage the Taliban to pull it from the ambit of New Delhi.

5. Being wary of Indian beligerence

Simultaneously, Islamabad needs to be vigilant of New Delhi's beligerence. India will try to sabotage any rapprochement between Islamabad and Kabul. Hence Islamabad's intelligence should remain privy to hostile intelligence agencies' nefarious activities in the region.

Conclusion

Pak and Afghanistan have lately been at odds with each other. The major factors for this animosity include India's nefarious activities, Taliban patronage to TTP, and continued incitement of Pakistan's ethnic faultlines. However, the relations can improve if Kabul is economically engaged and the trust deficit with the Taliban is reduced.