

Current Affairs

Question no.1.

Formation of new provinces

Introduction:

The debate on creating new provinces in Pakistan resurfaces whenever questions of administrative efficiency, ethnic identity and resource distribution arise. The debate is not only the administrative efficiency but also its political stability, national unity and economic stability. However, formation of new provinces have some hurdles despite its benefits. Economic constraint, administrative disruption, ethnic tension, political gridlock, intra-regional inequalities, legal complexity and business tax complications are major hurdles in the formation of new provinces. Government should strengthen local governments, fiscal de-

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centralization, adopt phase
approach, build consensus through
dialogue, conduct economic
feasibility, improve administrative
efficiency, adopt rational
framework for province
creation and avoid hasty
reform to prevent provincial escalation.

are suggestion

involvement

Sudden Outburst of Creation of new provinces

~~The current debate appears sudden and politically driven rather than grassroots mobilisation. However, this movement arose out of long-term grievances. The Saraiki belt in south Punjab demand separate province in result of neglectance and political representation. The Hazara division in KPK saw mass protest in 2010 following the renaming of NWFP to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Urban Sindh call for administrative autonomy due to dominance of rural Sindh.~~

Hurdles in the formation of new provinces

There are following hurdles in the formation of new provinces.

1) Economic costs

Formation of new provinces requires establishment of new assemblies, high courts, ministries, secretariats which would cost billions in annual expenditure. For an economy already struggling with fiscal deficit could worsen the economy and lead to financial instability.

2) Administrative disruption

Division of assets, allocation of civil servants, delimitation of constitution and legal disputes over provincial boundaries could worsen the governance for many years. Lack of data regarding population, lands and resources complicate decision making process.

3) Ethnic tension

Drawing new boundaries is a sensitive work in a diverse society. This may trigger ethnic tension. Demand of province for Saraiki, Hazara, Mohajir or Pashtun can create fear of domination by other groups.

4) Political gridlock

Constitutionally, the creation of new provinces

requires approval of two third of the concerned provincial assembly and both houses of Parliament. Securing such consensus is difficult amid political fragmentation and coalition governments.

5) Intra-regional inequalities

New provinces may empower dominant groups within each region leaving rights of minorities. For example, creating South Punjab province dominate Saraiki speakers and ignore minorities.

6) Business and tax complications

Companies operating nationwide would face additional burden under multiple provincial jurisdiction raising costs and reducing quality.

Recommendations

Recommendations to remove hurdles in the formation of new provinces are following:

1) Strengthen local governments

Constitutionally, amend article 140 A to empower local governments. This may ensure financial autonomy, defined responsibilities and decentralized service sectors such as health, education and policing.

2) Fiscal decentralization

Ensure 30-40% of allocated provincial revenue is allocated to district and tehsil government through transparent provincial finance commission.

3) Adopt phase approach

New provinces are created in the regions that

have strong administrative efficiency, clear public demand and economic viability. Strengthen metropolitan model in selected regions, evaluate and then consider new provinces if necessary.

4) Build political consensus through dialogues

A multiparty conference and inter-provincial dialogue reduce hurdles and ensure legitimacy. Consensus based restructuring of provinces avoid ethnic polarisation.

5) Conduct economic feasibility studies

Before any province created, conduct assessment of revenue resources, infrastructure cost and analyze its impact on NFC award. Transparent actions avoid political manipulation.

6) Improve administrative efficiency

For the formation of new provinces, focus is on governance reforms. Improve administrative functions through better service delivery and resource management.

7) Adopt National Framework for province creation

A provincial commission should be established which define criteria for the formation of new provinces on the basis, of population size, revenue sources, cultural identity and geographic location.

Critical Analysis

The formation of new provinces often considered as solution to improve governancy, resources distribution and service delivery.

However, this debate remains politicized and political parties misuse the issue by requiring two third majority. Pakistan which is already struggling with fiscal deficit, circular debt and dependency on foreign aids ^{will} merely redraw boundaries rather than administrative efficiency. Without transparent framework and economic stability, the creation of new provinces is more likely to deepen political conflict than to deliver meaningful governance.

Conclusion:

The formation of new provinces in Pakistan have some hurdles like economic, political, administrative, equality, legal and revenue collection. While strong governance, phase approach, decentralization

economic stability and administrative efficiency can turn this debate into a meaningful governance

Question no. 2

Revival of Militancy

1) Introduction.

Revival of Militancy in KP and Balochistan posed a serious threats to Pakistan's internal stability and security. From 2008-2016 a series of military operation like Rahe-Rast zarb-e-Azab claimed militancy defeated. Thousand being killed or arrested. The writ of state was ensure. But it was short lived as strong revival of TTP and other militant groups in Balochistan and KP. Failed negotiation between TTP and government, weak border management, alienation from resources and role of foreign agencies are the major reasons behind revival of militancy.

2) Short view on Militant groups operating in Pakistan

Sectarian militancy:

Lashker-e-Tahangvi and Sipha-e-Sahaba are sunni militant groups while Sipha-e-Mohammad and Fatimoon are shia militant groups.

Terrorist organizations.

TTP (Tahreek-e-Taliban Pakistan) is on the top of the list comprising 37 small groups. Qari Gulbani group and Islamic State of Khorasan all are responsible for terrorist attack in Pakistan.

Separatist organizations in Balochistan.

BLA (Baloch Liberation Army) is most important group. Majid Brigade (a part of BLA), BRA (Baloch Republican Army), BLF (Baloch Liberation Front) are other militant groups.

These terrorists have adopted guerilla war against Pakistan.

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Guerilla warfare technique

* Hide, hit and run

* IED (Improvised explosive devices)

* Suicide bombing.

Reasons for revival of military (TTP) in KP

1) Spillover from Afghanistan Post 2021

The victory of Afghan Taliban against US and NATO encouraged TTP to challenge the writ of Pakistan once again.

This encourage the terrorist organization to resume attacks against the security forces, Chinese and other target in Pakistan because US and NATO failed to defeat Afghan Taliban.

2) Weak border management

Pakistani Taliban have the leverage of using the bordering of Afghanistan with Pakistan as a launching pad for terrorist attacks in Pakistan. Majority of Pakistan Afghanistan border is still porous especially in hilly areas. They easily cross the border and infiltrate into Pakistan. Afghan Taliban have got closer relations with TTP and are reluctant to go for operation against Pakistani Taliban. They have not been able to stop terrorist organization from using Afghanistan as a launching pad.

3) Failed negotiations with government

The ambiguous policies

of the Government of Pakistan have been responsible for the revival of militancy. Government of Pakistan allowed TTP and Gulbahadur group militants to come back their hometowns but without weapons. Unfortunately weapons were available in Malakand division in abundance.

4) Demands of TTP and government response

Pakistani Taliban demanded the reversal of 25th amendment or reform bills. Through 25th amendment, Frontier crimes regulation (FCR) was abolished and PPC criminal procedure court were extended to FATA. They also demand the control of areas to ^{be} given to TTP. They also demanded the establishment of Shariah bill ^{that was} promulgated in 2008. Such demands were never be accepted by government of

Pakistan. Resultantly, terrorist organizations started terror operations once again.

5) Loopholes in the policing system

Till 2018, there was no policing system in merged district FATA. There were levies and Khasadar. As per the FCR these security personnels were not allowed to enter the villages and houses of the people as per policy system. In 2018, when Police act was passed to ex-FATA, the local policing still not enter the villages and houses of the people. They are not trained and equipped enough to fight for insurgencies. Whenever military forces vacated specific areas,

a policing vacuum was created there. TTP and other militant groups once again entered in these areas. This policing system has resulted in spread of militancy across provinces.

Reasons for the revival of militancy in Balochistan

There are two major schools of thought regarding the separatist militancy in Balochistan. The centralist school of thought who support strong centre and weak units. And other is federalist school of thought ^{who} support strong units and weak centre.

1) Alienation of the common public

The common public get alienated from the state when their socio-economic rights are not fulfilled. Sui gas in Balochistan

Sui gas was explored in 1952 and was provided to all the major parts of the country, Punjab, Sindh and KP by 1960. But Quetta the capital of Balochistan got it in 1984. Sui area

is still deprived of this facility. The reason is that cost of pipeline is big in Balochistan while number of beneficiaries are less because population is dispersed. Majority of the area do not fall under criteria but there are 20+ place in Balochistan that fall under criteria still deprived of gas facility. Saindak copper mine Chaghi Balochistan

Saindak copper mine was explored in 1986 by Chinese company called Metallurgical Company of China. The ratio distribution was Gov. MCC, 48:1. Centre 2:1. Balochistan. In 2023 45:1. MCC, Centre 48.5:1, Balochistan 6.5:1. Minimum resources distribution

According to 7th NFC award, for centre and for provinces. In Provinces share, Balochistan has minimum share of only . The number

of institutions are less because the financial share of Balochistan has been considerably low.

2) Gwadar issue

Gwadar port to make Pakistan a transit corridor largest seaport in Asia Pacific. China is stationed the area and security of Chinese is the top priority. Otherwise the project will fail. Because of security and checkpoints local people are unable to communicate which antagonized the people from state.

3) The Rise of armed militancy

When the socio-economic rights of the people are not being fulfilled by the state and when the state adopt coercive measures creates an environment of armed insurgencies. Baloch leaders held the state responsible for these

insurgencies.

4) Invitation to a foreign power

When insurgency spreads across the country, it provides an opportunity for foreign agencies to fuel up the crisis. RAW has been involved in supporting the separatist organizations in Balochistan.

Recommendations for the Removal of militancy in KP and Balochistan

1) Intelligence based Operations

Major Operation like Zarb-e Azab are not required right now because such operations have heavy cost and massive social cost (displacement of people). Intelligence based operation should be targeted, precise to prevent huge destruction.

2) Police reforms

Increase in number of police, sufficient funds for police department and required weapons. This would enable police to fight for insurgent groups in a much better way.

3) Socioeconomic development

Launch rapid development programs in conflict hit areas such as schools, hospital, roads. Government must ensure economic projects including local hiring and community based benefits to avoid insurgency.

4) Inclusive political dialogue

Government members structured dialogue with group leaders by addressing their issues.

5) Improve border security and regional diplomacy

Enhance surveillance,

border fencing and legal trade route between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Strengthen diplomatic engagement with Kabul and Tehran to curb cross border sanctuaries and weapons smuggling.

Conclusion.

The revival of militancy in KP and Balochistan is not of a single cause but the product of different cause such as governance issue, Crossborder terrorism, ^{and} socio-economic problems. A comprehensive strategy combining intelligence operations, peaceful dialogues, border fencing, federal-provincial coordination offer the best option for regional peace, security and stability.