

PROVINCIAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT SYSTEMS OF PAKISTAN; A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

Sumrin Kalia

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.