

## CREATION OF ADDITIONAL PROVINCES AND ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS IN PAKISTAN – PROS AND CONS

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### ABSTRACT

More provinces are created in many countries as and when the need arises. In Pakistan also, the creation of new provinces has been voiced since independence. Renaming of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and backing of Saraiki movement by the elected government have given further thrust to these voices. The basic reason for improving governance and uplift of backward areas has been overshadowed by ethnicity and political desires. This ethnic provincial politics in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa left an enduring effect on the present politics of the country. The situation has been further complicated as governments and political players always warm up their muscles in a do-or-die condition to succeed in elections. There is a strong resistance also against the creation of new provinces in many circles. Relevance of the creation of new provinces in other countries vis-à-vis the scenario in Pakistan, the balkanization of Pakistan and the increase of ethnic and political rivalry are a few reasons for this resistance. While analysing the background of the problem and keeping in view national integration in focus, this research is an attempt to find out the perception that is there a need to create new provinces or administrative units in Pakistan.

**Keywords:** provinces, administrative units, Pakistan, Punjab, Baluchistan, Sindh, KPK, politics of Pakistan, geography of Pakistan, administration of Pakistan, economy of Pakistan

### INTRODUCTION

“While, however, one must love one ‘s town and work for its welfare, indeed because of it, one must love better one’s country and work more devotedly for it. Local attachments have their value but what is the value and strength of a part except within the whole? Yet this is a truth people so easily seem to forget and begin to prize local, sectional or provincial interests above and regardless of national interests. It naturally pains

me to find the curse of provincialism holding sway over any section of Pakistan” (Ahmed, 1996). Based on this statement of the founder of Pakistan and the fact that Pakistan is a federal state this paper is an attempt to find out “Will creation of more provinces or administrative units (Ahmed, 2018) promote ethnic fragmentation or national integration? It is an important issue as Pakistan has already suffered a divide based on

ethnicity. It also reviews all the other important aspects of the subject which are required for national integration including the ideology of Pakistan.

### Review of Related Literature:

Pakistan is a multiethnic nation made up of both tribal and federating territories. Four historical “nationalities”—the Punjabis, Sindhis, Pushtoons, and Baloch—as well as a significant linguistic group—the Urdu-speaking people—as well as several minor ethnolinguistic groupings, have historically been used to characterize Pakistan’s ethnic diversity (Rahman, 1996; Waseem, 1996). As of 2010, the administrative divisions were based on those that British India had left behind. Pakistan was divided into two wings, separated by 1600 kilometres, between 1947 and 1971 (Shah, 2019). The Sylhet District from the erstwhile Indian state of Assam was part of the single province of East Bengal, which made up the eastern wing (Khan & Palwasha, 2020). The western wing was formed from three full provinces,<sup>1</sup> one Chief Commissioner’s Province,<sup>2</sup> thirteen princely states and parts of Kashmir (Chadda, 2002). In 1948, the area around Karachi was separated from Sind province to form the Federal Capital Territory. In 1950 Hazara<sup>3</sup> province was expanded to include the small states of Amb and Phulra and the name of West Punjab was changed to Punjab. The four princely states of southwest Pakistan formed the Baluchistan States Union in 1952 (Zafar & Shahid, 2020). In 1955, the western wing’s provinces and princely states were combined to create the new province of West Pakistan, with Lahore serving as the provincial capital, as part of the One Unit doctrine. East Bengal was renamed East Pakistan at the same time, and the provincial capital was Dhaka. When Rawalpindi and Islamabad were finished, the federal capital was relocated from Karachi in 1960. The Federal Capital Territory was merged into West Pakistan in 1961 (Shah, 2019).

Although President Ayub Khan abolished the role of Chief Minister of West Pakistan in favour of governor control, the One Unit concept aimed to reduce costs and eliminate provincial prejudices.

The second military president, Yahya Khan, abolished West Pakistan in 1970 and founded four new provinces (Mushtaq, 2009). East Pakistan gained independence in December 1971, becoming the new country of Bangladesh. The last princely states<sup>4</sup> were disbanded in 1974, and their area joined with the Gilgit Agency to establish the Northern Areas.<sup>5</sup> In 1975, the Federally Administered Tribal Areas were formed by combining sections of Hazara, Peshawar, and Dera Ismail Khan Districts. The Islamabad area was designated as a capital territory in 1981.<sup>6</sup> Gilgit-Baltistan has also been granted autonomous status (Waseem, 2018).

Elections were held in 2001 after the “divisions” were eliminated in August 2000 as part of a strategy to reorganize local governance. The districts and tehsils now conduct a large number of the tasks that were formerly performed by the provinces (Jaffery, 2021). The previous level of “divisions” was reinstated in 2008 by the new government, which also nominated commissioners for each (Mushtaq, 2009). A federal state is what Pakistan is. A state must have at least two territorially distinct levels of administration, neither of which is subordinate to the others, though they may be interconnected, to be considered a federation (Waseem, 2010). The demographic preponderance of the East Pakistan province, which accounted for 55% of the country’s population, presented Pakistan with the problem of an unbalanced federal structure from the start. The ongoing center-province relationship dilemma is the foundation of Pakistan’s federal problem. The three minor provinces’ aspiration for provincial autonomy (Ali, 2019) is highlighted by a profile of the state’s Punjabization (Zafar & Shahid, 2020). Since independence in 1947, various structural changes have taken place in Pakistan. The visible aim of structural changes was good governance (Bugti, 2023) but the same could not be accomplished (Kamran 2008). The same has been used as a tool by political parties for power sharing and has instigated people to demand autonomous, manageable and small provinces (Jaffery, 2021; Siddiq, 2018).

Provincial autonomy in Pakistan, in general, may

be traced back to colonial policies and decisions made before and after Partition. British rule in India was maintained through legislation passed by the British Parliament. Under the 1935 Act, some provinces<sup>6</sup> had more powers than others since they were eventually converted into judicial commissioner's provinces, headed by a commissioner who was both the administrative and judicial head (Talbot, 2015). The introduction of the federal or unitary system in India was the subject of a contentious debate in the Indian press and British Parliament from 1925 to 1935. The consensus in India was for a federal system of governance. Additionally, there was a discussion about the appropriate level of autonomy for India's future federating units (Hussain & Mahmood, 2019). One of Jinnah's well-known fourteen points—the separation of Sindh from Bombay since Sindh has never been a part of Bombay linguistically, culturally, historically, or geographically—was one of the ideas put out in this argument. According to this logic, the NWFP, the state of Qalat, and the province of Baluchistan—except the Pashtun-speaking region of modern-day Baluchistan—should all have the same status (Roofi & Muhammad, 2011; Ijaz & Muhammad, 2009; Shah, 2019). Among other things, the two substantial grounds that convinced the sub-committee of the Round Table Conference<sup>7</sup> were that both the two major political parties of British India, the Muslim League and the Congress, urged the separation of Sindh from Bombay in their manifestos (Waseem, 2010). The destiny of Baluchistan, which remained a tribal region after independence, was not decided by this subcommittee, even though it suggested that the erstwhile NWFP become a full province as well.

On March 23, 1940, the Lahore Resolution—now known as the Pakistan Resolution—was the result of the discussion surrounding distinct Muslim nationhood. According to the Pakistan Resolution, a future Muslim state will grant the federating units the greatest amount of provincial autonomy (Khan, 2020). This has now been understood to suggest that the provinces, which will be independent and sovereign from the centre, will handle all other matters while the central

government will oversee defence, foreign policy, finance, and some aspects of communication and currency (Iftikhar et al., 2007; Siddiq, 2018). Even though Muhammad Ali Jinnah's successors have altered the original text, it is still true that Jinnah and Pakistan's founding fathers decided on the federal form of government's guiding principle—namely, the degree of autonomy granted to the states or provinces (Ali, 2019). Bengali leaders, including Quaid-e-Azam himself, took the lead in calling for identity and the highest level of province autonomy (Ahmar, 2016). Being more than a thousand miles distant, the Bengalis could not see how they could cooperate with West Pakistan unless they had the utmost autonomy (Dixit, 2019; Waseem, 2018).

Even after Pakistan gained independence on August 14, 1947, these issues remained without a constitution. It was a federation with Punjab, Sindh, NWFP, and East Pakistan as its provinces; British Baluchistan, which included the Pushtoons-speaking region of modern-day Baluchistan; Quetta, Murree, and Bugti agencies as federally administered areas; and Qalat, Makran, Kharan, and Lasbella Princely States, with Qalat being the largest at the time (Ijaz & Muhammad, 2009; Talbot, 2015). It operated under the Government of India Act 1935 (Hussain & Mahmood, 2019). The NWFP Province at the time consisted of six states, with Swat being the largest, followed by Khairpur in Sindh and Bahawalpur State in Punjab. Despite intense pressure from India, the ruler of Bahawalpur State chose to join Pakistan. Declaring independence, the Amir of Qalat asserted that, unlike other Princely States, he had never been fully a part of British India (Chadda, 2002). However, the founder of Pakistan himself ordered the suppression of his uprising. Although unable to declare it, Swat's ruler likewise wanted independence (Zafar & Shahid, 2020).

In the post-colonial era, the princely state of Bahawalpur was promoted to the rank of administrative province (Ahmed, 2018). The provincial assembly was elected, and the Nawab of Bahawalpur was appointed the province's ex-officio governor. The Saraiki language was taught in the Saraiki state of Bahawalpur (Fatima & Mirza, 2023), and lower judicial hearings were

also held in Saraiki (Rahman, 2004 & 1996; Langah, 2010). But a few months after Bahawalpur province was established, all of the provinces and princely states were combined to form West Pakistan, which was viewed as “One Unit” (Khan, 2020). In 1956, a new constitution for Pakistan was drafted using this mechanism, with two wings known as West and East Pakistan (Weiner, 2021). The parity principle—which entails equal seats in the National Assembly and maybe similar rights in all other governmental organs—formed the basis of this new constitution. As a result, East Pakistan’s citizens were deprived of their majority in the National Assembly. This was the single most significant setback to Pakistan’s integrity, leading to its dissolution in 1971 (Talbot, 2015).

In the 70s political struggle in the name of Mohajir Punjabi Pathan Mahaz<sup>8</sup> was started against Sindhis with the claim of a Mohajir Province. However, in the Zia era, initially, Mohajirs were relieved as they got rid of Bhutto, but their representation declined in government<sup>12</sup>. Gradually, feelings of alienation and separate identity among Mohajirs occurred which resulted in the creation of MQM<sup>9</sup> in 1984. Although MQM has been renamed MQM and its leadership is trying to succeed as a national<sup>10</sup> entity, it relies heavily on the Mohajir vote. However, their demand for Mohajir Province has been declined (Javed, 2023).

At the time of independence, Pashtuns stressed independent Pakhtunistan or loose confederation with Pakistan. Later on, the terms Pakhtunistan or Pakhtunkhwa were used by their leaders for NWFP (Roofi & Muhammad, 2011). However, with time Pashtun movement declined due incorporation and accommodation of Pashtuns in the power structure. Recently, the Awami National Party was able to change the name of the province as per their will in April 2010. With 17,743,645, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, formerly known as NWFP, is the third-largest province in Pakistan. According to the National Census of 1998, the Pashtoons make up the largest ethnic group in the province, accounting for over 73.9% of the total population. The Hindko are the second largest ethnic group. They make up over 20.43

percent of the province’s entire population, but just 2.4% of the nation’s total population, according to 1981. The Hindko community has protested the NWFP’s renaming, which has sparked ethnic violence in the region (Roofi & Muhammad, 2011; Waseem, 1996). As per Pir Haider of ANP, the creation of a province on linguistics was a central issue to the majority of Pushtuns of Pakistan and the same cannot be ignored being a democratic state (Siddiqi, 2018). Tribal areas of Pakistan also have resentments and they also feel they have been kept backwards for so many years after independence and resources are not been allocated to elevate the standard of life. The majority of FATA Parliamentarians support either a special status inside Pakistan<sup>11</sup> or continued federal administration (Kakakhel, 2010). They are not in favour of unification with KPK<sup>12</sup> because they believe that their importance would decrease.<sup>13</sup> They are also concerned that the development allocations for FATA would be threatened because of the province’s comparatively weak financial status.

Additionally, they assert that integration between the KPK and FATA would be difficult due to the substantial differences in their socioeconomic structures (Yusuf, 2020). The ANP’s manifesto states that it wants to give FATA representation in the provincial parliament and merge it into KPK (Kakakhel, 2010). If necessary, specific measures will be taken to guarantee that the proposed administrative and legal modifications adequately consider the customs and culture of the tribe. This would make it possible for the province’s borders to be expanded, which would boost its influence in the region (Waseem, 2018; Kakakhel, 2010).

There is a strong resistance also against creating new provinces (Haque, 2019) in Pakistan on the pretext that it is an attempt by Western powers to balkanize Pakistan. However, demands for the creation of new provinces have gained such momentum that if the issue is not addressed, resentment amongst people will increase to an unbearable amount. Major political parties are also demanding the creation of new provinces in one form or another (Dawn Editorial Board, 2023; Khan & Qureshi, 2021). Each party has a vested

interest. It is very difficult to reach a consensus on the issue as their interests clash with each other (Shaikh, 2017). Saraiki province is needed to off-balance one party (Fatima & Mirza, 2023), while Hazara province is not needed to maintain the hegemony of another (Langah, 2010). Minor political parties demanding a specific area to be announced as a province, such as the Bhawalpur movement and the Hazara movement have started political campaigns for new provinces; however, their voices are mostly unheard presently (Haque, 2019; Siddiq, 2018).

The global trend toward local autonomy (Ali, 2019) and self-determination, as well as the growing desire to reduce dependency on centralized planning, have led to the emergence of decentralization (Awan & Zia, 2018; Raza & Rahim, 2017). Addressing local needs and features necessitates community involvement and motivation. Demands for a larger portion of resources and decision-making authority to influence their development have been echoed by local governments and residents. However, in Pakistan, the “legitimacy and survival” of military governments are mentioned as another reason that motivates decentralization (Ansari, 2019; Raza & Rahim, 2017). In Pakistan’s past, local government systems have always been backed by military regimes (Waseem, 1996).

The justification for a new local government structure for the delivery of public services, together with the capacity to collect fees, taxes, user charges, etc., to pay these services, was bolstered by the federal and provincial governments’ inability to sufficiently capture local preferences and provide basic services. Thus, following the adoption of the Local Government Ordinance 2001 by all four Provinces, a new local government was established on August 14, 2001 (Iftikhar et al., 2007; Talbot, 2015). The new system comprised a District Government or a City District Government and Zila Council in a district, Tehsil Municipal Administration and Tehsil Council in a tehsil<sup>14</sup> and Union Administration and Union Council in a union. Village/Neighborhood councils provide an interface between the lowest tiers of the Local Government<sup>15</sup> with the

community (Yusuf, 2020). However, the same was abolished in 2009. But in 2009, the same was eliminated. Nonetheless, there were enough institutional provisions in the new system to enable grassroots community organization (Anjum, 2001). However, for the community to truly be empowered, the system itself needs to be sustainable and financially viable, and it must create possibilities for the poor to earn money and find work (Javed, 2023).

The Imperial Civil Service, introduced by the British Rulers, continued after independence in the shape of the Civil Service of Pakistan, later designated as the District Management Group (Sabharwal & Berman, 2017). Unfortunately, on account of a lack of adequate appreciation of its role in the development process and the fulfilment of the primary duty of maintenance of law and order, this class has acquiesced to the penchant of our rulers<sup>16</sup> by subordinating the considerations of efficiency, integrity and public welfare to political/personal loyalty (Siddiq, 2018). For this reason, bureaucracy is criticized as being unresponsive, obstructive and insular by not reacting to changed circumstances.

As per Article 239 of the Constitution of Pakistan, the geographic boundaries of a province cannot be changed unless a two-thirds majority in the respective Provincial Assembly approve the same (Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, 2012). 18th Amendment passed in April 2010 (Adeney, 2012) was billed as the most comprehensive reform package after the passage of the 1973 Constitution. The bill further enhances provincial autonomy as The President will no longer be able to declare emergency rule in any province unilaterally and Provinces will have shares in all federal services, including autonomous bodies and corporations established by, or under the control of the Federal Government (Waseem, 2011). After the passage of the 18th Amendment, several political parties asked the federation to reinvent itself by creating new provinces (Dawn Editorial Board, 2023; Adeney, 2012)) such as four out of Punjab, two out of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, two out of Sindh and three out of Baluchistan (Siddiq, 2018). As per Article 239 process of creating provinces requires

a two-thirds majority in both houses of parliament and a resolution with a two-thirds majority in the provincial assembly. At present senate has passed the 20<sup>th</sup> amendment bill, awaiting the signature of the president. The bill was aimed at removing the cliché of Article 239 of the Constitution of Pakistan, however, consensus on the same could not be reached and the status quo in this regard prevails.

Pakistan's central government collects the majority of its earnings, which are then split among the federal and provincial governments. While the provinces disperse funds through a revenue-sharing system among the lower levels of government. The 1973 constitution mandated that the government convene the NFC every five years to ensure equitable resource allocation across the federation and its constituent entities. Khan & Qureshi (2021) emphasize the importance of financial resources in growth. Its judicial and fair distribution is vital to developing any underdeveloped or poor area or location (Yusuf, 2020).

The current system of resource distribution has evolved. The federal and provincial governments' resource-sharing framework has undergone several adjustments. However, the subject of resource sharing between federal and provincial governments has never been straightforward, and it is far more complex. However, a look at the history of NFC reveals that the problem of resource distribution is never treated seriously (Shaikh, 2017). Or it is a political economy issue, where in the game-theoretic perspective, stakeholders bargain over the resource pie, and owing to non-consensus, by will or force, they retreat to an invariable criteria-based formula that is not optimal (Shah, 2014). That is why, in general, the NFC has failed to evolve and address the issue of fiscal decentralization amicably. At times, there was little or no consensus, resulting in temporary awards and grants that benefited the larger province (Talbot, 2015).

The problem of partition is more complicated than it first appears, even in light of the increasing calls for the establishment of additional provinces. There will be a lot of variables at play, and the establishment of new provinces will significantly affect the economy and other facets of the nation.

The economic effects of any decision about additional provinces become crucial given Pakistan's already precarious economic situation (Shaikh, 2017; Shah, 2014). The conflict between limitless desires and finite resources is the core economic issue (Ahmed, 2011). An equitable distribution of income and resources requires certain sacrifices because there are never enough resources to meet everyone's requirements. When resources are even slightly insufficient, as they are in Pakistan, the issue gets worse (Khan & Qureshi, 2021). People from various regions have long grumbled about receiving less funding for development. Any province's major cities are known to receive the majority of the funding, while smaller cities are disregarded. One of the main reasons for the need for new provinces, particularly in Punjab, has been the unequal distribution of resources. There is a possibility that resources will spread more fairly to other regions if there are more provinces. For instance, a portion of the funds will be used for Multan, Bahawalpur, and the surrounding areas rather than just Lahore (Talbot, 2015).

To get around these obstacles, a suitable formula for resource and royalty distribution should be constructed if new provinces are to be established. There is a chance that new industries will emerge if the distribution problem is resolved and each province receives its fair share. The administration would be able to increase employment prospects for its citizens and close the growing socioeconomic gaps between the various parts of the nation if a few more cities were taken under consideration (Nasir & Ali, 2021; Siddiq, 2018).

The economic condition of a country plays a major role in deciding to restructure. At this point, the economic condition of the country is not as good as it can sustain more provinces. Every province created would be required to contribute towards federation, rather than becoming a burden on the economy (Shah, 2014). It has to be carefully, analyzed that new provinces are apt to generate resource revenue. Major issues which have led to demand for new provinces can be categorized into the following domains:

**i. Sovereignty:**

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**ii. Allocation of resources:**

This is arguably the most significant venue for conflict between ethnic groups and provinces. “Financial resources for development and ongoing expenses, a portion of irrigation water, government employment,<sup>17</sup> chances for professional and higher education,<sup>18</sup> and the distribution of agricultural “ (Sheikh & Gillani, 2023, p. 391) lands in Sindh and Baluchistan to military officers and civil bureaucrats are among the resources for which the opposing parties fight (Ijaz & Muhammad, 2009).

**iii. Inter-province migration:**

Some people in Baluchistan and Sindh harbour strong animosity toward foreign immigration as well as in-migration from Punjab and KPK. According to the 1981 census, Sindh’s net migration to total population ratio was 9.6%. Such large-scale migration often strains their meagre resources and alters the demographic balance (Bhatti, 2022).

**iv. Language and culture:**

A recurring theme in ethnic communities’ fight for identity assertion calls for the preservation and advancement of their languages and cultures in opposition to Urdu’s dominance and disregard for local cultural heritage. Cultural symbols are tools used to promote unity among a community and validate demands made by that group (Anjum, 2001; Yusuf, 2020).

**Research Methodology:**

**Objectives of the Study:**

The objective of the study is to obtain a real perception of the need for creating new provinces or administrative units in Pakistan. This paper aims to evaluate the creation of new provinces, keeping in view the legal framework available and settlement of the demands of people. It endeavours to answer the following questions:

- i. On what basis present provinces were created and what are the most probable reasons that voices for the creation of new provinces are rising?
- ii. What impact will the creation of more provinces have on the federation and present provinces?
- iii. Will the demand for the creation of new provinces stop at the creation of a few provinces as demanded now or will it lead to other such demands? Pakistan is already undergoing political and economic turmoil, will it be the right time for the creation of more provinces?
- iv. What effects creation of more provinces will have on the common man?

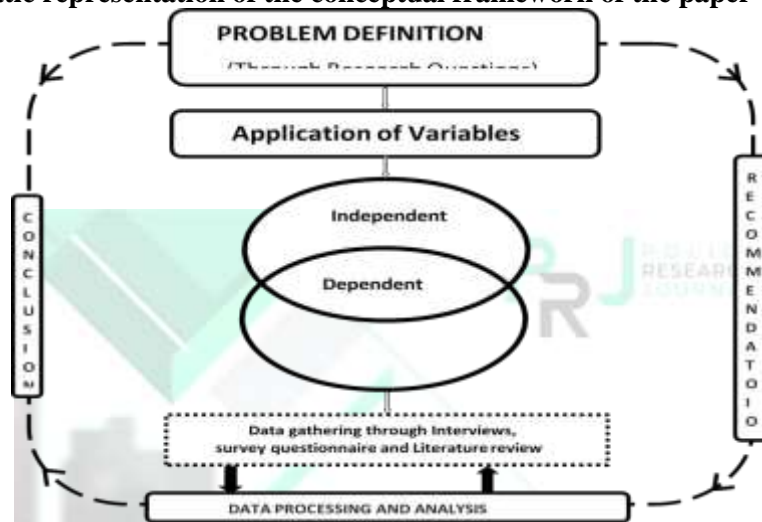
**Significance of the Study:**

This research analyzes the real perception behind the demand to create more provinces in Pakistan. The study will put up comprehensive recommendations concerning the creation of new provinces after carefully analyzing the pros and cons vis-à-vis national integration in focus.

**Scope and Delimitation:**

There are many sides to creating new provinces or administrative units in Pakistan; however, this paper is bounded by obtaining perceptions of people on the issue. Other details which have led to such demands have been briefly touched upon. There is a colossal amount of statistical data while analyzing the issue, which is easily available in the literature with minor differences. The same could have been used to make paper bulky; however, the same has been intentionally not included to make paper manageable in a given time frame, concise and add real matter in the paper instead of verbosity.

**Figure 1: Schematic representation of the conceptual framework of the paper**



The main limitation of the study is that prominent politicians of all political parties could not be interviewed during the timeframe when the research was being undertaken. Therefore, their point of view on media has been used for research. Moreover, published material, discussions on various forums, and survey questionnaires proved helpful in obtaining balanced views about the subject.

#### **Conceptual Framework:**

The basic structure of the paper is the development of problem definition, followed by the interplay of various variables with each other to collect and analyze the data for arriving at workable recommendations. A conceptual framework for this paper is explained in Figure 1.

#### **Variables:**

The following were the independent variables for the study:

- i. Factors contributing to the present demand for new provinces.
- ii. More provinces or more administrative units are required.
- iii. Economic and legal factors.
- iv. What is there for a common man?

The dependent variable for the study was the “perception about the need for creating new provinces or administrative units in Pakistan.”

The intervening variables for the study were as follows:

- i. Historical Background of the political division in Pakistan
- ii. Ethnic and linguistic diversity in Pakistan
- iii. Division of Pakistan into two independent wings in 1971
- iv. Ideology of Pakistan

#### **Definition of Terms:**

The key terms for the research are defined as follows:

##### **i. Ethnicity:**

The term ethnicity refers to a somewhat complicated conglomeration of historical, cultural, and racial traits that split societies into distinct and often antagonistic political families. In its most basic form, the concept is shown by racial groupings in which skin colour is the only feature that separates them (Adeney, 2000; Amin, 1988).

##### **ii. Province**

The province or state is not subservient to the federal authority in a large number of federations and confederations. Instead, it is seen as sovereign concerning its specific set of constitutional duties. A constitution identifies the functions, or areas of jurisdiction, of the federal and provincial governments (Farooq, 2017).



### iii. Administrative Division:

A section of a nation or other political division created for governmental purposes is known as an administrative division, sub-national entity, or country subdivision. Administrative divisions must run themselves through their local administrations and are given a certain amount of autonomy (Ali, 2019). To make it easier to manage their territory and citizens' issues, nations are split up into smaller divisions (Hasan, 2004).

### Hypotheses:

It was hypothesized that concerns of smaller provinces and ethnic groups must be addressed to avoid a disintegration-like situation as has been experienced in 1971. However, it does not necessarily mean that the creation of new provinces is necessary, rather reforms could be undertaken to do away with the idea of creating new provinces. Point in case demand for Mohajir province had been diminished. This hypothesis facilitated non-fixation to the creation of new "provinces only."

### Method of Research:

The research paper was qualitative, also known as ethnographic research. This method was preferred as it was best suited to the study of political and social sciences. Moreover, it generated healthy arguments to conclude.

### Locale of the Study:

The study has been conducted at Punjab University Lahore in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Bachelor's degree. However, the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics, Islamabad and Quaid-e-Azam University were regularly visited to seek guidance from IR and Political Science departments. Moreover, a survey from the students of SZABIST Islamabad, Institute of Management Sciences Peshawar and students of Punjab University, Lahore was also conducted. The reason for selecting this group of the populace is as under:

- i. It is a heterogeneous group of students representing almost all parts and factions of the country.
- ii. The populace is educated; they would be familiar with the background of the topic.

iii. It was easy access for the researcher.<sup>19</sup>

iv. It was the quickest and inexpensive way to obtain effective information.

### Respondents (or Unit of Analysis):

Besides this, other politicians were also approached, however, due to their commitments personal interviews could not be conducted. Nevertheless, the creation of new provinces is a hot topic, and the opinions of all political stakeholders are available in the media. Interviews<sup>20</sup> with the following personalities were conducted during the research:

- i. Chairman PIDE, Islamabad.
  - ii. HOD Political Science, Quaid-e-Azam University, Islamabad.
  - iii. HOD Economics, Quaid-e-Azam University, Islamabad.
  - iv. MNA of PTI from FATA.<sup>21</sup>
  - v. Former MNA of Awami National Party.<sup>22</sup>
- HOD International Relations, Punjab University, Lahore.

### Instruments:

Interviews, literature reviews and survey questionnaires are the instruments used for gathering data. Research questions and sub-questions formed the basis of the interview schedule. Books, articles and interviews in media were used for the literature review. The main instrument of data gathering was a survey questionnaire, designed based on expanding the research questions to obtain perceptions about the creation of new provinces or administrative units. The Survey Questionnaire was designed on an internationally accepted Likert scale (Robinson, 2024). It gave possible indicators and their strength/intensity, thereby using quantitative data in qualitative terms i.e. that opinion/attitude can be measured.

### Data Gathering Procedure:

Literature about the data was gathered using the internet. Various libraries were also visited for that matter, however, it was time-consuming. Interviews were conducted at the convenience of the respondents using personal relations which

also consumed a lot of time. The Questionnaire from students of SZABIST Islamabad, Institute of Management Sciences, and Peshawar was distributed through a friend. Respondents were contacted before attempting the questionnaire to orient them to the purpose of the research and

were convinced to provide information based on confidentiality. They were assured that the information was gathered purely for academic research and would not be utilized in whatsoever form for any other purpose.

**Figure 2: The pros and cons of creating new provinces and administrative units in Pakistan**



**Statistical Treatment of the Data:**

The expected populace was 250 students and approximately 200 respondents. However, the opinions of 129 students could be obtained. A full sample size was used for analysis. After gathering data, it was tabulated and as per the Likert scale intensity of possible indicators<sup>23</sup> was achieved in qualitative terms (Table 1). Based on the analysis, the interpretation of data was conducted through descriptive inferences. The data enabled the researcher to obtain a real perception of creating more provinces or administrative units in Pakistan and the pros and cons related to the subject.

**Results and Findings:**

**Table 1: Responses to the Questionnaire**

Items	Responses					
	SA	A	UD	D	SD	Total
There is a need to create more provinces in Pakistan.	51	39	6	17	16	<b>129</b>
The creation of more provinces should be based on language.	34	17	10	17	51	<b>129</b>
More provinces should be formed as per the present “Division system” in Pakistan.	14	23	25	53	14	<b>129</b>
Only Punjab should be divided to form another province.	8	10	8	44	59	<b>129</b>
All the provinces should be further subdivided to form many other provinces.	15	38	17	23	36	<b>129</b>
Karachi should be made a separate province.	15	21	22	41	30	<b>129</b>
Hazara area be made a separate province.	43	30	18	27	11	<b>129</b>
Provinces should be abolished and the district system should be enforced.	13	20	18	58	20	<b>129</b>
The creation of more provinces would disintegrate Pakistan.	23	16	17	58	15	<b>129</b>
The creation of more provinces would improve administration and facilitate better management of provinces.	34	64	10	13	8	<b>129</b>
The creation of new provinces is a hype created by political parties.	22	58	18	18	13	<b>129</b>
The common man benefits from the creation of more provinces.	45	36	11	24	13	<b>129</b>
Political rivalries would increase in Pakistan by the creation of more provinces.	20	28	15	59	7	<b>129</b>
The creation of more provinces would give rise to corruption.	30	13	17	35	34	<b>129</b>
More provinces devastate the concept of Pakistani ideology.	8	11	11	64	35	<b>129</b>
More provinces would increase interdependency thereby improving national integrity.	37	51	21	16	4	<b>129</b>
Less developed or remote areas will benefit from the creation of new provinces.	50	47	7	16	9	<b>129</b>
The creation of new provinces would decrease the foothold of political tycoons.	35	47	23	14	10	<b>129</b>
The creation of new provinces would be a burden on the economy of the country.	37	32	13	30	17	<b>129</b>
The creation of more provinces weakens the federal powers.	31	31	12	42	13	<b>129</b>
If stronger laws are introduced and implemented, the division of areas into smaller areas will generate positive competition.	30	46	34	14	5	<b>129</b>
The creation of new provinces will lead to other such demands in future.	27	49	15	31	7	<b>129</b>
Under the present political condition, it is the right time to create more provinces.	19	28	16	21	45	<b>129</b>
Political consensus is required before creating new provinces.	35	50	14	8	22	<b>129</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>676</b>	<b>805</b>	<b>378</b>	<b>743</b>	<b>494</b>	<b>3096</b>

**Findings:**

Based on the analysis, the following were the findings of the study:

i. Most of the respondents agreed that there is a need to create more provinces in Pakistan.

ii. The respondents did not agree that the creation of more provinces should be based on language or on the present “Division system” in Pakistan.

- iii. They did not agree that only Punjab should be divided to form another province or that Karachi should be made a separate province.
- iv. They agreed that the Hazara area be made a separate province.
- v. The respondents did not agree that provinces should be abolished and district system should be enforced.
- vi. The respondents did not agree that the creation of more provinces would disintegrate Pakistan.
- vii. They agreed that the creation of more provinces would improve administration and facilitate better management of provinces.
- viii. They agreed that the creation of new provinces is a hype created by political parties.
- ix. They agreed that the common man would benefit from the creation of more provinces.
- x. The respondents did not agree that Political rivalries would increase in Pakistan with the creation of more provinces.
- xi. The respondents did not agree that the creation of more provinces would give rise to corruption.
- xii. The respondents did not agree that more provinces devastate the concept of Pakistani ideology.
- xiii. They agreed that more provinces would increase interdependency thereby improving national integrity.
- xiv. They agreed that less developed or remote areas would benefit from the creation of new provinces.
- xv. They agreed that the creation of new provinces would decrease the foothold of political tycoons.
- xvi. Mixed the creation of new provinces would be a burden on the economy of the country.
- xvii. The respondents did not agree that the creation of more provinces weakens the federal powers.
- xviii. They agreed that if stronger laws are introduced and implemented, the division of areas into smaller areas will generate positive competition.
- xix. They agreed that the creation of new provinces would lead to other such demands in future.
- xx. The respondents did not agree that under the present political condition, it is the right time to create more provinces.
- xxi. They agreed that political consensus is required before creating new provinces.



**Figure 3: Pakistan with potential new provinces based on current demands**

**Interpretation of Results:**

The issue of creating more provinces has remained controversial in Pakistan. It is deduced that this heterogeneous mixture from all parts of the country has enabled a balanced viewpoint about creating more provinces. The majority of public demand creates more provinces. The Modus operandi to create more provinces is still debatable. Provincial rights, regional autonomy, self-determination, allocation of resources, language and culture are probable causes of such desires. It is inferred that the creation of more provinces based on language is a possibility as major provinces of today are also language-based. However, it may lead to other such demands in

future. Creating more provinces would improve administration and facilitate the common man in day-to-day affairs.

The common man will also be able to provide a positive contribution towards the federation as he will be able to interact easily with the government in smaller provinces. The creation of more provinces will facilitate the smooth running of the country, create harmony among people and help mitigate ethnic and linguistic issues. Declaring the administrative Divisions seems to be an easy solution which can diffuse ethnicity, however, it would be difficult to achieve consensus on this issue.



**Figure 4: Before-and-after creation of new provinces comparison of governance efficiency, economic distribution, and population density within regions of Pakistan**

At present there is a strong impression that demand political parties are exploiting this issue for electoral gains. The young generation especially has little faith in the political system of the country. If smaller provinces are created, it would disperse the domination of a single party in a larger area, thereby ensuring a better democratic process. However, before taking any step it is

prudent that resource revenue smaller units suggested should be kept in mind, otherwise new provinces created will be a burden on the federation. At present economic condition of the country is questionable in creating more provinces. Provinces have to be created to address the concerns of people, it will strengthen Pakistan as it would increase interdependence on each



it could not help solve the issues. Due to this disparity, Pakistan suffered disintegration in 1971. The hypothesis proved right that demands for the creation of a new province to address cannot be rejected totally. The creation of more provinces will facilitate the smooth running of the country, create harmony among people and help mitigate ethnic and linguistic issues. It will increase interdependence on each other and would also ensure the participation of the majority of the population in the affairs of the country, thereby strengthening democracy.

Creating provinces requires the agreement of all stakeholders, which is highly unlikely in the current democratic process because Pakistan has yet to fully develop a consensus on operational political standards. Whatever understanding had established among the contending interests at one point in time was permitted to erode over time due to the competing interests' unwillingness to accommodate and open rejection of "constitutionalism and democratic principles" (Romaniuk & Marlin, 2016). This is not to say that the people have abandoned the primacy of popular will, participatory government, ruler accountability, and governance for the benefit of the people. The intellectual commitment to these ideals endures, calling into question the legitimacy of non-participatory and authoritarian government and political management.

### Recommendations:

Creating new provinces or administrative units is the need of the time to ensure better management, and address the concerns of smaller provinces, and ethnic and political parties. Before creating new provinces or administrative units in Pakistan following points must be considered:

- i. True democratic process be applied i.e. consensus between all stakeholders be achieved. Distrust of people political parties demand a referendum as the best possible solution to have the direct opinion of the people.
- ii. No one province or area should be marginalized (such as Punjab), instead provinces or smaller units be created all over Pakistan on a long-term basis.
- iii. A comprehensive economic survey be

carried out to ensure that new provinces if created are financially viable and sustainable.

- iv. Appropriate constitutional mechanisms be adopted to ensure maximum autonomy for future administrative units of Pakistan.

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