



RESEARCH PAPER

Formation of New Provinces in Pakistan: Challenges and Prospects

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ABSTRACT

Pakistan is a federation that consists of four provinces, and its population is 241.49 million according to the 2023 census. However, there are still four provinces in Pakistan despite the population increasing rapidly since 1947. This increase has led to overcrowding in existing provinces and a need for additional provinces. The research explores the challenges and prospects of forming new provinces in Pakistan. The research method adopted in this study is qualitative and descriptive. The 1973 Constitution of Pakistan has made creating new provinces difficult. Besides, many challenges are involved in making new provinces, including political parties' politics, economic implications, ethnic and linguistic identities, centralization, and major regional groups. New provinces will be more likely to be made if these hindrances are overcome. It would be helpful to appoint a constitutional commission every ten years or twenty years to resolve the issue of the formation of new provinces in Pakistan.

Keywords: Constitutional Commission, Formation of New Provinces, Pakistan Politics

Introduction

Population, area, expansion of the area, and demographic characteristics in the country, all these factors justify the creation of a new province. Leadership, services, facilities, and all the arguments for the lowering of the rule of law support the creation of new provinces. But, Pakistan's constitution is unnecessarily limiting. This constitution makes four provinces possible by name. Perhaps it should only mention federal units without mentioning their names. As stated in the constitutions of India and the USA. This will reduce the impression that the number of provinces is final. Pakistan's Constitution gives the impression that the number of provinces is final. The subject matter must be amended in the Constitution (Dunya, 2018).

Unfortunately, the two major political parties (Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz Sharif (PML-N) in Punjab and Pakistan People's Party (PPP) in Sindh) have been deriving their strength from their respective provinces for many years. But in the elections of 2018, for the first time, Pakistan Tehrik-e-Insaf (PTI) came into power not only in Punjab but also in the center as a third party. Despite this, PML-N has also deep roots in Punjab, and apart from its ability to form a government in Punjab, its numerical superiority also benefits it at the national level. The PPP gets the government in Sindh because of its numerical superiority, but it does not have many benefits at the center. Not surprisingly, both parties have refused to listen to the division of power. Both parties feel that their constituency in their province will be divided. What if they support the issue, it just means they can form governments in more provinces in the future instead of just one (Dunya, 2018, p. 15).

The world's population is growing rapidly. To cope with this growing population storm, many countries around the world have implemented economic, political, and social reforms in their respective countries. These countries are also increasing the number of constituent units or provinces from time to time to accelerate good governance and better development in the country. But the population of Pakistan was about 75 million in 1947 and it had four provinces after seventy-five years the number of provinces in the country is still the same while its population has crossed the limit of 200 million (Statistics, 2024). This means that, unlike other countries in the world, no attention has been paid to the formation of new provinces in Pakistan. Due to this Pakistan lags behind other nations of the world in the field of development in the world.

The reason why the number of new provinces in the country has not increased is because of Pakistan's elite and centripetal forces. The 1973 Constitution of Pakistan has made creating new provinces extremely difficult and even impossible. Besides, there are many challenges in the way of making new provinces in the country, including politics of political parties on the name of new provinces, economic implications, ethnic and linguistic identities, demand on ethnic grounds by movements of new provinces in the country, centralization, major regional political groups and parties (such as *Sindhi, Pashtun, Baloch, Punjabi*).

Where there are big challenges in creating new provinces, there is also the possibility and prospect of making new constituent units. If the above-mentioned challenges and obstacles that stand in the way of creating new provinces are removed or resolved, the chances and hopes of making new provinces will increase. Besides, the possibilities and prospects of creating new provinces, these are; the establishment of the constitutional commission, the number of the provinces, raising the voices for the grievances in backward regions and areas, size of provinces, inequitable distribution of resources, etc.

Literature Review

Saman Zulfiqar has written in her article "Politics of Provinces in Pakistan: Prospects and Challenges" about the formation of new provinces in Pakistan. She has declared that the issue of new provinces is very complex and difficult. She describes that the creation of new provinces is impossible without national consensus and constitutional worth. The book of Dr. Muhammad Akbar Malik "Bahawalpur Mein Bahali-e-Soobahki Tehreek" has been written about the rehabilitation movement of Bahawalpur province. In this book, the author stressed that new provinces should be created based on cultural, ethnic, and language differences as well as based on administration. He stated that the new administrative units are essential to eradicate the sense of deprivation in the backward areas of the country.

Dr. Umbreen Javid has written in her article "Movement for Bahawalpur Province" about the desire of the people of the Bahawalpur region for what they want. The people of the region feel that their basic problems can be solved through a separate province. The author warns that if solemn steps are not taken for the development and prosperity of the region, then regional prejudice can become a very serious issue.

The article "Regional Identities in Quest of Separate Provinces: A New Challenge for the Pakistani Federation" was written by Muhammad Mushtaq. This study throws light on the problems of the Federation of Pakistan. The federation is already facing many internal and external problems, so it cannot open a new Pandora's box to fulfill the demands of regional identities. The author states that many demands are problematic to show up for the federation, but the claim for a new province in the Southern region of Punjab may be acceptable, and it has popular support.

An article by Moonis Ahmar, "Conflict Prevention and the New Provincial Map of Pakistan: A Case Study of Hazara Province," describes that the possible threat of the outburst of skirmish exists between the different ethnic and linguistic groups if the new administrative units are made without consensus into account the interest of the key interested party. The author suggests that it is the right time for Pakistan's Parliament to form a new commission to give thought to the creation of new administrative units in Pakistan. He suggests that present divisions should be declared as Provinces or should be made such a restructuring that is acceptable for everyone.

Latif (2017) concluded that the great interest in the country's new provinces should be made based on administrative rather than religious, linguistic, and ethnic bases. He said that the State is fully accountable for the justifiable distribution of resources to develop all the constituencies of the nation-state. He described the criteria for new provinces and presented his legal and administrative perspectives. He also explained the present federal structure of Pakistan.

The article "Justification for More Provinces" has been written by Khalid Chandio in IPRI Review. This article provides great information about new provinces in the country. The writer suggests that new units should be established on an administrative ground rather than an ethnic, cultural, lingual, and regional basis.

Material and Methods

The research method adopted in this study is qualitative and descriptive. Descriptive research is to understand the current status of the subject of the study. For authentication and justification of the present research, all primary and secondary sources available in the study have been used. Data have been collected from different secondary sources, i.e., libraries, comments, opinions, and analyses published in different newspapers, magazines, and other sources from the internet, which were relevant and important for this research. All the data have been collected manually from the concerned resources and arranged accordingly.

Amendment of Constitutional Provisions

The formation of new provinces is also stopped through the nature of Pakistan's constitution, which sets out a very strict process for the creation of new provinces in the country (Javaid, 2018, pp. 15-36). Under the current constitution of Pakistan, the formation of new provinces is not an easy mission because it is very difficult to change the boundaries of the existing provinces without amending the Constitution. Under article 239 of the constitution, the constitutional procedure for the formation of new provinces requires an amendment bill to be formed in both the Houses of the parliament which must be approved by a two-thirds majority of both the Houses. The consent of the Provincial Assembly is also essential for a change in the boundaries of any province (Ahmad, Khalid, & Kashif, Movement for the Restitution of Bahawalpur Province in Pakistan, 2020). According to clause (4) of Article 239, "A bill to amend the constitution which would have the effect of altering the limits of a province shall not be presented to the president for assent unless it has been passed by Provincial Assembly of that province by the votes of not less than two-thirds of its total membership (Pakistan N. A., The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, 2012)." This article requires the consent of the Provincial Assembly for any delimitation of provincial boundaries. It will be hard to meet these legal requirements in an alliance government (Zulfqar, 2012).

Interpreting the constitution of Pakistan concerning the new provinces in the country particularly South Punjab Province, a Senior Lawyer and Former High Court Judge Mr. Habib Ullah Shakir said in an interview with the Abdul Sattar Qamar in Multan on 28 August 2018, that South Punjab must be made a province to end poverty, unemployment,

hunger, shortage, political and economic exploitation. He said that sub-section four of Article 239 of the Constitution should be amended to remove the condition of approval of the resolution for the change in the province by a two-thirds majority. He said that to create a new province, Article 1 of the Constitution, which identifies four federal units, would have to be amended. Gilgit-Baltistan is a province created under an executive order. Similarly, Articles 2, 3, and 9 of the Constitution will also have to be amended, requiring a two-thirds majority for any amendment (Shakir, 2018).

He said that in Article 51 of the Constitution, seats are given to the National Assembly and the Provincial Assembly. This article must be amended to determine the seats of the South Punjab Assembly. Under Article 59 of the Constitution, the four provinces have 25 seats in the Senate. If two provinces of Multan and Bahawalpur are formed, then there will be an increase of 50 seats in the Senate. If one province is formed, then the 25 seats will have to be increased. This situation is not acceptable for Baluchistan, Sindh, and KPK as the senators of Punjab and South Punjab together could pose a threat to their interests. Moreover, Article 101 of the constitution wants to be amended to provide for the appointment of a governor who is the constitutional head of the province from the center and is bound to follow the Chief Minister's advice. Thus, by amending Article 6 of the Constitution, the seats for South Punjab Assembly are to be fixed. Habib Ullah added that PTI wants to create 10 provinces in the country bringing the total number of seats in the Senate to 250 (Khabrain, 2018).

Politics of Political Parties

Political Parties are a big hurdle to making the new provinces in the country. Major national political parties are playing with the feelings of the people of backward and deprived areas. When elections come near, they announce the favor of the cause of new provinces to get votes of that region who are demanding the creation of a new province. But, after taking political advantage, they forget the issue of new provinces. In this regard, different political parties favor the issue to get political advantages such as PML-N in the *Hazara* region in KPK, Pakistan People Party (PPP) in the *Seraiki* belt in Punjab, PTI in the *Hazara* region in KPK and South Punjab region. Interestingly, PPP wants to make a province in South Punjab, but she does not want the division of Sindh into more provinces. Table 4-1 shows the major political parties at the national level in Pakistan (Taj & Rehman, 2015, pp. 352-365).

Table 1
Major Political Parties of National Level in Pakistan

Sr. No.	Name of Political Parties on the National Level in Pakistan
1.	Pakistan Tehrik-e-Insaf (PTI)
2.	Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz Shrif) (PML-N)
3.	Pakistan People's Party (PPP)
4.	Pakistan Muslim League (Quaid-e-Azam)
5.	MutthidaQaumi Movement (MQM)
6.	Awami National Party (ANP)
7.	Jamiyat-e-Ulma-e-Islam (JUI)
8.	Jama'atIslami
9.	Muttahida Majlis e Amal (MMA)
10.	Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party (PkMAP)

Source: (Taj & Rehman, 2015)

For example, here discuss the politics of political parties in the *Seraiki* Province Movement which is the biggest movement in Pakistan. All the major and minor political parties of Pakistan have their difference or consensus regarding the proposed *Seraiki* province. Pakistan People's Party (PPP) has agreed with the decision to create a new

province with the *Seraiki* identity and the name of *Seraiki* province, but at the same time proposes the name of South Punjab province. PML-N has been afraid of a new linguistic and administrative identity in Punjab and that is why it raised the slogan of the Bahawalpur Province movement.

The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf (PTI), after two decades of interaction, is ready to create a limited but administrative province. The centralist establishment is not at all willing to name the proposed province *Seraiki*. Therefore, the PPP, in a conciliatory manner, had given a solid legal justification to the demand to pass a bill in the Senate in the name of South Punjab Province in 2012. The PML-N approved a resolution in the Punjab Assembly in 2013 to form a province called "Bahawalpur South Punjab". On the other hand, in 2013, the PML-N continued to exchange north Punjab Officials in government offices during the previous regime, weakening the *Seraiki* identity and strengthening the position of "one Punjab (Mubarak, 2018)."

When the PPP introduced a constitutional amendment bill in the Punjab Assembly which was necessary for the creation of a new province, the PML-N rejected it. According to Pakistan's Constitution, the National Assembly cannot send a bill for any new province to the Senate for approval and then to the President of Pakistan for final approval until the relevant province from which the new province is to be formed is approved by a two-thirds majority, or by amending Article 239 relating to a two-thirds majority in the National Assembly and not extending this power to its jurisdiction. Contrary to apparent claims, the PML-N had in January 2013 also rejected the report of a parliamentary commission set up to create new provinces, saying that its representatives were not included in the commission and that the commission was focusing on only one province while they also wanted to create another province that was *Hazara* in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Khabrain, 2018).

PTI has also achieved success in South Punjab. The faction of *Seraiki* intellectuals and nationalists believed that the creation of a province without the word *Seraiki* would be not only incomplete but meaningless, ineffective, incomplete, and weak, but would further weaken *Seraiki's* linguistic and cultural identity over time. The *Seraiki* province should also include the two districts of KPK, namely Tank and *Dera Ismail Khan*, as these two districts have always been historically unique and culturally *Seraiki*. The *Awami* National Party (ANP) in its manifesto recognizes the definition of *Seraiki* identity and culture within KPK but rejects the proposed merger of Tank and *Dera Ismail Khan* into South Punjab or *Seraiki* province. On the other hand, *Baloch* nationalists and national parties, including the National Party and the Balochistan National Party, do not recognize *Dera Ghazi Khan* and *Rajanpur* as *Seraiki* districts (Khabrain, 2018).

Some of PTI's politicians, intellectuals, and political activists want to create a separate province consisting of three divisions: *Dera Ghazi Khan*, *Multan*, and *Bahawalpur*. The name of which is South Punjab Province. In all, it is a province of ten districts. The proposal has received little support because it does not include purely *Seraiki* districts such as *Jhang* and *Mianwali*. PML-N has been blowing the trumpet on the bill of South Punjab province without adopting any concrete strategy and without any constitutional basis. Going beyond the election slogans, it remains to be seen what role the PTI will play in the creation of *Seraiki* province. The people of South Punjab say that we should not be dragged into linguistic confusion. We only need a province in which we have jobs, employment, education, and health, and let the people of South Punjab develop in other matters. The formation of the province will lead to fierce competition in the upcoming elections between the PPP, PTI, PML-N, and new strong parties emerging in South Punjab (Khabrain, 2018).

On December 20, 2018, the Opposition's Leader in the National Assembly *Shahbaz Sharif* announced the introduction of a constitutional amendment bill to create South Punjab province and restore Bahawalpur province. The PPP supported it while the PTI government

opposed it saying that it could not be done that Bahawalpur province consisted of three districts while the South Punjab two Divisions, became separate provinces. Shahbaz Sharif more said that our government voted for a resolution in the Assembly for the South Punjab province and the restoration of Bahawalpur province. So, the government should come forward and support our bill. PTI's MNA Aamir Dogar replied that the resolution was passed in the last days of the government in the past and now they are trying to make matters worse. PTI's government will make South Punjab Province. Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said that PPP has taken practical steps in South Punjab. PPP has brought the issue of South Punjab into the mainstream. Former Prime Minister Raja Pervez Ashraf said that the PPP did a lot for South Punjab (Jang, 2018).

About the new provinces in the country, political parties and their leaders are doing just political points scoring on the issue. If they take practical steps, there is a danger that their interests will be harmed. The demand for the new provinces in the country should not be based solely on political principles but should be aimed at improving social and economic development (Latif, 2017). But, in Pakistan, major political parties are fighting the tug of war of their interest not for the betterment of the country, because if Sindh is divided into more provinces then most of Sindh will be out of the hands of PPP which she will never want. Similarly, the PML-N considers Punjab as her real political force, she knows that Punjab winning means the whole of Pakistan win, so she is against the partition of Punjab, while now the PTI, which came to the force with the slogan of making South Punjab a province, sees that if South Punjab becomes a separate province then the rest Punjab will get out of her hands because PML-N will form the government again in the rest Punjab.

For the prospects of new provinces in the country, all political parties and stakeholders must be on the same page. For this, a commission should be formed permanently to review every ten- or fifteen years whether new provinces are needed in the country or not. If necessary, new provinces should be formed on an administrative basis only.

Inequitable Distribution of Resources

In the existing structure of Pakistan, the revenue is collected through the center and reallocated among the provinces. This redeployment has been a combative matter between the center and the provinces (Ahmad, Mustafa, & Khalid, 2007). Federating units have at all times demanded additional political sovereignty and a larger share in funds and income. That is why there has always been disagreement in Pakistan over the NFC Awards and the distribution of river water (Zulfqar, 2012, pp. 146-152). The core aim of the demand for new provinces is the unsatisfactory distribution of development funds between big cities and far-flung areas of the provinces (Anjum, 2011). To decide on new provinces, the government must make comprehensive recommendations to overcome technical, administrative, and procedural requirements (Zulfqar, 2012, pp. 146-152). On the other hand, the ruling forces of Pakistan are making it difficult to make this decision so that new provinces cannot be formed.

Economic Implications

The formation of new units will also affect the budget. Supporters of new administrative units have faith that new provincial administrations will take their financial plan and will be able to mobilize additional funds for backward zones that have been underprivileged of their due share. Incidentally, it will be necessary to see the sights of the financial latent of these parts. For example, Southern Punjab may have large cotton manufacturing textile units and KPK may advance hydropower plans with its water resources. However, creating new smaller units will increase non-development expenditures which will put an additional burden on the taxpayers and the already modest economy will shrink further (Zulfqar, 2012, pp. 146-152).

Although the demand for new smaller units has been increasing in Pakistan from time to time, political parties have formally stated their position on the idea of creating more provinces. It is expected that many factors will work, and the formation of new smaller units will have a huge influence on various aspects of the country, including the economy. Given the already weak economic situation facing Pakistan, the economic implications of a decision on new provinces are crucial. Therefore, for the equal distribution of income and resources, some things will have to be compromised while the resources are already scarce in Pakistan which becomes a matter of concern (Anjum, 2011).

People in backward areas of Pakistan have always complained that very few development funds are allocated for their areas, due to which their areas are deprived of development. But there is also no denying that the big cities of any province get the most funds while the small cities are ignored, this inequality in the distribution of resources is becoming the main reason for the demand for the new provinces, especially in Punjab. If more small units are established there, then there is a possibility that resources will be available in more suitable amounts for other areas as well. For example, instead of spending a lot of money in District Lahore alone, some of it part should be allocated in District Multan, District Dera Ghazi Khan, District Bahawalpur, District Mianwali, District Bhakkar, and adjoining areas (Anjum, 2011).

Besides, the impact of increasing non-development spending needs to be considered. If new provinces are created, there will be a significant increase in non-development funds. This will put an additional burden on the treasury. Thus, it would be a big issue to consider the management of such non-development funds before deciding to create new provinces. Thus, it can be concluded that the formation of smaller units will have the most important economic implications, both helpful and harmful. The decision on new provinces in the country should be taken after considering all these factors as Pakistan can no longer afford to make mistakes on the economic front (Anjum, 2011).

Ethnic and Linguistic Identities

Like the other challenges, ethnic and linguistic movements are a big hurdle in the way of new administrative units in the country. Each province has a substantial geographically concentrated minority: *Seraiki* in South Punjab, *Mohajirs* in the city of Sindh, *Hazarewals* in the *Hazara* region of KPK, and *Pashtuns* in north Balochistan. This diversity has a great impact on the politics of Pakistan (Mushtaq, Ethno-regional Political Party Success in Pakistan (1970-2013): An Analysis, 2018, pp. 97-116). Table 4-2 indicates the ethnic-regional political parties of Pakistan (Mahmood, 2014, pp. 1-39). Because, movements that are working for the formation of a new province in Pakistan want to make new units for their identity, culture, language, and ethnicity basis. Such as *Seraiki* intellectuals and nationalists believe that the creation of a province without the word *Seraiki* would be not only incomplete but meaningless, ineffective, incomplete, and weak.

Consequently, the claim for the formation of detached provinces on an ethnolinguistic basis is the main hurdle in its way of achievement. The *Siraiki* nationalists do not agree with to form of the *Seraiki* province on administrative shapes (Mushtaq & Shaheen, The *Siraiki* Province Movement in Punjab, Pakistan: Prospects and Challenges, 2017, pp. 139-150) as of *Pakistan Seraiki Party* (PSP) President Taj Langah argued that “we want a new province comprising of 21 districts based on shared language, culture, and history. The proposed name of *Janoobi*(South) Punjab is out of the question. We will not accept any name other than *Siraiki* province (Ahmar, Conflict Prevention and the New Provincial Map of Pakistan: A Case Study of Hazara Province, 2013, pp. 01-19).”

But the other hand, the centralist establishment is not at all willing to name the proposed province *Seraiki*(Ahmad, Khurshid, & Asdullah, Socio-economic development under the Development Authority, 2020). It was also reasoned that Pakistan’s existence

would be put at risk if ethnolinguistic characteristics were legalized in the form of new smaller units. Thus, the cry for the making of new provinces is also being stopped by the opposition of the establishment, which would only stand when it is only on administrative grounds instead of ethnic and linguistic (Samad, 2020). Therefore, that is why these movements are a big challenge for the formation of new provinces.

Movements that back the boundaries of new provinces on ethnic and linguistic grounds can escalate cultural conflict (such as the case of *Muhajir* province in Sindh), which will finally deteriorate the country by encouraging sub-nationalism (Zulfqar, 2012, pp. 146-152). If provinces are formed based on ethnicity or lingual in the country, then there is a risk of ethnic violence. Instead of forming on ethnic grounds, new smaller units should be created along the administrative lines to avert the risk of racial viciousness. "The best solution to the issue of the racial, lingual, and ethnic assertion of identities is to upgrade Pakistan's divisions to provinces, with proper planning and management so that power is devolved to the grassroots level (Ahmar, Conflict Over New Provinces, 2018)." According to the Election Commission of Pakistan, the list of regional political parties is given in the following table (Pakistan E. C., 2018).

Table 2
Ethno-Regional Political Parties of Pakistan

Province	Region	Sub-National Ethno-Regional Political Parties
Punjab	South Punjab	Pakistan <i>Sariaki</i> Party
		<i>Sairkistan Qaumil Tehad</i>
	Bahawalpur	Seraiki Sooba Movement Pakistan
		Bahawalpur National Awami Party Awami Tehreek Bahali-e-Soba Bahawalpur Pakistan
Sindh	Urban Sindh	Mohajir Qaumi Movement Pakistan
		Muttahida Qaumi Movement Pakistan
		Mohajir Ittehad Tehrik
	Rural Sindh	Sindh Democratic Alliance
		Sindh Dost Ittehad
		Sindh National Front Sindh Taraqi Passand Party (STP) Sindh United Party
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	Pashtun Region	Awami National Party
		Awami National Party (Wali)
	Hazara Region	Hazara Awami Ittehad Pakistan
		Hazara Democratic Party
		Hazara Qaumi Mahaz
		Ittehad Milli Hazara Tehreek-e-Suba Hazara
Balochistan	Baloch Region	National Party
		Jamhoori Wattan Party
		Balochistan National Congress
		Balochistan National Democratic Party
		Balochistan National Movement
		Balochistan National Party
		Balochistan National Party (Awami)
		Mutahida Baloch Movement of Pakistan
		All Muttahida Baloch Qaumi Movement
		Pakistan Brohi Party
Pashtun Region	Pashtoonkhwa Milli Awami Party	

 PashtoonQuomi Tehreek

 PakhtoonkhwaQaumi Party

 KakarJamhoori Party Pakistan

 JamoteQaumi Movement

Source: Election Commission of Pakistan. Note: South Punjab and Bahawalpur regions in Punjab, Urban Sindh region in Sindh, Hazara Region in KPK, Pashtun Region in Balochistan are demanding new provinces in Pakistan based on ethnic and linguistic identities.

It is generally claimed that administrative units formed based on ethnicity and language will not be harmed. Intellectuals say that ethnic identities are strong in the current provinces. Pakistan got these provinces from the British as they were before independence. Since then, only KPK has been given a new name on ethnic grounds and it has boosted the awareness of the *Hazara* public. It has before now begun to respond in a series that encourages other racial groups to claim new smaller units on ethnolinguistic grounds. Counting these expansions, a movement for a *Muhajir* Province was launched in Karachi and Hyderabad with wall chalking. It was made stronger by protests by the privileged of the movement (Shah, 2012).

Then came more stresses for the partition of Sindh and the formation of a province in South Sindh. In reply, a rally of Sindh's lovers was held on 22nd May 2012, in contradiction of the partition of Sindh which caught fire on a large scale, and more than a dozen persons were murdered. Then, on 30th May 2012, the Sindh Solidarity Conference was called which was joined by conventional and nationalist politically aware parties and accepted a united resolution in contrast to the partition of Sindh (Shah, 2012). This shows that the movements supporting the new provinces on an ethnic or linguistic basis can escalate ethnic conflicts that will eventually deteriorate the country by serving sub-nationalism (Zulfqar, 2012, pp. 146-152).

Major Regional Political Groups and Parties

Regional groups are other steeplechases in the way of the creation of new provinces in Pakistan. Each of its provinces is associated with a convinced ethnolinguistic group – Punjab with Punjabis, Sindh *Sindhis*, KPK with *Pashtuns*, and Balochistan with *Balochis* (Mushtaq, *Ethno-regional Political Party Success in Pakistan (1970-2013): An Analysis*, 2018, pp. 97-116). In this way, such as Sindhi nationalists in Sindh, *Baloch* regional political parties, and groups in Balochistan and *Awami* National Party (ANP) in KPK are opposed to the division of Sindh Province, Balochistan Province, and KPK Province respectively. Sindhi nationalists and other regional parties do not want the political division of Sindh. In January 2012, there was a wheel jam and shutdown strike across Sindh at the request of nationalist parties against the 20th constitutional amendment bill in the National Assembly proposed by the MQM for the creation of new provinces. Protests in almost all cities of Sindh were followed by violent incidents and aerial firing which resulted in many people injured.

In Hyderabad, *Awami Tehreek* and *Sindhiani Tehreek* rallied from Haider Chowk to SP Chowk all through which demonstrators conflicted with police. A strike call was given by the Save Sindh Committee, which is a coalition of five Sindhi nationalist sets. Dr. Safdar Sarki the Chairman of *Jeay Sindh Tehreek* said “The bill tabled by the MQM discloses its intention” The Sindhi nationalists passionately opposed the resolution, saying it would give the central government the authority to change the boundaries of provinces deprived of consulting any province in question (Nation, 2012). While the aims of MQM were the division of Punjab “division will also set the principle of more divisions elsewhere which, in turn, supports MQM’s plan to carve out something for itself in urban Sindh (Siddiqi, 2011).”

The Awami National Party (ANP) opposed the proposed bill in the Assembly while she was then the ruling party in KPK province. In response to the demand of Hazara province, ANP's Ghulam Ahmad Bilour objected and said "I will never discuss the division of Sindh or Punjab and will never allow anybody to discuss the division of my province (Pakistan N. A., House Debate , 2012)" Participating in the discussion on the floor of the National Assembly, Sheikh Waqas Akram said:

Sir, this is a very important issue. There is nothing emotional about it. We also think so and our party has a very strong position that new provinces should be formed so that the capital hegemonies within different provinces like KPK is dominated by the people of Peshawar and Punjab is dominated by the people of Lahore and for better governance of the people, they can be given the rights and the issues for which they have been working for years (Akram, 2012).

The Number of Constituent Units

Modern federations have also changed the number of provinces. In history, the two unit's federations have tackled complications and, in many cases, have ended up existing. The disintegration of the Malaysia-Singapore federation, the leave-taking of Eritrea from Ethiopia, the breakdown of Pakistan in 1971 and the riven between the Czech Republic and Slovakia give the impression to recommend that bilateral federalism "has been notoriously unstable (Amoretti & Bermeo, 2004, pp. 1-23)." The federation of Belgium consists of three regions, including the Flemish Region, the Walloon Region, and the Brussels.

On the contrary, some federations make up many provinces. Through the formation of new provinces, the number of provinces in the Indian federation has improved to 29 while the number of states in the USA has increased from 13 to 50. Switzerland consists of 26 cantons and half cantons. In the same way, Nigeria has formed new smaller states and their figure has augmented to 36. Given the experiences of modern federations, it has been argued that "a high number of differentiated regional units provide a more solid ground for a federal state than a lower number (Colomer, 2001, p. 186)."

In the Pakistani context, it has been reasoned that "the lower number of states within Pakistan has contributed to the federal instability". Pakistan has been living as a federation with four provinces since 1971. This little figure of provinces has caused stiffness inside the Federation (Adeney K. S., 2003, p. 237). Pakistan can learn a lesson from those countries of the world that have increased the number of provinces in their countries to strengthen federation and integration. More constituent units are the basic key to good governance and strengthening the federation in the country. So, Pakistan has been facing many problems and obstacles in the way of development since its inception due to the smaller number of provinces in the country. For good governance, the welfare of the people, and development in the country, Pakistan should follow this formula. Moreover, this idea can increase the prospects of a new province in the country.

Size of the Federating Units

In the case of Pakistan, Punjab is the biggest province of the country concerning population. Its population is more than half. Due to this, the federation of Pakistan has been always getting instability for many decades. Punjab has always dominant position in the civil-military bureaucracy and central politics. The socio-economic condition is better than in other provinces of Pakistan. This comparatively beneficial location of the Punjabis has been supposed by the minor provinces as the "*Punjabization*" of Pakistan (Talbot, 2002, pp. 51-63).

According to a 2009 public opinion poll, the idea was substantiated in answer to the query that “whether or not they think that the relative size of one province (Punjab) is an obstacle in the smooth functioning of the Pakistani federation?” Most of the respondents are in the right place to the smaller units agreed with the proportion: 92.5% *Baloch*, 80.7% *Pashtuns*, and 68% *Sindhi* well-thought-out the comparative size of Punjab in authority for the inability of the federation to put up diversity (Mushtaq, Consociationalism and Multi-Ethnic States: Post-1971 Pakistan—A Case Study, 2011).

Modern federations fluctuate in size, number, and nature of the formation of federal units. The provinces of federations are always unequal in size, every so often surprisingly. The irregular size of provinces is challenging and these complications are further to be expected to occur in small units such as Schneier says that “problems are more likely to arise in smaller units (Schneier, 2006, p. 179).” It has been consistently argued that the size of provinces affects the success of federations in adjusting to diversity and raises the grievances of small units. Watts explains that the sheer size of Punjab helped it gain a foothold in central politics, which has led to politically aware unpredictability in Pakistan (Watts, 2000, pp. 1-4).

Adeney says that “many of the tensions in the federation of Pakistan are related to the fact that one province has most of the population. This tension would exist independently of whether or not Punjabis dominated the army and the bureaucracy because it is also related to the issues of representation and resource allocation (Adeney K., 2007, p. 175).” The size of the provinces of Pakistan should be almost equal so that small units of the country can get equal opportunities for development and prosperity. Minimizing the size of big provinces in Pakistan can be caused by the prospect of new provinces in the country.

Voices for the Grievances of Backward Regions and Areas

The voices raised by the people of the backward areas and the movements of the separate provinces have also strengthened the hope of the prospects of a new province in the country to end the backwardness, exploitation, injustice, and other grievances. When problems and issues reach their peaks then they convert into challenges. The people of the backward areas of Pakistan have big problems and issues that are related to their development and prosperity. They think that these challenges and issues are the main hurdles in the way of prosperity and development and can be removed these challenges only to form the new provinces in the country. The ethnic factions and smaller provinces claim that these grievances are due to the centrality of political supremacy in the country (Mushtaq, 2011).

In this regard, they have a lot of grievances such as a sense of deprivation, imbalance in power-sharing, poverty issues, distance issue (distance from the provincial capital to the far-flung areas), political and economic backwardness, and identity rights, to oppress the exploited and backward classes through privileged classes, injustice, inequitable distribution of national resources, inadequate education and health facilities, lack of development and socio-economic backwardness, unemployment, improper behavior of government administration due to the high workload, etc. The demand for the creation of new provinces is stirred due to local socio-economic disparities in the country (Latif, 2017).

Centripetal Forces and Centralization

The 1973 constitution makes it clear that Pakistan meets the needs of the federation. Legislative, administrative, and financial powers have been distributed to the Center and the provinces. However, compared to modern-day federations, the Pakistani federation is relatively centralized (Mushtaq, 2011). The centralized forces still want to make Pakistan a unitary/central state in its place of a federal state (Ahmar, 2016). These forces are not in

favor of a decentralized system in the country because doing so will have to shift economic and political power to a low level.

The formation of new provinces in the country is also a link in the same chain in which power must be decentralized from the centralization system, but a centralized mindset does not want to do so because their interests prevent them from doing so. Consequently, the centripetal forces and centralization are major challenges in establishing new provinces in the country:

Three contradictory factors that influenced the issue of creating new provinces in Pakistan were religion, nationalism, and centralization. The argument that the identity of Pakistan rested with Islam as a major unifying force was exploited by the bureaucratic-military establishment which wanted to suppress nationalistic forces and establish a unitary instead of a federal state (Ahmar, 2013).

It was also reasoned that Pakistan's survival would be put at risk if ethnic and linguistic characteristics were legalized in the form of new smaller units (Ahmar, Challenge of new provinces, 2013). Moreover, it was claimed that even though the 1973 Constitution had proper federal structures, it largely acted as a unitary system. As a result, "the political centralization caused a sense of marginalization and alienation in the smaller provinces of Pakistan" (Mushtaq, 2009, pp. 279-294).

Civil Bureaucracy

Another element that stands in the way of new provinces is the opposition to the civil establishment. It despises the idea of creating new provinces because it is based on ethnic-linguistic goals, not administrative ones. The conception of a new province would divide the powers of chief secretaries that would not keep water for bureaucrats (Samad, 2020). Zia Shahid, a senior journalist, and columnist considers the civil bureaucracy to be the real ruler of the country, he wrote in his Urdu newspaper *Daily Khabrain* on August 8, 2020, that "the bureaucracy is, in fact, the heir to the British crown that has left here". "The real decision-makers in the country are the bureaucrats (Shahid, 2020, p. 3)."

He believes that all the political rulers who have gone from 1947 to the present, whether he is the PM of the country or the Chief Minister (CM) of the province, MNA or MPA, are all helpless in the face of these elites. He further added that "the real rulers in the country are the Chief Secretary, Secretaries of different departments, Commissioners, Deputy Commissioners (DC), Assistant Commissioners (AC) and Inspector-General of Police (IG), Deputy Inspector-General of Police (DIGs), Superintendent of Police (SPs), in front of whom the members of Legislature Assembly are helpless and walk around praying for the officers in a recommended tone." The English left for his country but left his class (Shahid, 2020, p. 3).

Conclusion

If the policy of the most important stakeholders of power in the country is constructive, and they want to serenely resolve problems that basis resistance, uncertainty, pandemonium, ailment, and fierceness in different provinces because of social, financial, and political discriminations, they must study suggestions to upgrade the current divisions of Pakistan addicted to provinces. It is important to ensure that the formation of new provinces is achieved in an amicable manner and with minimal disruption to the people and the country. Moreover, the government should provide all the necessary support to these new provinces to help them become successful. Intended for that issue, suitable come up with by disturbed stakeholders as well as civilian groups that need to be done with the aim of compromise is the procedure to make smaller units in Pakistan. There are many hurdles and obstacles in the way of creating new provinces in the country. If the formation of new

provinces accelerates Pakistan's development journey, all these hindrances to the formation of new provinces must be removed with an open mind. There is no better solution to these areas as creating new provinces will also help alleviate the grievances of the people of the backward areas. The purpose of creating new provinces in the country should be to facilitate the people and bring prosperity to the underdeveloped areas of Pakistan. Therefore, all stakeholders should work together to resolve this issue as soon as possible. The new provinces should be empowered with the resources to develop infrastructure, create jobs, and provide basic services to their people. The governments should also ensure that these areas are well-equipped with the necessary resources to improve their quality of life. Furthermore, access to quality education and healthcare should be ensured in these areas.

Recommendations

The constitution should require a constitutional commission every ten or twenty years to investigate the need for new provinces. Pakistan should take up the issue in such a way that past disputes over the issue of new provinces do not arise. The creation of new provinces needs to be debated for various reasons. These reasons should not be bothered by the reasons that have been presented from time to time and have given a negative color to the suggestions. These reasons for the new provinces should be neither political nor ethnic nor linguistic. Rather, providing good governance to the citizens of Pakistan should be the only reason for the new provinces. The Civil Division is the largest administrative unit within the province, it has been suggested that every civil Division in Pakistan be made a province. In this way, linguistic and ethnic problems can be avoided. Politics should be excluded from this whole process. It cuts it off from the history of conflicts. Its traditional opposition must be nullified (Dunya, 2018, p. 15).

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