

## Local Government in Federal States of India and Pakistan: A Comparative Social Experimental Study

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### Abstract

*India and Pakistan are countries of great diversity with a variety of cultures, languages, and lifestyles. The well-being of people in both states depends on the choices of the people which are granted by the governments. Both states have different levels of economic and social development. India and Pakistan have given importance to the principles of good governance and local government is an important part of the governments to serve the people. This research is based on a quantitative method of study to examine the social behavior towards the local government in federal states and to examine the reasons to change in the behaviors towards local government. The data was collected by World Value Survey's sixth wave and it was analyzed by using the statistical software STATA to get the results. The results show that income and education affect the social behavior toward local government in the federal states of India and Pakistan. The results also show that age, education, and income have deep effects on public behavior toward the local government in India and Pakistan. The research concludes that the public in Pakistan and India shows positive behavior toward elections.*

**Keywords:** Federalism, Good Governance, India, Pakistan, Local Government.

### Introduction

Many states have a very unique federal system of government. Local government institutions have gained more importance since the 1980s and many states have transferred many kinds of responsibilities to the local government authority (Devas & Alam, 2008). Some states have two tiers of the government system, namely, central and provincial. But some states have a third tier of government, named the local government system to tackle local issues.

The local government has its importance and always it is defended as it is involved in the process of democracy and mass participation (Bird & Vaillancourt, 2008). No political system is completed without having a local

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government (Havenga, 2002). It is important to complete the system of democratization. Local government refers to the local authority like municipal authority. Local government is a subdivision between the rural and urban authorities, and between the local and central authorities. It also includes the regional and district subdivision government or local authority is an institution that works under the control of the elected government but is subjected to the provincial authority. Local authority institution is headed by the elected members of the council.

A three-tiered system of government is gaining importance. Local government works for two purposes the first one is administrative. All the services including the supply of goods etc. are included for administrative purposes (Haque, 2012). The second involves the representation of the citizens and it specifies the local needs and then determines to meet those needs. It is important to understand what is local government and what are its functions. Lawrence Ziring in his study, "The Administration of Basic Democracies: The Working of Democracy in Muslim States", says that the main purpose of decentralization is to make maximum participation of people in their progressive community life. He suggests that no system is perfect but if there is harmony between the political units for political and cultural conditions then it can make the system move toward success.

Local government is gaining more importance all over the world. It is considered that local government is important in a democracy because it involves participation at the grass root level. Bureaucracy is also involved in the local self-government and performs many roles.

Local self-government has the power to decide according to the demands and needs of the local areas and people. Basic education, health, and security in the local areas are the main responsibilities of the local government. In the local government system, decentralization is the popular system for the delivery of services in the world. In this model, the services are given to the lowest level or tiers of the government because the lowest tiers are closest to the local people. They give a better match to the demands of the people. Through decentralization, the powers are divided into lower units (Sellers & Lidström, 2007).

*"Local Government is a product of devolution as a dimension of decentralization". (Havenga, 2002).*

## **Federalism and Local Government**

The federation is an agreement between two types of governments to share power and control their respective territories (Behnke & Benz, 2020). On this basis, federalism can be said to be a form of government in which at least two levels of government exist within the country - first at the central level and second at the local or state level. Federalism can be defined as the distribution of rights between local, central, and state governments. The concept of federalism is divided into two parts (Orluwene, 2018) based on the relationship between the central and state government (1) Cooperative federalism (2) Competitive federalism.

Federalism is the theory and practice of creating an integral union state, formed from some politically and legally equivalent parts (quasi-states) based on common interests, historical destinies, and contractual constitutional relations. The management of a single state as a whole can be carried out according to the principle of federation, which presupposes close interdependence of its constituent entities, or according to the principle of confederation, which presupposes the autonomy of the constituent entities of the union.

Decentralization is a word that is used in many ways for many things but in local governments, it is used to describe the distribution of power from the central authority to the local authorities. In many local governments, the central authority makes decisions and the local authority is silent (Agrawal & Ribot, 2000). Since the 1980s, decentralization has emerged as important as it is valued by many states. A World Bank study regarding decentralization in developing countries noted that 12 out of 75 developing states with a population of more than 5 million saw the transformation of power from the central authority to the local units (Agrawal & Ribot, 2000).

Decentralization is now justified as it increases the efficiency, and participation of people and increases the government's response toward the public. It can be defined as the distribution of power from the center to the lower institutions by any act of formally coding distributing power which includes the administrative hierarchy (Agrawal & Ribot, 2000). When powers are transferred to the lowest unit, it involves many actors in decision-making in which many actors enjoy or exercise some autonomy. Political powers can be transferred in various ways. Sometimes government transfers power through reconcentration and sometimes by decentralization.

In the Indian and Pakistan administrations, power flows from the center to the local bodies, that is, the *panchayat*, which is why decentralization is necessary for the country to ensure that the center does not acquire all the powers. This gives rise to the need for federalism. This system greatly helps the administration under the burden of work (Chen et al., 2022). Significantly, the officials sitting at the center are unable to reach the villages due to which the villages are left untouched by the development. Therefore, the local government helps the executive to reach the lowest level and ensures the active participation of all citizens of the country in a democracy. In local government, the central government makes legislation and distributes the responsibilities and services to the hired staff. It takes full responsibility and it is accountable for the delivery of services.

Hierarchical divisions of power make the representatives responsible to the superior authorities or responsible to the local people. Distribution of power includes many types of power like the power of making rules, taking decisions, and enforcing the rules.

### **Research Hypothesis**

In federally administered countries of India and Pakistan, people trust the local government and believe that local governments can improve their living conditions.

### **Literature Review**

Local government is the sub-divisional level of the government in which it exercises its power over the limited areas which are part of the larger area (Miller, 2002). This is where the administration is controlled by the local authorities. It is a process in which public opinion is determined and policies are made at the local level. It is an exercise of power including political, fiscal, and administrative power over local affairs.

When the local government operates, it is the agent of the central government. It has an increasing role in the state in the modern world. It makes sure the better delivery of services, provides a long-term policy, and monitoring is the most important task of the local government. Local laws are made by the local government but these laws are not against the laws of the state. Local government is responsible to ensure the implementation of local laws. In local governments, sometimes the national structure is under the central government. Sometimes local government is defined as having legal personality, budgetary power and limited control over the center,

specified powers, and effective local citizens participation (Havenga, 2002). Local government is a form of government having territorial and community rights and regulates its affairs, it has the power to act independently and local people participate to address their local affairs. Local governments are not completely independent. It acts only in response to the shared responsibilities of central authority. Local governments play an important role in the democratic environment. It works with the central authority as it is a partner in the country's development. It facilitates political harmony and can influence legislation (Havenga, 2002).

Local government is the third tier of the government (Androutopoulou et al., 2019) and was created to ensure mass participation in the democratization process so that they would be able to participate in decision-making for their daily life. Local government aims to serve every individual in his community at the local level. It referred to the direct and indirect participation of individuals in the communities. This tier of the government is important because it provides training at the grass root level for leadership, promotion of economic development, deliverance of services, and representation of the local demands and problems (*ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT*, 2012). It provides some measures of power to the masses and makes it real that in a democracy it is the government by the people and for the people. The main purpose of the local government is economic prosperity (Morosan, 1995).

Local government or local institutions have more importance because local authorities are aware of the issues, problems, and needs of the local people (Fernando, 2019) of the communities than the central authorities. They are also good at identifying in better ways the problems, respecting local cultural identities, and both supporting and responding to them more efficiently. Local governments face pressures from their areas like the demand for roads, health, and educational institutions. Local masses' involvement in the decision-making ensures close participation of the masses in the political process. It can be concluded that the local government has authority over a specified local area and takes decisions for the given territory but under the command of the central government. No laws and rules can be against the central government local government faces challenges of financial pressure (Wall, 2014).

In a federal union, functions, rights, and obligations of state, federal and regional, local authorities are delimited. The prerogatives of the central state

powers are foreign relations, the protection of state territory, the creation and management of armed forces and law enforcement agencies, the issue of banknotes, the management of central financial institutions, state property (which usually includes federal railways and highways, communications, etc.), formation of the federal budget and other national functions.

The institutional structure of the members of the federation repeats the structure of the central state power with the same division of legislative, executive, and judicial powers, with the prerogatives of administration and lawmaking within their territory within the framework of federal legislation and the general constitution. The advantages of such a combination of centralized government with decentralized local government in comparison with the unitary government were emphasized back in the 18th century. *C.L. Montesquieu* (Aksuoğlu, 2021).

A necessary condition for the federal organization is the political homogeneity of a federal society (Kropp, 2019) (if it is possible and even inevitable for its class differentiation). In other words, a federal state cannot simultaneously consist of republican, monarchical, and imperial subjects. At the same time, neither their ethnic, national, linguistic, or other cultural and historical differences serve as an obstacle to the formation of a federation. Federalism turned out to be not only a compromise that allows solving the problems of internal peace in states with a complex territorial-national structure but also a significant, if not decisive, means of preserving the integrity of such states, resolving the dilemma of severe conflicts in the struggle for and against the separation of nation-states or their union coexistence in the federation. If within the federation issues of self-determination of the constituent entities arise or are not eliminated, this means that a federal society has not developed in it, and it can disintegrate for the same reasons as the empires collapsed.

An important condition for the integrity of any federation is the real participation of its members in state administration, which does not allow inequality between federal units and formations of a federal political province. However, the heterogeneity of the federal association and the unevenness of the historical and social development of its members can allow any entity to secede and create its statehood without any conflicts. Historically, the federal system of government has been adopted mostly in countries with large areas and populations. In countries with large

areas or populations, ethnic, linguistic, and cultural diversity is also more likely to occur. Countries with similar populations do not need such institutions as countries with diverse populations do.

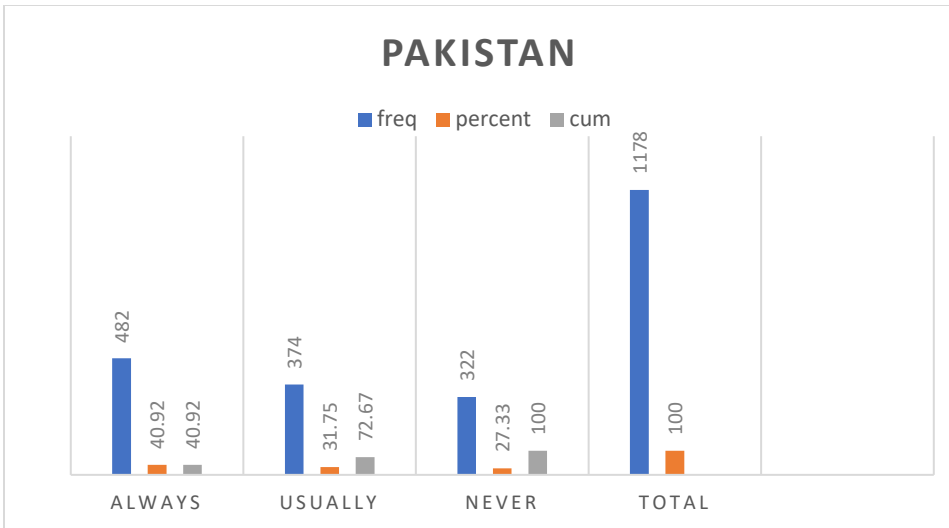
A diverse population spread over a wide area requires a political system that can meet the needs of each segment or group of the population, and if these ethnic, linguistic, and cultural groups are spread over specific areas, then regional and geographical. Units come into being, which requires legal and political arrangements to harmonize with each other. The federal system has two levels of government. One is that which governs the whole country and the other is the regional government, which has jurisdiction over a specific region.

### **Research Design and Data**

The researcher has used local governments in India and Pakistan as cases for study for this research. People in both federal states showed different behavior towards the local government. For the research, the data is used from World Value Survey and specifically the data from its 6<sup>th</sup> wave which is openly available to use. More than 50 countries are included in this survey. 1500 respondents from India and 1200 respondents from Pakistan are included in the analysis. The sample size was decided by World Value Survey and this sample includes rural areas, urban areas, educated, and uneducated populations, and people living with facilities and with fewer facilities, these all factors are included in this sample for better results. STATA software was used to get the results. The following statements from WVS were used in this research:

1. *When elections take place, do you vote always, usually, or never?*
2. *Some people think that having honest elections makes a lot of difference in their lives; other people think that it does not matter much.*

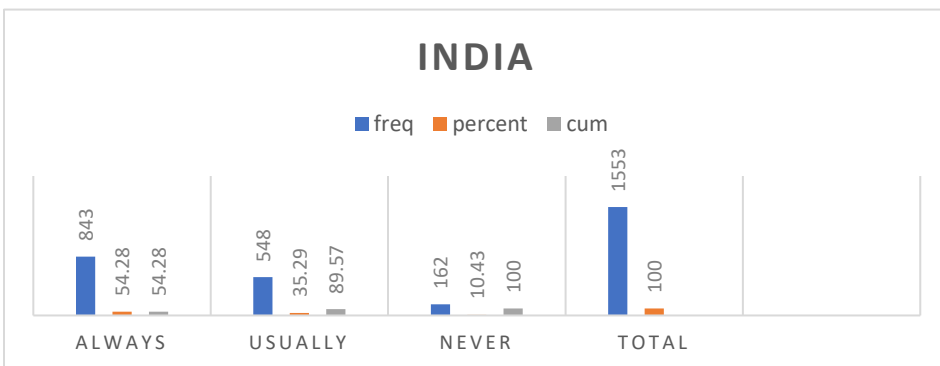
Multiple choices were provided in the questionnaire. For the first question, the choices were given Always usually, and never. For the second question, the choices were Very important Rather important not very important not at all important. Other demographic variables like education age and income were used to check the public behavior toward local government.



Source: World Value Survey, 6th wave

**Figure 1: Vote in local elections in Pakistan**

The presented graph provides the analysis that the Pakistani public shows positive behavior towards the local government. There was a total of 1178 observations and 40.92% of respondents say they vote in local elections, 31.75% say they usually vote and 27.33% say they never vote. Majority of the respondent vote in local elections in Pakistan.



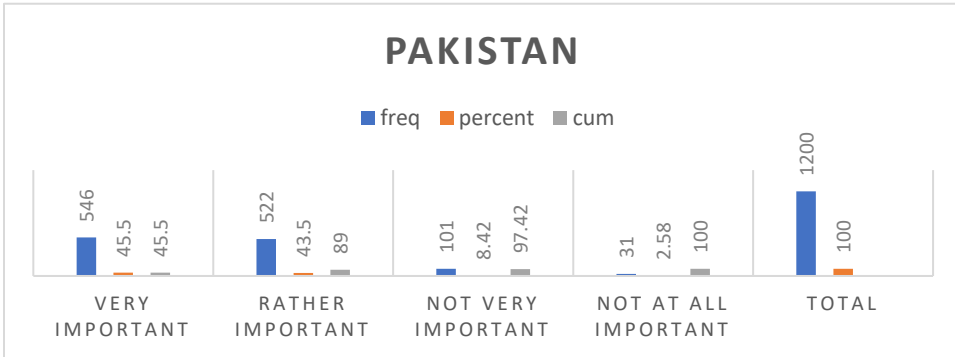
Source: World Value Survey, 6<sup>th</sup> wave

**Figure 2: Vote in local elections in India**

From India, 1558 respondents responded to the statement that they vote for local elections. 54.28% say they always vote for local elections, 35.29% say



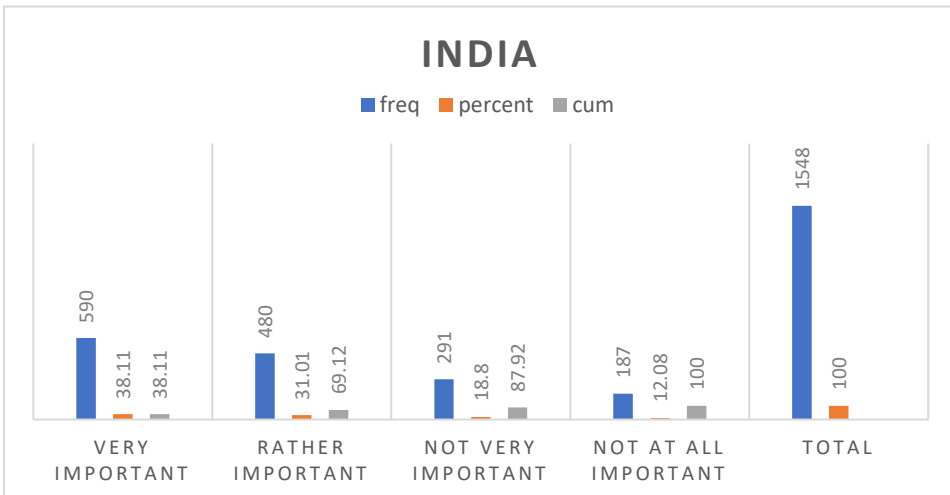
they usually vote and 10.43% say they never vote for local elections. The majority of the respondent vote for local elections in India as the results of the parented graph describes.



Source: World Value Survey, 6<sup>th</sup> wave

**Figure 3: Having honest elections makes a lot of difference in their lives**

The presented graph shows that people in Pakistan believe that honest local elections make a lot of difference in their lives. 45.5% responded very importantly and 43.5% responded rather important.



Source: World Value Survey, 6<sup>th</sup> wave

**Figure 4: Having honest elections makes a lot of difference in their lives**

The presented graph shows that in India majority of the people say that honest local elections make a lot of difference in their lives. 38.13% say it is important 31.01% say rather important, 18.8% say not very important and 12.08% say not at all important.

**Table 1: OLS Regression Model Local Government and Pakistan**

Column1	Model 1	Model 2
VARIABLES	Local Govt.	Local Govt.
agegrp2	-0.260***	-0.260***
	-0.0445	-0.0445
agegrp3	-0.333***	-0.333***
	-0.0453	-0.0453
agegrp4	-0.504***	-0.504***
	-0.0609	-0.0609
agegrp5	-0.538***	-0.538***
	-0.0957	-0.0957
agegrp6	-0.523***	-0.523***
	-0.134	-0.134
income	0.0290***	0.0290***
	-0.00815	-0.00815
education	-0.0488**	-0.0488**
	-0.021	-0.021
Constant	1.964***	1.964***
	-0.0714	-0.0714
Observations	917	917
R-squared	0.114	0.114
Standard errors in parentheses		
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1		

Source: World Value Survey, 6th wave

The OLS regression analysis of local government in Pakistan is significant to the hypothesis. There is a total of 917 observations from Pakistan and R-

Squared is 0.114. Age groups, education, and income level affect the public behavior toward the local government in Pakistan.

**Table 2: OLS Regression Model Local Government and India**

Column1	Model 1	Model 2
VARIABLES	Local Govt.	Local Govt.
agegrp2		0.159***
		-0.0578
agegrp3		0.169***
		-0.06
agegrp4		0.133**
		-0.0644
agegrp5		-0.0405
		-0.0743
agegrp6		0.291***
		-0.0903
education	-0.0154	-0.0163
	-0.0177	-0.0176
income	0.0257***	0.0249***
	-0.00716	-0.00715
Constant	1.726***	1.610***
	-0.0508	-0.067
Observations	1,221	1,221
R-squared	0.011	0.029
Standard errors in parentheses		
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1		

Source: World Value Survey, 6th wave

The presented OLS regression analysis shows that age, education, and income have deep effects on public behavior toward the local government in India. The results are significant to the hypothesis of the research. There is a total of 1221 observations and the R-Squared is 0.01.

## **Discussions and Conclusion**

The above-mentioned graphs provide the analysis that the Pakistani and Indian public shows positive behavior towards local government and the public believes that honest local elections make a lot of difference in their lives. The OLS regression analysis of local government in Pakistan is also significant with the hypothesis that local government makes public lives better.

Local self-government has an important and unique value in the process of democracy. One of the main aspects of local self-government is the safeguarding of democracy. Democracy provides the institutional basis for the local self-government so that it can perform its functions in a state. Local self-government is an important tier in democratic societies.

Local self-government consists of locally elected people who are answerable to the local people or elected assembly. As it has locally elected people who are well aware of the demands of the local people, so they are close to the people and it strengthens the democracy.

Local self-government has capacities to enhance and facilitate democracies. It is close to the local communities so it has become an essential part of the government because it is available to the local people. It involves the maximum masses in the democratic process and local people get involved in political matters and issues because it provides them the opportunities of such kinds.

Higher standers of the population required the facilities of living, education, and health. When the population is increased then the demands are also increased. The best example of the establishment of local government is the United States where the local government was established on the demands of citizens and in response to pressure groups. If we see the example of New Zealand the importance of local government has increased as they have transferred the environment management to the local government(Hayward, 2003). The local government holds an important position to provide facilitation.

Local self-governments provide those services which are important for the civilized community and civilized life. These services may include health, environment, or personal services. Planning of street beauty, education, roads, and hospitals are also included in these services. Local self-government is needed in every country because a single authority can't look

into every matter of citizens. The central government does not have proper knowledge of the issues of local communities

Local governments provide opportunities and platforms for the people to take an active part in politics and political matters. As local self-government is close to the people so it is easily accessible to the masses. Elected local representatives become more active in responding to

local issues. They know the actual needs of the people. This research provides evidence that age groups, education, and income level affect public behavior toward the local government in Pakistan and India. The public in both countries shows positive behavior towards local government. The majority of the people say that honest local elections make a lot of difference in their lives.

Federalism and local government have great relevance as local government in federalism supports and encourages public participation and helps to innovate the policies across the country. The local institutions are created by the federal states to implement policies of the federal government such as education and health policies. The federal government sometimes influences the local government in terms of the distribution of funds and grants. Federalism shares the powers between the national government and local governments. Local government under federalism has limited powers as a lower tier of government and public administration. The state is controlled by federalism and local government in India and Pakistan is the subdivision of government to deal with the local issues and local concerns. In both states, federal laws are for everyone and local laws are for a particular area and their residence. Federalism is handling government units in both states by distributing and recognizing powers.

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