DEMAND FOR NEW PROVINCES IN PAKISTAN
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Abstract
There is an increasing demand for the creation of new provinces among the masses, due to uneven socio-economic growth in the less developed regions of Pakistan which seems to be reasonable enough considering their basic right to prosper. This sense of trust deficit in provincial setup has made voice louder in the concerned public, for new and small administrative units in the form of new provinces. It is also a fact that the people of Pakistan are credulous which threatens the rationality and causality of this demand. This may affect the desired outcome of social and economic uplift of common man in the backward regions. A just principle in the form of a policy decision is the need of hour, taking on board all the parties, ensuring the division to satisfy the grievances of all stakeholders. This paper surfaces critical questions and proposes a model for the new provinces, resting on the premise that welfare of the population should be the prime concern in this process.

Introduction
Pakistan emerged as an independent state in 1947, on the partition of British India into two sovereign states in South Asia. The dominion which consisted of modern-day Pakistan and Bangladesh was created for the Muslims of the Indian sub-continent, theoretically with majority areas of the Muslim population. The territory of Pakistan was a federation of five
provinces, namely East Bengal, West Punjab, Balochistan, Sind and the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) along with princely states within the geographical boundaries of the provinces and others willing to accede to Pakistan. Bangladesh separated from Pakistan in 1971 and at present, Pakistan consists of four provinces, Gilgit-Baltistan, Islamabad Capital Territory and Federally Administered Tribal Areas.

Four Provinces Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan constitute present day Pakistan. These provinces are administered by their respective provincial assemblies and governors, and comprising of multiple ethnicities, speaking variety of languages, possessing cultural and social norms and traditions, having diverse religious affiliations and lifestyles in the provinces. The socio-economic situation and level of development also varies in the provinces, even within a province, level of prosperity and growth is uneven. This is a natural phenomenon that some regions possess more potential to develop as compared to other ones. State is responsible for equitable distribution of resources to develop all regions of the country. State is also supposed to take care of its units regardless of any discrimination. Government plays a vital role in this regard, as the economic development at national and provincial level has become one of the major public policy concerns in Pakistan during the past decades.

This partial failure at the government’s end has led to frustration and disappointment among the public due to their deprivation in terms of regional development and access to
political power. Pakistanis, being credulous, are more attuned to the political motives of the ruling class being clueless about their share in the Development pie.

In this background, the demand for the creation of new provinces is on full swing at present in the political spheres of Pakistan. Despite the 18\textsuperscript{th} amendment in the 1973 constitution regarding more provincial autonomy, there are masses who demand the division of existing provinces for their economic rights at national level. The demand for creation of new provinces is stirred due to local socio-economic disparities in the country. A perception is prevalent among the concerned masses that the economic and social development of Pakistan has been uneven in the last few decades. Despite the fact, that the entire country has suffered from the energy crisis, security situation, low foreign investment and strained foreign relations, it is perceived that the provincial capitals and their peripheries have benefited more than other areas of the province.

This paper explores the historical trends and the rationale for the division of provinces in sub-continent in the past, which was meant to achieve the desired level of development and good governance under the different rules. It covers the post-partition era regarding the administrative units till 1971 and then 1971 onwards till present day. This paper also seeks to define the problem as a matter of public policy and discusses the policy criteria to address the demand for the creation of new provinces in Pakistan. The speculative
demands and the lack of any criteria for changing the administrative status of provinces in Pakistan have triggered the expectations in many ethnicities and stakeholders. The paper is purely an academic endeavour to define the problem and seek the policy framework rather favouring or discarding the proposal of demand for new provinces.

**Historical Outlook**

The administrative system has evolved in India, from the rule of Mughals to East India Company. Modern approach to administration was introduced by the British to cater for the vast apparatus of the government as a colony. Bureaucracy was introduced to govern and administer the large territory of British India.

The British also followed the Mughal precedent of provinces which was headed by the governors. They further divided the provinces into small administrative territorial units called districts. An officer was assigned the duty of administration of each district known as district officer who was assigned the designations of an executive, chief magistrate and a collector of revenue. The British stretched their network of administration to the gross root level for increased control and governance. The motive behind the division of provinces into divisions, districts, tehsils and villages was to manage the state affairs and its administration efficiently.
In the historical perspective of provinces and their division, Partition of Bengal in 1905 is quite important to understand the political, religious and social dynamics of that period. It is described that the first partition of Bengal in 1905 was an administrative initiative to boost good governance in the province. It shows that the administration is a core criterion for the division of provinces in the greater interest of the nation and the state. A brief description of the provinces and their administration in 1907 is given in the table as under:²

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province of British India</th>
<th>Chief Administrative Officer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Burma</td>
<td>Lieutenant Governor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bengal</td>
<td>Lieutenant Governor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madras</td>
<td>Governor In-Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bombay</td>
<td>Lieutenant Governor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Provinces</td>
<td>Lieutenant Governor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Provinces</td>
<td>Chief Commissioner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punjab</td>
<td>Lieutenant Governor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assam</td>
<td>Chief Commissioner</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There were also some small provinces like British Balochistan and NWFP. Partition of Bengal and then its annulment is also an important development in the history of sub-continent for the recognition of the public demand and its repercussions in the region.
In 1935, British Raj introduced the Government of India Act 1935, to administer and govern the India in the light of emerging trends of political scenarios. One of the most significant aspects of the Act was the grant of large scale autonomy to the provinces in British India. Pakistan maintains the same pattern of provinces and their structure at present. The administrative and political autonomy vested by the British Raj was in prime interest of the federation, for example, Sindh was separated from Bombay. This was also generally recognized, that the clauses of act relating to the provincial autonomy conferred a great deal of power and responsibility on local politicians to play their role in the local development. Our neighbour, India started with 14 states i.e. provinces and at present it has 28 provinces.3

Criteria for the New Provinces

There are some indicators or variables that must be well evaluated and analyzed in the national interest of Pakistan before undertaking any endeavour to the creation of new provinces. In the absence of a comprehensive and just policy, it will be tough to manage the growing demands of new provinces. A red line has to be defined in a democratic process to further the demands; otherwise it may lead towards a situation of anarchy and further exploitation by the interest groups and influential stakeholders. Meanwhile, acceptance of unending demands for the creation of more provinces can leads towards situation like pre-independence era of more than 560 princely states. Pakistan is not in a position to
undertake a distorted wave of unrest in its internal framework. Any loophole in the policy towards the creation of new provinces, may lead to further deterioration of inter-provincial relations. Furthermore, Federation of Pakistan needs internal strength and unity among its public to cope with the hostile international relations in the backdrop of war against terrorism. Pakistan presently, is striving for providing a reasonable solution to the demand of new provinces. It is observed that in a very recent development, the Punjab Assembly has unanimously approved resolutions in favour of reinstating Bahawalpur province and the formation of a separate province in southern Punjab; both resolutions were tabled by Pakistan Muslim League – Nawaz (PML-N) leader and Punjab Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Rana Sanaullah, in a session of the provincial assembly and a commission is proposed to be established for this very purpose.4

There are some questions which come to mind being a public policy analyst in the wake of demand for the creation of new provinces in Pakistan such as following:

- Is it sure that the justified social and economic growth is impossible with the existing system/ provinces?
- Does the division of large provinces empirically project the road map to quicker growth and development in Pakistan?
- Does the salvation of the demanding stakeholders lie only in the division of provinces?
Is there enough homework being done to constitute the genuineness of demand based on the evidences by the government under some competent authority or commission?

What are policy options and alternatives available with the government to furnish the demand of new provinces in the light of uneven economic and social development?

What will be the acceptable criteria in the democratic government for the division i.e. Equity, Equality, Justice, Population, Resources, Income Share, Urbanization, Literacy and others?

What will be the minimal economic and geographical size of a new province?

Is the calculus for the economic and financial constraints being done or assessed in due course of emergence of new provinces?

It is also observed that any break-up is always emotionally and politically wrenching for the people involved, hence what may be the remedial or reconstructing measure for the stakeholders?

How long can the political parties both at provincial and national level afford to ignore the demand of new provinces by the masses in the less developed regions of the country?

Pakistan has witnessed the partition of Bengal in 1971. Will the creation of more provinces strengthen our
federation or will it lead to further inter-province conflicts?

Keeping in view, a comprehensive and meticulous response is desired by the government and political parties. There are some basic measures that must be considered while devising any criteria or framework for the further division of already existing administrative units.

- Constitutional Amendment
- Political Will
- Ethnic Affiliations
- Linguistic Cohesion
- Social Contract

Constitutionally, a two-third majority is required in the parent provincial assembly for its division into new provinces as per article 239, subsection 4 of the constitution of Pakistan. This is mentioned as:

“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 the Provincial Assembly of that Province by the votes of not less than two-thirds of its total membership.”

This interprets that in case of Punjab, a two-third majority is mandatory out of its total 370 members for the further division into small provinces. A resolution has also been passed on May 09, 2012 unanimously in the Punjab Assembly for the creation of two new provinces out of it.
Political will for the creation of new provinces is enthusiastic at present, especially the ruling party and some of its coalition partners in the government. This is a good sign that political high ups are concerned about the demand of public. But this enthusiasm should not override the national interests in greater benefit for the state and its sovereignty. Moreover, demand for new provinces should not be merely based on the political scoring in the country. The motive should be the improvement of social and economic uplift of the general public. This situation also surfaces the questions, whether the demand for new provinces is nationalistic or people oriented by the political parties. The political mobilization and articulation along caste/ethnic/language-based social cleavages need to be evaluated unbiased. There is a difference of opinion in the national parties and regional parties regarding the demand for new provinces.

There are also different ethnicities living in the existing provinces. The creation of new provinces may lead to ethnic demands for more recognition and self-centred isolation in the national landscape. Demand for new province, on the basis of regional identity, culture and geographical differences, is more evident in Saraiki and Hazara regions. Moreover, precedence of language based division in the Sub-Continent is also prevalent; however, this criterion of division may neither be suitable not fruitful. There is also a change in populace criterion on division of province, now new provinces are being demanded on the basis of good governance, efficient
administrative management and economic development. Now, new provinces are being demanded on the basis of good governance and economic development rather than on the language principle.

Social contract of the people living in one province is important in the current demand for new provinces. There have been such events in the past, which stirred the social sentiments of the concerned regions. Economic exploitation is the core concern in the social disparity among the masses. Punjab province is the largest, with almost 60% of total Pakistan’s population. At times, it becomes difficult to address the problems of the entire public due to larger size of the province. This brings us to a question, is it the size of the province that becomes a hurdle in efficient service delivery or is it lack of efficiency in delivery system in the local administration and political end? As the state declares unprejudiced and priority based administrative setup exists all over the country. Moreover, political system with representation in the national and provincial assembly is also ensured by the state.

In broader context, it is also necessary to define the exact problem which can solve the grievances of the concerned population. As a matter of case study, if new provinces are carved as per demands then what is the surety that there will be social and economic uplift of the ordinary public? There is also fear that this division may lead to further exploitation by
same interest group who already have the positions in the high ranks of both civil and political domains.

**Pakistan’s Administrative Structure**

Since colonial era, administrative divisions had formed an integral tier of the government structure in the sub-continent. At independence, Pakistan comprised of two wings – eastern and western, separated by a distance of thousand miles of Indian Territory.

From 1955 to 1970, The One Unit Policy meant that there would only be two provinces in Pakistan, namely East and West Pakistan. After the Fall of Dhaka in 1971, Eastern wing separated from the western as a new state, known as Bangladesh. The remaining portion of western wing comprises Pakistan at present. Pakistan consists of four provinces, Islamabad Capital Territory and Federally Administered Tribal Areas with a total area of 796,096 sq. km. at present and its administrative structure is shown in the chart below:

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+-----------------------------+
| Federal Government          |
+-----------------------------+
| Province (e.g. Punjab)      |
+-----------------------------+
| Division (e.g. Faisalabad Division) |
+-----------------------------+
| District (e.g. Toba Tek Singh) |
+-----------------------------+
| Tehsil/Taluka/Town (e.g. Gojra) |
+-----------------------------+
| Union Council (e.g. UC-19)  |
+-----------------------------+
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It also raises the question about level of efficiency of the existing system, because the very same system will work under the new provincial administration if new provinces are carved out. In this way, what will be the real change to acquire the desired results? This is a big question which needs to be answered by the competent authorities.

**Legal Perspective**

The Organization structure of the federal and Provincial Governments in Pakistan is governed by the provisions in the 1973 Constitution of Pakistan. In a federal setup, where both the Federation and the Federating Unit (Provinces) derive their authority from the same Constitution, both are independent of each other’s control in the spheres assigned to each by the constitution.⁶

- As for the governance of provinces, each province will have a governor, appointed by the President of Pakistan.
- Each province will have Provincial Consolidated Fund comprising all revenues, loans etc.
- Each province will have a Public Accounts of the Province.
- Executive authority of the province shall extend to all matters in respect of which the Provincial Assembly may make laws.
- Provincial Government may make rules of business regulating the procedures.
Demand for New Provinces in Pakistan

Above mentioned are a few salient features of a province in Pakistan. It is perceived that through the demand for the creation of new provinces, all the stakeholders are also seeking such a setup for their respective regions and ethnicities. Moreover, this will bring the desired level of development and progress to their respective areas. Although there is no harm in having positive perceptions and aspirations but these should be realistic and well-evaluated.

**Administrative Perspective**

Pakistan already maintains comprehensive administrative setup at different levels. There are three tiers of administration at division level, also shown below:

- Commissioner (Division)
  - Deputy Commissioner (District)
    - Assistant Commissioner (Tehsil)

This system of administration already exists at each district level. With the creation of new provinces, it is vital to ascertain the level of improvement which will be yielded resultantly. It is believed that this system can be developed to the highest level of output and service delivery by enhancing the people’s skills and training.

Administrative reforms in the existing and proposed provinces may be considered on a three point agenda i.e. a) measure for improvement in service provisions, b) an
instrument for political/ideological control and c) a condition for economic development in Pakistan.

**Policy Options**

Government should seek multiple policy options regarding the demand for new provinces to reach a democratic solution, catering all the stakeholders. The ultimate goal should be the national interests of Pakistan along with the fulfilment of public demand.

**Model for New Provinces**

A model was applied in “Papua New Guinea” for creation of new provinces, which is a four tier process model. The same model can be applied in context of Pakistan for creation of new provinces.

The resolution regarding creation of new provinces in Punjab Assembly also accompanied the demand for the establishment of a commission to process in a comprehensive way. This depicts the difficulties involved in the process, as it is very sensitive, and precautionary measures are indispensable. Government of Pakistan may put together proposals for administrative criteria and processes for consideration on the creation of new provinces:

- One option can be the establishment of new provinces either by amalgamation or separation between existing provinces or
- By the variation to existing Provincial Boundaries

In this background, a Four Tier Process Model may be proposed. Basically it involves:
The Initiator which may be a legislative body or some other entity to provide a proposal that must demonstrate how it proposes to meet constitutional, legislative, national policy, financial feasibility, ethnic and geographical cohesion, popular support and other criteria.

A Competent Commission to screen proposals assesses substantive proposals, advise the legislature on those proposals and assist in the smooth processing.

Parliamentary Committee with consultation to its supporting institutes like Federal Ministry of Inter Provincial Coordination, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs and Establishment Division decide the final acceptability of the proposal and introduce legislation for boundary changes (including new provinces) if so decided or some other decision.

Parliament to decide on legislation for change of boundaries.

There is a set of principles for the process in the Model which may be negotiated according to the domestic requirements. The principles for the process are:

- To establish a baseline set of requirements for establishing new provinces and boundary variations.
- To put the onus on Initiators of Proposals for new provinces/boundary variations to “make the case”.
➢ To force initiators of proposals to provide sufficient information for informed decision making, especially costing and funding information.
➢ To give a rational basis to the commission to make a decision on whether to approve introduction of legislation for a new province/boundary variations.

**Development Strategies for Pakistan**

Pakistan needs to review the development strategies to attain the desired level of equal growth among its existing and contingent proposed provinces to boost the local economic system and pro-business climate. China provides an absolute case study of such development in recent decades. Chinese leaders developed several incentive policies to encourage productivity in their economic system, resulting in the uplift of social and economic conditions of respective regions.\(^8\) In Pakistani context, the less developed or deprived regions should be accorded incentives for economic activities i.e. direct subsidies, quotas and investment.

**Case Study of China and Turkey**

China also suffered from bureaucratic problems as inefficiency, unresponsiveness, lack of innovation and corruption but as a response Chinese granted greater authority at various tiers of government including provincial, county, city and village, over issues relating to their jurisdiction along with local economic planning, resource management and even foreign trade.\(^9\) The 18\(^{th}\) amendment appears to be a very progressive and the results will be even
fruitful for Pakistan. The purpose of new provinces should be very clear to the public on logical grounds rather than mere political pledges. Pakistan seeks growth and development, no matter if it undergoes the division of its provinces or status quo.

Turkey has an area of 783,562 km$^2$ being 37$^{th}$ largest state on globe whereas, Pakistan is at 36$^{th}$ position with 796,096 km$^2$ but it is quite astonishing to mention that there are 81 provinces in Turkey and only 4 in Pakistan. Turkey is ranked 16$^{th}$ in terms of GDP (PPP) as per 2011 estimates with the total of $1.073$ trillion.\cite{10} Whereas, Pakistan is merely estimated a total $488.580$ billion GDP (PPP) in same period.\cite{11} It shows that division of provinces as per respective requirements and national interest can be beneficial for the nation as in the case of Turkey.

**Conclusion**

Pakistan is the only Islamic nuclear power in the world and at the same time, it is the second most affected state after Afghanistan due to the war against terrorism in the world. Pakistan needs strong and united federation to cope with the international and internal security threats in the course of this war against terrorism at present. Energy crisis, low foreign investment, political maturity in democracy, low growth in Gross Domestic Product and internal security situation are the big problems for Pakistan which needs priority and long term response by the government. In the light of all these concerns, this is perhaps not the right time to involve the masses in the
quest for new provinces in absence of any justified criteria or formula. It is also suspected that the motivation behind this demand is merely political rather than in the national interest of Pakistan. This paper emphasizes the need to critically evaluate and analyse the political/ administrative decisions regarding the creation of new provinces and suggest a well-articulated policy which may answer all the concerns in the due course of division.

This does not suggest in any sense that there should not be demand for more provinces or division of existing large units. The crux of the study is that this demand should be rationale and logical in its nature and application and its core motives should be the adherence to the national interest of Pakistan, unity amongst provinces, increased collaboration, communication at each level, harmony in the nation, strong federation and most importantly the welfare and well-being of the ordinary citizen of Pakistan on equal basis. If the populace is to remain in the same suppression even after the creation of new provinces then the purpose of this whole effort is void.

It is also observed that the administrative and political setups already exist then what will be the new power or motivation factor to realize the demands of public in the wake of new provinces. The determination of the direction is vital as it may lead towards the opposite side of the path to success.

Despite the fact, Pakistan is abundant in resources, new administrative facilities, technical equipments and staff working in the new provinces will still require a large amount
of governmental financial sources. It will be in greater interest of Pakistan and its national integration if democratic concerns like economic growth, social development, welfare, decentralization and good governance are given priority rather than the religious, ethnic, linguistic, caste to be the valid bases for conceding the demands for the creation of new provinces.

End Notes

1 See the Annexure 2 for map of Pakistan.
2 Imperial Gazette of India vol. IV 1907, p. 46.
5 Article 239, clause 4 of the 1973 Constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan.
6 Jameelur Rehman Khan, ed. “Government and Administration in Pakistan”. Islamabad: Pakistan Public Administration Research Center, 1987
7 See Annexure 1 for the Administrative map of Pakistan.
9 Ibid.