



RESEARCH PAPER

Exploring the Derailing Factors of Local Governments in Pakistan:
Structural Issues in Musharraf's Devolution of Power Plan

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ABSTRACT

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For more than seven decades Pakistan is struggling for a viable local government system. Even one of the most empowered local government system introduced by military dictator Pervez Musharraf was uprooted by civilian government. This research attempts to explore the structural issues in the local government system introduced by Musharraf regime in order to find reasons of its derailment. Comprehensive literature review has been conducted to search for the common theme reported by the researchers so far. The study found that indirect and non-party based elections of Nazim, structural financial imbalance, tussle among provincial and district governments, unreal and idealistic objectives, abolition of commissioner office, non-establishment of district cadre, gender discrimination, and flawed organizational structure of devolved departments were substantial structural issues in Musharraf's local government system. Moreover, the two main pillars of the political system i.e. bureaucrats and politicians considered empowered local bodies as their rivals. Thus they left no stone unturned to cause hurdles in smooth working of district government. To alleviate political rivalry among politicians, it is recommended to systematically involve MNAs and MPAs in the development work with the District Nazims. On the other hand, establishment of district cadre is required to end the struggle between provincial bureaucrats and the district government

Introduction

At a time when world is battling with pandemic, United National Development Programme (UNDP) identified fundamental deficiency in Pakistan's response towards global pandemic: "disconnectedness of state institutions from its citizens". In its assessment report UNDP observed that local governments are at the forefront of Covid-19 response in the world. However, in Pakistan a more "top down, authoritative and reactive" style government is responding to pandemic. Therefore, numerous issues have surfaced including lack of effective communication with masses, sense of deprivation that people's voice is not being heard during planning and implementations phases etc. (UNDP, 2020).

Oxford Policy Management studied responses of local and national governments towards the pandemic across the globe and concluded that vibrant and efficient local governments have led to better management of Covid-19 responses. Local mayors were not only able to mitigate the socio-economic impact of the pandemic induced restrictions but also played key role in managing the Covid-19 itself. Whereas the national leaders of USA, Brazil and India were criticized for being in the state of denial as the pandemic started, local leaders in New York, Sao Paulo and Kerala were quick to take steps to manage pandemic in their own areas. Moreover, lessons from Ebola outbreak in 2014 and SARS virus in 2003 signifies the importance of local government responses (Rajadhyaksha, 2020).

Literature suggests that an effective disaster management or pandemic response plan cannot be implemented without an effective local government system. Participation of local and community leaders is the key for effective response. Moreover, Local governments also play key role in socio-economic development of a country (S. Ali & Majid, 2020). It also plays essential role in strengthening the democratic system. For countries like Pakistan, which have heterogeneous population, need of local government is even more. Communities feel empowered when allowed to solve their own problems which they are able to do (S. M. Ali, 2018).

Unfortunately, after seven decades of its inception, Pakistan lacks a vibrant and efficient local governments. Due to the reason that local governments did not evolve as part and parcel of democracy in Pakistan. Since the creation of the country, not a single Local Government System have been allowed to function. Military governments pioneered three major local government systems in the country which were uprooted by civilian governments (Alam, 2013).

Literature suggests that military government used local government systems to further their political agenda. It was used as a tool to legitimize their rule, and to decrease the influence of national and provincial politicians by transferring authority to local representatives. On the other hand, political parties and provincial politicians remained susceptible of the idea of powerful local governments (Alam, 2013; Cheema et al., 2006). After Musharraf's departure from power, political parties repealed local government ordinances of 2001. They called it the legacy of a dictator and thus rallied for its removal.

Moreover, in the absence of the local governments a balance between executive and legislatures cannot be achieved at provincial level. Because, usually politicians join federal or provincial assemblies to either become the part of executive by having a ministry in the government, or to initiate some development projects in their respective constituencies through special allocated funds, or at least to enjoy some influence on the public departments, like police. The fact is that the empowered local governments indirectly strengthen legislatures because those politicians who want to work for their constituencies can simply participate in local elections rather than becoming a parliamentarian (Naqvi, 2003).

Unfortunately, local government system is still in the experimental phase. Punjab, Sindh and Balochistan have passed new local government laws on which elections are yet to be conducted. Therefore, researcher finds it imperative to find the root causes and problems which have derailed local government systems in the past.

This study will explore and analyse the structural and political issues surfaced during implementation of local government system introduced by Musharraf regime.

Historical Background

After more than 70 years of independence, Pakistan is still experimenting with local government systems. First three local government systems were created by non-democratic regimes of military dictators only to consolidate their rule further (Cheema et al., 2006). That is why for politicians, this system was not more than a mere legacy of dictatorship, designed to usurp powers of national and provincial politicians. Therefore, civil governments struck down such systems at their earliest (Mahmood et al., 2016).

First local government system was introduced by General Ayub Khan called Basic Democracies System. It was introduced through two separate ordinances called Basic Democracies Order and Municipal Administration Ordinance passed in 1959 and 1960 respectively. Ayub Khan did not believe in open democracy instead he was proponent of controlled democracy. Upon this political ideology he laid foundation of basic democracy system. This local government system created a class of 80,000 union council members which acted as the Electoral College for the election of National and Provincial Assemblies, and the President of the country (Hussain, 2018). In other words, only these 80,000 local government members were eligible to vote in general elections. West and East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) had 40,000 local government members each. Half of these local council members were elected by masses while other half were appointed by the government. Moreover, local government members were controlled by the bureaucrats through the office of commissioner and deputy commissioner known as controlling authority (Cheema et al., 2006; Mezzera et al., 2010)

Basic Democracy System was a four tier system separate for rural and urban areas. In rural areas lowest tier was Union Councils, then came Thana/Tehsil councils. While in Urban areas lowest tier was termed as Union/Town Committees and the second tier was municipal councils. Next two tiers in rural and urban areas were same called district council and divisional councils. The only representative body of the country operated under the command of non-elected bureaucrats. Ayub Khan's local governance system badly failed because it instead of giving powers to elected representatives it developed sense of deprivation in them. Bureaucrats utilized state funds to finance local elites in order to bypass national and political politicians. Resultantly, besides other resentments it widened ethnic conflict among citizens of East Pakistan against dominant Punjabi ruling class (ICG, 2004).

With the end of Ayub Khan regime, his local government system also ended. A popular leader and first elected Prime Minister of Pakistan, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto then devised a local government system which never got implemented. Therefore, the second local governments system was implemented after a gap of 10 years by General Zia-ul-Haq, who assumed power in a coup d'état. General Zia introduced a three tier local government system in 1979, which was considered far more empowered system than Ayub Khan's basic democracies. Researcher suggests that Zia adopted Bhutto's populist local government system which only remained on papers (Cheema et al., 2006). In the new system elected officials were not placed under the control of bureaucrats nor were government servants made part of the local

government systems. Eighty percent of total officials were elected by votes while twenty percent seats were reserved for women and peasants (Kizilbash, 1973).

Motivation behind Zia's political system was not 'controlled democracy' as was in Ayub's case. Rather, Zia's aim was to keep Pakistan Peoples Party away from the politics and win support for his military rule (Hussain, 2018). That is why he conducted local government elections on non-party basis in order to establish direct relations with local elites to bypass Pakistan Peoples Party politicians at national level. Non-party based elections created a problem for local governments. Provincial and national politicians did not own local governments instead they attempted to suppress them through various means. Provincial governments also had power to establish or suspend the local governments which resulted in weakening of local government system.

Local governments had limited powers to perform certain functions. They were responsible for waste disposal and sanitation, water supply, primary education, firefighting, street lights and social welfare. Other optional functions delegated to them included public health, foods and drinks, parks, libraries, cultural fairs, and social welfare places such as asylum, social welfare homes etc. (Punjab Local Government Ordinance, 1979). However, availability of financial resources for these governments were very low. LGs mostly relied upon Annual Development Budget (ADB) and federal grants (Zaidi, 2019).

After Zia-ul-Haq's death in a mysterious accident in 1988, successive civilian governments did not conduct local government elections at regular intervals that is why these bodies remained suspended for more than a decade. In the last year of 20th century, General Musharraf assumed power by toppling the government of then Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. He introduced one of the most ambitious local government system in the history of the country in 2000.

Musharraf's regime introduced a comprehensive devolution of power of plan. Significant functions of provincial governments were devolved to the local governments. Around 31 provincial departments were devolved to the local governments including civil defence, agriculture, social welfare, schools and special education, basic and rural health, hospitals, transport, excise and taxation, land revenue, forests, fisheries, sports and culture department (National Reconstruction Bureau, 2001). Motivation behind Musharraf regime to establish powerful local government system was multiple. One reason was to win international legitimacy by transferring political and administrative powers to the ground level. Another reason was to gain support of masses to win referendum to consolidate his rule further (ICG, 2004).

Local government system was a three tier system on top of which was district government, then came tehsil government at the town level and the lowest level was union council. Union councils consisted of 21 members out of which 12 Muslim candidates were elected on general seats, 33% of total seats were reserved for women, 5% for peasants and workers, and 5% for minorities. Nazim and Naib Nazim of Union Council contested election on joint tickets. Union councillors and Nazims were directly elected from masses. All elected Union Councillors formed Electoral College

for election of district nazim – the chief executive of the district department (National Reconstruction Bureau, 2001).

Musharraf's local government system attempted to ensure financial independence of local governments. The law gave relative financial autonomy to district governments through introduction of Provincial Financial Commission Award (PFC) for the first time. PFC set a predefined criteria for the transfer of funds from provinces to districts by eliminating the room for political manoeuvring (SPDC, 2007).

Local government Ordinance established an executive body and a policy making body at all three tiers of the local governments. Executive branch was led by elected Nazims and Naib Nazims of respective tiers while policy making rested with the respected councils i.e. Union Council, Tehsil Council or Zila Council. Councils were tasked not only to devise rules and regulations and approve plans but they were also tasked to monitor governance of Nazims and hold them accountable (Hasnain, 2010).

But unfortunately, this local government system met with the same fate as the previous systems. On the very moment the constitutional cover provided to these bodies expired in 2009, civilian government disbanded local governments. Due to some structural faults, political parties never developed sense of ownership about local government system.

In 2010, government of PPP – first civilian government after 9 year of military rule – provided constitutional protection to local governments through 18th constitutional amendment. Constitutional amendment also transferred multiple functions from central government to provinces. But the powerful provincial governments of political parties remained hesitant to transfer their powers to district governments. Interestingly, after eighteenth amendment, civilian governments not only abolished Musharraf's devolution plan but they also restored the colonial system of district management controlled by provincial governments through offices of commissioners and deputy commissioners (Islam & Khan, 2018).

Moreover, Sindh and Punjab did not hold local government elections until next 5 years, when finally Supreme Court of Pakistan ordered to hold elections. Therefore, in 2015 first local government elections were held in Punjab and Sindh after the military rule. Balochistan was the first province to conduct local government elections in 2013 after 18th amendment. None of the province continued with the devolution plan of former dictator, rather they drafted new but weaker local government system that was largely based on Gen. Zia-ul-Haq's local government ordinance 1970.

In the following section researcher will analyse the structural issues which persisted in Musharraf's devolution of power plan. This is a qualitative study which is dedicated to the exploration of the structural issues that were present in the local government system introduced by General Musharraf in 2001. Purpose of this study is to explore the causes which lead to derailment of one of the ambitious local government program in the history of our country.

Pervez Musharraf's Local Government System (2001)

Devolution of Power Plan, 2001 was first of its kind in the history of the country. Pakistan was not ready for such a major administrative overhaul. People not having prior experience of running government were suddenly given a mammoth responsibility. Consequently, the system did not succeed in giving desired results. And soon after a year when national and provincial assemblies were reinstated a new political front opened between local and national politicians. Following are some of the structural issues of Musharraf's local government system.

Indirect elections of District Nazim

District Nazims and Naib Nazims were not elected by masses directly, instead they were elected indirectly by an electoral college. This provision opened the door for political manoeuvring. Electoral College for District Nazim consisted of elected councillors of all Union Councils of a district. Majority of these councillors were convinced or pursued through monetary and other benefits to vote for a particular Nazim. Electoral College for election of Nazim consisted of less than 800 union councillors, however, a constituency of Nazim consists more than 750,000 voters (Sherdil & Rana, 2008). Indirect elections of Nazim had negative impact on development scheme of districts. Because major focus of Nazim remained to make his voters happy, in this case was union councillors. They tried to distribute district resources to likeminded union councillors so that they execute small schemes in their respective area. Consequently, small and neighbourhood based schemes were initiated and major plan for district development remained ineffective. That is why district mayors failed to execute a development plan for the district, because there was no incentive for that. Instead smaller and insignificant development programs were launched such as provision of water supply, rehabilitation of sewage system. Around 17 thousand small schemes were launched in the districts of Punjab each costed between 0.3 million rupees to 1.5 million (Hasnain, 2010).

Indirect elections of Nazim also hurt the cause of accountability. As the Nazim was not directly accountable to public because he was not elected by the popular vote. Instead, a Nazim was elected by Union Councillors, in this case accountability could only had happened if the councillors were the true representative of masses which was not the case. There are examples that district Nazim allocated development budgets to union councillors to make them happy and increase their chances of re-election. Moreover, considering local political dynamics of the country, union councillors were themselves dependent on the endorsement of District Mayor for their re-election because District Nazims mostly belonged from influential families having political leverage at grass root level (Hasnain, 2010).

Non-Party based Elections

Musharraf's regime held local government elections on non-party basis. Military government wanted to keep large political parties specially Pakistan Muslim League and Pakistan Peoples Party away from politics. But not only this strategy failed but many other political issues and conflicts surfaced. Non-party based elections created a gulf between political parties and local government officials. National and provincial politicians looked upon local governments as their sole rival.

They did not spare a single opportunity to create hurdles in the working of local bodies. Such political tussle at ground level rendered local bodies largely inefficient (Cheema et al., 2006). Moreover, provincial politicians used their influence over provincial departments to overturn the orders of district nazim and compelled them to work upon specific scheme of their own constituencies. Office of Chief Minister was sometimes also used to curtail their powers. In fact, with periodic amendments in local government ordinance, Punjab government brought local bodies largely under their own control (SPDC, 2007; Taj & Keith, 2018).

Another impact of non-party elections was triggering of ethnic politics. Keeping out main stream political parties from the elections created a political vacuum which was filled by *biradari* politics. Rival castes of a district quickly entered into play and attempted to campaign for their biradari candidates. People were compelled to vote on the biradari lines by the elders. In Punjab, traditional biradari system played dominant role in local government elections. In Balochistan, on 40% of the seats district nazim was selected uncontested. That indicates how strong was the impact of tribal politics upon election that no one attempted to contest against a tribal elder (*sardar*) or his family members. In Punjab, ratio of uncontested seats were 6%, in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa 11%, while in Sindh 12% Nazim got elected unopposed (Ahmed, 2009; Hasnain, 2010).

Structural Financial Imbalance

Prior to eighteenth constitutional amendment 2010, federal government of Pakistan was much centralized. Almost all responsibilities of tax collection rested with central government while provincial governments were supposed to do their functions without the power to raise substantive taxes. Similarly, LGO 2001 transferred numerous assignments to district governments which required financial resources, but the district governments did not have large tax base. Revenues raised from local government's own sources amounted to only 0.1 percent of the GDP. Tax base assigned to Local government was largely inelastic and narrow that proved insufficient to meet expenditures. Weak tax collection mechanism and lack of incentive to raise their own taxes further contributed in poor funds raising. Percentage of total expenditure of local governments in comparison with combined expenditure of federal, provincial and local government was less than 1%. While in India this percentage stood at 4%, in developed countries it was around 20 to 35% (Kardar, 2006).

Local ordinance initially gave powers to district governments to implement certain taxes. But later on, when the provincial government were reinstated in Punjab, it made conditional raising of new taxes on the prior approval from provincial governments. Moreover, inexperienced district Nazims themselves had no incentive to raise the fund through taxes (Kardar, 2006). Instead they solely relied upon provincial transfers which effected their autonomy and increased provincial government's control upon them. The tax base of the districts shrank very much. They became more dependent upon the provincial transfers. Provincial governments exercised their leverage to influence district governments by negotiating funds, which programs to initiate first, delaying funds transfers, arbitrary deductions (Shah et al., 2006). Developmental priorities of the districts were changed through vertical development programs included in ADP. As the funds came through federal and

provincial agencies which gave them leverage over decision making of districts (ADB, 2004).

Another significant financial imbalance in LGO was that the Tehsil/Town municipal administrations were given more power to raise local taxes than district governments (ICG, 2004).

Provincial and District Government Tussle

Provincial government kept overstepping district government's mandate by blocking necessary administrative arrangements. For instance, according to the law, Lahore Development Authority (LDA) had to be merged with City District Government Lahore, and Karachi Building Control Authority and Karachi Water and Sewerage Board were to be merged with City District Government Karachi, but this provincial government did not allow this to happen (Islam & Khan, 2018).

Afterwards when national and provincial assemblies got reinstated, a series of legislation was adopted by provincial governments to curb powers of district governments. Such as a Nazim used to write annual confidential report (ACR) of police officers but later on his powers were taken. Similarly, Nazim could request provincial government for the transfer of DCO but provincial governments were no longer bound to act according the request. Moreover, time of suspension of Nazim by Chief Minister was increased from thirty days to ninety days. CM was given direct powers to suspend a Nazim, and the role of provincial assembly was eliminated. Instead Local government commission was tasked to hold an inquiry against any Nazim and can recommend to any action regarding suspension to CM it was his prerogative than to either suspend the Nazim or not.

CM was also given powers to suspend tehsil Nazim or Union Councillors. Power of Local Government Commission to recommend cancellation of order to CM was curbed. Important LG functions such as housing and college education was recentralized. Number of members in union councils were decreased. Moreover, chief minister was given powers to directly order District Coordination Officer and District Police Officer to compel them to act as per provincial governments order in any emergency situation. Chief Minister could also instruct the DCO to submit progress report of any local government to the provincial government (Sherdil & Rana, 2008).

Moreover, provincial governments assumed effective control of devolved departments through back channel tactics. Power of recruitment, posting, transfer and disciplinary actions against the employees of devolved department also remained with provincial governments. Consequently, the disparity between the law and actual practices caused the public to suffer.

Districts had limited managerial or financial autonomy in presence of provincial governments. Due to the limited authority of Nazims over district officials, some senior civil servants did not consider themselves district employees although they were posted in a district. This happened because elected district head were not empowered enough to compel such officials to compliance. Bureaucrats were not interested in implementation of devolution plan because technically they were employees of provincial government not district government. Provincial

governments attempted to weaken local governments by exercising their influence on DCO's and EDO's (Sherdil & Rana, 2008).

Provincial governments also interfered in the internal matters of local governments by constantly transferring DCOs, and EDOs without the consent of local governments. According to the law, minimum term for a DCO in a district should not be less than three years but on the ground average time DCO spent in a district was around 1 year (SPDC, 2007). District Nazims did not have power over their transfers, dismissal, salary or budget etc. Provincial government appointed DCOs or DPO and other top bureaucrats. Nazim can only recommend provincial government for removal of DCO. That is why district politicians used to look up to provincial authorities for their survival rather than their voters (Sherdil & Rana, 2008).

Flawed Objectives

Very objective of Local governments were conceptually flawed because it created multiple mini provinces in Punjab. One of the reason for creation of local government was stated that those living in aloof districts would not require to travel to provincial capital for the resolution of their issues, and they would be resolved by district governments. But transfer of numerous provincial functions to districts proved counterproductive. District administration did not have prior experience to take up new functions. Management of some devolved department required technical expertise to dispel services which were not present in a district (Kardar, 2006; Mezzera et al., 2010).

Another flawed assumption was that the provincial government failed to handle economic and business sector. Therefore, role of provincial and federal government should be confined to social sector services. However, the fact is that the role of local government in developing economic and business sector is not proven worldwide. Instead, economic and business development is largely dependent on macro-economic policies of central government (Kardar, 2006).

Integration of rural and urban in one framework was another major flaw associated to this system. This policy caused skewed decision making in support of rural areas while neglecting urban areas which are the economic hub of the country. In a district councils, a large majority of a members belonged from rural areas of a district who, therefore, pressed for channelling development funds towards their rural constituencies by neglecting district headquarters which have always been an urban centre. Such policy hampered any centralized development plan for any district because the development funds were utilized in small schemes, which only fulfil narrow interest of representatives (Hussain, 2018). Such integration is cause of failure of local governments to respond to 'growing urbanization'.

A union council Nazim tend to divert development schemes to its own electoral bank in his village. While the villages which has one or no union councillors tend to suffer a lot. Patron-Client relationship was so strong at union council level that in many instances drainage systems were designed in a way that it left out the non-voters located next door (Cheema & Mohmand, 2006).

Abolition of office of Commissioner/ Non-establishment of District Cadre

Abolition of post of Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner (DC) alienated federal and provincial bureaucrats. A post of District Coordination Officer was created with a diluted mandate. Bureaucrats who enjoyed enormous powers in a district through the office of DC now had limited powers. Police services was taken back from the control of DC and brought under direct supervision of District Nazims. Deprived of their magisterial powers, DCO was still expected to perform executive duties with regard to maintenance of law and order, price control and removal of encroachment etc. Moreover, provincial secretaries from federal and provincial administrative services had much more authority as compared to district bureaucrats and thus they exercised their authority to decrease efficacy of Nazims. On the other side, provincial ministers who were already wary of powerful district Nazims aligned themselves with provincial secretaries, who were senior bureaucrats, causing serious hurdles in functioning of local governments and causing problems in service delivery (Hussain, 2018).

Duplication in chain of commands and lack of clear authority was also a source of problem for local governments. For instance, officials from different departments were answerable to DCO but also to the respective heads of their provincial departments (SPDC, 2007). A survey of Nazims and bureaucrats revealed that typical mind-set, unclear division of authority, conflicting priorities and duplicity in chain of commands were major issues resulting in lack of coordination among elected and unelected heads of districts. In some instances, district mayor had to take a step back from his/her demands as the provincial government tried to enforce its will through DCO. Moreover, bureaucrats were not ready to distance themselves from their past, rather they still thought of themselves as Commissioner or Deputy Commissioner (SPDC, 2007).

District administrators were for the very first time placed under elected mayor of the district. But they remained suspicious about district mayors. They thought that Nazims were not aware of the rules and regulations (SPDC, 2007).

Gender Discrimination

Despite the fact that the local government system empowered women by allocating 33 percent quota for the females but patriarchal structure caused hurdles on every level for the women. This policy did not prove sufficient in empowering women politically as the males were involved in each and every step from electing a woman to conducting of official business. Most of the women participated into their election on advice of their brothers, fathers, sons or political head. As most of the women councillors were illiterate their male candidates managed the political process, from filling the form to organization of political campaigns. Later on when a woman got elected they were usually not allowed to participate in councillor meetings instead their father, husband or any other male relative participated on her behalf (S. M. Ali, 2018). Some elected women councillors did not participate even in the single meeting of councillors. Moreover, as most of the women came from joint family system, they did not have to worry about their home chores. Mostly aged women participated in elections because young women were not allowed to work

with stranger males. Also, older women are free from responsibilities while young women were supposed to do domestic work (Nasreen et al., 2016).

Once elected, women councillors had to work with the two-third majority of male counterparts who were not only ready to accept the reality that for the first time a significant number of women is present in the council but also they usually turn a deaf ear to the advices from female colleagues. So, participation of women in local governments were mere formality as their advices were not paid heed.

Moreover, Nazims mostly organized meetings in their traditional drawing rooms (*Deras, bethaks or hujras*) which is a male only place and participation of women in such places were not welcomed. In Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, sometimes a curtain was raised between male and female councillors while later were instructed to remain silent. It was observed in KP province that women councillors who got elected either belonged from the elite class or the lowest economic class of the society. (Nasreen et al., 2016).

Education and Health Sector

Primary and secondary education departments were devolved to local governments. It is argued that the devolution in education sector yields positive results. As decision making goes closer to the consumer so the relevant authority can better make decisions considering the need of the local community. Also it opens the door for the accountability as the parents can hold school officials. But again flawed design of local government created hurdle in smooth functioning of education department. District governments had the power to recruit teachers in Basic Pay Scale (BPS) 16 or below while power to hire teachers in BPS-17 and above rested with provincial governments. Power to ban mass recruitments and relaxing the rules in some cases rested with the Chief Minister. Thus, sanctioned posts in many schools across districts lied vacant (Hussain, 2018).

Many teachers were appointed through the influence of Member Provincial Assembly (MPA) or Member National Assembly (MNA) so they did not adhere to the discipline enforced by District Education Officer (EDO), which resulted in absenteeism in schools. Furthermore, the large chunk of allocated funds for education sector in a district were utilized in salaries. In case of Sialkot, 95% of the education budget went to salary expenditure and just 5 % budget was utilized in non-salary expenses. Therefore, condition of school remained very miserable, lack of drinking water, electricity, and walls was a commonly reported problem. Donor agencies had prioritized teachers training in their agenda. But no significant progress was made in that as wells (Hussain, 2018).

Devolution plan established the post of Executive District Officer to head a particular line department in a district but these officers were not trained about how to run the affairs smoothly. In other words EDOs lacked technical knowledge. Chain of commands for EDOs leading to Nazim or DCO was not clear. EDOs in Punjab expressed their views demanding that the devolution of education functions from province to districts were not sufficient, instead some functions should be directly devolved to that schools because schools were better able to understand their issue and manage their problems (Khan, 2013).

Devolution of health and education sector remained only on paper. Control of provincial government on these two sectors through financial control and back channel tactics rendered service delivery ineffective. It was reported that in Punjab 21 percent of funds specified for education and health sector annual development programs remained with provincial government. While recurrent expenditure of provincial governments for education sector grew annually by 48% and for health sector by 16% in post-devolution period. During this period Punjab launched comprehensive Education Sector Reform Program with aid of donor agencies. Funds were transferred to local governments as a tied grants to provide facility at the primary and middle schools. However, local MPA made the task complicated through exercising its influence on provincial governments by either stopping the funding to local governments or by pressurizing local governments to change the priorities of district governments. Implementation of this programme was transferred to National Logistics Corporation in 2006 barring the district governments from the role of planning, identification and execution of the schemes. Very similar situation occurred in the implementation of health sector related program called Health Sector Reform Programme and Chief Minister Accelerated Program Social Development (CMAPSD) (Hasnain, 2010; Hussain, 2018).

Conclusion and Recommendations

Local Government System introduced by Gen. Musharraf was one of the most empowered system till date, in which substantive provincial functions were devolved to district government. However, there were some structural issues which barred the local governments from achieving desired results, and finally led up to its derailment. Analysis of academic literature suggests that political conflict among provincial and local politicians was among the major causes of the derailment of the system. Provincial governments never owned a local government system because MNAs and MPAs from a constituency considers development work their right to please their voters (clients), and local governments tend to disturb their political clientele. Policy makers should address this fundamental issue on priority. A mechanism is needed to involve MNAs and MPAs of a district in district development programs through district mayors. Other structural issues involved indirect elections of Nazims, non-party based elections, flawed objectives, non-establishment of district cadre, lack of defined role for women councillors, financial imbalance and lack of capacity in district officials.

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