

# PROVINCIAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT SYSTEMS OF PAKISTAN; A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

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## ABSTRACT

An empowered, accountable and efficient local government that is capable of addressing the needs of people and promoting democratic participation is an imperative for appropriate allocation of resources and improved delivery of services. Pakistan's experience of local government is unique, as all the local government reforms carried out in its history have been initiated by the non-representative military regimes. The democratic regimes have undermined those reforms and have largely unwelcomed autonomous local governments. A glance at history shows that no local government plans have been implemented by democratic governments resulting in the concentration of decision making remaining with the center. The Eighteenth Amendment passed in 2010 by a democratic regime can thus be considered as an achievement towards devolution, as it not only empowered the provinces, but also made it obligatory for the provinces to further devolve power to local government institutions. The provinces now have greater legislative and functional responsibilities. This paper is a study of the historical evolution of the local government system in Pakistan and provides a critical analysis and a comparative perspective of the structure, composition, authority and powers of provincial government.

**Keywords:** Local government, Structural Setup, Pakistan

## INTRODUCTION

### Local Government

The local government in Pakistan has the following official definition:

Local Government: Each province shall, by law, establish a local government system and devolve political, administrative and financial responsibility and authority to the elected representatives of the local governments.

Elections to the local governments shall be held by the Election Commission of Pakistan. This was emphasized earlier in the Constitution under Article 32.

### Promotion of Local Government Institutions

The state shall encourage local government institutions composed of elected representatives of the areas concerned, and in such institutions special representation will be given to peasants, workers and women.

Each province has the discretion to devise its own local government system, and the responsibility of holding local government elections. This legislation suffered much delays and delusions in all provinces. The erstwhile Local Government Ordinance (LGO) of 2001 was abandoned in 2010 and the authority was transferred from elected representatives to bureaucrats. Balochistan was the first province to devise its Local Government Act which was passed in May 2010. The other three provinces finally passed their Local Government Acts in 2013. Balochistan held local government elections on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2013, while no elections have yet been held in other three provinces.

This is the first time in the history of Pakistan that local government system has not been devised from the center; consequently, the system is not uniform across the country. The extent of authority, functions, and fiscal discretions conferred to the local government varies in each province. It must be remembered that good local governance is not just about providing a range of local services, but also about achieving true participatory liberal democracy that encourages civic dialogue, supports sustainable local development and facilitates outcomes that enrich the quality of lives of the people (Anwar, 2006). Whether or not the enacted systems are capable of achieving these notions of good local governance is yet to be seen.

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This study begins with a brief review of the previously enacted local government systems in Pakistan. It then analyses the structure, composition, authority and fiscal powers of the four local government acts in a comparative perspective. A structural breakdown of all the tiers is presented, followed by an analysis of the powers and authorities vested, and the range of functions and responsibilities given to the local government.

## **HISTORICAL EXPERIENCE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN PAKISTAN**

The Indian Sub-continent has had the local government system since the time of the kings and monarchs. The British government formally introduced the system of local government in the mid, 19<sup>th</sup> century. Through this system the British attempted to co-opt the local elite, however these institutions were never truly empowered, as the Deputy Commissioner; a district level agent of the non-representative central bureaucracy, was the principle actor at the local level. An important feature of the British system of administration and local government was the creation of a rural-urban divide. Urban local councils were established by the British to provide essential municipal services in urban areas. In contrast, rural councils were explicitly used to homologize the local elite through a selective but extensive system of patronage (Siddiqui, 1992).

After independence Pakistan inherited local body institutions from the British which were autonomous in certain respects but substantially under the control of the provincial governments through district officers. The status of the system remained elusive for a long period of eleven years due to lack of political consensus on the constitution. The priorities of the governments in that period remained divergent and the provincial governments had complete control over the matters of municipal government. The budget of the municipal committees was required to be approved by the divisional commissioners and the local authorities were left entirely at the whims of district administration, thus rendering unprecedented control to the bureaucracy.

This state of affairs continued to prevail and no remarkable progress was made until the military government led by General Ayub Khan experimented with local government with the Basic Democracies Order in 1959.

### **Basic Democracies Order (1959)**

In 1958, General Ayub Khan imposed Martial Law and installed The Basic Democracies Order which was the only

representative tier of the government. It comprised of a hierarchical system of four linked tiers. The lowest tier was the Union Councils in the rural area and Union committees in urban areas, comprising of directly elected members who in turn elected a chairman amongst themselves. The higher tiers of local government had some members elected indirectly by these directly elected members and some official members nominated by the government as chairmen. Although the system assigned several functions ranging from social welfare to health and infrastructure, especially at the lowest tiers and at the district level, few functions could be performed due to a severely curtailed fiscal capacity. The Deputy Commissioner was the controlling authority for Union Council and Tehsil Council and the Commissioner for District Council. The controlling authority had vast powers to quash the proceedings, suspend resolutions passed or orders made by any local body. The bureaucracy was given extraordinary powers to determine the policy direction of the local bodies. The Basic Demands System was used as a contrivance to legitimize the Rule of the Military and the President's office (Gauhar, 1996). The 1962 Constitution explicitly linked the Office of the President to the newly created local bodies by declaring the 80,000 basic democrats as the electoral college for the election of the president and national and provincial assemblies. The political role assigned to the Basic Democracies System and the complete bureaucratic control on its operations rendered it controversial and ineffective.

### **Local Government Ordinance 1979**

The 1970's saw the return to democracy and resulted in unanimous approval of the Constitution of 1973. Despite the fact that the constitution established promotion of local institutions as 'principles of policy' envisioned under Article 32, the two local government legislations which were passed during Bhutto's administration People's Local Government Ordinance 1972 and the People's Local Government Act 1975 were never implemented. These legislations abolished the direct representation of the bureaucracy in local governments as members and chairmen, and instead provided for direct representation of all members (including chairman) of all tiers of local government through direct elections.

In 1979 the Zia Regime promulgated the Local Government Ordinance. The Ordinance resembled Ayub's legislation in some respects, as it continued with the rural-urban divide and the local bodies continued to lack constitutional protection. This ordinance created four levels of municipal government in the urban areas: town committees, municipal committees, municipal corporations and metropolitan

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corporations. In the rural areas the system provided three tier system: Union Councils, Tehsil or Taluka Councils and District Councils. General Zia consciously adopted the provision that the members of each council elect their chairman/ heads and the controlling authority remained the elected house, thus weakening the role of bureaucracy in local governance. Although, the provincial administration retained suspension powers and the powers to quash resolutions and proceedings during the Zia period, nonetheless, their control over local government functioning through direct representation was weakened. Local councils had considerable power to launch schemes, review and implement development programs, and perform functions of other government departments. Councilors with necessary qualifications were appointed ex-officio Justices of Peace.

Divisional and District Co-ordination Committees comprising of local government members were formed to co-ordinate the activities of local bodies, departments and the provincial government. They prepared and approved development schemes under the ADP (Annual Development Program). The members of these committees were elected from *Taluka* and District Councils in case of rural areas and from Town and Municipal Committees and Corporations in case of urban areas.

For revenue generation the local councils mainly depended upon their taxes, commercial projects and government grants. Various types of taxes, rates, tolls and fees which were to be levied by the local bodies were specified. There were certain taxes which the concerned provincial governments shared with the local councils, for instance property tax, betterment tax, fines and penalties levied on municipal offences, proceeds from auctions of mines and minerals and fishing rights. Besides, the provincial governments also gave grant-in-aid to the local councils.

### **Local Government Ordinance 2001**

The period between 1985 to 1999 saw the revival of elected provincial and federal assemblies resulting in enhanced domination of provinces on local institutions. Many factors led to the suspension of the local bodies between 1993 and 1998. In 1999 General Pervez Musharraf, took over the country by replacing an elected government. In 2001 Local Government Ordinance, also called the 'Devolution of Power Plan' was promulgated. This plan was significantly different from the earlier plans as it devolved administrative and expenditures responsibilities to the local governments and empowered them with decision making across all levels. It abolished the urban-rural divide and established a three-tier

system. The lowest tier was the Union Council which had directly elected members. The middle tier of Tehsil Council comprised of the directly elected *naib nazims* (deputy governor) of each union council in the *tehsil*. The top most tier was the District Council which had all the nazims of Union Councils in the district as members. This system linked all the tiers politically. These councils supervised the three categories of local government; district governments, *tehsil*/town municipal administration and union administrations. A large bulk of public services were delegated to the district government.

Almost all provincial government departments were devolved to the district level with the exception of departments of police, higher education, irrigation and power. The head of the district administration deputy commissioner who reported to the provincial bureaucracy was replaced by the District Coordination Officer (DCO) who reported to the District *Nazim*. Similarly, the District Police Officer (DPO) also reported to the District *Nazim*. These two factors enhanced the authority of District *Nazim*. The staff of the district including the DCO however, continued to remain provincial government employee, which limited the District Council's authority to appoint, promote, transfer or discipline these employees. Postings/ transfers of members of district cadres was an important source of mustering and exercising political influence (Mezerra, Aftab, et. al., 2001).

A Provincial Finance Commission (PFC) was established for rule-based transfer of funds to the local governments. A major bulk of these funds was used for salaries of the staff which were determined by the federal government. The *Nazim* had the power to devise the budget of the districts, however, he had no influence on the allocation of PFC awards. The districts could also raise their own revenues through certain taxes, however these were meager making them excessively reliant on provincial and ultimately federal funds.

Another caveat in this system proved to be the non-party based elections which invariably ended up weakening political linkages between elected provincial governments and the local governments. This resulted in conflicting interests, rise of non-committed agents, changing loyalties and a lack of political ownership of the system.

The Provincial Local Government Commissions were constituted to oversee the performance of the local government through reviews. It could also organize consultative meetings between national and provincial legislators and the elected representatives of the local government, to discuss Annual Development Plans (Local Government Ordinance, 2001).

The LG system provided for several conflict resolution mechanisms such as the *Zila Mohtasib*, *Zila Mushavirat* Committee and *Muslihat Anjumans*. Finally grass, root community participation for small scale development was encouraged through Citizen Community Boards.

The system had limited constitutional support hence was largely abandoned in 2010, transferring administrative authority to provincial bureaucracy. The 18<sup>th</sup> amendment empowered the provinces to devise their own local government however, the system remained in a quandary until the acts were finally passed in all the four provinces after much deliberation and perplexity.

### STRUCTURAL COMPARISON

The Local Government Acts promulgated by the provinces of Sindh, Balochistan and Punjab closely resemble Local Government Ordinance 1979 in their structural composition. The urban-rural divide has been brought back with the Union Council and District Council forming the two tiers in rural areas and Municipal Committees, Municipal Corporations and Metropolitan Corporations as levels in urban areas based on population size. These bodies are responsible for provision, maintenance, management and improvement of the services assigned to them. The offices of the government have been retained under the purview of the provincial governments, and the local elected bodies have the responsibility to improve and supervise the functions of the line departments.

Contrastingly, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Local Government Act (LG Act) is heavily inspired by the LGO 2001, where a district government as a separate tier of the government has been developed. The KP Act fully devolves offices of the government to the district government giving it financial and administrative authority. It consists of a District Council and District Administration. The elected district council is responsible for the control, operation and management of the devolved offices. The KP LG Act has identified twenty-five districts in the province. These districts are further divided in tehsils where Tehsil Councils will be elected. The Village Councils and Neighborhood Councils have been formed to distinguish areas with urban and rural characteristics respectively however, there is no distinction in their functions and authorities. All the Local Bodies in KP will be elected directly (Figure 1).

While the Acts of Punjab, Sindh and Balochistan are similar in their overall composition, some difference can be noted in their design. Punjab separates the functions of health and education and creates separate District Health and Education

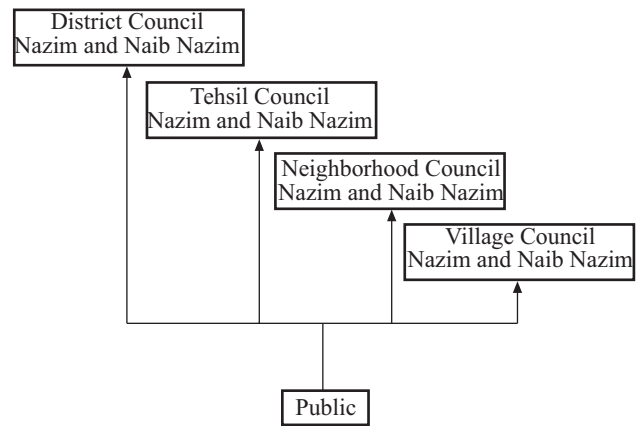


Figure-1: KPK Local Government Act 2013, Structural Breakdown.

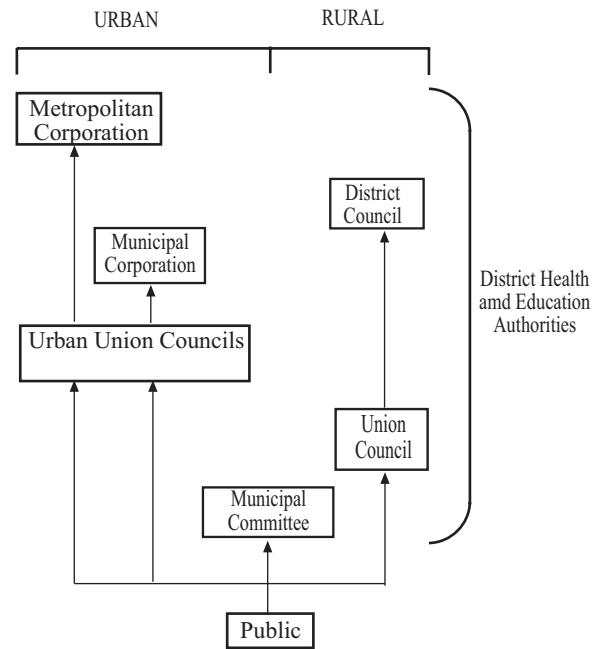


Figure-2: Punjab Local Government Act 2013, Structural Breakdown.

Authorities. These authorities will have members from the local government in the district who will be elected by their respective local bodies and technocrat members who will be appointed by the Government of Punjab. The Chairman, Vice Chairman, and the Chief Executive Officer of each shall also be appointed by the Government of Punjab. The Chief Executive Officer will be appointed through open competition and will act as a principal accounting officer (Figure 2).

In Sindh a new tier of union committees has been added,

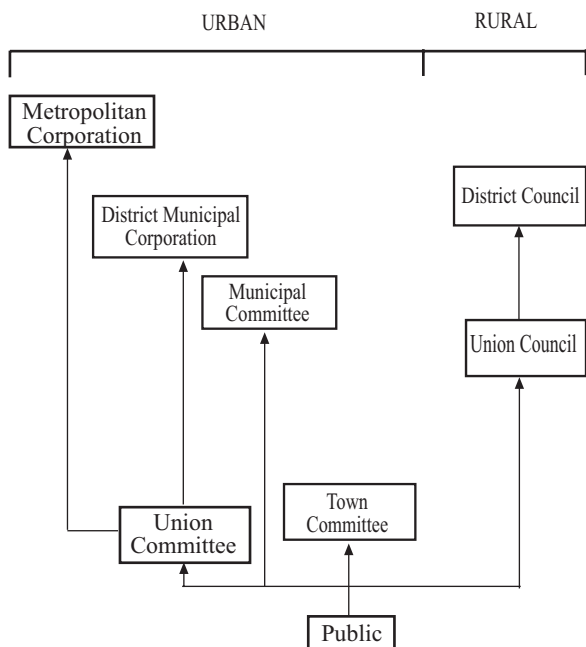


Figure-3: Sindh Local Government Act 2013 Structural Breakdown.

the Metropolitan and Municipal Corporations will have Union Committees as the lowest tier. The members of Union Committees, Town Committees and Municipal Committees in urban Sindh and of Union Councils in rural Sindh will be directly elected (Figure 3).

Balochistan has directly elected Union and District Councils in rural areas. Metropolitan, Municipal Corporations and Municipal Committees exist in urban areas according to size of population and the members are directly elected (Figure 4).

### Local Representation

The representation through local elections is an important

Table-1: Electoral Representation

|             | Population that the lowest tier shall cover                              | Elections                        | Term Limit |
|-------------|--|----------------------------------|------------|
| KP          | Village and Neighborhood Councils 2,000-10,000                           | Direct Elections at all Levels   | 3          |
| Balochistan | Union Councils 1000-1,500  | Direct Elections at all Levels   | 4          |
| Punjab      | Urban Union Council - Above 20,000<br>Rural Union Council - Above 10,000 | Direct Elections at lowest tiers | 5          |
| Sindh       | Union Committee 10,000-50,000  | Direct Elections at lowest tiers | 4          |

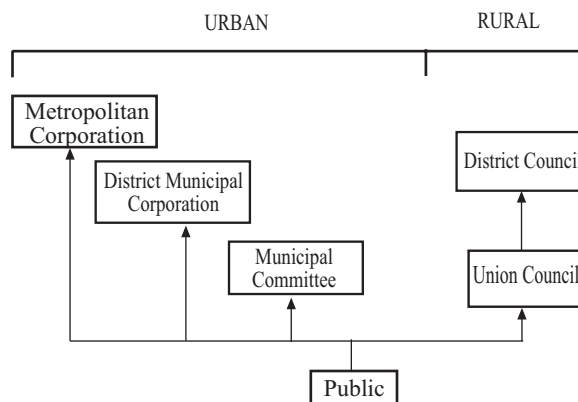


Figure-4: Balochistan Local Government Act 2010, Structural Breakdown.

element of local governance as it provides opportunities for people to have a say on issues that might affect them within their local community. The Acts show considerable variations in the way local bodies are elected. The population covered by the lowest tier of local government is also considerably different in each province. The only electoral similarity that exists is the stipulation that all four provinces will have elections on party-basis. Table 1 shows a comparison of electoral representation at local governments in the provinces.

### FUNCTIONAL DEVOLUTION

Delegation of functions is also very different in each province. The Local Government Act of Sindh and Balochistan retains the divide of optional and compulsory list of functions as in the LGO 1979, whereas Punjab separates the functions of health and education from the main local councils. KP devolves almost all functions to the district government. The KPLG Act stipulates that the coordination, human resource management, planning, development, finance and budgeting functions of all the devolved offices are the responsibility of the local government.

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## ADMINISTRATIVE AUTHORITY

The devolution of administrative authority, which is an integral prerequisite of the Article 140A, has been restrained in most cases with varying degrees of delegated power.

KP gives complete discretionary power to the elected *nazimeen* to undertake administrative decisions concerning devolved offices and to initiate inspections of the *Tehsil* Municipal Administration, Village Councils and Neighborhood Councils in the district through Standing Committees. The village and neighborhood councils have been authorized to supervise and monitor the performance of functionaries of the government offices.

Sindh gives the elected Mayor the power to exercise supervision over the acts and proceedings of all servants of the council (Sindh Local Government Act, 2013), however the Act does not clarify their control over government offices. The chief executives (municipal commissioners and the officers) shall be under direct control of the Mayor or the Chairman. However, this power is stifled by the provision that the provincial government has broad powers to supervise and inspect the local councils. The chief executives of the councils are required to submit a copy of every resolution passed in the council to the provincial government. An important modification made by the Sindh Act is that local councils can make recommendations in certain cases and if the government does not accept those, it is obliged to give reasons.

The Balochistan Act explicitly states that the business of local councils to be conducted in manner as prescribed by the government. The provincial government in Balochistan is also entitled to conduct broad inspections of the local councils and a government appointed inspecting officer has been given power to issue directions and advice to the Local Council if necessary. All development plans initiated by the local councils require approval from the provincial government. Even in routine discharge of functions the local councils are required to issue periodical reports to the government and follow its directions.

Punjab goes far enough to empower the Chief Officer to oversee the conduct of the Local Government and to make sure it works under the framework of the provincial government in the prescribed manner. In Punjab provincial bureaucracy has been given considerable powers as the Chief Officer has been entrusted with the charge of principal accounting officer. The Act gives wide powers to the provincial government as it may issue directions to a local

government which will be binding in nature. In the case of health and district authorities the government retains the power to appoint the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Chief Executive Officer. These authorities have been delegated the functions of maintenance, supervision and development of educational and health care institutions. As regards the composition and even the functions of these authorities there prevails confusion the provincial government has made this all ambiguous and kept unregulated powers with it. It would be correct to say that the provincial government has centralized the functioning of the sectors of education and health.

The Acts also vary considerably in matters regarding execution of functions and supervision of the administration. The KP Act specifies the powers and conduct of District Councils, such as electing a Standing Committee for each office to oversee service delivery. Regarding the service matters of the employees KP continues with the Local Council Boards initially established under the 2012 Act, but ensures that service structures of local council services will be devised by the government of KP within a year.

Sindh constitutes the Local Government Board, however the functions and even the membership of the board has not been specified. The Act also provides for Divisional and District Local Boards, if required, however their role also seems unclear. In Karachi, the situation is slightly different as the service board constituted by provincial government will have representation of the District Municipal Corporation.

In Balochistan, the Balochistan Local Government Board retains the power to deal with service matters of employees of local government.

In Punjab the power to make appointments, order transfers, take disciplinary action and deal with other service matters has been fully retained by the Punjab Local Government Board. The members of this board shall be appointed by the provincial government. This leaves little room for elected members to exercise supervisory control.

## INTER-GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

It is also interesting to note that all the provinces have retained varying degrees of authority to oversee the conduct of local governments. The local government commissions in KP, Punjab and Sindh are authorized to conduct inspections and audits of the local governments. They are responsible to the provincial government and recommend necessary actions to be taken. The decisions of the commission are binding to the local councils. A similar function is carried

on by the inspecting officer in Baluchistan. Sindh and Punjab require the commission to hold consultative meetings of national and provincial legislators, the Mayors and the Chairmen on a periodic basis to sanction and review development schemes and provide facilitation to decentralized provincial departments.

In Baluchistan every division has a Divisional Coordination Committee, to coordinate the matters of the local councils. The members of this committee are the elected mayors and chairmen of all local bodies in the district; heads of departments of both provincial and federal government and the Collector of the district. It has representation from the reserved seats and is head by the commissioner. This committee has the power to scrutinize and sanction the budget of the local bodies, and make decisions regarding the taxation authority of the local councils. This committee is also authorized to resolve any conflicts among the departments and councils.

The chief ministers in all the provinces have the power to dismiss a local government or head of council and appoint office holders after the dismissal of council heads. In Punjab, the government can suspend local government officials for ninety days, in Sindh for six months, and in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan for thirty days. During and after this period the dismissed officials can file review petitions to the provincial governments.

## FISCAL DEVOLUTION

The revenue sources of the local governments are the amounts raised through taxes, fines, tolls, etc. and has its share in Provincial Consolidated Fund (PCF) which is disbursed as grants from the provinces including the grants in lieu of Octroi and Zila Tax. PCF's in Punjab, Sindh and KP have been established to disburse funds to the local governments through a formula-based transfer mechanism. In Balochistan

a similar function is performed by the Local Councils Grants Committee. The taxes levied by the local governments are almost the same in all provinces, some of which are conservancy charges, parking fees, license and permits.

The KPLG Act assures that in addition to the agreed funds the development funds that shall be disbursed to local government will not be less than thirty percent of the total development budget of province in the respective year. There is no such guarantee in rest of the three provinces. It also emphasizes the need to consider the revenue bases of the local councils and the reach and quality of services while deciding fiscal transfers. Punjab and Sindh consider principles of population, backwardness, need and performance of a council while Balochistan emphasizes need, capacity, effort and performance of local councils while making recommendations for fiscal transfers.

The taxing powers in all the provinces are limited and it can be seen that expenditure decentralization is majorly dependent on the provincial finance commission awards. The local governments are given straitjacket mandates with few resources, and kept under tight provincial reign.

## CONCLUSIONS

Below are a few observations relevant to the Acts of all provinces.

- Party based elections of the local government will help create political linkages between the tiers of the government and reduce frictions. It will give mainstream political parties a stake in supporting local democracy. The efficacy of this can be best harnessed if the political parties select local electoral candidates on the basis of merit and a good reputation of public service rather than loyalties and patronage. This will support grass root democracy and remove barriers to entry in politics.

**Table-2:** Various commissions and boards constituted in LGAs of the provinces.

|                            | <b>Punjab</b>                 | <b>Sindh</b>                  | <b>Balochistan</b>                 | <b>KP</b>                     |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Disbursement of Funds      | Punjab Financial Commission   | Provincial Finance Commission | Local Councils Grants Committee    | Provincial Finance Commission |
| Administrative Services    | Punjab Local Government Board | Sindh Local Government Board  | Baluchistan Local Government Board | Local Service Board           |
| Inter Governmental Matters | Local Government Commission   | Local Government Commission   | Divisional Coordination            | Local Government Commission   |

**Table-3:** A comparison of finance related issues of the local governments in all provinces.

|   | <b>Punjab</b>                           | <b>Sindh</b>  | <b>Balochistan</b>   | <b>KPK</b>   |
|---|---|---|--|--|
| Representation of Local Government in the Provincial Finance Commission/ Local Grants Committee | No representation                       | One Mayor Metropolitan Corporation<br><br>One Mayor of Corporation<br><br>One Chairman Municipal Committee<br><br>One Chairman District Council | No Representation  | Two <i>Nazimeen</i> District Council Elected by <i>Nazimeen</i> of all District Councils<br><br>Two Nazim <i>Tehsil</i> Elected by <i>Nazimeen</i> of all <i>Tehsil</i> Councils |
| Audit   | Auditor General of Pakistan             | To be audited by an authority as prescribed by Provincial Government  | Director Local Fund Audit  | Internal Auditor and Auditor General of Pakistan   |
| Budget  | Prepared and Sanctioned by Local Bodies | Prepared and Sanctioned by Local Bodies   | Prepared by the Local bodies and sanctioned by Divisional Coordination Committee | Prepared and Sanctioned by Local Bodies  |

- The suspension powers given to the provincial governments can be a credible threat over the local politicians. Additionally, local representatives have limited authority over the matters of bureaucracy which remains under the purview of provincial secretariat. This can result in unchartered, and conflictual relationship between the local heads and the bureaucracy, which was evidenced in the LGO 2001. This has the potential to limit the role of the local government and thereby reduce efficiency of public services.

- The Local Government Acts treat large metropolitan areas like Karachi (23 million people with large and dynamic tax base) and Lahore as typical local governments with limited authority. Moreover, some metropolitan functions have been retained by the provincial governments. Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB) and the Sindh Building Control Authority (SBCA) remain subject to the authority of provincial minister for local government. Similarly, in Punjab, Lahore Development Authority (LDA), Parks and Horticulture Authority (PHA), solid waste management remain beyond local government control. This can restrain metropolitan growth and deprive the residents from gaining a share in economic development. Literature on fiscal federalism suggests that large metropolitan areas should have autonomous two-tier regional governments with powers equivalent to that of a province and direct interface with the center (Shah and Shah, 2006).

- The Acts entirely ignore the need for public participation

in community development. An ideal decentralized system provides consistent level and combination of public services, facilitates partnerships of various non-state stakeholders with public agencies and develops networks that can improve social and economic outcomes. Local governments should possess mechanisms for citizen involvement in local decision making.

- Powers to impose taxes are restricted as per the local government Acts of all provinces. Local governments are not allowed to incur debt in all the Acts. Local governments are excessively reliant on provincial allocation through the distribution of the Provincial Finance Commission Award. Institutionalizing effective local democracy will require giving local governments control over the planning and provision of all local public goods and services, control over its administrative staff and rights to predictable and effective finances.

Conclusively, globalization and information revolution are changing the roles of various levels of government. Most responsibilities are being shifted to the local governments and the role of provinces is greatly reduced. An obvious justification to this tendency is the fact that local governments are closer to the people and hence more responsive. An ideal decentralized system ensures a level and combination of public services consistent with voters' preferences while providing incentives for the efficient provision of such services.



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Pakistan's experience with local government has remained tainted as military regimes have used the system to legitimize their control. Consequently, the mainstream political parties viewed non-partisan local governments as a class of collaborative politicians who could be possible competitors for power and patronage. This explains why civilian governments have never revived local government systems and have replaced them with non-elected administrators. In 2008 the civilian democratic rule returned, however the incumbent political parties despite spending a full term in office did not hold local government elections. In 2013 the country saw its first ever transition from one civilian government to another. The year saw another milestone as the local government legislations were passed which gave political ownership to the system.

Despite some recognizable achievements the analysis of the Acts reveals that the Local Government Acts are largely

differential to the provincial governments rendering them powers to regulate functions of local governments, determining resource distribution and suspending them without any independent judicial reviews. The supremacy of the provinces as envisioned in the Acts, can offset local democracy and taint the quality of public services. This can be endorsed by Pakistan's Human Development Index which rose by 18.9 percent between 2000-2007, an era when LGO 2001 was in effect. This corresponded to an annual average of 2.7 percent. From 2007 to 2012 it only went up by 3.4 percent, just under 0.7 percent per annum. The LGO 2001 was discontinued in 2010 and during the last six years without any effectual local government system the HDI increases crashed down as low as 0.59% a negligible average annual increase of under 0.20 percent.

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