

Devolution of Power Plan in Pakistan by General Musharraf

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Abstract: *Pakistan is a democratic country but since its inception, it has deprived political background particularly in local self-Government. Pakistan's history shows us that inconsistent civilian rules hindered the process of a viable democratic culture across all level. Time and again military engulfed the civilian political romance. Each military generals introduced the local self-government, General Ayyub introduced Basic democratic system in his regime, General Zia also introduced local government, their main aim was only to legitimize their own powers. But in last military coup by General Musharraf on 1999, the decentralization reforms in Pakistan can be seen.*

INTRODUCTION

He introduced Devolution power plan in 2000, The main aim is to give power to democratic institution and to strengthen the people at grass-root level by providing them the command to identify and implement their own need-based projects. This Chapter would begin with the brief description on the Devolution Plan further I discuss the Principal, Structure, Salient features of Devolution power plan. Further I would make comparative analysis of Local government Introduced by Ayyub's Basic democratic system and Musharraf's Devolution Plan.

DEVOLUTION PLAN

Devolution plan is a system in which the powers are granted from the central level to the state, regional or district level. It means power is transmitted or transferred at the lower level which strengthen the Democratic system.

On 17th October 1999, General Parvez Musharraf announced his plan to decentralize the powers at lower level or at grass-root level in the

state of Pakistan. To implement these powers, on 14th August 2000, the devolution of power plan was launched and it was implemented in 2001. According to Cheema, the main aim of this new system is to empower the people at lower level and to strengthen the democratic system of Pakistan. It was urged that this plan will enhance the participation of ordinary citizens not only in politics but also in delivery of services, it will enhance the accountability of the government officials and it would improve the distribution of social services. This Power Plan would paved the way for the re-establishment of local governments at the district level and sub-district levels (Cheema 2005). According to this Plan, political, administrative and fiscal powers were decentralized to the local governments at three levels the union, tehsil and district levels. Sajid Khan stated that the Devolution of Power Plan based on five principals that are as following:

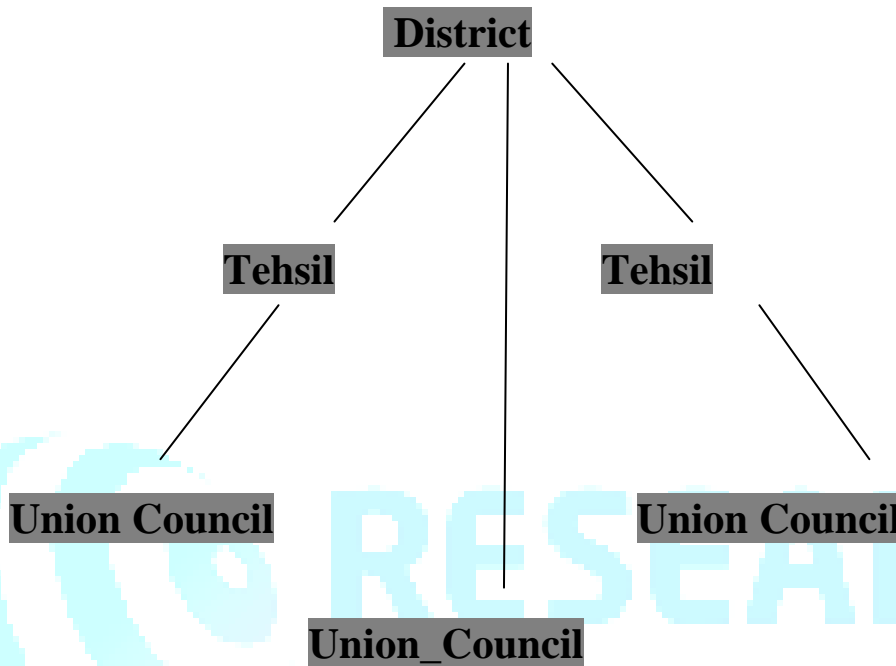
1. **The Decentralization of Political Power.**
2. **Delegation of Administrative authority.**
3. **Deconstruction of management facilities.**
4. **Dispersion of Power authority.**
5. **Sharing of the resources to the local level (Khan 2006).**

Structure of Local Government system

The local Government program proposed in 2000, this new system consist of three levels of tiers: District council, Tehsil council and union council. Each level of local government has its own line of authority comprises of Nazim and Naib-Nazim, and administrative structure. The administrative structure also introduced in the Local government program that is: District administration, Tehsil administration and Union administration. The highest level of local

government is District that is comprised of large areas. The middle tier is Tehsil level which is equal

to the towns and the last and lowest tier is union level of local governance which comprises of villages.



The Three tiers described briefly bellow:

District Council:

The highest and most important Tier of new local government is District.. It comprises of Zila Nazim and Zila naib nazim. The head of the District is Zila Nazim and Naib zila nazim act as a speaker of district council. There responsibilities are to formulate the plans, implement the policies, they also distribute the budget at district level. Deputy commissioner officer is considered as the head of the district administration who submit the reports to Zila Nazim. The administrative structure of districts is further divided into offices and sub offices and that sub-division of the districts is manage by the “Executive district officers” and the “District officers”. They both are answerable to the “Deputy commissioner officer”.

Tehsil Council:

The middle tier of new local government system is Tehsil Council. It is also known as the “Tehsil Municipal Administration”. It comprises of “Tehsil nazim” and “Naib Tehsil nazim”. The tehsil nazim act as the executive head of the Tehsil whereas Naib tehsil nazim act as the convener of the Tehsil council (Khan 2006). Tehsil municipal officer who directly submit the reports to the Tehsil nazim, and there responsibilities are to formulate planning, coordinating, infrastructure and several municipal activities are performed by Town Officers at Tehsil level.

Union Council:

The Third and basic tier of new local government structure is Union Council. It comprises of “Union nazim” and “Union naib nazim”. Union council are formulating in Urban and also in the rural areas. It also composed of the union administration. Which includes the “elected union nazim” and

“union naib nazim” other than these there are also three secretaries. These secretaries are responsible to manage the functioning of the union committees, they are also responsible for community

development activities under the supervision of the union nazim. The decentralized structure can briefly be described in the Table:

<u>Administrations</u>	<u>Councils</u>	<u>Structure</u>	<u>Political</u> <u>Head of the</u> <u>Councils</u>	<u>Administrative</u> <u>heads</u>
District	District council	District Administration	District Nazim	District coordination officers
Tehsil	Tehsil Council	Tehsil Administration	Tehsil Nazim	Tehsil Municipal officer
Union	Union Council	Union Administration	Union Nazim	Union Nazim

(Muhammad Shakil Ahmad, Noraini Bt. Abu Talib 2014)

Salient feature of Devolution Power Plan:

The Devolution plan presented by General Musharraf exhibit some significant importance which differ from Ayyub and Zia’s local government system. The most significant intervention made in the new system is representation that is given to the women. The new local government system reserve 1/3 seats for the women. Another change in Devolution plan is the restoration of the representation of minorities into the political

mainstream. The other most significant features of power plan are the establishment of the Citizen community Boards. This Board is consisting of non-elected members and the only purpose or main purpose of the establishment of CCBs is development of the areas. The representatives of the areas received the financial support from the local government by this they do the activities for the development of their areas this shows the direct participation of the citizen in the service delivery.

Another important feature of the devolution plan is distribution of powers at local level. The powers are being distributed in 3 tiers of local government system that are: District council, Tehsil Council, Union council they are politically linked with each other (Nazir Hussain Shah, Tayyaba Syed, Mrs Shawar Hussain 2016). In previous governments the district coordination officers were answerable to non-elected representative but in new local government they must be answerable to the elected district nazim which shows that the Public representation are ensured in the new system.

Similarly, in the previous government system, the urban and the rural are two distinct entities but in the devolution plan abolish the rural urban divide and integrate both urban and rural areas. This change considers as important for the allocation of the resources. Many functions like planning, infrastructure, budgeting have now been devolved at district and tehsil level.

Through local government ordinance, the assigned powers to all the three levels of local government are cleared. For example, the district council are responsible to perform the activities like providing basic health care, social welfare, provide education. The tehsil councils are responsible for providing municipal services such as sanitation, water etc.

The introduction of fiscal decentralization is considered as the most important changes in the devolution Power plan. In the new local government, they themselves are responsible to generate their own budget for delivery of most of the public services. The federal and provincial government are only concerned with policy issues, maintenance of foreign relation, monitoring functions. The PFC is established in all the provinces to develop the fiscal and distribute the funds to local government. Local council now receive 2.5 % of general sales taxes other than these two new taxes were also introduced in new local government that are health taxes and education taxes.

Comparative analysis of Local Self Government concepts by Ayyub's Democratic system and Musharraf's Devolution Plan:

The local government in Pakistan introduced thrice by military leaders, first during Ayyub Khan regime, second during Zia's Regime and last during Musharraf's Era.

However, I will focus on the local government systems presented by Ayyub and Musharraf.

During General Ayyub Khan regime, he introduced basic democratic system which is comprised of 80,000 basic democratic members. First well-defined system was introduced in the state of Pakistan. This system shifts the political participation from the urban to rural, through decentralization of Power it involves citizens. However, the BD conferred the portfolio of decision making in the hands of bureaucracy. Ayyub Khan strengthen the bureaucratic system by giving them much powers. This system has powers to elect the officials and can enact laws but at the smaller level. the main aim of Ayyub's is to legitimize his own powers. On the other hand, Musharraf introduced the devolution plan in which he devolved the powers at grass-root level. This system gave more power to the elected members and took the powers away from the bureaucrats. The main difference among Ayyub and Musharraf's local government system is in the structure. The local self-government introduced by the Ayyub is having four tiers and gave more importance to the three lowest tiers. On the other hand, Musharraf introduced the devolution power plan in which he gave the three level of local government and he removed all the upper level posts. In Ayyub System, the Deputy commissioner is answerable or give report to the non-elected representative, but in Musharraf Regime the district commission officer gives report to the elected District Nazim. Another difference in their systems is that in Basic Democratic system the several functions like budgeting, planning, infrastructure, education services, health services, policy making services was been performed by the provincial government but on the other hand in Devolution Plan these services and

functions are performed by the district bureaucrats (District Nazim). In basic Democratic system people have limited representation and their involvement in the decision making were also restricted but in devolution Plan the public representation not only increased but also give right of participation not only in politics but also in the public services. In Ayyub's system there was a clear distinction can be seen in the rural and urban Areas (Rural-urban divide). But in Musharraf's plan there is no financial distinction between the rural urban areas. Basic Democratic system did not give much importance to the women and have given a limited representation but in Musharraf's system they empower women representation as they increased women seats in the legislative assemblies the devolution plan introduced thirty-three percent quota for women in local councils and seventeen percent quota in legislative assembly. Therefore, it can be notice that the Ayyub system is highly centralized system. The system reflected the political philosophy of military and officialdom of bureaucracy. But on the other hand, Musharraf introduced decentralized system he devolved the powers at grass-root level.

CONCLUSION

This Chapter examine the Devolution Power Plan introduced by General Pervaiz Musharraf formulated to strengthen the institutions. The aim of Devolution plan is to empower the people at grass-root level. This plan were introduced based on five principals that are: **Decentralization of Political Power, Delegation of Administrative authority, Deconstruction of management facilities, Dispersion of Power authority and Sharing of the resources to the local level.**

The new local government system introduced the structure in which the powers are distributed equally in all the tiers of local government. It gives representation to the public, ensures the participation of People in political as well as in service delivery. The system represent by Musharraf is far better than previous ones. If we analyze the basic democratic system of Ayyub we can see that it was highly centralized system as it not only limited the representation of public but also restricted the

participation of public in the decision making but in Musharraf's Devolution of Power plan the powers are devolved at local level . It also empowers the women as in the plan the allocation of seats for women can clearly be seen..

The local government system introduced by General Musharraf exhibit some significant features which were absent in Ayyub and Zia's system of local government. In Devolution of Power Plan the powers of political, administrative and fiscal are devolved at local level. These powers are exercised equally by all the three tiers of new local government system. Another most important significant were the allocation of seats for women, peasants and minorities were ensured in new Local government system. This system gave more power to the elected members and took the powers away from the bureaucrats. This Plan not only increased the public representation but also give the right of participation not only in politics but also in the public services.

The Devolution Plan is far better than the previous but still this system is not proved to be successful in state of Pakistan. The non-party base local government election raised baradari system. In Musharraf's Devolution Plan there were seen lack of check and balance with the local government system.

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