

## **National Unity and Inter-Provincial Harmony in the Context of the 18th Amendment.**

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### **Abstract:**

The article discusses revisiting the 18th Amendment in light of the provinces' increased autonomy. More provincial autonomy to the provinces as a result of 18th Amendment is some how a threat to national unity because of problems of economy and ethnicity. To put it plainly, solving administrative issues was essential for achieving democracy and progress. Gaps in the economy and educational system are alarming for Pakistan because everyone puts their interests in their provinces above other people's needs. While some of the ethnic groups are growing, others are suffering. Like Pakistan is divided inside its provinces, its territory is divided throughout the country based on economic growth, education, ethnicity, and language. Punjab is more developed than other provinces. These sentiments promote hate when other provinces watch themselves undeveloped. Since the provinces now control economic and educational policies following the 18th Amendment, they should consider ethnicity and economic development issues. The authority which has given to provinces make them alienated not a single province is ready to accept others suggestion and don't want to accept the policies as a whole. One of its example is Single National Curriculum .Sindh and KPK was not ready to accept it because both provinces claimed that education is under provinces according to 18th Amendment not under the supervision of center.

**Keywords:** 18th Amendment, inter-provincial harmony, economy, ethnicity, development

### **Introduction:**

A constitution is the backbone of a nation. It is the compact between govern and governed. Its absence causes turmoil and ambivalence in a state. The Constitution is defined as a state's rule book that sorts out the fundamental principles by which the state is governed. It describes the foremost institutions of the state and defines the relationship between the state institutions. It limits the exercise of power and sets out citizens' rights and duties (Dr. Leslie Seidle 2013). The Constitution of Pakistan was adopted on April 12, 1973. It has 280 articles, which are divided into 7 parts. A constitutional amendment plays a crucial role in the evolution and governance of a country. (Dr. Leslie Seidle 2013). The 18th Amendment to the Constitution of Pakistan is a landmark event in Pakistan's history. It includes a total of 102 amendments. The Parliamentary Committee on Constitutional Reform held 77 meetings lasting 400 hours between mid-2009 and early 2010. As a result, 69 out of 280 were amended, 20 were substituted, 7 were inserted, and 4 were deleted(Dr. Leslie Seidle 2013). The critical concern of the 18th Amendment was to strengthen the institutional and constitutional frameworks. It was the most crucial contribution of the Pakistan People's Party. The primary purpose behind the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment was to institute the equilibrium of powers between the president and Prime Minister-ship(Arif, 2021). The main changes made by the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment are following

1. Parliamentary and Federal form of government(Arif, 2021)
2. President became a ceremonial head of the state.
3. Amendment in Article 6 to deter future military coups (Afridi & Javaid, 2019)

4. Governors were mandated to fulfill dual criteria, serving as residents and registered voters in their corresponding provinces. Their appointment was to be at the discretion of the president, subject to the prime minister's approval (Afridi & Javaid, 2019)

A large portion of the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment deals with federal and province relations, strengthening the provinces in the federation of Pakistan. It was primarily fabricated to widen inter provincial harmony. Also, it aimed to dilute horizontal as well vertical inequalities. Provincial autonomy in Pakistan has both positive and negative effects as Pakistan is a country of diverse cultures and multi-ethnicity, so giving autonomy to provinces sometimes hinders national unity. It provides a thorn in flesh to national integration. Sometimes, it leads to the weakening of the central government. Resource distribution causes unequal development in Pakistan's provinces, which causes several issues the government faces. But it is a fact that in Pakistan, a province within is divided based on economic development. The strong elites are capturing political power. Pakistan's culture plays a crucial role in unity, development, and structural progress. The Baradari system is an extended expression of familial values; it expects the in-group members to place a particular focus on identities than any other factor while offering support in the political realm (Sajid & Adeed, 2023). If autonomy is given to provinces, the administration must divide resources in such a way that all cities and towns grow equally. It's the center's responsibility to distribute resources equally so that a feeling of attachment remains and upheaval the national unity. However, if resources are distributed unequally, tensions emerge and cause a serious threat to state unity. An open ended questionnaire was drafted and data were collected from primary as well as secondary sources. Students of political science from four provinces answered the questions.

#### **Literature gap:**

While much scholarly ink has been spilled on the 18th Amendment, one crucial aspect still needs to be explored. Its impact on national unity. To fill this critical gap, I embarked on a deep dive into unexplored territory, meticulously analyzing the Amendment's potential to either bolster or fracture the very fabric of our society. A question was unanswered: HOW does autonomy affect unity? WHY does it affect? and What do we do? So these questions are answered.

Research question:

1. Why is the provincial autonomy affecting national unity?
2. How are the economy, education, and ethnicity leading towards chaos?
3. How does regional politics affect autonomy and national integration?
4. What should we do to solve these issues?

#### **Provincial autonomy:**

Provincial autonomy is understood as the province of a state being independent in making its policies, which are granted to it by the Constitution. It's the decisive feature of a federal state where the provinces manage their area according to the need of time and proper well, and it lessens the burden from the center (Ryder, 1990). Inter-provincial harmony means an atmosphere of peace, tolerance, and adaptability to acceptance of every culture, and all the provinces remain united under a single identity, i.e., Pakistani. Unfortunately, in Pakistan, from the first day of independence, we noticed the restless situation and the crisis of regionalism, which got hot air from regional political parties. Furthermore, constitutional holes adds a fuel to already explosive fire. The 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment played a key role in cooling down the fire of ethnicity by giving autonomy to provinces so that every province could make its own policies within the constitutional limits. So that no one feels that the center is tilted towards one province, but problems within provinces create a second scenario that is not eventually discussed. Although there is devolution of power, the provincial representatives are unable to exercise due to extra

constitutional forces. Noticeably, democratic traditions became more delicate delicate. Political institutions at provinces became a burning question as it could be easily crumbled. Therefore, it took the flight of uneven development, security crises, education disparities, and health disparities that construct a sense of loneliness and hate feeling, and we are unable to unite under the umbrella of some specific objectives. Moreover, religion is considered to be binding force in this intricacies of heterogeneous atmosphere ,even it has failed to unite the people of Pakistan under the cloud of Islamic state. Although 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment ensured the transfer of 17 federal ministries to the provincial level, it is observed that bureaucracy and politicians preferred to transfer only a few functions to the provinces. They claimed that the province lacked the expertise, experience, and capacity to handle the task(Naseem & Mahmood, 2019). This piece of paper explain the aspect of unity based on economy, regional political parties, and education factors.

### **Economy:**

Economic development may be represented by many indexes, such as the growth of GDP, an average of an individual's share in the product, inflation rate, commercial openings, budget deficit, interest rate, exchange rate, and stability of the local currency, among other economic indexes. The available Literature analyzed the relationship between political and economic changes. Some believe that economic development is a primary factor in political stability as development, in general, leads to the improvement of an individual's living level to promote political and economic stability(Masry, 2015). Peace and economic development are directly proportional to each other. If you lose peace, you lose economic prosperity. Peace is necessary for trade, sustained economic growth, and prosperity. In turn, economic stability and a rising prosperity broadly shared within and among countries can foster peace. This will most likely happen in an atmosphere of economic cooperation, openness, and a multilateral approach to economic and political problems(Strauss-Kahn, October 23, 2009). We looked at the conflicts between Pakistani provinces, resulting in several issues. Each province has a separate GDP. The 18th Amendment states that resources are allocated according to the population. Punjab thereby receives the largest share and invests more in development. Because Punjab is more developed than other provinces, other provinces take offense at Punjab and instigate strife.

Baluchistan waged a struggle for its rights. The reality is that Punjab is split into upper and south Punjab due to the power of decision, which allows powerful political families to make policies based on their personal objectives. It divides the people among Punjab proper and Punjab common. South Punjab is working by leaps and bounds on a SARIKISTAN movement in response to its inability to achieve equal resource distribution and linguistic identity. Similar events take place in other provinces. If we glance Karachi bids fair to be developed, however, other yards of the countryside is dismal. While comparing with other cities and towns, Quetta can be considered a more developed. Thus, these disparities in distribution lead to conflict, which in turn amplifies, and leads to strikes that have a knock-on development and prosperity(Mahmood, 2014).

### **Education:**

Education is the process of changing people's behavior so they can fit into society appropriately. It is the medium that shapes the political behavior of people. A quality education nourishes the civic sense public. It charts national integration. National unity is the process of bringing together a variety of individuals from distinct cultural, ethnic, tribal, and social backgrounds in a specific setting or polity for the common good (Wongeh et al., 2022).Education is from three perspectives: as a process, a product, and a discipline. Viewed as a process, education means change by which we acquire the civilization of the past and enable it to take in the civilization of

the present and make the civilization of the present the civilization of the future. As a product, education is behavior change, and as a discipline, education is the body of organized knowledge (EGUGBO & SALAMI, 2021). If I analyze education, the policy-making regarding education is in the hands of the provincial government. The literacy rate of each province and the number of primary secondary schools and universities are different in each province. Even the quality of education is also vary. So, it creates a difference among voting behavior of people. Owing to it, the send representatives to respective assemblies of provinces matters a lot. It is widely accepted that due to it the representatives setting in Balochistan assemblies bears no competence. They are not held accountable by people as in other provinces. Moreover, Pakistan has 202 universities in both the public and private sectors accredited by the HEC (Administration, 2024-01-12). The top-ranked universities are in Punjab. No facilities are provided to other students in different provinces. The Baloch students, who are raising their voices for marginality, are not even safe in these educational institutes. On the other hand, the government, instead of making universities and other institutions to promote education in the marginalized area, they set a quota system to facilitate the students of deprived province, it amount to less in order to beat inequality, which lessens the work of the government, and a feeling of hate is generated when students come and study in Punjab, they feel deprived and start demanding their rights not from the government but from the people of Punjab. On the other side, it is a heart wrenching issue that Punjab the most educated province but it is divided within itself, upper Punjab verses south Punjab. South Punjab is deprived region with few universities, no proper infrastructure which cause un rest in province and demand of new province is also on the main pages. But for betterment of country it is more beneficial that it should be divided into more provinces as turkey is an example of it. It helps for better administration and promote nation building a nation unity. Tensions are created because of depriveness. So, the students from such areas cannot even beat the overall country criteria of civil services, and a gap created a vacuum in this scenario filled with hate. This is a severe threat to unity because if a house is not protected inside, then everyone from a neighbor can use the member of the house by using hate and deprived sentiments. Even the government of Pakistan made a policy of a Single National Curriculum to solve the issue of a gap, but because educational policies are the subject of provinces, it is not implemented. Sindh openly denied it, the same as Balochistan. If educational opportunities are not provided equally, the unemployment rate will increase, and the state will remain in the problem of economy and chaos. The provinces should revisit their policies and somehow respect the decision of the center.

#### Regional political parties:

The regional political parties have played a critical role in adding to the misery of the situation. The regional parties have their vested interests, and they do everything to achieve those interests. The leadership is primarily low-profile and parochial. Since it is not possible for them to achieve some prominent place in national politics, they appeal to the regional sentiments of the masses and aggravate the provincial and ethnic issues to stay in the news headlines. They contest elections on the basis of regional issues and, subsequently, make people feel scared through the perceived threats to the community's interests and even to its survival. No doubt, the regional imbalances and deprivations remained there, and the allocation of scarce resources had been the source of conflict in Pakistan. The absence of representative institutions and the prolonged periods of military rule have further complicated these issues. Still, the presence of strong and articulated political parties could have consolidated the feelings of oneness among the people of Pakistan.

Nonetheless, the absence of organized political parties established democratic principles, and the negative role of regional parties made the process of national integration a challenge to political stability

and the very existence of polity(Mahmood, 2014). The cultural diversity, pluralism, and ideology shaped this multi-party system in Pakistan. Political parties play a crucial role in Pakistan's democratic system, influencing its development and ensuring adequate leadership for its citizens(Yasin & Muzaffar, 2021). Baloch and Pashtun communities are more dynamic in demanding their constitutional rights, both economic and political(Nasreen Akhtar 2022). In Sindh, the Mohajir community has established its own political party, the Mohajir Qomi Movement (MQM)(Nasreen Akhtar 2022).MQM has become a dominant and influential party in Sindh, which has challenged Sindhi's political interests. Inequity and unjust policy "distribution of national power dissatisfied" the multi-ethnic groups demanded to preserve their ethnic identity(Rais,R. B. 2017). Pakistan is a federal state, and the nature of its federalism has been questioned and challenged by influential ethno political leaders- Sindh, Balochistan, and now the troubling province KPK by PTM. In Balochistan, ethnic politics consistently amplified insurgency and contributed to the disintegration of the federation. Balochistan shares its border with Afghanistan-another war zone area(Nasreen Akhtar 2022). However, anti-Pakistan forces exploit national separatist ethnic fault lines to disintegrate Pakistan(Ali, 2017). The most surprising element is that political parties are also based on sects of religion Islam, ideologies of liberalism, Marxism, and other religions. For example, Awami Worker Party, Barabri Party Pakistan, [Pakistan Sunni Tehreek](#), [Sunni Ittehad Council](#), Pakistan Hindu Party, and Mazdoor Kisan Party. 18th Amendment gives autonomy to the province, but if these regional and political parties come into power, it only promotes its interests and ignores the factors. It causes rivalries in provinces, and the results are uneven development.

Recommendations:

Power devolution to provinces is a landmark event in the history of Pakistan, but how it affects the unity of Pakistan because of multiple ethnicities and multi-cultural groups. There are several models from a sociological perspective for national integration(Shah & Ishaque, 2017). Some are

Assimilation model

Differentialist model

Pluralist model

Federalist model(Shah & Ishaque, 2017).

Assimilation model:

Social integration is its cornerstone. A process through which individuals or groups from different cultural backgrounds adopt the customs, values, and behaviors of the dominant culture within a society. This phenomenon has been observed in various societies throughout history and is associated with the formation of a national culture that incorporates diverse elements. Cultural assimilation can indeed be achieved through various means, including socialization, education, and interaction with the dominant culture. It involves individuals or groups willingly adopting the practices and norms of the majority, often leading to a blending of different cultural elements into a unified national identity(Shah & Ishaque, 2017). This model is helpful, but according to my personal point of view, the factors(Morfit, 1981) that promote this model are absent in Pakistan. So we need a mixed culture but without dominating one. We can adopt this model but make changes in the segment of one dominant culture. Other models are also not suitable for us, but the federation model is one which we are adopting.

Religious scholars have a responsibility to present Islam in its true spirit and discourage sectarian sentiments. It is essential for relevant departments to develop a religious narrative that counters sectarian and extremist interpretations

comprehensive media programs is recommended, where scholars from various sects and backgrounds can educate the public on religious harmony, tolerance, and the importance of fostering integration instead of division along religious lines(Cohen, 2011)

We must narrow the gap between different social classes, regions, and provinces by ensuring fair resource mobilization and distribution. Mega projects, such as the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), should contribute to national integration, but it's crucial that they are managed with a practical and realistic approach(O'leary, 2001)

As in Belgium, we should adopt their policy, i.e., Community councils ensure cultural rights and representation for different ethnic groups, reducing tensions and fostering inter-group communication(Warden, 1985).

Pancasila is a foundational principle of Indonesian society. It is taught in schools and is a central part of national identity. The principles of Pancasila are meant to guide the country towards a just and prosperous future. It includes five principles: belief in one supreme god, humanity with justice, unity in the country, social justice for all, and Democracy guided by the wisdom of deliberations in representative councils(Morfit, 1981); Pakistan should also adopt these ideologies.

Media should play a more enhanced and influential role in cultural amalgamation. Strong counter-sectarian and anti-terrorist narratives have to be broadcast. It may promote communal peace, counter the foreign media influence, and promote the actual soft image of Pakistan.

Biculturalism in New Zealand aims to create a harmonious society. Bicultural education is integrated into the New Zealand curriculum, ensuring that all students learn about and appreciate both the Maori and Pakeha cultures of New Zealand(Lourie, 2016). This includes learning about Maori history, traditions, language, and values. We should add syllabi of different cultures of Pakistan in each province so that everyone knows about every culture and respects each other.

We should adopt one manifesto of South Africa and The Truth and Reconciliation Committee, i.e., Promote national healing and reconciliation through public hearings, victim testimonies, and community outreach programs(Allan & Allan, 2000)

Victims of racial violations who experienced financial, psychological, or physical damages should be awarded individual grants. These awards will intended to provide these people with material assistance while also acknowledging the pain they endured. I.e., in Balochistan, south Punjab, rural Sindh, and KPK by their provinces and central government also.

Financing community development initiatives should be taken in communities that are disproportionately affected. In order to address social injustices and rebuild communities, these initiatives might concentrate on economic development, housing, healthcare, education, and housing.

Museum construction should be done as museums and memorials documenting the history of apartheid. These would serve as educational tools and spaces for remembering the past and promoting reconciliation.

Conclusion:

The 18th Amendment, enacted by the PPP government, is an iconic landmark in Pakistani history. For a nation with a diverse ethnic population, provincial autonomy is also the most suitable approach. Federalism is the finest model, which is what we are doing. However, there are some sections where we should review our policies, such as those related to the economy, ethnicity, and education. Considering these gaps is vital because these threaten our unity. Managing center-province relations is essential. Listening to the apartheid communities is crucial. We shall collapse without it, just as we faced in the case of Bangladesh. To ensure the future of the country, not just for the future of a few elites, we must gain insight from the past and improve the present.

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