



**Changing Patterns of Local Government System in Pakistan:
Analysis of Post 18th Amendment Challenges**

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Abstract:

The Local Government system working in the Pakistani's political and administrative structure was actually inherited from the British colonial system. Ironically, being a democratic country, much of the period of Local Government system has remained under different military regimes that set the tone for organizing Local Government institutions in the country. However, all the military regimes have tried to place an authoritarian rule by limiting public participation and administered the country through the non-representative entities such as bureaucracy. On the other hand, the elected civilian government did nothing to strengthen local government institutions by failing to provide political and economic amenities to ensure empowerment of people at grass-root level. The study comparatively analyzes LG systems under both military and civilian rules and discusses the issues during these historical moments. This paper mainly focuses on the analysis of the post 18th Amendment issues and challenges which are hindering provinces to strengthen local government system. Exploratory and analytical methods have been employed with discourse analysis for clarity and understanding.

Keywords: Pakistan, 18th Constitutional Amendment, local government system, authoritarian rule, bureaucracy, provincial autonomy, decentralization

INTRODUCTION

Democracy is the most popular political system, yet it is a complex political system which success depends upon some pre-requisites and peculiar political and economic environment. As no government can effectively and efficiently govern the whole country from one center,

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therefore, it is required to decentralize political and financial power and authority at grass roots level. Empowerment of local government institutions is one of the most important conditions for the successful functioning of democratic institutions which is not possible without decentralization of political, economic and administrative authority and resources to the Local Government at grass-roots level (Dick-Sagoe, 2020). It is one of the important principles of modern democracy that local bodies should have maximum power and authority in the administration of those matters which are local in nature. Democratic government works for the welfare of people which is also not possible without strengthening democracy at grass roots level. In South Asia the institutions of Local Government had been existed since ancient time in the shape of Panchayats which means group of five who used to settle different issues of villagers, but this body was not representative of the whole village, rather they were representing landlords and upper classes of Hindu Community (Anjum, 2006).

However, modern system of Local Government was introduced in India during the period of British Government, but main philosophy behind all the pre-independence enactment regarding Local Government reforms was to create a class of elites which could provide a link between rulers and ruled and the provision of social services and promotion of democracy was secondary to them. Therefore, Local Government institutions could not be developed on sound footing in South Asia. After the independence the same system remains continue with slight modification, but desire objectives could not be achieved (Anjum, 2006).

It is interesting to note that all political parties and their leaderships are strong supporter of democracy, yet they discourage the establishment of viable Local Government institutions when they came to power and it has always been introduced by military regimes. The passage of 18th Constitutional Amendments was a major political and constitutional development which decentralized administrative and financial power and authority at provincial level. This amendment also authorized the Provincial Government to established Local Government institutions at local level, but all the provinces failed to establish sustainable Local Government system as stipulated in the article 140-(A) of the Constitution of 1973 (Laski, 1967).

The institutions of Local Government have great importance in democratic countries because without them performance of government cannot be improve. Moreover, most of the economic and political problems faced by people are local in nature which require local solution, because local representatives not only understand these problems but may also suggest appropriate solution of the problems. This study focuses on the question: Why civilian governments are reluctant to introduce Local Government system? Highlights the post 18th Amendment issues and challenges to Local Govt.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Dick-Sagoe (2020) noted that decentralization of power and authority at grass roots level is vital to strengthen democracy and to enhance the performance of government. Anjum (2006) discussed in his work that system of Local Government had existed in India since ancient time in the shape of Panchayat but it was not true representative body. It further stated that modern system of Local Government was introduced in India by British. The study also included history of Local Government before and after the partition and various issues and challenges which obstructed in the promotion of Local Bodies institutions in the country.

Sultan (2010) elucidated that one important cause of weakness of democratic system in Pakistan is absence of Local Government institutions which is essential for the success of democracy and good governance. The work also highlighted that in USA and West Europe democracy is successfully functioning and performance of government is good due to existing of sound LG at grass roots level.

Afzal (2019) analyzed the framework and structure of Local Government system introduced by military regimes of Ayub Khan and Zia-ul-Haq and also made comparative analysis of both systems. Quddus (1981) in this study has given detailed analysis of the evolution and development of Local Government institutions in different countries of the world in general and Pakistan in particular. Abid (2002) evaluated the Devolution of Power Plan introduced by the military regime of Musharraf in 2000 under which first time in the history of Pakistan system of District Government was established headed by Nazim. Khan (2003) in this work made detail analysis of the structure and objectives of Local Government system introduced by various military regimes, but they used Local Government institutions to consolidate their unjust rule.

Mazhar-ul-Haq (1967) highlighted that democracy is best system of government but it requires suitable socio-economic conditions for its promotion and development. This study also revealed that democratic government works for the welfare of the people and without sound Local Government institutions social welfare services cannot be efficiently provide to citizens. Jalalzai (2003) observed that without decentralization of power and resources at grass root levels the performance of government cannot be improved. Qasim (2014) argued that political parties and their leadership are not sincere to decentralize power and authority at grass roots level.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research is qualitative and descriptive in nature in which both primary and secondary sources have been utilized for the collection of data which guide and provide foundation to this study. Primary data has been collected from politicians and officials associated with local government institutions and secondary data collected from books, research magazines, newspapers and internet. The researcher has also utilized the comments and analysis published in different English and Urdu newspapers and magazines regarding importance and strengthening of Local Government institutions. The researcher has also used the facilities of World Wide Web in inter net for research and analysis. The qualitative study helps to highlight the problems, issues and challenges faced by elected representatives at grass roots level for delivering services to their respective communities. A qualitative perspective of the study is primarily focused on the problems hampering the smooth functioning of Local Government intuitions in Pakistan.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

There are two main concepts of allocation of governmental power and authority: centralization and decentralization. In centralization all powers and authority of government is in the hands of one central government and least power and authority are given to local government. On the other hand, decentralization is the transfer of political, economic and administrative authority and resources from center to the local government at grass roots level (Dick-Sagoe, 2020). It is one of the most important principles of modern democracy that Local Government institutions

should have maximum power and authority in the administration of those matters which are local in nature (Anjum 2006). As modern states are large and have diversity of culture, language, races and traditions and these states may not be efficiently and effectively administered by one Central Government. Such diverse and heterogeneous state may not understand and offer effective solution to problems which are local in nature (Mazhar-ul-Haq, 1991). It has, therefore, been considered appropriate to decentralize power and authority which is local in nature; which could be solved in a better way at grass roots level according to the local genius of the people. It is due to this reason that Professor Laski has stated that we cannot realize the full benefits of democratic government, unless and until we began by admission, that all problems are not central problems and the results of the problems not central require decision at a place where it is most deeply felt (Laski, 1967).

The system of decentralization of power and authority is much conversant with the desires, needs, culture, traditions and habits of the people of specific region. Under 1973 Constitution, Pakistan is a federal state, where power has been distributed between Central Government and Provincial Governments. After 18th Constitutional Amendment concurrent list has been abolished and most of the powers from this list have been transferred to provinces. This new development has increased the responsibilities and pressure of work on the administration of all Provincial Governments which is main cause of inefficiency and bad governance in the provinces. Due to this reason that there should be decentralization of political and economic authority at grass roots level without which neither democracy could flourish, nor the performance of government cannot be improved (Rafique et. al, 2020).

DECENTRALIZATION AS ESSENCE OF DEMOCRACY

Democracy may be defined as system of government based on participation of people in the affairs of government. Democracy is, indeed, the best form of government, yet it is also the most difficult system of government and it is the only form of government, whose success depends on some pre-conditions and peculiar social, economic and political environment. It is fact that Local Government is very much essential for the success of democracy, because it creates conducive environment which is essential to strengthen democratic political system. Due to this reason Lord Bryce said that Local Government institutions inculcate the spirit of intellect, appropriateness, justice and social harmony which is essential for the success of democracy (Mathenjwa, 2016)

The concept of Local Government developed in ancient time when rulers of some great empires felt the need of having information about the people living in far flung areas. For this purpose, they constituted committees of prominent persons of locality, who used to keep the emperor informed about the conditions of people and also about the progress going on in different social and economic projects in their areas. With the passage of time some administrative, financial and judicial powers were also transferred to them. During the period of Roman Empire these institutions had also existed but not for providing services to common people, rather they were serving the cause of ruling class. Modern system of Local-Government is product of Industrial Revolution and evolution of democratic political system in the West. After Industrial Revolution process of migrations started from rural to urban areas for better life, which increased the population in urban areas (Suleiman, 2002).

Urbanization created different social, economic and political problems because the existing infrastructure had no capability to face new challenges, which rendered the traditional system of Local Government obsolete and ineffective. The new industrial centers grew up which demanded better infrastructure i.e. better police, better roads, better sanitation and sound socio-economic institutions. As a result, old system of Local Government was organized on modern lines so as to cope with new socio-economic challenges. Moreover, in order to check the process of migration toward urban areas, European Governments also decided to provide better facilities to the people in rural areas and for this purpose they felt the need of stable Local Government institutions without which development in rural areas was not possible (Suleiman, 2002).

Important of Local Government System

The term Local Government means the management of local affairs of people by their elected representatives belong to that particular village or town. It is based on the principle that local problems, needs and other matters can be administered by the people of locality better than the Central or Provincial Government. It refers to all those bodies which are created at local level to perform the functions related to the resident of locality by elected representatives of that area. Normally, it performs three important functions i.e. provision of services, management of resources and planning for future (Razvi, 1976).

Firstly, the institutions of Local Government are essential for sustainable democracy and good governance because the experience and knowledge acquire at local level could be utilized at central and provincial level as Local Government institutions are considered as training ground for successful functioning of democratic institutions. It is matter of common observation that what is done by Village/ Town Council in the solution of our common problems, gives us degree of satisfaction which is unobtainable when it is done for us by others. Democracy is successfully working in Europe and America because of the existence of strong Local Government institutions. On the other hand, democratic system is weak in developing countries because of the weakness of Local Government institutions at local level.

Secondly, Local Government institutions also serve as instrument of political education for people. It ensures effective participation of citizens in the politics, which make them aware about their rights and duties. There are many problems at local level which need to be solved locally in accordance with local needs, environment and wishes of the people. Central or Provincial Government cannot understand the local problems of people (Sultan, 2010).

Thirdly, Local Government institutions provide numerous civics amenities to the inhabitants such as collection of garbage, cleaning of streets, provision of water, fire service, health service and provision of education. It not only provides certain essential services to the people at local level but also reduce the burden of either Central or Provincial Government. If the Central/Provincial Government is over loaded with work, it will become incompetent, incapable and inefficient to perform their assigned duties.

Fourthly, the misuse of power and corruption of bureaucracy may be checked in the presence of elected representatives at grass root level. In the presence of strong Local Government institutions, the members of bureaucracy will work efficiently and honestly which may enhance the efficiency of governance in the country.

Lastly, Local Government may also serve as channel of communication between rulers and ruled. These institutions keep the government informed about the problems faced by people at grass root level. The people living in far flung areas come to know about the government policies and programs for the solution of their problems through the representatives of Local Government.

Good Governance and Local Government

Governance generally conceived as an exercise of political, economic and administrative authority for the welfare of the people. It is a mechanism which controls the relationship between two extremes-rulers and ruled. The political process lies at the core of governance and this can be efficient only if elections are free and fair, elected government is accountable, balance division of authority between three organs of government and decentralization of political and economic authority at grass roots level. Good governance can be understood in terms of three major components i.e. political authority that exist in a country, means through which it is exercised for efficient management of economic resources and political authority and ability of government to discharge its allotted functions efficiently, effectively and equitably for the betterment of common people. Government must therefore, set up institutions for the maintenance of law and order, protection of the rights of the citizen and also encourage internal and external investment and productions. The state should also play effective role in the establishment of basic infrastructure and provision of services such as health and education for poor. But since independence, real power has been exercised by small elites group, comprising civil servants, military officers, landlords and capitalist class, who successfully adopted colonial structure of government to strengthen their influence and hold over power (Khan, 2003).

Democracy in Pakistan has never been allowed to function effectively and government in power has been destabilized through conspiracies by elites class for the protection of their selfish interest which is important cause of political instability and bad governance in the country. Decentralization of political and economic authority is most effective means to solve these problems and it is global trend to strengthen Local Government system because without them neither democracy could flourish nor performance of government may be improved. Many studies around the world have shown that through effective decentralization of power, authority, and resources at grass roots level, the institutions of Local Government could be made pro poor and monopoly of elites could be ended. Pakistan inherited a colonial pattern of administration and like most of Asian and African countries, the colonial master handed over power to political leaders who had no experience of good governance and sound planning that is important cause of bad governance in the country. Effective decentralization and maximum participation of people in the affairs of government would reduce corruption and ensure increase in cost effectiveness of social services which ultimately promote the performance of governance. It will also reduce the problem of ethnicity and sense of deprivation among the people in backward regions which is a significant cause of ethnic conflicts and tension in Pakistan (Khan, 2003).

Dilemmas of Local Government System in Pakistan

Since independence the system of Local Government remained a theoretical exercise only and

was not put into practice with sincerity, therefore proper infrastructure of Local Government could not develop in the province. Local Government can grow and take root only in a democratic environment, but unfortunately, neither Central nor Provincial Governments had provided an environment conducive to the growth of Local Government institutions (Kandhro & Akbar, 2015).

Some of the important causes of the weakness of Local Government system are the following: First, political parties and their leaderships are not willing to decentralize administrative and economic authority at grass roots level. All political parties in Pakistan seem to have an unannounced accord not to strengthen Local Government system. All are on the consensus that general election must be held and their discontinuity will endanger their definition of democracy, but they are not sincere to empower Local Government institutions which could take away from them many administrative powers along with developmental funds worth billions of rupees from their hand (Hussain, 2013).

Second, at present developmental funds for the province are used by political parties and provincial government only in selective cities. If the management these projects are decentralize to District Government as happening all over the world, then what performance would the Chief Ministers of the provinces to show to electorate in the time of next election? In addition to it, If Local Government election held, the ruling party may lose control over some of the districts. Therefore, they are not interested in holding Local Government election (Qasim, 2014).

Third, without Local Government institutions, it is easy to misuse developmental funds by Provincial Government but in the existence of viable Local Government system even a citizen of Union Council knows how much developmental funds his local councilor has been allotted and it is not difficult for them to hold the local councilors accountable. On the other hand, when billions of rupees are spent by head of government in collusion of bureaucracy, there is no chance of any accountability. Provincial Chief Minister with the blessing of party heads wants to rule the districts directly through civil servant appointed by him. Bureaucrats also feel more comfortable and freer in misusing power and funds, being directly answerable to CM, who is based in distant provincial capital, than to have to local politicians hanging over their heads (Qasim, 2014).

Some other problems and issues which restrained the development of Local Government institutions at grass roots level are lack of information and knowledge, lack of power and authority and financial dependency on provincial govt. Due to missing of strong Local Government institutions at grass root level, the government institutions/offices established at local level to provide social services particularly in education and health sector, are not giving their due out put, because there is no proper check over them (A. Siddequi, personal communication, Apr. 19, 2015).

The institutions of Local Government have long history in Sub-Continent. In ancient India it was existed in the shape of Panchayat which means the group of five who used to settle different issues of villagers in rural areas. This body, however was not representing whole village, rather it was representatives of landlords and upper cost of Hindu Community. After Mughal decline, British captured India and they decided to introduce modern system of Local Government in

Sub-Continent. However, the main philosophy behind all pre-independence enactment regarding Local Government system was to create a class of elites who could provide a link between the rulers and ruled. The object of social, economic and political reconstruction of society was secondary importance for colonial master (Sharma, 1990).

After independence, Pakistan adopted act of 1935 as provisional constitution under which Provincial Government were entrusted the responsibility of organizing Local Government while Central Government retained the responsibility of Cantonment Board. The system of Local Government inherited by Pakistan from British in 1947 was product of series of British efforts made from time to time through act of parliament and reports of different commissions. But Local Government institutions remained under the control of Provincial Governments through civil servants.

Impacts of 18th Constitutional Amendment On Local Government System

In 2008, Musharraf resigned and elected government came to power at central and provincial level. It was expected that elected government would improve the performance of government and would work to strengthen democracy, but unfortunately it did not happen. The elected government of Pakistan People's Party (PPP) after taking over passed 18th Constitutional Amendment (April, 2010) in which more autonomy was given to provinces and also increased the share of the provinces in national resources under 7th NFC award. But 18th Constitutional Amendment too was not free of shortcomings, though it resolved the key issue of provincial autonomy and thus broken the monopoly and domination of center over financial resources and administrative structure. However, all Provincial Governments stopped to further devolve the power down to grass root level. So earlier the issue was how to break the power of Central Government over national resources and administrative hierarchy and now the issue is how to break the monopoly of Provincial Government and to strengthen Local Government at grass roots level as stipulated in the article 140-A of the Constitution of 1973 (Qasim, 2014).

The article 140-A says that each province shall establish Local Government system and decentralize political, economic and administrative authority to the elected representatives of Local Government. It is interesting to note that the establishment of Local Government system was included in principle of policy that was not enforceable part of the Constitution of 1973 but now after 18th Amendment it has become enforceable part of the constitution. This new change in the constitution has made the Provincial Government more powerful and the resulting non-sharing of power have made the whole system of government at provincial level too difficult and cumbersome. The primary aim of all the Provincial Governments seems not to establish vibrant and strong Local Government institutions, but to set up compliant local bodies system. The laws regarding Local Government have been designed in such a way that Provincial Government can easily interfere in the working of Local Government (A. Sardar, personal communication, Jan. 18, 2015).

18th Constitutional Amendment was considered as an important step in Pakistan's federal history, as it granted provincial autonomy to the provinces by transferring substantial powers to them. In the beginning it was hoped that the decentralization of authority would authorize LG system equally along with Provinces. But preliminary studies on the post 18th Amendment

provincial autonomy explored that it created new form of centralization of power at provincial level and different constraints were observed during the implementation phases i.e. lack of political will, capacity building and lack of coordination at various levels (Ali & Khan, 2022).

After the amendment, it is now mandate of the provinces to establish Local Government system in their respective provinces. The provinces are bound under Article 140-A to do necessary arrangements and establish LG system and devolve political, administrative and financial responsibilities to these elected bodies at grass-root level. But, the behavior of Provincial Governments towards establishment of Local Government institutions are annoying and irresponsible (Kakar, 2017). Punjab is the most populated province of Pakistan have a biggest share of seats in federal Legislature (NA). Local Government system in Punjab has seen great upheavals such as inconsistency and political intervention. Local Government Acts 2013 and 2019 were considered as great milestones for devolution of power but they were not fully implemented and elections of Local Government were delayed on different pretext. It was only after directives from higher judiciary that elections to local bodies were held in Punjab. LGs which were elected in 2015, was dissolved before the expiry of its term in 2019. According to different sources, the suspension of Local Government institutions and giving more heed to bureaucrats expose the dual face of elites that is a grave violation of the constitution (Kakar, 2017).

Sindh is the second most populous province with both rural and urban governance patterns. The province is currently governed by Pakistan People's Party (PPP). Karachi is the mega sea port city considered a business hub of the whole country, but the Provincial Government of Sindh province creates hurdles in the way of effective devolution of power and elections were delayed (Kakar, 2017). For example, in new legislative reforms regarding Local Government system is seen as a step curtailing the powers of LG in Karachi as some major local services like water supply, building control and solid waste management has been given to Provincial Government (Hussain, 2019).

In KP Province, Pakistan Tehrik-i-Insaf (PTI) has been in power since 2013 and in the beginning PTI government has adopted mixed approach towards empowerment of Local Government institutions as initially it showed some progress in local bodies election but a gradual decline has also been noted in the powers of these bodies. In 2013, great administrative and financial control was granted to LGs but the control has been taken away after amendment in KP Local Government Act in 2019 under which two tier structure of the Local Government was introduced and District Government which is most important tier of Local Government institutions has been abolished. Initially, the act aimed at decentralization of authority to LG yet the new amendment has reversed the power given to these bodies (Janjua, 2022). The amendment curtailed the financial and administrative authority of LGs. It has been observed that elections to LGs were held phase wise from 2021 to 2022, yet the delay caused inefficiencies and erosion of public trust on local bodies while the non-delivery of local funds to local government representatives has greatly undermined public trust on local governments (Hussain, 2022).

In Baluchistan province the Local Government election were held in 2013, yet local bodies a still lacked capacity to provide basic facilities to their respective communities because Provincial

Government had not devolved some important administrative, financial and political powers and authority to them. In addition to it due to insurgencies, separatist tendencies and terrorism, authoritative issues are on the surface which further complicates the LG governance system in Baluchistan and it is on the full disposal of provincial bureaucracies. The over reliance on Provincial Government for administrative and financial matters has greatly undermined the true essence of grass roots democracy in the province (Kakar, 2017).

Issues and Challenges to Local Government after 18th Amendment

Passages of 18th Constitutional Amendment in the Constitution of 1973 was major constitutional development to strengthen Local Government system in Pakistan. But Local Government institutions in all provinces still have to confront certain issues and challenge the detail of which are as follow;

- 18th Constitutional Amendment has given financial autonomy to the provinces, but provinces still have shortage of money and resources to meet social sector expenditure. The limited decentralization of taxing power imposes fiscal liability on provinces. Though this amendment accommodated the administrative power in the hand of provinces yet they have failed to deliver public service due to deficiency of resources (Burki, 2010).
- This new amendment has also empowered the province to devolve and decentralize the power to Local Government institutions, but after lapse of many years no positive measures has been taken to strengthen Local Government system in all the provinces. Political Parties and their leaderships do not want devolution of power and authority at local level as stipulated in the article 140-A of the Constitution of 1973 (Farooqui, 2020). Owing to lack of devolution of power at grass roots level, the entire responsibilities has been concentrated in the provinces which have no capacity to provide efficient delivery of services to people at grass roots level (Shah, 2012).
- Although 18th Amendment has also given responsibility to provinces, but provinces do not have enough financial resources and capacity to provide quality education to millions of school children and to bring about improvement of the physical infrastructure of existing educational institutions (Hussain , 2022).
- The changes made in the Constitution of 1973 under new amendment has empowered provinces to further decentralize and devolve power at local level, which require visionary leaderships, positive role of political parties and efficient civil service that work for the betterment of public. But unluckily, in all provinces there is no visionary leadership, political parties are working for their vested interest and bureaucracy is more corrupt and inefficient. This situation cannot be change without devolution of power and authority at grass root level which is the global trend to promote efficiency of government (Hussain , 2022).

FINDINGS

Lack of coordination and politicization of LGs is a common practice in all provinces. The LGs led by parties other than those ruling the provincial government are seen as threats and not as partners. This lack of trust and coordination results in election delays, and hinders budget allocation for developmental purposes. Due to inconsistencies in Provincial Finance Commissions e.g. administrative and distributive, e.g. the expiration of PFCs (Punjab PFC award expired) and non-renewal has left LGs mostly ineffective and dependent on the provincial allocation of funds. Most of the local representatives lack efficiency and training how to navigate the bureaucratic mechanism for attaining funds and implementing development programs. The

role of judiciary is important to consider, the courts have ordered to set up LGs respectively, yet they did not make provinces bound under Article 140-A to empower them. After the 18th amendment, provinces were given full course to implement LG systems but without a harmonious framework. A need of 'National LG Policy (NLG-Policy)' is felt because without coherent national level plan, the provinces have adopted different LG-structures with varying powers and capacities. Under 18th amendment it was sought to give more autonomy to provinces and decentralization of authority downwards yet it created centralization within province. Addressing these issues require an understanding, and harmonious approach both at national and provincial level.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The existence of strong system of Local Government at grass root level is effective solution of the problems of locality, because local representative can understand and addressed the local problems in a better way than Provincial Government. Moreover, decentralization of economic and political authority at grass root level will reduce pressure of work over provincial governments, which will bring about efficiency and improvement in administration, but unluckily, no sincere efforts have been made in this direction. It is interesting to note that in the entire history of Pakistan, Local Government system has always been established by military dictators, but they also used it to create their own political cadre. There are many causes of failure in democracy and poor governance in Pakistan, but one dominant causes of the weakness of democracy and bad governance is lack of well-organized Local Government institutions at grass roots level. Local Government can grow and flourish only in a democratic environment, but unfortunately elected government always discouraged it when they came to power.

18th Amendment in the Constitution of 1973 was landmark achievement in the political and constitutional history of Pakistan because it was long awaited demand of the people of all the provinces of Pakistan. This amendment empowered provinces to establish Local Government system and decentralize administrative, political and financial power and resources at grass roots level, but despite passage of 18th Constitutional Amendment, all provinces did not expedite the legislation regarding sound Local Government system. It resorted to the intervention of higher judiciary to compel provinces which often hid behind technical and political excuse to legislate on the subject of local bodies. For the advancement of the country, it is imperative to shift governance paradigms by empowering Local Government institutions as driver of human development because sound Local Government system can foster inclusive growth, equitable distribution of resources and efficient execution of developmental program and projects. Through implementing Local Government reforms, we can unlock full potential of democracy, empower communities and establish an equitable and responsive governance model that can truly serve the public. Following recommendations may be given to strengthen Local Government institutions at local level:

Constitutional Protection: After 18th Constitutional Amendment in 2010, it is now responsibility of the Provincial Government under article 140-A of the constitution of 1973 to make necessary arrangement and conduct Local Government election. But constitution of 1973 is still silent about the structure, procedures and time frame for local government election. To conduct local bodies' election on regular basis on the pattern of National Assembly and Provincial Assemblies

elections, constitution of 1973 may be amended and structure, procedure and time frame of Local Govt election may be added to the constitution.

Party Base Election: Except Union Council, the election for all other institutions of Local Government may be held on party basis. Through party base election, public could be acquainted about the performance and popularity of ruling parties both at national and provincial level. In this way the misuse of the authority of ruling party could be check and its performance may be improved.

Financial Autonomy: Financial autonomy is one of the most important conditions for the successful functioning of Local Government institutions. Therefore, it is necessary that Local Government may be given financial power to impose local level taxes, which is beyond the reach of Provincial Government. This arrangement on one hand could broaden tax base and on other hand may reduce financial pressure on provincial government.

Arrangements of PFC Award on the pattern of NFC Award: For the equitable distribution of financial resources among all the districts of the provinces, Provincial Finance Commission (PFC) Award may be announced on the patterns of National Finance Commission (NFC) Award. It is through this way that we can strengthen Local Government institutions and could also ensure development of economic and social infrastructure at district level on equal footing.

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