



**Seminar Report  
On  
“Local Governance”**

**Organized by  
Event organizer committee of  
AJIZ-Union of Development Concern Pindi Bhattian.**

**At  
GC-University Faisalabad.**

**Report Prepared by**

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**A**JIZ-Union of Development Concern organized a seminar on “Local Governance” on July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2009 at 10 am. AJIZ-Union of Development Concern serves as an independent think tank research base foundation which believes in impartial and nonpartisan approach. AJIZ-Union of Development Concern is engaged in generating and innovating policy ideas through its research, four basic agendas and other activities. AJIZ-Union of Development Concern has been arranging seminars, symposiums, debates, panel discussions, work shops, lectures and talks on various aspects of social, political and education policies in Pakistan in general and specially at District level (Hafizabad) in particular.

The seminar focused on Local Governments, Prospects and Problems in Pakistan. The main purpose of the seminar was to enhance an understanding about the Local Governance system both from Reactionary’s as well as Academia’s perspectives.

Mr President, Head of AJIZ Foundation enlightened the participant about AJIZ-Union of Development Concern, the purpose of seminar and introduction of the speakers. The seminar was delivered by Mr. Sheikh Tanveer Previous general counselor, Mr. Asad Saleem Sheikh Professor and vice Principle of Government Degree College Pindi Bhattian. Dr. Haq Nawaz Director of Planning and Development Department in Government College University Faisalabad, Furthermore, all most whole Pindi Bhattian correspondences, reporters and honorable citizens participated from all walks of life including media, NGOs, and a large presence of students attended the seminar.

Mr. President shared his personal opinion based on his experience about the prospects and problems of Local Governance in Pakistan. His presentation comprised of the basic rationale of local Governance and its implementation in Pakistan. While talking about the importance of LG, he emphasized that when legislations are made their practicality and purpose along with the source of inspiration behind them are kept in mind. There is possibility that specific laws can over ride the general laws. In LG system the core principle of devolution lies in the delegation of authority rather than distribution of authority.

He stated that there are certain conditions related to the devolution process which should be considered when we talk about devolution. If authority has to be delegated, there must be enabling environment where the local institutions could exercise the authority and responsibilities assigned to them. If a new system is introduced or replaced with the existing system, there must be careful crafting by examining which system will fill the vacuum resulted from that replacement. Integration of the key components of governance is also the pre-requisite along with the articulation of the legal framework leaving no suspicions behind. The roles and responsibility needs to be clearly defined. If these conditions are prevailed or taken care of then there is possibility of success and if even one of the components is missing or ignored, there is prominent possibility of failure.

While talking about devolution plan 2001, he enlightened that when the devolution plan was implemented, the authority lied in the hand of one person. The situation was not stable and for any new system to be introduced there is a need for stable conditions. The main purpose of the devolution plan was to devolve political power, decentralize administrative & financial authority to make local governments accountable for good governance, effective delivery of services & transparent decision making through institutionalized participation of the people at grass-roots level. A lot of donor support and opportunities were available. Teams of consultants and all available resources were used for the crafting of this system. A number of diverse functions including land administration, finance, HRM, Planning etc. were delegated to the local governments to implement at local level.

According to him the main elements of the devolution were to transfer responsibilities and resources to the decentralized offices for the operations, management and control. But surprisingly the results were opposite to the expected ones. Though functions were given to the system but authorities, responsibilities and resources to perform those function was not delegated to the decentralized institutions. He mentioned the limits and extents within which it was expected from the local institutions to perform their functions. Whenever a system comes in contrast or in conflict with another system it has an overruling effect. So the LG ordinances in all provinces were given an overriding effect, that they will function within the provincial frameworks and will not impede the executive authority of the government of the province.

He shared the practical discrepancies of LG system. According to him, the efficiency of devolution plan was based on good governance, effectiveness of the institutions and transparent decision making. Describing the positive aspects in the devolution plan, he stated that two LG elections have been held to-date, marginalized segments of the society i.e. women, minorities, farmers and other ethnic groups are mainstreamed in the system and education sector specially political schooling in which many of the representative from local government have taken part in Provincial and National assembly elections. The negative aspects of the devolution plan are described as that it lacked focus and fulcrum and the responsibility and authority has not been delegated, it has rather diluted. The transparency is not assured and receding degree of responsiveness, marginalization of Governance, dispersal of institutions and breakdown of regulatory structure were the other aspects constrained Devolution plan.

Mr. President emphasized that the core of the devolution plan is grafting, that it is brought and crafted in an area without making an enabling environment for its growth and development. It is necessary to provide a stable environment for a new system to flourish but the devolution plan was put into practice at the transition period which resulted in institutional inertia, redundancy and ineffectiveness. The calamity of the devolution plan is the dispersal of Government and Governance, removal of supervisory tier at Divisional level and ignoring the requirements of executive authority of Government.

Expressing his views about local government like in NWFP, he stated that NWFP has its own special Pukhtun values and culture. So the system should be designed in such a way that it should be well suitable with our environment. The difficulties are also of diverse nature as NWFP has specific regulatory governance for PATA and FATA, insurgency impacts and pressure of displaced population.

He suggested that improvement in the system can be brought by applying the incremental approach, creating the missing axis, regrouping district offices, identifying the executive authority and regionalizing oversight. His ideas of way forwardness brought a ray of hope; rationally determined structures & functional domain; building on the concept of urban and rural divide; linkages building Provincial Assembly through

Local Councils Accounts Committee & Local Councils Grants Committee; a clear vision of the role of political will and wisdom of people for effective functional local government system.

Mr. Sheikh Tanveer gave emphasis to the utility and importance of local governance in the process of political development, consciousness and change by giving a historical overview from the political science perspective. Local Governance in his opinion is the institutional setup at the grass root level where local elected representatives are awarded with an opportunity to manage local affairs with the help of locally available resources. The role of local government is essential for the promotion of democracy culture in any society. Giving a historical perspective, quoting from one of the professor's book from England he stated that many politician from British India famous in the struggle for independence movement and later on as a political manager of their respective countries India and Pakistan, had started their career from local government. Khwaja Nazimuddin, second Governor General and second prime minister of Pakistan has served as chairman of Dhaka municipal committee from 1921 to 1929. They were the nurseries or primary schools for democracy where people learnt the art of politics, governance and administration etc.

He stressed that the local government institutions should be in lined with the ground realities Pakistan has. This was the major consideration which made the General Ayub Khan, pioneer of LG system in Pakistan. He will be remembered for giving the nation a framework, no matter how faulty or good it was. In most of the occasions, G. Ayub stated that we need a kind of democracy that suits our environment, not imported from anything outside; rather we should have a home grown plant. He was of the opinion that locally elected representative should learn while working with the trained Govt. officers. In 1951 the Basic democracy scheme was launched. Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto at that time was also happy with that system. He delivered a lecture on "Basic democracy is great experiment" which was published in a book, "Political System in Pakistan". He abolished the system when he came into power, and considered it a failure due to nepotism, bribery and corruption. He committed to launch his own system "People's Local Government" but the elections could not conduct.

Credit goes to military for the establishment of local governance system in Pakistan. Though politician who keep the slogan that they are champions of democracy and want to flourish it in the society, are always reluctant to revive and strengthen the institutions which regarded as school of democracy. Despite the faults in the Ayub's basic democracy system, there was a room for improvement but that was not improved otherwise we would have the system of LG right from that time. According to him, development is related to change and growth. If growth is not there it is understood that there is no development. So it doesn't not matter how slow is the further improvement, LG institutions in Pakistan could have developed continuity and sustainability.

Military rulers had given attention to LG system because of their own personal agendas of remaining in the power for the long run. In this regard they emphasized on the institutional building of local governance institutes. Reviving local government first and then following a very unique emphasis on their part; holding referendum, making extraordinary use of elected councillors in mobilizing public opinion in their favour. This pattern has been followed by all the military rulers and all of them had followed identical strategies in this perspective. The results of referendum was very improperly imparted, taking it as a direct mandate of the masses of those military ruler claim themselves as elected presidents.

While discussing the efforts to implement local Government system in Pakistan, he discussed that Zia-ul-Haq establishes a large scale contracts with the masses at the time when he was launching this system. A questionnaire comprising 99 question was published in news papers and people are called upon to send their proposals as what needs to be done. This strategy was different from the one which was prepared by a small group of people at Islamabad in recent years. This recent experiment should have to be much purposeful at that line of action what we have option to.

Discussing the major problem in LG, he questioned that why the implementation of the LG system is always by military ruler? Why our politicians do not implement this system effectively. It is a ground reality that Military has ruled 33 years over Pakistan and if the politicians do not change their attitude towards the system, the idea of stable, strong and effective system will never be materialized.

Benazir Bhutto in his second term took this question very seriously. A task force was formed headed by Mr. Asfar Kamaluddin. He called to prepare all the things as a result of which the foundation of District government could be laid down. She used the term District Government first and the scheme was published in the news paper but the idea was not implemented. The main reason behind that was the dividend mandate having in the national assembly. Her share in the house was 86 seats out of 207 while her opponent PMN had 72 seats. Party member might have advised her that it would be difficult to detach the political parties being attached in LG elections.

Its is observed that if the upper level of local government is not from political horizon, local government manager feel very comfortable but as soon as the high level institutions( provincial/ National Assembly) came into being; a traditional rivalry erupts between provincial assembly and their counterparts in local government system. A clear policy is yet to determine in order to draw a line of demarcation; what exactly should be the domain for the parliamentarians as well as for local councillors. As a result of this unclear situation, a very strange scenario has been developed having overlapping, duplication and encroachment.

In his concluding remarks he referred to the article 7 and 32 in which Local Government is mentioned, based on this a fair initiative ca be taken for the proper utilization of this system. Commitment of the Politicians needs to be ensured for the promotion of a democratic culture in Pakistan, laying a solid foundation of LG where it can serve for future generation politicians. He further suggested that a list of all important things which LG take or spell out should be added into the constitution.

In the end, Dr. Haq Nawaz, emphasized on the importance of education in the province and related its importance to the workforce of the province. He also highlighted that how awareness can be created through education. He insisted on the participants to start educating themselves and their surroundings on Governance issue. He concluded that through these discussions either we can provoke people or their thoughts. He told the participants that the Centre will come up with similar initiatives in the future create awareness among the masses regarding different issues in our society.

To sum up, the seminar Mr. President thanked to all participants and honourable citizens and specially thanked to Dr. Haq Nawaz Chief Guest of the seminar who was shove out time for AJIZ-Union of Development Concern seminar.

We Thanks to All participants.

The Joint Secretary  
Salman Tahir

The President  
Hafiz Muhammad Imran Tahir

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