
A study conducted in district Mardan of the NWFP, Pakistan

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DECLARATION

Declaration by the candidate

I, Sajjad Ali Khan, do hereby declare to the senate of the Norwegian University of Life Sciences (UMB) that this thesis is a product of my original research work and that I have not submitted this work to any other university or institution for any other academic degree/qualification. Information obtained from sources other than my own has been properly acknowledged. No part of this work may be published/reproduced without the prior consent of the author and/or the Norwegian University of Life Sciences (UMB).

____________________________________  _________________________
Sajjad Ali Khan                        Date

Declaration by supervisor

This thesis has been submitted for examination with the approval of my supervisor.

____________________________________  _________________________
Ingrid Nyborg                          Date
DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this work to:

*My loving and affectionate parents, Hukam Khan & Basmina Khan*

*My kind and affectionate uncle, Muhammad Khan*

*My beloved wife, Lubna Tauheed*

&

*My dear brothers and sisters*

To whom I owe an immense debt for their unconditional and constant support and their unceasing confidence in my abilities to accomplish this task.
ABSTRACT

On August 14th 2000, the military regime in Pakistan, unveiled a Local Government Plan intended to strengthen the democratic institutions and to empower the people at the grassroots. It was urged that the Plan would increase access of marginalized groups in society to politics, enhance participation of ordinary citizens both in politics as well as the delivery of services, enhance accountability of the government functionaries as well as elected members and improve the delivery of social services. The Devolution Plan paved the way for the reestablishment of local governments at the district and sub-district levels. According to the Plan, political, administrative and fiscal powers were devolved to the local governments at the union, tehsil and district levels.

The fact that local governments in Pakistan in the past have mainly been used by regimes to legitimize control over the state and to achieve future survival, makes this ambitious attempt controversial. Especially, its contextual resemblance with the previous two attempts at local government reforms, further strengthen the notion of legitimization and survival. This study was thus an attempt to find out whether the same old wine has merely been presented in new bottle for the third time or actions have spoken louder than words this time. In doing so, the study tried to explore the perceptions of both the ordinary people and the elected representatives on the recent devolution plan. It took into account a number of things e.g. the motivation for the process, the recent local government elections and the impacts of the devolution process on; citizens’ participation in politics as well as delivery of service, accountability and transparency and service delivery.

Data for the study was collected from seven union councils in district Mardan of the NWFP, Pakistan. Respondents in the study area were divided into four major categories because of the nature of the data required for the proposed research. The study has found that the Devolution Plan (2000) has both promises and limitations. As for motivation for the process is concerned the study found that the architect has followed in the footsteps of his predecessors. Despite exhibiting some continuations, the recent devolution plan, however, is considerably distinct from the previous local government reforms as far its substance and structure is concerned. Contrary to the previous local government reforms, it has devolved
substantial political, administrative and fiscal powers to the lower tiers of government. However, it has an ambiguous nature, which is one of the major causes of hindering elected representative from the exercise of power. It has resulted in substantial decrease in powers and control over resources of both the civil as well as political bureaucracy. In addition to its ambiguous nature, the process is incomplete in many respects e.g. some of the departments have been devolved while others still remain under the provincial control. Similarly, in most of cases, only few services within a department have been decentralized.

Regardless of having a number of bottlenecks, the recent devolution’s impacts on democratic participation both as voters and as representatives and the delivery of services have been positive. Most importantly, the new local government system accruing from the Devolution Plan (2000) is popular among majority of the people.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First of all, I would like to express the deepest sense of gratitude to Almighty Allah, the most gracious and the most merciful, Who enabled me to complete this project.

I would like to express cordial gratitude to my honorable supervisor, Ingrid Nyborg for her sincere cooperation, noble guidance, useful criticism and valuable suggestions. My local supervisor, Miraj Nabi also deserve special thanks for providing guidance and facilitation during my fieldwork.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AC</td>
<td>Assistance Commissioner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AJK</td>
<td>Azad Jammu and Kashmir</td>
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<tr>
<td>ANP</td>
<td>Awami National Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>BD</td>
<td>Basic Democracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BDO</td>
<td>Basic Democracy Order</td>
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<tr>
<td>CCBs</td>
<td>Citizen’s Community Boards</td>
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<tr>
<td>DAO</td>
<td>District Agricultural Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DC</td>
<td>Deputy Commissioner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DCO</td>
<td>District Coordination Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DGA</td>
<td>Director General Agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DGAE</td>
<td>Director General Agricultural Extension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DLG</td>
<td>Democratic Local Governance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EADA</td>
<td>Extra Assistant Director of Agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDOA</td>
<td>Executive District Officer Agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EP</td>
<td>Elected Representative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESCAP</td>
<td>Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAO</td>
<td>Food and Agricultural Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FANA</td>
<td>Federally Administered Northern Areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FATA</td>
<td>Federally Administered Tribal Areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FCA</td>
<td>Federal Capital Area</td>
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<tr>
<td>GDP</td>
<td>Grass Domestic Product</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOP</td>
<td>Government of Pakistan</td>
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<tr>
<td>HSSC</td>
<td>Higher Secondary School Certificate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICG</td>
<td>International Crisis Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRIS</td>
<td>Center for International Reform and the Informal Sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JUI</td>
<td>Jamiat Ullema-i-Islam</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
LGO  Local Government Ordinance
LGP  Local Government Plan
LGS  Local Government System
LP  Local People
MAO  Municipal Administration Ordinance
MNA  Member of National Assembly
MPA  Member of Provincial Assembly
MQM  Mutahidda Quami Movement
NRB  National Reconstruction Bureau
NWFP  North West Frontier Province
PDO  Pattan Development Organization
PML (N)  Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz Group)
PML (Q)  Pakistan Muslim League
(Quied-e-Azam Group)
SDC  Swiss Development Corporation
SSC  Secondary School Certificate
UA  Union Administration
UNDP  United Nations Development Programme
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter begins with a brief description of the various bottlenecks existing in the pre-devolution governance structure what the architects of the recent devolution process termed as the root causes of the crisis of governance and consequently advocated the genuine need for carrying out the recent political reforms in the form of devolution of power plan (2000). It is followed by a brief overview of the recent devolution process, its objectives and the major changes introduced in the governance structure. In the end, I have elaborated on the justification for the current study. In addition to this, this chapter also includes the objectives of the study as well as the research questions involved and the outline of the thesis.

1.2 Background

Prior to decentralization, Pakistan had four administrative tiers: the center, the province, the division and the district. The districts and divisions were distinct legal entities while the provinces had constitutional status. Both fiscal and administrative powers were mainly enjoyed by the center. The Deputy Commissioner (DC), the head of the district was assigned all the executive, judicial and developmental functions (Keefer et al., 2003). Similarly provinces governed districts and tehsils directly through the bureaucracy at the division, district and tehsil levels. Urban and rural local governments existed separately from each other. The relationship between the provincial bureaucratic set ups and the local governments was somewhat like the “ruler” and the “subject”. The existence of separate local government structures was aggravating rural-urban antagonism on one hand while the administration’s role as the “controlling authority” was further accentuating the rural-urban divide on the other. These two factors, coupled with the absence of adequate functional coordination between the line departments at the division, district and tehsil levels, resulted in inefficiency and corruption and were thus exhibiting as the root causes of the crisis of governance at the grassroots level (Local Government Plan, 2000).
Shortly after the October 1999 military take over, General Parvez Musharaf, the then chief executive and the current president of Pakistan, in his first speech to the nation unfolded a seven point agenda. Devolution of power to the grassroots level was an important point of the seven point agenda. Consequently, on 14th of August 2000, Musharaf’s government unveiled the Local Government Plan (LGO) intended to build genuine democratic institutions and to empower the people at the grassroots. Shortly after one month of the coup, the National Reconstruction Bureau (NRB) was set up and assigned the task to develop a scheme for the devolution. With technical assistance from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the NRB drafted the Local Government Plan (LG Plan) 2000. The LG Plan 2000 paved the way for the re-establishment of democratically elected system of local governments at the district, tehsil and union levels. The devolution plan resulted in the transfer of political, administrative and fiscal responsibilities from the center to the local governments (ICG 2004).

It is difficult to refer to any single document in which the objectives of Pakistan’s devolution have been precisely set out. An overarching objective of the recent devolution process in Pakistan was to reform the political structures i.e. to develop a political system that would serve the interests of the common people; increase access of marginalized groups in community (women, workers, peasants) to politics and to increase political stability through accountability of politicians through the local electorate. Additionally some technical objectives were also set out in order to underpin the overall political strategy. The most prominent of the technical objectives is the promise to improve the delivery of services especially the social services. It was urged that local governments would deliver primary health, education and municipal services like water and sanitation more efficiently once they are being appropriately empowered, staffed and resourced (World Bank 2004). According to the NRB (2001a), the change in the system of governance at the district, tehsil and union levels has been proposed to restructure the bureaucratic set up and to decentralize the administrative authority to the district level and below. Re-orientation and rationalization of the administrative structures are proposed to enhance public participation in decision-making and to improve efficiency and service delivery. The new system of governance would also enable the proactive elements in society to participate in community works and other
development related activities. It would also have the capacity to enhance accountability and transparency of both the government functionaries and the elected members through the monitoring committees of the local councils and the office of the Zila Mohtasib respectively.

1.3 Rationale of the Study

Decentralization is a process that brings decision making closer to the people, enhances participation and representation of ordinary people at the grassroots in politics, increases accountability and transparency, makes government more responsive to public demands and improves the delivery of services. The objectives of Pakistan’s devolution as stated by NRB match the arguments on the basis of which proponents of decentralization advocate the process. According to Manor (1999) countries experimenting with decentralization consider it as a solution to many different kinds of problems. Decentralization is generally believed to help stimulate economic growth, reduce rural poverty, strengthen civil society, deepen democracy and reduce the burden of fiscal responsibilities on central governments. Ahmad et al. (2005) point out that a number of countries have decentralized the responsibility for the provision of basic services like health, education, water and sanitation because central governments in these countries have not been able to provide such services in an appropriate manner.

Rondinelli el al. (1983) urge that decentralization improves government’s responsiveness to public needs and increases both the quality and quantity of the services it provides. Shah and Thompson (2004) call decentralization as “a silent revolution in the public sector governance” and urge that it brings decision making for the local public services closer to the people. The arguments that decentralization brings decision-making for public services closer to the people and makes government more responsive to public needs seem genuine. Because locally elected representatives usually live in constituencies of their electorate and are thus comparatively easily accessible to the local people than both the provincial and national level politicians. Similarly, local politicians comparatively have a better understanding of the local issues, which makes them more responsive to public demands and thus helps improve the delivery of goods and services. Elaborating the key themes of Democratic Local Governance (DLG) Blair (2000), describes participation and accountability as the core components of the democratic local governance. According to Blair, participation gives citizens an important
role in local government decisions that affect them whereas accountability enables them to hold the local government responsible for how it is affecting them. Participation provides the popular inputs for what the local government does and accountability provides the popular control over what the local government has done or left undone. Thus the existence of these two components will enable the local government to become more responsive to citizen’s desires and more effective in service delivery.

Motivations for decentralization are numerous and differ among countries and regions. In central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, it was aimed at political and economic transformation; in Latin America the purpose was to achieve democratic transition. In South Africa, Sri Lanka, Philippines, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Yugoslavia, decentralization emerged in response to political crisis due to ethnic conflicts. In countries like Indonesia, Mali, Senegal, Uganda, Mexico, political crisis due to regional conflicts paved the way for decentralization in these countries (Shah and Thompson 2004). Motivation for undertaking the recent decentralization reforms in Pakistan in its architect’s words is to “empower the impoverished”. However, having a thorough look at the political history of Pakistan, it is likely to get acquaintance with some harsh realities. Most importantly, the fact that the process (decentralization) has always been used to hijack the affairs of the state. Zaidi (2005) rightly points out that besides substantive differences in their substance and structure, the three decentralization reforms implemented in Pakistan since 1947, share many similarities, most importantly, in intention. A second common characteristic in each case is that the architects of the local government reforms in the form of decentralization and devolution have been the military regimes. Thirdly, in all the three cases, power was taken through the use of force. According to ICG (2004) “the main rationale for devolution was and remains regime legitimacy and survival”. Cheema et al (2005) also state that the prime motivation for undertaking the recent local government reforms is to legitimize control over the state. And according to Shah and Thompson (2004), the recent decentralization reforms in Pakistan have been undertaken due to fiscal crisis and political maneuvering. They urge that an analysis of the motivations for decentralization in different countries and regions of the world

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reveals that the primary reason for experimenting with decentralization might not always be an appropriate division of powers among different levels of government.

Decentralization is not a novel phenomenon in the political history of Pakistan. Since its independence, the country has experienced three major attempts at decentralization in the form of local governments. General Ayub Khan was the first to experiment with local government reforms by introducing his Basic Democracy (BD) Plan in 1959. In 1979, another attempt was made at reviving local governments under the military regime of General Zia-ul-Haq. And lastly, General Pervez Musharaf, in August 2000 unveiled his government’s local government plan to devolve political, administrative and fiscal powers to the grassroots.

What is interesting about local governments in Pakistan is that they have always been overwhelmingly supported by the military regimes. Democratic governments, on the contrary, have always undermined this tier of government. Where as the three local government reforms are different in their substance and structure, they do share some similarities. For instance, it is evident that in all the three cases, the reforms have been undertaken by military regimes. Similarly, the reformer in each case assumed power by overthrowing a representative government through the use of force. It is, however, worth pointing out that the motivation described by the reformers for carrying out the reforms was and has been to empower the people at the grassroots.

The previous two attempts at decentralization in Pakistan (during Ayub and Zia’s eras) have relatively a poor track record in terms of real devolution of powers to the grassroots. Rather, local governments in the past have mainly been exploited for legitimizing control over the state. The concept of local governments in Pakistan, is thus closely associated with the notion of future political survival. Pakistan’s military government has for the third time unveiled the devolution plan (2000) shortly after the October 1999 coup with an explicit determination to increase access of marginalized groups in society to politics, to enhance public participation in decision making as well as in development works, to enhance accountability of government functionaries as well as elected members and to improve the delivery of social
services. However, since the devolution plan (2000) exhibits similarities with the previous two local government reforms as for its context is concerned, there are rumors that history might repeat itself. At the same time a sense of optimism also exists. For both the pessimists and the optimists it is too early to count the chickens before they are hatched, as the atmosphere is still foggy and the process itself is still infant. The prevailing circumstances thus demands for an inclusive study of the recent devolution process in Pakistan in order to enrich our understanding of whether the same old wine has merely been presented in a new bottle or actions are speaking louder than words this time.

1.4 Objectives of the study

The objectives of this study included:

Objective one
To explore the perceptions of both the local people as well as the elected representatives on the recent devolution process in Pakistan.

Research questions

a) How and to what extent respondents in the study area are familiar with the concept decentralization?
b) What was the motivation for undertaking the recent devolution process?
c) Is the current local government system popular among the citizens (both ordinary people and elected representatives)? If yes, why and if not, why not?
d) In what respects does the current local government system differ from or is similar to the previous local government systems?
e) What are the merits and demerits of the newly introduced electoral reforms?
f) Whether the local government elections were contested on party or non-party basis?
g) Whether the elections were transparent?
h) What was the level of participation of people (both females and males) in the election process?
i) What were the major drawbacks in the local government election process?
j) Has there been a real transfer of powers to the lower levels? If yes, to what extent and if not, why not?
k) Has there been any change in powers and control over resources of both politicians (MNA’s and MPA’s) and the civil bureaucracy? What is their response to the recent devolution process?

Objective two
To assess the impacts of the recent devolution process on public participation (both in politics as well as service delivery), accountability and transparency and the delivery of services in the study area.

Research questions
a) What are the impacts of the recent devolution process on citizen’s democratic participation in the study area?
b) How has the recent devolution process enhanced representation of citizens (both women and men) in politics?
c) How frequent do the elected representatives visit people in their constituencies for identification of problems?
d) What is the level of awareness of elected representatives about local problems?
e) What mechanisms are in place for involving ordinary people in the delivery of services?
f) What are the impacts of the recent devolution process on citizen’s participation in the delivery of services?
g) What formal and informal mechanisms are in place for enhancing accountability and transparency?
h) What is the level of effectiveness of these mechanisms?
i) What are the impacts of the recent devolution process on the delivery of services in the study area?
j) What kinds of community development projects have been undertaken in the study area?
k) What are the local sources of revenue generation in the study area?
l) What is the local revenue performance of the union administrations in the study area?


**Objective three**

To assess the impacts of the devolution process on the delivery of agricultural extension services in the study area.

**Research questions**

a) What changes have been introduced in the agricultural extension after decentralization?

b) What could be the possible impacts of these changes on the agricultural extension?

c) Has there been any increase in the number of agricultural staff after the decentralization reforms?

d) Has there been any increase in the number of agricultural development projects/extension programmes in the study area?

e) Has there been any increase in the number of visits made by extension staff after decentralization?

f) Has there been any improvement in the training facilities for the agricultural staff as well as farmers in the study area?

g) What is the level of coordination between the extension staff and the elected representatives?

h) What are the impacts of the decentralized agricultural extension services on the overall production in the study area?

**1.5 Outline of thesis**

This thesis is comprised of six chapters. Chapter first encompasses information on the background, rationale and objectives of the study. Chapter second begins with a brief description of the study area followed by information on how sampling and data collection were carried out for the proposed study. Since this study was confined to the lowest tier of the local government system i.e. the union council, reasons for choosing this tier of government as a unit of enquiry has also been explained in this chapter. Furthermore, the second chapter also includes information on the problems encountered in the field as well as the limitations of this study.
Chapter three reviews relevant literature on decentralization. In this chapter, the term ‘decentralization’ and its different forms have been defined. This is followed by a discussion of the various factors, which have motivated a number of countries across the globe to experiment with one or another type of decentralization. It then identifies the conditions, which are deemed necessary for decentralization to be successful. Based on literature review, the chapter also discusses the possible impacts of decentralization on governance and society and the various problems that the process might encounter.

Chapter four is mainly intended to give an overview of the history of decentralization in Pakistan. This chapter is divided into sections. Section I begins with a brief introduction of the country which includes information on its; situation, number of provinces, total area, population size, literacy rate, agriculture and political and administrative structure. Section II provides information on the evolution and existence of local governments in the Indian Subcontinent both during the pre and post-independence periods. Especially the local government reforms undertaken in Pakistan during the post-independence periods are discussed in detail.

Chapter five focuses on the analysis and discussion of the main findings of the study. This chapter has been divided into three sections. Section I analyzes the perceptions of respondents (both ordinary people and the elected representatives) on the recent devolution process. Section II discusses the impacts of the recent devolution process on participation, accountability and transparency and the delivery of services. Section III analyzes the impacts of the devolution process on the agricultural extension services. Conclusion of the study is presented in chapter six.
CHAPTER TWO

METHODOLOGY

2.1 Introduction
This chapter begins with a brief description of the study area. The description provides information on the situation of the district, its geography, total area, population size, agriculture, the total number of tehsils in the district, the total number of union councils with in the respective tehsils of the district and the composition of the district assembly. It also emphasizes on the how population in the study area was sampled and data collection carried out for the study. Since this study was mainly confined to the lowest tier of the local government system i.e. union council, the reasons for choosing this tier of local government as a unit of inquiry have been mentioned. I have also mentioned various problems, which I had encountered during my fieldwork. There was also a need to explain some terms used in the first two chapters for avoiding confusion in the forthcoming chapters and as such the terms have been explained. In the end I have pointed out some of the limitations of this study.

2.2 Description of the study area
District Mardan is one of the most popular districts of the North West Frontier Province (N.W.F.P). The district was named as Mardan in the honour of Pir Mardan Shah, a prominent religious figures of his time. Until 1937, district Mardan was a part of the Peshawar district. However, it became an independent district in 1937. “The district lies from 34 degree 05 to 34 degree 32 north latitudes and 71 degrees 48 to 72 degree 25 east longitudes”. It shares its boundaries with district Buner and Malakand division on the north, district Swabi on the east, district Noshehra on the south and district charsada and Malakand protected areas on the west². The total area of the district is 1632 sq. km., which is 2.19 percent of the total area of the province standing 15 with respect to total area. Population density is 895 per sq. km (District Census Report 1998).

² http://www.yespakistan.com/hdf/Mardan/Mardan.asp
The district may be divided into two parts. The North-Eastern part of the district consists of hilly areas while the South-Western part mostly consists of plain area. Pajja or Sakra is the highest point in the hilly areas of the North-Eastern part, which is 2056 meters high while Garo or Pato is the lowest point, which is 1816 meters high. The Southwestern half of the district is the most fertile plain area in the district. Important streams include Kalpani, Baghiari Khawar, Maqam Khawar and Naranji Khawar. The streams flow from North to South and drain into Kabul River³.

The district is known for its fertile agricultural land. The total reported area is 162085 hectares. Of the total reported area, 112790 hectares is under cultivation while 49295 hectares is un-cultivated area. The major crops grown are wheat, sugarcane, tobacco, maize, rice, rapeseed and mustard. The land of the district is especially suitable for the cultivation of sugarcane and tobacco and is thus called as the land of sugarcane and tobacco. Major fruits include orange, plum, peach, apricot, pear, rare mango and apple. Major source of irrigation are canals. Other sources of irrigation include tube-wells and lift irrigation⁴. The upper and the lower Swat canals provide water for canal irrigation in the entire district⁵. Mesquite, ber, acacia and jand are among the most common trees found in the district. The most common shrubs include Spanda, Akk, red-poppy, Spera, Camelthorn and Paighambri-gul and Drab grass. Much of the flora found on the irrigated tracts is exotic (District Census Report 1998).

³ [http://www.yespakistan.com/hdf/Mardan/Mardan.asp](http://www.yespakistan.com/hdf/Mardan/Mardan.asp)
⁴ Director Agriculture Statistics, NWFP, Peshawar.
⁵ [http://www.yespakistan.com/hdf/Mardan/Mardan.asp](http://www.yespakistan.com/hdf/Mardan/Mardan.asp)
2.3 Population

The total population of the district is 1460100, which is 8.23 percent of the total population of the province and is ranked as the second most populous districts in the province. In 1981, the population was 881465. The percent change in population is 66 since 1981 with a population growth rate of 3.01 percent (District Census Report 1998). Only 20.2 percent of the total population lives in urban areas whereas 79.8 percent lives in rural areas. Big urban areas include Mardan Municipal Committee, Takht Bhai Municipal Committee and Mardan Cantonment with respective populations of 239, 49 and 7 thousands.

Until 1988, Mardan had the status of a district comprising two tehsils i.e. Mardan and Swabi. In 1988, it got the status of an administrative division. As a result tehsil Swabi got the status of district. Currently, district Mardan has two tehsils i.e. tehsil Mardan and tehsil Takht Bhai. The total number of union councils in the district is 74. Out of 74 unions, 56 constitute part

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6 http://www.yespakistan.com/hdf/Mardan/Mardan.asp
of the Mardan tehsil whereas the rest (18 unions) constitute part of the Takht Bhai tehsil. The District Council/Assembly consists of 106 members. Table 2.1 illustrates the composition of the district council of Mardan district.

Table 2.1 Composition of Mardan District Council/Assembly

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Tehsils</th>
<th>Membership</th>
<th>Reserved Seats</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Union Nazims</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Union Naib Nazims</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Peasants &amp; Workers</td>
<td>Minorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mardan</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Takht Bhai</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


2.4 Sampling

The total number of union councils in tehsil Takht Bhai is 18. A Union Administration (UA) has 21 seats to be filled against different categories. Table-2.2 illustrates the composition of UA.

Table 2.2 Composition of the Union Administration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Seats Reserved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Male General Councilors</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Women General Councilors</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Male Labor/Peasant Councilors</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Women Labor/Peasant Councilors</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Minority Councilors</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Union Nazim (Council Head)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Union Naib Nazim (Deputy Head)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Out of 18 union councils, 7 were randomly selected for data collection. They included Shergarh, Makori, Lundkhwar, Hathian, Takkar, Pat Baba and Mian Issa. Depending on the
type of information needed for the proposed study, population in the seven union councils was divided into four different strata. The sampling frame thus included: the elected representatives, the local people, the agricultural extension staff and the farmers. The total number of elected representatives in the selected union councils was 147. Of the total number of elected representatives in the selected union councils, 35 were randomly selected for interview purposes. An equal number of elected representatives were interviewed from each council i.e. five respondents per union council. Of the total number of elected representatives interviewed at the union level, six were female councilors.

Even though, this study mainly focused on the 3rd tier of local government i.e. the union council as a unit of inquiry, information was also collected from one woman councilor at the tehsil level, one Worker/Peasant and the naib zila nazim at the district levels. Including the later three, the total number of elected representatives interviewed was thus 38. Similarly, the total number of agricultural extension staff (field assistance) in the selected union councils was 21 of which 14 were randomly selected for data collection. In addition to this, the District Agricultural Officer (DAO) and two other agricultural extension officers were also interviewed. So the total number of extension staff interviewed was 17. Similarly, an equal number (28) of both the local people as well as farmers were interviewed for data collection purposes. The sample size for all the four categories of respondents was thus 111. Table-2.3 illustrates the number of respondents of each category in the seven union councils.
Table 2.3 Number of respondents of each category randomly selected for data collection within each union council

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Respondent’s Categories</th>
<th>Shergarh</th>
<th>Makori</th>
<th>Lund-Khwar</th>
<th>Hathian</th>
<th>Takkar</th>
<th>Pat-Baba</th>
<th>Mian-Issa</th>
<th>Others</th>
<th>Total for each Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Elected Representatives (Males)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Elected Representatives (Females)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Local People</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>28</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Agri. Extension Staff</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Farmers</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>28</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total for all categories</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The elected representatives and the local people were merged into one group (group one) followed by merging the agricultural extension staff and the farmers into another group (group two)[figure 2.2]. Four separate structured interview guides were designed for each category of respondents in each group. The interview guides designed for the two categories of respondents in the same group in both cases had more or less the same set of questions. The purpose was to compare and contrast the information (regarding the same issues) provided by one category of respondents in a group with the information provided by the second category of respondents in the same group in both the cases. The interview guides had both open-ended as well as closed questions depending on the information required for the proposed research. The interview schedules were written in English. However, in the field, the questions were being asked in the native language i.e. Pushto. Response was, however, recorded in Urdu (the National Language of the country). This is because I write Urdu more fluently than my mother tongue (Pushto).
Figure 2.2 Categories of respondents selected for data collection

2.5 Data collection

A single union council comprised 4-5 villages. Prior to pursuing the collection of data, it was important to get the necessary information about respondents in the study area. It was especially important in the case of elected representatives and the agricultural extension staff. For this purpose, I personally carried out a number of visits to both the relevant extension departments and the local union administration offices in the study area. Consequently, I had been able to gather information on the names, designations, village names and union councils of both the elected representatives as well as the agricultural extension staff. The information was complete in many respects except that telephone numbers of majority of respondents were missing. The next step was to get prepared for conducting the interviews.

Data collection was carried out during December 2004 and January 2005, months of the year with comparatively shorter day lengths. As mentioned earlier, the four categories of respondents were placed into two groups; group one consisting of elected representatives and the local people and group two consisting of agricultural extension staff and farmers. Each of the two groups as well as respondents’ categories with in each group were tackled at a time for data collection purposes. In group one elected representatives were the first to be interviewed followed by local people. Similarly, in group two, first the agricultural extension staff were interviewed followed by interviewing the farmers. A structured form of interview was used during data collection. The purpose was to ask each respondent within the same category the same set of questions so as to increase the standardization of both the asking of
questions and the recording of answers. Bryman (2004), urges that variations in the ways questions are asked sometimes could be a potential source of error.

Prior to conducting an interview, the interviewees were first contacted through telephone to ask for their willingness and allocation of time for the interview. After showing willingness, the next step was to fix the time and location for the interview. Before conducting an interview, it was important to introduce myself in the first instance followed by a brief description of the proposed research e.g. what the research is about? What kind of information is required? Why the respondent has been selected for the interview? Such formalities are sometimes very important to be carried out during data collection in order to get accurate information or otherwise, it is most probable that respondents might feel hesitant to express their views more openly especially on sensitive issues.

2.6 Union council as a unit of inquiry

According to the LGP (2000), local governments were formed at three levels: district, tehsil and union. Of the three tiers of local government, union council remains the basic and most important tier because of a number of reasons. For example, all its members are directly elected by the people and as such this tier is relatively closer to the people. Its members (the councilors) constitute the electoral college for the election of the nazims and naib nazims of both the tehsil and district councils. Similarly, the union nazims are members of the district councils whereas the naib union nazims are members of the tehsil council. In this way, a union council is integrated into the higher tiers (tehsil and district) of government. Since the devolution plan (2000) was aimed at transferring both powers and resources to the grassroots, it seems genuine to choose a union council as a unit of inquiry for the proposed study in order to assess the devolution’s impacts on different variables (like powers and responsibilities, participation, accountability and transparency and service provision) at the lowest level.

2.7 Problems encountered in the field:

Data collection is a challenging job. It is not unusual to encounter difficulties while doing a survey research. Problems confronted are usually unique in nature depending on the context
in which the data collection is being carried out. Problems encountered during my fieldwork are worth mentioning here as it might help the readers and the prospective researchers to get an understanding of the issues, which usually pose difficulties in the field.

It was earlier mentioned that information obtained from the union administrations was rich in many respects e.g. it contained information on the names, designations and locations of the elected representatives. It was, however, missing telephone numbers of majority of the prospective respondents. So during my first visit for the collection of data from both the elected representatives and agricultural extension staff, I had some uncomfortable experiences. For example, I had been able to be in the right place but I could not meet the respective respondent as he was out of home for some business according to his family members. It proved to be a turning point. I started to think that prior to making any visit, I should have had called the concerned person to seek his willingness for the interview and to allocate time for it. What seemed to be more important now was to get the telephone numbers of the prospective interviewees. I obtained the telephone numbers of majority of the elected representatives from their fellow councilors in the first instance. This helped in the collection of data in a smooth manner.

This study was conducted at a time when first local governments had only 4-5 months left in the end of their tenure. On several occasions while interviewing the nazims and naib nazims of the union councils, I expressed an intense desire to personally participate in their monthly meetings. But it was all in vein, as in most of the cases, no formal meetings of the councils had been summoned for the last 3-4 months.

Most of the women councilors showed reluctance and unwillingness for the interview because of the prevailing social norms, which prohibit women to talk to a stranger in person. Apparently it seemed as if I might not get the opportunity to have a face-to-face interview with a women councilor. However, since it was very important to collect information from the female councilors, I did not lose hope and continued my efforts to be able to conduct interviews of at least some of the female councilors. I simply changed my tactics i.e. instead of trying to make a direct contact with the female councilors, I requested my brother in law,
Abd-u-Allah, the union naib nazim of union council Makori to facilitate me in conducting interviews of some women councilors in the selected union councils. Consequently, I had been able to have face-to-face interview with six women at the union level and one at the tehsil level.

2.8 Explanation of the terms ‘elected representatives’ and ‘local people’

The terms ‘elected representatives’ and ‘local people’ used in this chapter will most frequently be used in the forthcoming chapters especially in the chapter on results and discussion. Question might arise on why I have preferred to use the term elected representatives instead of using others terms, for example, councilors, nazims, naib nazims etc. The same might happen while using the term local people. In order to avoid this confusion, it is important to state my reasons for using these two terms.

From table 2.2, it is evident that at the union level elected members have been divided into different categories (male/women general councilors, male/women workers/peasants, minorities and both nazim and naib nazim) and for each category a specific number of seats have been reserved. Even though, election for all the categories was held on the same date, election for each category, however, was contested separately from each other. Data for the current study was collected from all categories of the elected members of the union councils. All of them actually constitute one category of respondents of group one (see figure 2.2). Since this study was mainly interested in knowing the views of these different categories of councilors as one major category of respondents and comparing it with that of an other category (local people) with in the same group (group one), I have, therefore, preferred to use the general term ‘elected representatives’ rather than referring to any individual category of the elected members. And perhaps it seems genuine to call them elected representatives since being elected by the people to represent them. So in the chapters to follow, wherever, I use the term elected representatives, it will stand for all categories of the councilors i.e. male/women general councilors, male/women workers/peasants and both nazims and naib nazims at the union, tehsil and district levels.
Local people constitute the second category of respondents in group one. I have preferred to use the term local people instead of using other alternative words like citizens, ordinary people because respondents in this category belonged to the electorate of their respective elected representatives. To make it very simple, they belonged to the union councils selected for the study.

2.9 Limitations of the study

The devolution plan (2000) was aimed at empowering people at the grassroots. People include both women and men. Regardless of the fact that the number of female elected representatives interviewed is very small (only 18.42% of the total number of elected representatives), it might be stated that women do have a certain level of representation among this category of respondents i.e. elected representatives. The information obtained from female elected representatives will thus enrich our understanding of the impacts of devolution on women’s participation in politics and other related issues. However, contrary to this, among the local people, agricultural extension staff and the farmers, 100% of the respondents are males. Especially, in the absence of female respondents among the local people, it might not be possible to explore the views of female population (which is almost 50% of the total population of the country) on the impacts of the recent devolution process in Pakistan or to apply the results of this study to the whole population in general.
CHAPTER THREE
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

3.1 Introduction
This chapter reviews literature on decentralization. Since ‘decentralization’ has become a buzzword and a worldwide trend, it is imperative to get a thorough understanding of the term and as such the chapter begins with defining the term decentralization and its different types. The notion that decentralization has become a worldwide trend naturally gives rise to an important question i.e. why so many countries in the world have already undertaken decentralization reforms or are intending to experiment with one or another form of decentralization? An attempt has been made to answer the question by discussing the motivations that trigger the process. The possible outcomes of the process have been discussed by elaborating on its impacts on governance, society and the delivery of services. The chapter also discusses the conditions essential for successful decentralization as well as the problems that the process might encounter.

3.2 What is decentralization?
Decentralization is a phenomenon that has gained enormous popularity over the last few decades. Since 1980s, many developing and transitional (Eastern and Central European) countries have been engaged in decentralization of one kind or another (Manor 1990). There is no common definition or understanding of decentralization. It can have different meanings to different people depending on the context in which the term “decentralization” is being used. It may be defined in a number of ways. However, definitions differ from each other depending on the type and form of decentralization (Rondinelli 2002; Work 2002). Rondinelli (1981a), defines decentralization as “the transfer of responsibility for planning, management and resource raising and allocation from the central government and its agencies to: (a) the field units of central government ministries or agencies, (b) subordinate units or levels of government, (c) semiautonomous public authorities or corporations, (d) area wide, regional or functional authorities, or (e) nongovernmental private or voluntary organizations”.

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3.3 Types of Decentralization

Rondinelli (1981a) categorizes decentralization into four major types i.e. deconcentration, delegation, devolution and privatization. According to Manor (2000), decentralization has three major types. All the types can occur simultaneously or at different times. Sometimes various combinations of these types are being used. All the different types of decentralization share one common characteristic i.e. decentralization is not a situation rather it is a development and a process of change from one institutional system to another (Basta 1999 cited in Steimann 2004).

3.3.1 Deconcentration or administrative decentralization

According to Rondinelli (1981a), deconcentration or administrative decentralization involves the transfer of specific administrative responsibilities to lower levels within the central government ministries and agencies. Manor (1997) describes it as the dispersal of agents of higher levels of government into lower-level arenas and emphasizes that deconcentration and democratization should occur simultaneously. When deconcentration occurs in isolation, agents of the higher levels of government will remain accountable only to the authorities at the higher level. As a result there will be no change in the influence of organized interests at the lower level. Without democratization, deconcentration further strengthens the central power. Deconcentration is in practice mostly in less developed countries. According to Mawhood (1993) the various factors responsible for excluding people from the affairs of the government in less developed countries include higher levels of illiteracy, livelihood patterns and poor communication systems. Under such circumstances the deconcentrated field offices enjoy the power to take all kinds of decisions. They are not subject to local pressures. Despite entering into voluntary consultations with the local notables, central government’s demands are always prioritized.

3.3.2 Fiscal decentralization

The transfer of fiscal resources and revenue generating resources to the lower levels in the system is called fiscal decentralization. It empowers the lower levels to have influence over budgets and financial decisions. It must also be followed simultaneously by democratization or other wise it may not increase the influence of organized interests at the lower levels.
(Manor 1997). Fiscal decentralization is perceived to be essential for all kinds of decentralization. For instance, if the lower levels in a system receives only decision-making powers but do not receive any powers to have control over budgets and financial resources at the same time, all the decisions regarding different activities (e.g. development works etc) would be in vein. At the same time, a mere transfer of funds without decentralizing the decision power may also give rise to a number of problems. For example, since it will not be clearly defined who has authority over the use of funds, the risk of misusing the funds might exist (SDC 2001).

### 3.3.3 Devolution or democratic decentralization

Devolution or democratic decentralization is the transfer of powers and resources from the center to authorities at the lower levels which are representatives of as well as accountable to the local populations (Manor 1999; Crook and Manor 1998; Agrawal and Ribot 1999 cited in Ribot 2001). The authorities at the lower levels are largely or wholly independent of the central government and democratic in some way and to some degree (Manor 1997). The local units of government are autonomous and independent bodies, have a legal status and are separate or distinct from the central government. Central government has only indirect, supervisory control over such units. These units normally exist in the form of local governments (Rondinelli 1981a). Democratic decentralization can take different forms. Candidates are elected by secret ballots. Election can be both direct and indirect. In case of direct elections, candidates are elected by the people. In case of indirect elections, the directly elected representatives elect members at the higher levels. The persons being elected either directly or indirectly become members or heads of their respective councils as the case may be (Manor 1997).

### 3.3.4 Delegation

Delegation is the transfer of public functions to the lower levels of government, public corporations or any other authorities outside of the regular political-administrative structure to implement programs on behalf of a government agency (Alex et al. 2003; Ostrom et al. 1993 cited in Ribot 2001). Even though the agents possess broad discretion to carry out the
specified devolved functions and duties, it is the central government that remains as the sovereign authority (Rodinelli 1981a).

3.3.5 Privatization

Privatization occurs when responsibility for public functions are being transferred either to voluntary organizations or private enterprises (Agrawal and Ostrom 1999).

3.4 Motivations for decentralization

Since a great number of regimes including both the solvent and the insolvent; autocracies and democracies and governments of the left, right and center have experimented with some form of decentralization, it is important to find out what factors have motivated countries across the world to undertake one or another type of decentralization (Manor 1997). The causes of decentralization differ from one place to another. Decentralization is not the result of a single cause in all countries rather it is the result of a combination of causes. Similarly, the combination of causes resulting in decentralization also differs from country to country (Huntington 1992 cited in Manor 1997). Similarly, Manor (1997) states that motivations for decentralization are diverse.

Blair (1998), has grouped the reasons for decentralization into two categories: *Traditional central government reasons* for decentralizing and *democratic reasons* for decentralizing. The traditional central government reasons for decentralizing include decentralization reforms undertaken as adapting policy, for supporting regimes, for avoiding fragmentation and for transferring responsibility. In cases where the central governments are not adequately able to plan for important local variations, decentralization is needed as an *adapting policy* for effective local planning and implementation. Sometimes decentralization efforts are aimed at *supporting regimes*. In such cases national leaders usually undertake decentralization reforms for building up local support base. Decentralization in such cases can hardly contribute to development and democracy. Countries that are ethnically, linguistically and religiously diverse usually carry out decentralization reforms in order to *avoid fragmentation*. Another traditional reason for experimenting with decentralization is to transfer *responsibility for the provision of services* to the lower levels. Education and health
care are the most common examples of services responsibility for which has been devolved to the local levels in many countries.

Democratic reasons for decentralization according to Blair (1998) include: to empower local citizens to influence the formulation and implementation of policies affecting them i.e. their ability to participate in the decision-making processes. To empower the elected members in the governance structures but at the same time making them accountable to both the local people as well as to the authorities at the higher levels. To improve the provision of local public services by managing and delivering such services at the local levels.

Shah and Thompson (2004), however, urge that the prime motivation for decentralization may not necessarily be the appropriate division of powers among different levels of government. In most of the cases the decision regarding whether to decentralize or not is based on political and economic reasons. Table 3.1 summarizes the motivations for decentralization in different countries and regions of the world.
Table 3.1 Motivations for Decentralization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Countries/Regions</th>
<th>Motivation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Central and Eastern Europe, Russia</td>
<td>Political and economic transformation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosnia-Herzegovina, Ethiopia, Yugoslavia, Nigeria, Sri Lanka, South Africa, Philippines</td>
<td>Political crisis due to ethnic conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia, Madagascar, Mali, Senegal, Uganda, Mexico, Philippines</td>
<td>Political crisis due to regional conflicts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Colombia, India, Pakistan, Philippines</td>
<td>Enhancing participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Poland</td>
<td>Interest in EU Accession</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peru, Pakistan</td>
<td>Political maneuvering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia, Indonesia, Pakistan</td>
<td>Fiscal crisis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chile, Uganda, Cote D’ Ivoire</td>
<td>Improving service delivery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China, Turkey, European Union</td>
<td>To centralize</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern and Central Europe, Russia</td>
<td>Shifting deficits downwards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>Shifting responsibility for unpopular adjustment programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America</td>
<td>Prevent return to autocracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>Preservation of Communist rule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most countries</td>
<td>Globalization and information revolution</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


3.5 Conditions for success

Manor (1997) identifies four things, which he considers as crucial conditions for successful decentralization. All the four must take place simultaneously. If any of these is missing, decentralization may not produce the expected benefits. The four crucial conditions that must be met are:

3.5.1 Adequate powers

The elected bodies at the lower levels must be devolved sufficient powers, which should enable them to have substantial influence with in the political system as well as over significant development activities (Manor 1997). The devolution of adequate powers to the lower levels, however, demands political will. Any effort at decentralization that lacks the required political will might encounter failures as Blair (1998) has rightly
pointed out that a major reason for the failure of decentralization efforts has been the central governments’ unwillingness to devolve enough powers to the local government in order to enable them to function properly. Similarly, SDC (2001) points out that for successful decentralization, it is important that the devolution of power takes place as a result of political willingness. However, in certain cases despite the devolution of power, the elected bodies at the lower levels are not guaranteed any constitutional protection. In such cases, as pointed out by Kalin (1999), local governments may not function properly because they are confronted with the threat to be dissolved by higher levels of government as and when they want.

3.5.2 Sufficient financial resources
As discussed earlier, fiscal decentralization is crucial for all forms of decentralization. According to Basta (1999) a successful decentralization not only involve the devolution of powers and the assigning of tasks to the decentralized authorities but demands for the transfer of sufficient financial resources in order to accomplish those tasks. According to Ford (1999), the legal and regulatory framework should enable local governments to borrow money from the higher levels of government.

3.5.3 Reliable accountability mechanisms
According to Manor (1997), a decentralized system must possess reliable accountability mechanisms. Such mechanisms should ensure both the accountability of the elected representative to the citizens and the accountability of the bureaucrats to the elected representatives.

3.6 Impacts on governance
3.6.1 Responsiveness
Since democratic decentralization involves the transfer of powers and resources to the elected bodies at both the intermediate and local levels, it thus enhances the speed as well as the quantity and quality of responses from government institutions. In case there is pressure from below regarding problems, the elected bodies at the lower levels having both power and resources at their disposal respond quickly to the problems without waiting for approval from governments at the higher levels. Similarly, since the elected bodies at the lower levels are
more interested in undertaking small-scale projects, it thus increases the quantity of outputs from government. Democratic decentralization provides people at the grassroots the opportunity to have influence over the decisions of the elected bodies. By taking into account the local preferences, there is an improvement in the quality of responses (Manor 1997). Faguet (2004), in his study on decentralization in Bolivia found that there has been an increase in public investment in education, water and sanitation, water management, agriculture and urban development after the 1994 decentralization reform. Increase in investment in these sectors took place especially in regions where there was greater demand for these services. For example, 250 smallest and poorest municipalities invested the devolved public funds in projects that were of higher priority to them. Similarly, according to Blair (1998) since a democratically decentralized government is genuinely accountable to its citizens, it thus pays considerable attention to their wants and needs. According to Rondinelli et al. (1983), decentralization reduces the burden of responsibilities of government departments. By doing so, it makes administrators more responsive to the needs of their clientele and thus increases the responsiveness of government to the public as well as improves both the quantity and quality of services it provides.

3.6.2 Information flow
Increasing information flow between the government and the citizens is another major gain from decentralization. The elected representatives at the intermediate or the local levels usually live near or within their constituencies. Ordinary people generally believe that they have the power to influence government actions. They use them as a medium for passing information to the government about their problems and preferences (Manor 1997). Crook and Manor (1994 cited in Manor 1997) found that in the Indian state of Karnataka, the district level bureaucrats observed a ten fold increase in the information flow after decentralization. Information flow also takes place from government to citizens. Information flow in this case is comparatively low. The elected representative in this case also serves as a medium for the flow of information from the bureaucracy and elected bodies to the people at the grass roots (Manor 1995 cited in Manor 1997).
3.6.3 Transparency
Another major promise of democratic decentralization is to enhance transparency. Since the elected members of the decentralized bodies usually live within the same constituencies, which they represent, it is relatively easier for the local people to monitor them. Similarly, the sharing of information by elected representatives with the community on their doings and decisions not only helps them to cultivate popular support but also enhances transparency (Crook and Manor 1994).

3.6.4 Accountability
Accountability means answerability i.e. being accountable means being responsible to answer questions regarding decisions and actions (Schedler 1999 cited in Brinkerhoff 2001). According to Blair (1998), accountability is crucial for the success of democratic governance at the local as well as national level. Democratic decentralization must entail mechanisms for making public servants accountable to elected representatives and the later accountable to the public. A number of mechanisms can help ensure accountability. For effective bureaucratic accountability to the elected representatives, full authority to have control over civil servants must be transferred to local elected bodies. Similarly, effective elected representatives’ accountability to the public can be achieved through free, fair and regularly scheduled elections. Manor (1997) urges that since elected representatives get into a position of power through public support, they must show efficiency and responsiveness. Failing to do so, voters might oust them whenever they get such an opportunity. Once this happens to few, others in future will try to understand the meaning of accountability and will try to improve their conduct. According to Agrawal and Ribot (2000), the devolution of power to elected bodies which are not accountable to citizens, or which are accountable only to themselves or to authorities at higher levels of government can make decentralization ineffective in achieving its stated objectives. Both of them consider this downward accountability as the primary dimension of decentralization and urges that it is essential for enhancing participation of the local population as well as increasing the responsiveness of those in power.
3.7 Impacts on Society

3.7.1 Participation

Ribot (1998) defines political decentralization as the devolution of central state assets and powers to community and representative local governments and considers it as an important means of community participation. Participation according to Ribot, means power sharing in decision-making. The term ‘community’ is used when referring to a village or the population under the smallest unit of local government. Community participation thus refers to the collective control of public resources and decisions.

Decentralization enhances democratic participation by encouraging more people to get involved in the political processes (Blair 1998). Participation and accountability are the key components required for making local governance more democratic. The inclusion of these two themes makes DLG distinct from others forms of decentralization. Through participation, DLG enhances citizen’s interest and involvement in political processes. Participation enables citizens to influence decisions affecting them. It has been observed that the turn out in local elections is comparatively higher than the national elections after the introduction of DLG. Political participation, however, in addition to voting also encompasses campaigning, demonstrating, lobbying decision-makers and so on (Blair 2000). According to Manor (1997), democratic decentralization enhances participation in a number of ways: participation in the election campaigns and voting, through increased contacts between the elected representatives and the bureaucrats, through attending official and unofficial meetings and through protests and demonstrations. Even though, the poorer and the low status groups are subject to gain comparatively fewer benefits in such cases, the over all impact of decentralization on participation, however, is significant. Increased participation, however, can pose threats especially when expectations and demands are high and the decentralized bodies either tend to distribute benefits mainly among elites or are incapable to function properly. This situation can lead to widespread anger. Efforts by the higher-level authorities to destabilize the decentralized bodies can produce the same results.

However, when it comes to promoting community participation in development, decentralization has little promise. It does so, because the decentralized authorities are often
supralocal in character. Even when they are located at the local level, they encompass areas with numerous villages and towns. It is difficult for such bodies to mobilize majority of the population of a single village for development purposes. Similarly, another reason for the low participation in development is the fact that people are often cynical about government initiatives (Manor 1997). A number of mechanisms are used for enhancing participation in development works or the delivery of services, which will be described in the discussion to follow.

3.7.2 Representation
Since democratic decentralization brings government closer to the people, it thus enhances citizens’ participation in politics. People belonging to different groups in society, for example, women, minorities, small businessmen, artisans, parents of school children, marginal farmers and urban poor, either themselves stand for positions at the local bodies or support others from among themselves to become members of the local bodies to whom they have comparatively greater access. In this way, they get representation in the local bodies (Blair 1998). According to Manor (1997), the creation of elected bodies at the intermediate and local level increases the number of positions of power for people. For instance in 1987, prior to decentralization, the number of elected posts in the Indian state of Karnataka was 224. However, after decentralization the number of elected posts exceeded 50000.

3.7.3 Empowerment
As mentioned earlier, democratic decentralization brings government closer to the people and thus enhances citizens’ participation in politics. People from all walks of life, for example, women, minorities, small businessmen, artisans, parents of school children, marginal farmers and urban poor either become members of the local bodies or have great access to the those being elected. In this way, they get representation, which is a key element in empowerment. Empowerment enables them to influence public policy decisions that affect them. Public policy decisions having public input tend to serve the wider public by providing more appropriate infrastructure, better living conditions and enhanced economic growth. Such improvements in turn can reduce poverty and enhance equity among different groups in society (Blair 1998).
3.8 Impacts on service delivery

An implicit motivation for undertaking decentralization reforms is to improve the delivery of services. Two reasons give rise to such motivation. First, the central government inability to provide basic services such as health, education, water and sanitation and secondly the fact that these services which are consumed locally were historically provided locally. It is generally conceived that problems associated with the delivery of services are due to the centralization of these services (Ahmad et al. 2005). A number of problems are associated with centralized provision of services. Government spending does not often reach the front service providers. Similarly, allocation of resources might not necessarily take into account local preferences (Ahmad et al. 2005). Allocation of resources among different regions might be uneven (Faguet 2001). Central provision of public services might lead to corruption and misuse of funds (Bardhan and Mukherjee 2000). On the other hand, decentralization improves public service provision in at least three ways: by improving the efficiency of resource allocation; by enhancing accountability and reducing corruption in government; and by improving cost recovery (IRIS 1999; Azfar 2002).

3.8.1 Allocative efficiency

Decentralization improves allocative efficiency in at least two ways: by allocating resources according to the demand in each locality and by ensuring that the services delivered match the preferences and circumstances in the jurisdiction (Azfar et al. 2002). Decentralized or sub-national governments are more effective in improving the efficiency of resource allocation than centralized governments because they are better informed about and more responsive to the needs and preferences of local population than central governments (Crote and Braun 2000).

3.8.2 Accountability

For effective delivery of services a strong relationship of accountability must exist among the various actors (citizens, providers and policymakers) in the service delivery chain. Delivery of public services involves two relationships of accountability. First, citizens should hold policy makers or politicians accountable for allocating resources for the required services and secondly, policymakers should in turn hold the service providers accountable for delivering
the services (Ahmad et al. 2005). Decentralization promotes accountability and reduces corruption in government (Ostrom et al. 1993). It does so because decentralization brings government closer to the people, which enable local communities to monitor the local officials and to be aware of the actions of sub-national governments (IRIS 1999; Crote and Braun 2000). Accountability creates competition among the sub-national providers of public goods and services. The fear that inefficiency and irresponsiveness may constrain them from being elected to the office in future makes elected representatives disciplined (IRIS 1999; Manor 1997).

3.8.3 Cost recovery

When services delivered match the preferences of the local population and are demand responsive, people will be willing to pay for them (IRIS 1999). Similarly, transparency is another factor that can help increase the willingness of citizens to pay for delivered services in the form of both taxes and fees (Azfar et al. 2002).

A number of problems are also associated with the decentralized delivery of services as well. The sub-national governments often lack the capacity to exercise responsibility for public services. Similarly, decentralization, sometimes, may not result in the devolution of full responsibility to the lower tiers of government for a specific service. Finally, it might be possible that central government devolve political powers to the lower tiers with a mere intention of political capture with in these lower tiers (Ahmad et al. 2005).

3.9 Mechanisms for participation in service delivery

According to Hirschman (1970) there are a number of mechanisms through which people can participate in service delivery and can express their preferences for public policies. These mechanisms are:

3.9.1 Voice

It includes mechanisms that enable local population to participate in the service delivery through expressing their views about their preferences for different services as well as the problems associated with the delivery of such services. In addition to this, participation
through these mechanisms can take several other forms like making choices; being involved in projects and service management. These mechanisms include:

**a) Elections**

Elections can serve as a means for citizens to express their preferences for local public policy. However, it is important to note that promises made by candidates during their election campaigns might not necessarily be kept. Inman and Rubinfeld (1996 in IRSI 1999), therefore, urge to look for alternate channels to get feedback from citizens.

**b) Surveys**

Surveys is another important tool that local governments can use for identifying the needs and preferences of constituents and for assessing the satisfaction level of citizens about government programmes.

**c) Town meetings/public hearings**

Town meetings and public hearings can also be useful in knowing citizens’ problems and preferences. In public meetings and hearings people usually get the opportunity to provide a feedback on local issues.

**d) Direct community involvement in service delivery**

Citizen can also convey information about their problems and preference through direct participation in service delivery. Direct participation requires citizens to get involved in the design, implementation, operation and maintenance of the projects. Other mechanisms include demonstrations, legal recourse, ombudsman office and local referenda (IRIS 1999).

**3.9.2 Exit**

The second mechanism through which citizens can make their voices heard is ‘exit’ which refers to stop using the service. Citizens usually opt for ‘exit’ when voice mechanisms do not exit altogether or when voice mechanisms do not have any positive impacts on the service delivery. When citizens opt to exit, they usually switch to alternative service providers with in the same jurisdiction or move to another jurisdiction (IRIS 1999).
3.10 Major problems that decentralization might encounter

There is little evidence to show that decentralization efforts undertaken by governments were prompted by pressure from the ordinary people at the grass roots (Manor 1997). Sustainability of such efforts largely depends on support from the grass roots. Since in most of the countries, decentralization has been a top-down affair rather than the result of grassroots pressure from below, it is less likely to be sustainable in the long run. It is especially true in cases where the main motivation for undertaking the reforms was to gain short-term goals (Shah and Thompson 2004).

For decentralization to be effective, devolution of responsibilities must be accompanied by devolution of adequate powers. The transfer of responsibilities without being followed by the transfer of sufficient powers may have negative impacts on service delivery outcomes. According to Blair (1998), a general tendency in most of the countries is to deconcentrate rather than to devolve authority. Because national political leaders feel that devolution of power to the lower levels may deprive them of most of the powers and incentives they currently enjoy. Similarly, Manor (1997) states that such a feeling may create jealousy among power holders at higher levels, which could pose great threats to decentralization. Shah (1998), for example, points towards the political system in Pakistan, which has long been dominated by feudal lords who have always tried to impede effective political participation especially in rural area of all the four provinces. They prefer a centralized system because they know that it can give them effective control. In order to counter both the political and bureaucratic resistance to the devolution of power to the lower levels of government, Blair (1998) suggests that at the authority at the highest level which intends to take decentralization initiatives must possess political will for doing so.

Another common reason for the failure of decentralization schemes is the capture of local governments by elites. The take over of local governments by elites is either due to their influence at the local level or due to support from national elites who in turn get support from them (Blair 1998). Elite capture mostly takes place when civic participation in local government is low. Civic participation is usually low in rural areas characterized by large inequalities in land ownership (e.g. rural Sindh Province of Pakistan) and as such is their
ability to vote with their feet (Shah and Thompson 2004). Another reason for the poor performance of decentralization is associated with local revenue generation. Local governments’ performance to raise local revenues is generally disappointing (Blair 1998).
CHAPTER FOUR

LOCAL GOVERNMENTS IN PAKISTAN

4.1 Introduction

This chapter is organized into two sections. Besides its main objective to give a detailed overview of the various attempts at decentralization in the form of local governments in Pakistan, the chapter also attempts to provide information on some basic facts and figures of the country. The chapter begins with section I, which include a brief description of the country, Pakistan. The description contains information on the situation of the country, its total area and the number of provinces. This is followed by providing information on its population size and literacy rate. Agricultural sector being the backbone of the country will also be discussed in detail in this section. In end of this section, there is a brief description of the political and administrative structure of the country. Section II is about the evolution of local governments in the Indian subcontinent. It discusses the existence of local governments both during the pre and post-independence periods. Special emphasis is made on discussing the local government systems introduced in Pakistan during the post-independence period, which might help the readers in understanding the context and content of the recent local government reforms undertaken by the military regime of General Pervez Musharaf.

SECTION I

4.2 Description of the country: Pakistan

4.2.1 Situation

On the eve of independence on August 14th, 1947, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan had two wings known as the West Pakistan (now Pakistan) and the East Pakistan (now Bangladesh). Partition of the East wing (now Bangladesh) took place in 1971. Pakistan today is a federation of four federating units i.e. the provinces of Punjab, Sindh, North West Frontier Province (NWFP), Balochistan; two federally administered areas (Federally Administered Northern Areas (FANA) and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA); Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK); and the Federal Capital Area (FCA) of Islamabad. It has an area of 796,095 sq. km. It shares its borders with India in the east, with Afghanistan on the north and
north-west, with the Islamic Republic of Iran in the west and in the south with the Arabian Sea. It also shares a border of about 595 km with China.

4.2.2 Population Size and Literacy Rate

Pakistan is the 7th most populous country in the world with an estimated population of 149 million. The current population growth rate is 2.16% per annum i.e. an addition of 3.1 million persons to the total population every year. It is believed that if the increase in population persisted at the same rate, it would reach 217 million by the year 2020. Since its independence in 1947, there has been a 5 times increase in the total population of the country. In 1947, the total population was only 32.5 million, which increased to 33.7 million in 1951 and 85.1 million in 1981 and further to about 149 million in 2003.\(^7\)

In 1998, 67 percent of the total population (90 million) lived in rural areas. Due to rural-urban migration there has been an increase in population in urban areas. In 1947, the urban population was only 5 million (15.4% of the total population). In 1981 and 1998, the urban population reached 23.84 million (28%) and 42.44 million (32.5%) respectively. During 1981 to 1998, the increase in total population was estimated at 55 percent while the urban and rural populations increased by 60 and 40 percent respectively. Distribution of population is uneven over its four provinces, Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and the Federal Capital Islamabad. Punjab is the most populous province comprising an estimated 56 percent of the total population. Balochistan comprising 44 percent of the total land area is the least populous province with an estimated 5 percent of the total population of the country. During the last 25 years there has been an increase in the adult literacy rate from 26.2 percent in 1981 to 51.6 percent in 2003.\(^8\)

4.2.3 Agriculture

The total cultivated area of Pakistan is 22.17 million hectares. Forest area constitutes only 5% of the total land area making it a forest deficit country. Agriculture sector has been and

\(^7\) Economic Survey of Pakistan 2002-2003  

\(^8\) Ibid
continuous to be the single largest sector on which the growth and development of the national economy depends. It employs 48.4 percent of the total labour force and accounts for 24 percent of the GDP. It contributes to growth in a number of ways. For example, it supplies raw materials to industry; provides a market for industrial products and also contributes to the country’s exports earnings. The rural population, which accounts for 67.5 percent of the total population, is directly or indirectly dependent on agriculture for livelihood. The average annual growth rate of the agriculture sector during 1990’s was 4.5 percent. However, wider fluctuations have been observed in the growth during the last few years mainly due to drought and water shortages in the country. The major crops include cotton, rice, sugarcane and wheat. Their contribution to the GDP is 2.9, 1.7, 1.5 and 3.1 percent respectively. The most prominent among other major crops are gram, rapeseed, mustard, maize and tobacco. The minor crops mostly include oilseed crops such as the cottonseed, rapeseed, mustard, sunflower and canola and pulses such as masoor, mung, mash, potato, onion and chilies.

4.2.4 Crop Situation
There are two principal crop seasons in Pakistan i.e. “Kharif” and “Rabi”. Kharif begins in April-June and ends in October-December where as Rabi begins in October-December and ends in April-May. Rice, sugarcane, cotton, maize, bajra and jowar are Kharif crops while wheat, gram, tobacco, rapeseed, barley and mustard are Rabi crops.

4.2.5 Political and Administrative Structure
Pakistan has a federal and a parliamentary form of government. The president is the head of the state and the prime minister as the head of the government. The federal legislature consists of an upper house called Senate and a lower house called the National Assembly. In the Senate all provinces have an equal representation and the provincial assemblies elect its members. The total number of seats in the Senate is 100 of which 20 seats are reserved for every province and 17 seats reserved for women. Members of the Senate are elected for a term of six years. Election, however, are held every three years for 50 percent of the seats. Table 4.1 shows the composition of the upper house i.e. Senate.

9 Economic Survey of Pakistan 2002-2003
Members of the National Assembly are elected directly by the people. The total number of seats in the National Assembly is 342 of which 60 seats are reserved for women and 10 seats for minorities. Members of the National Assembly are elected for a term of five years. Provincial representation in the National Assembly is based on the respective populations of the provinces. Composition of the National Assembly is illustrated in table 4.2.

Table 4.1 Members of the Senate by province

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>General Seats</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Technocrates</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Balochistan</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FATA*</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islamabad</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NWFP**</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punjab</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sind</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>66</strong></td>
<td><strong>17</strong></td>
<td><strong>17</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Federally Administered Tribal Areas
**North West Frontier Province

Table 4.2 Members of the National Assembly by province

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>General Seat</th>
<th>None Muslim</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Balochistan</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FATA</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islamabad</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NWFP</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>43</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punjab</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>183</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sindh</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>75</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>272</strong></td>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
<td><strong>60</strong></td>
<td><strong>342</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SECTION II

4.3 Background of the evolution of local governments
The history of local governments in the Indian Subcontinent dates back to the pre-independence period. Rudimentary local government system existed even before the advent of the British rule in India.

4.4 The pre-independence period
4.4.1 Local governments in the Indian Subcontinent before the British Rule
Before the advent of the British rule in the sub-continent, a rudimentary local government system existed in the form of panchayats in the rural areas of India. A village panchayat consisted of five members and performed administrative, judicial and in some cases developmental functions (Majumdar 1960, Basham 1954 cited in Cheema et al. 2005). The panchayats were not the true representatives of the community. It often represented the founding families, upper castes and big landowners. Panchayats, however, was not the only form of local government existing at that time. Another form of local government, the village headman also existed during the reign of Mughals. The village headman, however, was more a representative of the Mughal Empire rather than that of the village government. The village headman continued to perform the same role even under the British Rule (Siddiqui 1992, Sand 1976 cited in Cheema et al. 2005).

4.4.2 Local governments during the British Rule
During the British Rule, the first local government was set up in 1688 when the East Indian Company established the first municipal corporation in Madras. It was followed by the promulgation of the Conservancy Act in 1842, which resulted in the formation of sanitary committees for garbage disposal. In Punjab and Sindh (both of which currently constitute part of Pakistan) local governments were introduced by the British after their annexation in 1843 and 1849 respectively (Tinker 1968). After the end of the 1957 War of Independence, the East India Company transferred governance of the country to the Crown. Once again

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local governments were formed with the intent to co-opt the native elites. The local governments formed at that time were in a top-down manner which were transferred responsibility for extremely limited functions. Another drawback of these local government was that its members were nominated by the British bureaucracy rather than being elected. District Committees were also set up in every province, which only served as a source of information for the District Magistrate (Tinker 1968).

Other important events related to the local government included the establishment of the Board of Conservancy in Karachi in 1846 and the promulgation of the Municipal Act in 1867 in Lahore and Rawalpindi. Lord Ripon’s Resolution in 1882 also paved the way for electing some of the members of the municipal committees and the establishment of rural local governments. Similarly, the Decentralization Commission set up in 1907 recommended the appointment of non-official chairmen of municipal committees. This recommendation was maintained and further extended by the Simon’s Commission set up in 1925. The Government of India Act 1935 established a federal form of government and provided provinces full autonomy. The Act also empowered the provinces to make legislations on local governments11.

4.5 The post-independence period

The introduction and implementation of the decentralization reform in the form of local government resulting from the October 1999 military take over, is not the first of its kind in the history of Pakistan. Since its birth, the country has experienced three major attempts at establishing local governments. The first to experiment with local government reforms was General Ayub Khan who introduced his Basic Democracy (BD) Plan in 1959. Twenty years later, in 1979, another attempt was made at reviving local governments by the military regime of General Zia-ul-Haq. And lastly, General Pervez Musharaf, in August 2000 unveiled his government’s local government plan to devolve political, administrative and fiscal powers to the grassroots. What makes these local government reforms more interesting

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is the fact that the implementing authorities have always been the military regimes. In the
discussion to follow, each of the three local government reforms is described in detail.

4.5.1 Local governments under General Ayub Khan

After independence in 1947, Pakistan had a local government system only in some parts of
the Punjab province. However, the system was not based on adult franchise and was under
the control of bureaucracy\(^{12}\). General Ayub Khan assumed power as the first military ruler by
imposing Martial Law in 1958. The constitution was suspended and both the national and
provincial governments were disbanded. In order to gain legitimacy, the regime, however,
needed some form of democratic representation at some level. Consequently, the military
regime of General Ayub Khan introduced the Basic Democracy (BD) Plan in October 1959
(ICG 2004). Elections for the Basic Democrats were held after two months of the
introduction of the Basic Democracies Order (BDO). The BDO was followed by the
introduction of the Municipal Administration Ordinance (MAO) for establishing local
governments in urban areas (Zaidi 2005).

Under the BDO, local governments were set up at four levels i.e. at the union, tehsil, district
and division levels. At the lowest level in the system, local governments were established in
the form of Union Councils in the rural areas, Town Committees in towns with a population
of less than 14000 inhabitants and Union Committees in towns with more than 14000
inhabitants. Tehsil was the next higher tier in the system, where local governments were set
up in the form of Tehsil Councils in rural areas and Municipal Committees and Cantonment
Boards in urban areas. The next higher tier was the district council, followed by the
Divisional Councils (Zaidi 2005).

At the lowest tier, 37959 villages were divided into 3414 Union Councils, towns having a
population of less than 14000 inhabitants were divided into 222 Town Committees and towns
with a population of more than 14000 inhabitants into 810 Union Committees (Siddiqui
1992). Under the new system, the country was divided into 80,000 wards. A single ward had

\(^{12}\) Local Government in Asia and the Pacific: A Comparative Study
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43
a population of 1000 to 1200 people. Elections were held on the ward basis. The elected members were called as Basic Democrats (ICG 2004). Members of the Union Councils, Town Committees and Union Committees were elected on the basis of adult franchise. The elected members from amongst themselves indirectly elected the chairman. At the higher tiers, the directly elected members at the lowest tier indirectly elected some members, while some members were nominated by the government. For example, chairmen, the most important figure at the three higher tiers were directly nominated by the government. In case of Tehsil Councils, either the Assistant Commissioner (AC) or the Tehsildar was appointed as the chairman. Similarly, at the district and the division levels, the Deputy Commissioners (DC) and the Commissioners headed these councils (Rizvi 1974). According to ICG (2004), half of the members of the local councils were officially nominated rather than being directly elected.

The councils were assigned a number of important regulatory and development functions. They were, however, virtually controlled by the district administrative bureaucracy who had the power to overrule the councils’ decisions and to suspend any resolutions or orders passed by them (ICG 2004, Siddiqui 1992). The most controversial aspect of the local government system was that Basic Democrats served as an electoral college for the election of the president as well as members of both the National Assembly and the provincial legislatures. Using this constituency, Ayub Khan confirmed himself as the president by getting 95.6 percent vote in the presidential referendum held in 1960. A new constitution was promulgated in 1962, which resulted in the establishment of a unitary, presidential government. The new system helped Ayub to enjoy unchallenged executive powers and to have the authority to disband both the national and the provincial assemblies. Similarly, the appointment of governors who were mainly answerable to the center further reduced the provincial autonomy (ICG 2004).

Union councils were assigned 37 functions. They were responsible for promoting rural agriculture and community development and to maintain law and order in rural areas. They also had the power to impose local taxes, which were used for funding the local projects. The major responsibility of the Tehsil Councils was to carry out coordination functions. The
tehsil councils neither had any executive functions nor had any taxation powers. The district councils were assigned 28 obligatory and 70 optional functions. They had the power to impose taxes. Their major function was to coordinate the activities of all local councils and municipal committees under its jurisdiction. The district councils were responsible for carrying out functions relating to education, sanitation, local culture and social welfare. The divisional council coordinated the activities of the various government departments\textsuperscript{13} & \textsuperscript{14}.

4.5.2 Local governments under General Zia-ul-Haq

General Zia-ul-Haq took control of the country in 1977 as a result of a military coup, the second in the history of Pakistan. With the imposition of Martial Law, all political activities once again came to an end. In the beginning, political campaigning was allowed and citizens were assured that elections would be held within ninety days. However, it did not take long to realize the fact that once again the country most probably would be ruled by the military for an unknown period of time. After disbanding both the National and Provincial Assemblies, the military regime of General Zia-ul-Haq, like his predecessor experimented with some form of devolution and decentralization in form of a structure of local government under Local Government Ordinance (LGO) 1979 (Zaidi 2005).

According to the LGO 1979, there were three tiers of local governments in rural areas: union councils, tehsil or taluka councils and district councils. Local governments were mainly recognized at the union councils and district councils levels. The existence of the middle tier i.e. the tehsil or taluka councils was nominal. In urban areas, local governments were established at four levels: town committees, municipal committees, municipal corporations and metropolitan corporation. Town committees were established for towns with populations between 5000 and 30000, municipal committees for towns with a population up to 250,000 and municipal and metropolitan corporations for big cities with population in excess of 250,000. The total number of town committees, municipal committees, municipal committees, municipal

\textsuperscript{13} http://www.country-data.com/cgi-bin/query/r-9776.html

\textsuperscript{14} Local Government in Asia and the Pacific: A Comparative Study
http://www.unescap.org/huset/lgstudy/country/pakistan/pakistan.html#evolve
corporations and metropolitan corporations established in the country was 336, 146, 12 and 2 respectively (Zaidi 2005).

Elections were held on non-party basis and members of the local government at the union councils, tehsil or taluka and district councils were elected on the basis of adult franchise. The members in turn elected the chairmen of their respective councils from amongst themselves (Zaidi 2005). An important feature of the LGO 1979 was that it abolished the direct representation of the bureaucracy in the local governments as members and chairmen of the local councils. As a result the provincial administration despite having the power to suspend the resolutions of the local governments, experienced a considerable decrease in their control over the functioning of local governments (Cheema et al. 2004). Allocation of seats for each council was based on the population density in the area. Allocation of seats was highest at the lowest level of local government i.e. at the union level in rural areas. The number of seats allocated for the district councils and municipal corporations in some provinces was not proportional to their respective populations. Separate seats were also reserved for non-Muslims, peasants, workers and women. They were, however, elected by members of the councils (Zaidi 2005).

The union councils were assigned civil, welfare and development functions. The civil functions included the provision and maintenance of public ways, water supply, sanitation, water pumps and tanks and maintenance of wells and the slaughterhouses. Similarly, in case of natural disaster, union councils were responsible to undertake relief measures. Among the development functions, the most prominent were the measures aimed at increasing food production, industry and promoting community development. The district councils were involved in the provision and maintenance of roads, bridges, public buildings, water supply, maintenance and management of hospitals and maintenance and construction of school buildings. Town committees, municipal committees, municipal corporations and metropolitan corporations in Punjab, Sindh and NWFP performed more or less the same compulsory and optional functions. Karachi Metropolitan Corporation was an exception, which had been assigned some additional functions. In Balochistan town committees performed comparatively fewer functions due to the lower extent of urbanization in the province. The
functions performed by the urban councils included garbage disposal, maintenance of roads, streets lighting, health care, water supply and sanitation (Zaidi 2005).

A number of formal and informal mechanisms were set out in the local government ordinances for ensuring public participation in the affairs of the local councils. For example, prior to imposing any new tax, the taxation proposal was to be published in the newspaper so as to get feedback from the public. The existence of such mechanisms was, however, nominal. A thorough overview of the performance of local governments in Pakistan since 1979 to 1999 shows that there have not been any considerable improvements in the delivery of services (Zaidi 2005).

Comparing the LGO (1979) with the BDO (1959) and the MAO (1960), Cheema and Mohmand (2003) urges that no significant change occurred in the functions and financial powers assigned to local governments during Zia regime. Local governments were established on the same legislative structures promulgated by Ayub. In both the cases the major intent was not to substantively empower the local government. It is evident from the fact that both the BDO (1959) and the LGO (1979) lacked mechanisms for providing constitutional protection to the local governments established under these ordinances.

4.5.3 The new local government system under General Pervez Musharaf

On 12 October 1999, the country witnessed another military coup which resulted in the overthrown of a representative government. In order to legitimize the coup, the Army Chief, General Pervez Musharaf announced a seven point democratic reform agenda. The agenda included; rebuilding national confidence and morale, strengthening the federation while removing the inter-provincial disharmony, reviving and restoring investor confidence, ensuring law and order and dispensing speedy justice, reconstructing and depoliticising state institutions, ensuring swift across the board accountability and devolving power to the grass roots level. Despite his initial claims that the armed forces had no intention to stay in power any longer than to pave the way for true democracy to flourish in the country, General Musharaf quickly seized upon the idea to revive local governments in order to achieve regime survival and consolidation (ICG 2004).
Taking devolution of power as the core policy priority of his government, General Musharaf set up the National Reconstruction Bureau (NRB) in November 1999 and assigned the task to develop a scheme for the devolution of power. The NRB developed the “Local Government Plan 2000” which was announced on 23rd of March 2000. The proposed Local Government Plan was mainly intended to strengthen the democratic institutions in the country and to empower the people at the grassroots level (ICG 2004).

The LG Plan 2000 is based on five fundamentals: devolution of political power, decentralization of administrative authority, decentralization of management functions, diffusion of power authority nexus and distribution of resources to the district level. According to the Plan, local governments were formed at three levels: district, tehsil and union. A series of non-party based elections were held in 2001 for representatives to be elected to the new district government set up. Since then elected local governments have been in place at the three levels. It’s the first time that 33% seats have been reserved for females at all three levels. Similarly, seats have also been reserved for peasants/workers and minority at each level in the local government system. In addition to this, both rural and urban areas have been integrated organizationally as well as administratively in order to remove the rural-urban divide. In the new system, the terms Mayor and Deputy Mayor have been replaced by the Urdu terms Nazim and Niab-Nazim respectively (Local Government Plan 2000).

4.6 Structure of the new local government system

According to the LG Plan 2000, the local governments are formed at three levels: district, tehsil and union councils. Local government at each level comprises a Nazim and Naib-Nazim, an elected body (councilors both males and females) and an administrative structure. The administrative structures of the district, tehsil and the union councils are called Union Administration, Tehsil Administration and District Administration respectively. Nazims are the head of their administrative councils. Members of the union councils are directly elected while union Naib-Nazim and Nazim constitute the elected bodies of the tehsil and the district councils respectively. The three tiers of local government are discussed below:
4.6.1 Union council
This is the basic tier in the local government structure. The union government comprises the union Nazim, the Naib Union Nazim and the Union Administration. Union councils are formed both in rural as well as urban areas. The populations of both the rural and urban union councils match each other so as to equalize their level of representation. Each union council is composed of a number of different committees for monitoring specific functions. It may have up to three secretaries: Secretary Union Committees, Secretary Municipal Functions and Secretary Community Development. The total number of seats in a union council is 21. There are twelve seats for Muslim General Councilors of which four seats are reserved for women. There are six seats for peasants and workers two of which are reserved for women. One seat is reserved for minority. The remaining two seats are those of the union nazim and the naib union nazim. A union council usually has an approximate population of 25000. A single union council has 18 wards. Several small villages with comparatively small populations are grouped together to form a single member ward. While large villages with comparatively high populations serve as multi-member wards. Members of the union council are directly elected from a single or multi-member ward while the union nazim and naib union nazim are directly elected as joint candidates by the entire population of the union council.

4.6.2 Tehsil/taluka council
This is the middle tier of the local government. The tehsil government comprises the tehsil nazim, the naib tehsil nazim, the tehsil council and the tehsil administration. The tehsil council is an elected body comprising naib union nazims of all union councils in the tehsil. The number of general seats in the tehsil council is equivalent to the number of unions in each tehsil. Apart from this, 33% seats are reserved for women, 5% for workers and peasants and 5% for minorities. The elected members (councilors) of all union councils with the tehsil constitute the Electoral College for the election of candidates on the reserved seats. Both the tehsil nazim and the naib tehsil nazim are also elected as joint candidates by the union councilors of the whole tehsil. The tehsil nazim acts as the executive head of the tehsil while naib tehsil nazim acts as the convener of the tehsil council. Both are required to have an
academic qualification of at least matriculation/secondary school certificate or equivalent (Local Government Plan 2000).

4.6.3 District/zila council
District Council is the highest and most important tier in the new structure of local government. The district government comprises the zila nazim and naib zila nazim, the district council and the district administration. The zila nazim is the head of the district and the administration while the naib zila nazim acts as the speaker of the district council. Both the zila nazim and the naib zila nazim are elected as joint candidates by members (councilors) of the union councils within the entire district. Both of them should have a minimum qualification of at least matriculation/secondary school certificate or equal. The district council consists of the directly elected nazims of all union councils within the district. In addition to this, 33% seats are reserved for women and 5% seats each for the workers and peasants and minorities. Members of the union councils of the entire district also serve as the electoral college for the election of candidates on the above mentioned reserved seats (Local Government Plan 2000). Figure 4.1 illustrates the structure of the local government.
4.7 Salient features of the Devolution Plan (2000)

Despite similar in its context and content in a number of ways, the new devolution plan, however, exhibits some significant departures from the previous two local government systems. According to Zaidi (2005), one of the most important interventions and changes made in the current local government system is the reservation of one-third seats for women. Another important change is the reintegration of religious minorities into the political mainstream. Similarly, another important feature of the current local government system is the establishment of Citizen Community Boards (CCBs). The CCBs consists of non-elected members and are primarily concerned with the development of their areas. They receive financial support from local government for carrying out different development activities. The also receive voluntary contributions from community. According to Cheema and Shandana (2006), one of the main purposes of creating the CCBs is to foster citizen’s direct participation in service delivery.
In addition to reserving seats for women and reintegrating religious minorities into the political mainstream, another important electoral change in the devolution plan is the political and electoral integration of the union into higher tiers of governments. For example, the directly elected union nazims, naib union nazims are members of the district and tehsil councils whereas the union councilors constitute the electoral college for the election of both nazims and naib nazims of both the district and tehsil councilors. In addition to this the union councilors also serve as an electoral college for the election of candidates on reserved seats at the tehsil as well as the district levels. The union. Because of this political and electoral integration of the union council into the higher tiers of the local government, members of the union council might find themselves in a position to hold the higher tiers of government accountable. The union nazims and naib union nazims being members of the district and tehsil councils receives grants from the district and tehsil development funds, which are allocated for different projects with in their respective unions. They can directly monitor the allocation of funds for their unions in the district/tehsil budgets.

According to Cheema et al (2005), the current devolution process has restructured the government at the district and sub-district levels. The local governments at three levels: district, tehsil and union council are politically linked to each other. Contrary to the past, the District Coordination Officer (DCO) instead of reporting to the non-elected provincial secretariat, now directly reports to the Zila Nazim, the head of the district government. Furthermore, the DCO has lost his functions as district magistrate and district collector.

Similarly, (Cheema et al 2005) during the pre-devolution period, both the urban and rural local governments were two distinct entities. The rural local governments were comparatively inactive. The provincial bureaucracy performed most of the functions. Resources were not equally allocated among the local governments in rural and urban areas. The current devolution plan has integrated both the rural and urban areas thus abolishing the rural urban divide. This change is especially important in the allocation of resources for both the rural and urban areas. Many important provincial functions have now been devolved to the district and tehsil levels. For example, functions like budgeting; planning and
development previously carried out by provincial secretariats are now performed at the
district and tehsil levels (Cheema and Shandana 2006).

The Devolution Plan 2000 has also restructured the development structure of the country.
Each level of local government is bound to undertake specific development projects. All the
three levels of local government; district, tehsil and union identify and select projects within
their jurisdictions. Communities and citizens are involved in the identification and selection
of projects at all the three levels i.e. district, tehsil and union through a collaborative and
consultative process. Through the promulgation of the Local Government Ordinances
(LGOs) by the provincial governments in August 2001, the three levels of government; district,
tehsil and union, have been assigned clear powers, responsibilities and service
delivery functions. The district government is responsible for carrying out services relating to
social and human development such as basic health care, education and social welfare.
Municipal services such as water, sanitation and urban services have been assigned to the
tehsil government (Zaidi 2005).

The current devolution plan has resulted in the transfer of provincial powers to the local
governments at all the three levels whereas no federal powers have been devolved to either
the provincial or local levels. Similarly, besides the existence of the local governments,
Pakistan still continues to exhibit a two level federal state. Local governments are not part of
the 1973 constitution. The 17th constitutional amendment provides protection to the local
governments only for a period of six years (Zaidi 2005; Cheema et al. 2005).

At the same time, the decentralization process is not uniform i.e. some of the administrative
departments have been decentralized while others are still under the direct control of the
provinces. For instance, the police and irrigation departments still remain under the
provincial control. Similarly, not all services within a decentralized department have been
devolved (Cheema et al 2005). For example, Malik (2003) points out that only functions for
the agricultural extension services have been devolved to the district governments whereas
agricultural research, adaptive research, agricultural engineering and agricultural education
still continue to be under the control of the provincial government.
One of the most important changes is the introduction of fiscal decentralization. Local governments now design their own budgets and expenditures for the delivery of most of the services. Both the provincial and the Federal Governments are only concerned with the policy issues, guidelines and monitoring functions. Provincial departments are no more in charge to determine the distribution of funds. Provincial Finance Commissions established in each province have developed fiscal transfer mechanisms and formula for the distribution of funds among local governments. Funds from provincial government are directly transferred to each local government. The local government funds include both funds received from provincial government as well as funds obtained from local revenues. Local governments have been authorized to levy a number of taxes. Local councils now receive 2.5 percent of the General Sales Tax and two new taxes known as health and education taxes (Zaidi 2005).

Cheema et al. (2005), however, point out that the extent of fiscal decentralization is limited because no new taxes have been devolved to the local governments. District governments continue to get the same level of revenues and are still dependent primarily on provincial and federal funds. Similarly, some of the district expenditures are fixed and under the control of the provincial government. For example, salaries of the public servants who are still the employees of provincial government. Table 4.3 is a summary of the distinguishing features of the three local government systems introduced in Pakistan since its independence.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leader</th>
<th>Tenure</th>
<th>No. of yrs</th>
<th>LG brand and Structure</th>
<th>Distinguishing features</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Ayub Khan</td>
<td>1958-1969</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Basic Democracy 5 tiers</td>
<td>Ward based elections, Only members of the union councils, town committees and union committees directly elected whereas half of members of local councils at higher tiers nominated by government, At higher tiers head of the councils (Chairmen) nominated by government, Functions of the councils controlled by bureaucracy, Basic Democrats served as electoral college for electing president as well as MNAs/MPAs, Rural-urban divide maintained.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Zia-ul-Haq</td>
<td>1977-1988</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Local Bodies 3 tiers</td>
<td>Tehsil/Taluka council (the middle tier of LG) existed nominally, Direct representation of Bureaucracy as members/Chairmen of the councils abolished, Considerable decrease in Provincial Govt. control over LGs functioning, Reservation of seats for religious minorities, peasants, workers and women, Introduction of formal and informal mechanisms for ensuring public participation in local councils’ affairs, In some cases allocation of seats was not proportional to the respective population of the area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Pervez Musharraf</td>
<td>1999- till date</td>
<td>6+</td>
<td>Devolution of Power 3 tiers</td>
<td>Elections held at the union council level, Heads of the union councils (Union Nazim and Naib Union Nazim) directly elected as joint candidates, LGs established at three levels in both rural and urban areas, 33% seats reserved for women and 5% each for peasants/workers and religious minorities at all the three levels of LGs, Rural and urban areas integrated administratively and organizationally, Tehsil and District councils are headed by indirectly elected Tehsil/District Nazim and Naib Nazim instead of bureaucracy, Political and electoral integration of the lower tier (Union) into higher tiers of the LG, Devolution of Provincial function to the LGs, Establishment of CCBs for ensuing citizens’ direct participation in service delivery.</td>
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CHAPTER FIVE
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

SECTION I

5.1 Introduction
This chapter is intended to give an overview of respondents’ (both elected representatives and local people) perceptions on the recent devolution process in Pakistan. Since decentralization is a complex phenomenon, respondents’ perceptions on all aspects of the process might be beyond the scope of this study. Thus the study is mainly interested in exploring their perceptions on: understanding of the process, motivation for the process, their attitude towards the process, its socio-political impacts, the election process, whether or not powers have been devolved to the lower levels and the impacts of the devolution on politicians and the civil bureaucracy. The discussion on respondents’ perceptions on the issues underpinned above begins with a description of their profile.

5.2 Respondents’ profile
Table-5.1 shows the age, educational level and occupations of both the elected representatives and the local people. Respondents’ age fall between 21 to 70 years. Similarly, they have different educational levels starting from primary up to master levels. There were, however, few who had never attended school. A certain degree of variation can also be seen in the occupation of respondents. It is important to underpin that among the elected representatives, a relatively large number (37.83%) are from 31-40 years of age. Similarly, it is also obvious that none of the elected representatives is illiterate. All of them possess at least an intermediate level qualification i.e. they have successfully completed secondary school studies. The number of elected representatives possessing higher secondary school certificate (H.S.S.C) or bachelor level qualification is relatively higher (29.72% each). Similarly, the number of people associated with farming is the highest (35.13%) followed by those (29.72%) who do not have any specific occupation. The remaining 18.91% are businessmen, 2.7% are associated with farming as well as business activities, 5.4% are government employers but are also engaged in farming activities whereas only 8.1% are legal practitioners.
The above discussion on the profile of elected representatives included both women and men. Profile of the women elected representatives can more specifically be described by considering them as a separate group. From table 2.3 in chapter two on methodology, it is evident that the total number of female elected representatives interviewed is seven. Of the total number of female representatives, a relatively large number (42.85%) are from 31-40 years of age while an equal number (28.57%) of them are 21-30 years and 41-50 years old. As for their educational level is concerned, a relatively large number (57.14%) possess higher secondary school certificate while 42.85% possess the minimum level of qualification i.e. S.S.C. None of the women elected representatives had any kind of occupation.

PDO (2001) in its study on devolution in Pakistan found that majority of the elected representatives belonged to the younger strata of society with majority (74%) of them less than 46 years of age. Similarly, majority (79%) of them were literate with 10% of them having passed the H.S.S.C examination and 16% possessing bachelor level qualification. Illiterate councilors constitute 21% of the total number of elected representatives. Out of the total number (21%) of illiterate elected representatives, 69% are women representatives. The findings of this study on variables like age and educational level of elected representatives resemble the findings of the PDO to a great extent. However, as for the number of illiterate female elected representatives is concerned it differs from the PDO because female elected representatives contacted for data collection in this study were all literate.

The above findings shows that the recent devolution process has proved significant by providing an opportunity to ordinary citizens most of them usually young and literate to get involved in the political process. Manor (1997) describes it as political renewal and urges that the creation of local governments at the intermediate and local levels can be an effective means to open up positions of power especially for the young who aspire for political influence. This might help such people in easing their frustration and giving up the destructive behavior, which often results from limited opportunities.
Table 5.1: Age, education and occupation of respondents

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21-30</td>
<td>10.81</td>
<td>17.85</td>
<td>Illiterate</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10.71</td>
<td>Farming</td>
<td>35.13</td>
<td>28.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>37.83</td>
<td>28.57</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7.14</td>
<td>Business</td>
<td>18.91</td>
<td>17.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-50</td>
<td>29.72</td>
<td>28.57</td>
<td>SSC</td>
<td>24.32</td>
<td>14.28</td>
<td>Farming+Business</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>10.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-60</td>
<td>18.91</td>
<td>21.42</td>
<td>H.S.S.C</td>
<td>29.72</td>
<td>14.28</td>
<td>Farming+Service</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>35.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61-70</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>29.72</td>
<td>21.42</td>
<td>Legal Practitioners</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>7.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71-80</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Master</td>
<td>16.21</td>
<td>32.14</td>
<td>Others</td>
<td>29.72</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>28</td>
<td></td>
<td>37</td>
<td>28</td>
<td></td>
<td>37</td>
<td>28</td>
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5.3 Respondents’ perceptions on the devolution process

5.3.1 Respondents’ understanding level of the concept decentralization

Decentralization has become a buzzword and a worldwide phenomenon. Since 1980s, many developing and transitional countries have experimented with decentralization of one kind or another (Manor 1990). Devolution or democratic decentralization which is the transfer of powers and resources from the center to authorities at the lower levels which are representatives of as well as accountable to the local populations [Manor 1999; Crook and Manor 1998; Agrawal and Ribot 1999] is one of the forms of decentralization. The authorities at the lower levels to which powers and resources are being devolved are usually called local bodies. In Pakistan, local bodies are most commonly known as local governments.

After asking questions on personal information, the very first question I used to ask every respondent was about; whether or not and to what extent they are able to understand the meaning of devolution? Apparently, it might seem unnecessary to begin with such an academic question. However, the main intent was to assess the level of respondents’ information on the recent devolution process. Majority of both the elected representatives (78.37%) and the local people (75%) were able to understand the term devolution or were at least aware of the benefits for which the process holds great promise.

Based on the respondents’ profile, most probably the two important factors contributing towards respondents’ understanding of the devolution phenomenon include; their educational
level and more importantly their engagement in politics. There is no doubt about the fact that with education comes awareness. Educated citizens usually possess an insight of current issues, politics being one of them. However, at the same time, it is also probable that politics may not be an issue of interest to many of the literates. Say for example, an agricultural scientist may be more interested in knowing the developments taking place in the field of agriculture rather than politics. Contrary to this, political engagement looks more crucial to the understanding of politics since it is based on interest in politics. Devolution of power to the grassroots in the form of local governments is not a novel phenomenon in Pakistan. Since its independence, several attempts have been made at reviving local governments in Pakistan. Local governments were first introduced during the 1960s by General Ayub Khan under the Basic Democracies Order (BDO). A second revival took place when General Zia-ul-Haq seized power in 1977, and established local governments under the LGO in 1979. Finally, General Pervez Musharraf introduced his devolution plan under the LGO (2000). Since majority (72.27%) of the elected representatives and local people in the study area confessed that have been engaged in politics for several years and have affiliation with different political parties, it thus might be stated that they would have had the opportunity to witness either of the two previous local government systems introduced in the country. Both the elected representatives and the local people defined the term devolution in the following ways:

- Devolution is the transfer of power to the lower levels of government.
- It is the planning and designing of policies at the grassroots.
- It means to share power with people at the grassroots in order to enhance their participation in all walks of life.
- It is the division of power among various levels of government i.e. district, tehsil and union administrations.

According to the respondents the various benefits accruing from devolution include:

- It helps to solve the problems of local people at the local level.
- It enables people to make efficient use of local resources for community development.
- It provides an opportunity to the people either to participate directly or through their representatives in the affairs of the government.
- It facilitates the transfer of funds for development to the grassroots.
- It improves the delivery of services and brings the service providers closer to the people.
- It enhances participation of ordinary people in almost all walks of life.

5.3.2 Motivation for the recent devolution process

The promises that decentralization yields depend to a great extent on the motivation that triggers the process. According to Manor (1997) motivations for decentralization are diverse. Similarly, reasons for decentralization in all countries are always multiple and also vary from country to country (Huntington 1992). There is little evidence that decentralization reforms have been undertaken due to pressure from below (Manor 1997). If the motivation results from pressure exerted from below, it might result in political will which according to Blair (1998) is critical to democratic local governance. Because it enables high level authority to devolve enough powers to the lower levels of government to function properly. Political will is also an effective measure for countering the political and bureaucratic resistance to the decentralization efforts.

Motivations for the recent decentralization reforms in Pakistan as stated in the LGO 2000 included; reforming the democratic institutions in the country and to empower the people at the grassroots (ICG 2004). The purpose of the political reformation was to serve the interest of the common people; to increase their access to politics and to enhance political stability and accountability. Some of the technical objectives included the improvement of service delivery especially the social services (World Bank 2004). However, there is great variation in the point of views of both the elected representatives and the local people regarding motivation for the recent decentralization reforms in Pakistan. Some are optimistic about the new political development while others are still cautious. In order to enrich our understanding of the factors, which actually propelled the government to carry out the decentralization reforms, it is worth quoting the views of both the optimists as well as the pessimists regarding the motivation for the process.
Optimists including both elected representatives (35.13%) and the local people (21.42%) perceived the promulgation of the devolution plan (2000), as a genuine necessity under the prevailing circumstances. The reasons they unveiled to support this notion closely resemble those stated by the National Reconstruction Bureau (2001a)\(^\text{15}\). They are summarized as: on the eve of the military take over, the country was politically instable. People were fed off of politicians. They were aspiring for any change to take place. Since most of the problems existed at the grassroots, there was a genuine reason for the transfer of autonomy to the grassroots and for strengthening both the democratic institutions as well as the democratic values. Administrative, judicial and developmental functions were mainly assigned to a single person (Deputy Commissioner) in the district and as such citizens’ voice and participation in matters relating to the administration, judiciary was nominal. It was necessary to take measures that could enable the ordinary people to have a share of power in both administrative and fiscal issues.

Similarly, prior to decentralization, both the national and provincial level politicians were responsible for carrying out development works in their constituencies. However, their track record regarding community level development work was very poor because of their lack of knowledge of the local problems. At the same time, access to such politicians was very difficult because of their high status. Devolution of power was thus essential for enabling people at the grassroots to have their own local representatives who would have comparatively better knowledge of the local problems and to whom people would have comparatively easy access. Similarly, people’s participation in development was nominal. It was important to take measures to ensure their participation in development related activities as well.

\(^{15}\) The change in the system of governance at the district, tehsil and union level has been proposed to restructure the bureaucratic set up and to decentralize the administrative authority to the district level and below. Re-orientation and rationalization of the administrative structures are proposed to enhance public participation in decision-making and to improve efficiency and service delivery. The new system of governance could also enable the proactive elements in society to participate in community work and development related activities. It would also have the capacity to enhance accountability and transparency of both the government functionaries and the elected members through the monitoring committees of the local councils and the office of the Zila Mohtasib respectively.
Pessimists including both the elected representatives (64.86%) and the local people (57.14%), however, have a different viewpoint regarding the motivation for the recent decentralization reforms. They unveil the motivations for the reforms as; the reforms have been implemented by a non-representative regime after seizing power as a result of a military coup. Since the government overthrown as a result of the coup was a democratic and representative government of the people, the argument that the purpose was to strengthen the democratic institutions obviously carries no weight. According to this category of respondents there was no pressure from below for undertaking the reforms rather the architect himself had a personal interest in undertaking the reforms. They described the devolution plan as a means to legitimize the act of overthrowing a representative government, to get control over the state and to ensure future regime survival. To further elaborate this, it is important to point out that devolution was the best option for its architect during the prevailing circumstances. Since a democratic government had been overthrown (and without any doubt people always have a dislike for the martial law regimes) it was most probable that the regime might have faced resistance from public without assuring them that the army regime does not intend to stay long in power. The devolution of power was thus devised to minimize the alarming public resistance by promising to give them a share in governance.

Another important factor that might have triggered the process is the pressure from the international community and donor organizations e.g. the World Bank and the Common Wealth. Since the military regime was well aware of the fact that the absence of democracy in the country would have adverse impacts on its relations with the international community and the donor organizations, thus the army chief in his first speech to the nation, promised to restore democracy to the country. There was a general consensus among this category of respondents (the pessimists) that the devolution process in Pakistan is actually an attempt at further centralization rather than decentralization.

This view is supported by Shah and Thompson (2004) who describe the motivation for decentralization in Pakistan as political maneuvering. Another important issue, which they point out, is that the recent decentralization move in Pakistan has it origins in attempts by

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regimes in power to sideline or weaken potential opposition. Zaidi (2005) points out that besides different in their substance and structure in a number of respects, the three local governments systems introduced in Pakistan since 1947, share many similarities. For example, so far, all the local government reforms have been undertaken by non-democratic and non-representative governments. The reformer in each case has always been the military regime and most importantly, the military regimes introducing the reforms came into power as a result of overthrowing representative governments through the use of force. Hence, Paracha (2003) has pointed out that the regime’s motivation for undertaking devolution was to legitimize the overtaking of power. Cheema et al. (2005), urge that Musharaf’s local government reforms represent a continuity of the local government reforms prevailing during the pre and post-independence periods. Contrary to the attempts at decentralizations in other countries, where the process was motivated mainly by the changes in state ideology and multilateral pressure, the prime motivation for undertaking the recent local government reforms in Pakistan is to legitimize control over the state. According to ICG (2004), the rational behind the devolution plan (2000) was and continues to be legitimacy of regime and future survival.

5.3.3 Respondents’ attitude towards the new local government system

For most of the period since its independence, Pakistan has been ruled directly by the military. The military regimes have always aggressively supported the local governments. On the contrary, the elected governments have always undermined local governments (Zaidi 2005). On the basis of their views regarding their preferences for type of governance structure, respondents are divided into three broad categories. Some showed a strong preference for current type of governance with local government being an integral part, others showed a preference for the democratic form of government existing prior to the introduction of the Devolution Plan (2000). The third category of respondents did not show any preference for either of the two.

The new local government system was popular among majority of both the elected representatives (62.16%) and the local people (82.14%). They stated a number of reasons on the basis of which they favored the new system. For example, they argued that most of the
problems exist at the lower levels. Both the national and provincial level politicians have little knowledge and understanding of local problems and issues. At the same time access to this class of politicians is usually very difficult. Contrary to this, local representatives are better aware of the local problems and are easily accessible by the community because they live either within their own or a nearby constituency. Similarly, the devolution of power is likely to empower the poor and marginalized groups at the grassroots. It can have positive impacts on participation of ordinary people in politics as well as in development related works. Respondent in the study area seemed quite optimistic about the new local government system. It is, however, worth pointing out that most of them urged that for the recent devolution process to accrue the expected benefits, real and substantial powers must be devolved to the lower levels. Similarly, local governments should also be provided with sufficient financial resources and finally effective mechanisms must be in place for ensuring accountability and transparency of the elected representatives. These three conditions according to Manor (1997) are crucial for successful decentralization.

Comparatively a small number of both the elected representatives (27.02%) and the local people (17.85%) showed a preference for the previous democratic form of government. They had very little or none to say something in support of democratic politics but had much to denounce the current devolution process. This class of respondents perceived the current local government system as a tool almost often used by military regimes to legitimize their overthrowing of democratic governments through the use of force; to legitimize control over the state and to achieve future regime survival. They urged that local government system has rarely been effective in achieving its broad-based objectives i.e. empowering people at the grassroots, enhancing their participation in politics, delivery of services and the decision-making processes, which affect them. They pointed out that the most interesting feature of the local government systems in Pakistan is that these have always been a product of the military regimes. This notion is support by Cheema et al. (2005), who point out that local governments during the pre as well as post-independence periods have been endorsed by non-representative regimes. Similarly, the purpose has always been the same i.e. to legitimize control over the state. The only difference between these two periods is the change in the non-representative institution i.e. during the pre-independence period, it was the British
imperial state, which introduced local government while in the post-independence period it has been the Pakistani military.

Opponents of the Devolution Plan (2000) urge that by introducing the new local government system, General Pervez Musharaf, has tried to follow the footprints of his predecessors (General Ayub Khan and General Zia-ul-Haq). Cheema et al. (2005) describe Musharaf’s local government reforms as a “continuity of the central historical tendency”. Very few (10.81%) did not show any interest in either the current local government system or the previous democratic system. Their point of view was that so for both the systems have not be able to solve the problems of the ordinary people.

5.3.4 Common and distinguishing features of the three local systems

Since its independence, there have been three major attempts at decentralization reforms in the form of local governments in Pakistan. While all the three differ from each other in their substance and structure, they also share some similarities (Zaidi 2005). For assessing the similarities and differences in the substance and structure of the three LGSs, it is important to describe both the common as well as distinguishing features of three LGSs based on the information provided by respondents in the study area.

In Basic Democracies introduced by General Ayub Khan, elections were held on ward basis. Similarly, members at the lowest level (union council, union committees, town committees)
were directly elected on the basis of adult franchise whereas half of the members of the local councils at higher tiers were directly nominated by the government. The higher tiers of the local government were headed by bureaucrats who virtually controlled functions of the union councils. The chairman and members of the union councils had the power to make significant decisions on local issues including the settling of disputes. Huge amounts of funds were available for community development projects and the elected members could freely use these funds. The most important feature of the BDS is that the elected members of the councils known as basic democrats constituted the electoral college for the election of the president as well as members of the national and the provincial assemblies.

Local governments under General Zia-ul-Haq differ from Ayub Khan’s BDS in that it abolished representation of bureaucracy both as members and heads of the councils. Similarly, all the members and heads of all tiers of local governments were directly elected through adult franchise. Provincial government influence over the local governments decreased to some extent. Other important features which distinguish Zia’s local bodies from Ayub’s BDS is the reservation of seats for religious minorities, women, peasants and workers and the introduction of both formal and informal mechanisms for enhancing participation of people in the council’s affairs. Similarly, the head of the union council used to be the ‘chairman’, who was supposed to be elected by the members of the union council. Chairman and other members of the union council were not members of the district council. The existence of the middle tier i.e. tehsil was nominal.

Both the Ayub’s BDO and Zia’s LGS share some common characteristics. For example, under both the LGSs, the rural-urban divide was maintained. Elections were held on non-party basis. In both the systems funds for development projects were mostly at the disposal of one person i.e. the chairman of the council. No financial powers devolved to the lower levels and that the local government systems during both Ayub and Zia’s era lacked constitutional protection. Under the Devolution Plan (2000) direct elections were held at the union council level. Heads of the union councils (union nazim and naib union nazim) are directly elected as joint candidates whereas both the tehsil and the district councils are headed by indirectly elected
tehsil/district nazims and naib nazims. By making union nazims members of the district councils and naib union nazims as members of the tehsil council, the lowest tier of government i.e. union council has been politically and electorally integrated into the higher tiers (i.e. tehsil and district councils) of local government system.

It is generally believed the current local government system is comparatively more democratic in nature with more powers vested in the elected representatives. Local governments have been devolved political, administrative as well as fiscal powers. Local representatives comparatively enjoy more powers than ever before. In order to increase representation of the marginal groups, seats have been reserved for women (33%), minorities (5%), workers and peasants (5%) at all the three levels i.e. union, tehsil and district. Minimum qualification has been set up for candidates participating in the local elections. One of the major focuses of this system is the community development. Utilization of funds in this system is more efficient and transparent as compared to the previous systems. Finally rural and urban areas have been integrated administratively as well as organizationally.

However, the current local government system also shares some important common characteristics with the previous two local government systems. For example, elections of candidates to the local bodies (union council, tehsil council and district council) in each case were held on non-party basis. Similarly, like the previous local government systems no constitutional protection has been provided to local governments.

5.3.5 Impacts on local level politics and social relations:
It is generally perceived that the impacts of the recent devolution process on politics at the local level have been positive. Because the creation of the third tier of government i.e. local governments has enhanced opportunities for the ordinary people to participate in the political process of the country. The reservation of seats for different marginalized groups (women, workers/peasants and minorities) in society at all levels of the local government system has enhanced their representation what according to Blair (1998) ultimately results in empowerment. Consequently, the process by revitalizing political activities at the local level
has enhanced awareness, will power, confidence and political maturity among the lower and the middle classes.

Whereas the process has revitalized political activities at the local level, it has also given rise to social conflicts. It is not unusual to hear people saying that the process has resulted in social unrest. Local government elections were more competent due to the fact that people at the local level are closely tied with each other through blood and friendship relations. On the eve of the local government elections, there were reports of disruption on a number of polling stations due to mutual conflicts between supporters of the rival candidates.

![Figure 5.2 Devolution’s impacts on local level politics and social relations](image)

### 5.3.6 Major electoral reforms

According to respondents in the study area, the major changes introduced in the electoral system include: the minimum voting age is now 18 years. The ward system has been replaced by multimember ward (union council). Candidates are supposed to contest elections on multiwards basis. Local governments’ elections are held on the basis of separate electorate. Similarly, members of all tiers of local governments are elected representatives of the people rather than nominated officials. Representation of women, minorities, peasants and workers has been increased through the reservation of seats at the union, tehsil and district levels. The union nazims are members of the zila council. Similarly, the naib union nazims are members of the tehsil council. The heads of the zila council, the zila nazim and naib zila nazim are elected as joint candidates by union councilors of the entire district. In a similar vein, the
heads of the tehsil council, the tehsil nazim and naib tehsil nazim are also elected by the union councilors of the entire tehsil as joint candidates. These electoral reforms are more explicitly stated in the Local Government Plan (2000).

The merits and demerits of the electoral changes demands further discussion. The decrease in the voter’s age apparently seems a useful electoral change because it might enhance citizen’s participation in the election process as voters. Similarly, it might be helpful in developing confidence among young people, the confidence to be able to influence local level policies. The reservation of seats for women, minorities, peasants and workers at all the three levels i.e. union, tehsil and district has brought these marginal groups into the political arena.

Similarly, by making both the union nazims and naib union nazims as members of the zila/district and tehsil councils respectively, the lower tier i.e. the union council has been integrated into the higher tiers of government. However, the indirect election of nazims and naib nazims of both tehsil and district councils by union councilors might have negative impacts on accountability and delivery of services. For instance, since the district and tehsil nazims and naib nazims are elected by union councilors, they are most likely to be directly accountable to these councilors and not to the ordinary citizens. Similarly, it is also probable that these nazims and naib nazims will be more inclined towards allocating more resources for service delivery to those who helped in electing them to their respective offices. This notion is supported by Keefer et al. (2005) who urge that procedures for electing the district nazims may limit their incentives to provide public goods and suggests that district nazims should be directly elected.

Similarly, the election of both the nazims and naib nazims as joint candidates at the union, tehsil and district levels also has some demerits. For instance, voters might not necessarily have favor for the two of them in which case it is most probable that they might vote against their conscious. Consequently, sometimes unpopular and detested persons might get elected to the office of nazims and naib nazims. It is most common that candidates contesting elections (as joint candidates) for positions of nazim and naib nazim at all the three levels also seek unconditional support for their counterparts during their election campaigns.
because both exist in symbiotic relationship. And lastly, it give rise to an important question i.e. since both nazims and naib nazims are being elected as joint candidates, why don’t both of them enjoy the same sets of powers and responsibilities?

5.3.7 Elections party or non-party based

According to the LG Plan (2000), elections were to be contested on non-party basis. Almost all (100%) of the elected representatives confessed that the recent local governments’ elections were non-party based. Majority of the local people (75%), however, revealed that the elections were actually contested on party basis. They pointed out that soon after the LGO (2000) was unveiled, political parties started homework for the forthcoming elections. Majority of the candidates contesting the local governments’ elections were nominees of political parties. Election campaigns of nominees of political parties were also supported by their respective parties. It is true to a great extent because two important questions were asked of every elected representative in the start of the interview. These questions were about their political engagement and their representation of any political party during the recent local government elections. The table 5.2 contains information on the number of years, elected representatives have been engaged in politics as well as the political parties they represented during the recent local government elections. It is evident from the table that the number of candidates taking part in elections as independent candidates is fewer (29.72%) as compared to the total number (70.25%) of candidates representing different political parties.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of years in politics</th>
<th>No. of respondents (in %)</th>
<th>Parties represented</th>
<th>No. of respondents (in %)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>10.81</td>
<td>ANP</td>
<td>24.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10</td>
<td>24.32</td>
<td>PPP</td>
<td>18.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15</td>
<td>24.32</td>
<td>Jamat-i-Islami</td>
<td>16.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-20</td>
<td>16.21</td>
<td>JUI (F)</td>
<td>13.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-25</td>
<td>13.51</td>
<td>PML</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-30</td>
<td>10.81</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>29.72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In section 5.2.4 on the Common and distinguishing features of the three local systems, it had been pointed out that one of the most common features of the three LG systems is their
adherence to the principal of holding elections for the lower tiers of government on non-party basis. Whether the local governments’ elections should be party based or non-party based is an elaborate question that demands further research on the topic. Views of researchers differ on the merits and demerits of both party and none-party based elections. Manor (1997) points out that those who advocate non-party elections for positions on decentralized bodies often accuse political parties on the grounds that they intensify conflicts within communities and import irrelevant issues from higher levels to the grassroots. According to Manor, the exclusion of political parties from taking part in local bodies’ elections might not prove successful in countries that allow for competition among parties at the higher levels in the system. Secondly, in the presence of the existing bans, party leaders might try to seek ways for participation in local elections, “by modest acts of subterfuge” which might have devastating impacts on the democratic system. Manor, therefore, suggests avoiding such bans on political parties so as to help prevent the party leaders from seeking illegal means of participation in the local elections. The fact that in case of a ban, political parties might seek alternative ways to get involve in local bodies elections has especially been observed during the local governments’ elections (both 2001 and 2005) in Pakistan. Especially, during the 2005 local governments’ elections, despite explicit electoral rule that prohibited political parties to get involve in local elections, different political parties introduced their candidates under specific brands. For example, PML (Q) the ruling party introduced its candidates as Roshan Khayal, PPP as Awam Dost, PML (N) as Watan Dost, Jamaat-e-Islami as Khidmat Group, JUI (F) as Islam Dost, ANP as Khidmatgar and Mutahidda Quami Movement as Haq Parast16.

Involvement of political parties in local elections might be useful for integrating local governments with representative structures at the higher levels. The presence of political parties might be useful in settling conflicts between central government and the local bodies (Gibson and Hanson 1996). Similarly, the presence of political parties in local bodies might promote accountability because political parties usually criticize each other for poor

16 Local Bodies elections 2005: an exercise in politics or confusion
http://www.southasia.fnst.org/webcom/show_article.php/ c-998/ _nr-53/_p-1/a.html?PHPSESSID=46a84caee3f296ecec9e938c32185f
performance and a variety of other reasons (Gazaryan and Jeleniewski 1996). Ribot (2004), however, urges that when candidates are contesting elections independently, elections could be more competitive and could best serve the interests of the poor. He also points out that candidates elected to the local bodies on party basis are less likely to be accountable to the poor citizens.

5.3.8 Participation level of local people in the local government elections
About 50% of the total respondents including both the elected representatives (56.75%) and the local people (50%) confessed that participation of local people in the local government elections was high. However, according to 27.02% of elected representatives and (25%) of local people, participation was low. Some of the respondents [elected representatives (16.21%) and local people (25%)] stated that the number of people who cast their votes was moderate. Based on the information provided by respondents, the average turn out of voters in all the union councils was approximately 45%. Participation of female voters according to a relatively large number of local people (60.71%) was low. However, almost an equal number of elected representatives (62.16%) stated that female participation was fair. According to Keefer et al. (2005), participation rate in the local government elections held in Pakistan from December 2000 to September 2001 averaged 52.5%.

5.3.9 Elections transparent or non-transparent
Contrary to the elected representatives (62.16%) who categorized the recent local government elections as free and fair, a relatively large number of local people (67.85%) regarded the elections as unfair and non-transparent. They underpinned a number of factors responsible for the lack of transparency in the election process. For example, different political parties, local elites, religious entities and the bureaucracy influenced the election process in different ways and through different means. This interference allowed candidates to pressurize voters, to use money for the purchase of votes and to encourage the use of fake identity cards. Similarly, it also compelled the polling staff to support certain candidates. In addition, some technical problems also adversely affected the election process. For example, the number of polling staff was very low and those on duty were not properly trained. Security arrangements at the polling stations were also inappropriate.
5.3.10 Major drawbacks in the election process

According to majority of both the elected representatives (83.78%) and the local people (71.42%) the recent elections had a number of drawbacks. In addition to the above factors responsible for making the election process unfair and non-transparent, respondents also pointed out a number of other factors adversely affecting the election process. They include; election of both union nazim and naib union nazim as joint candidates, confusing ballot papers, casting more than one votes at the same time, distant polling stations, poor information about the election process by government, low level of citizen’s awareness about the election process, a more complicated form of election, persistent traditional cultural values (blood relations, social relations), minimum educational level (S.S.C) for the district and tehsil nazims and naib nazims, indirect election of both the zila and tehsil nazims and naib nazims, absence of mechanisms to prevent the purchase of votes especially in the elections of both the tehsil and district nazims and naib nazims, absence of special mechanisms for preventing smugglers, black marketers, wrong doers and car-lifters etc. from taking part in the elections and violation of the election commission rules by candidates.

5.3.11 Suggestions for improvement

Respondents stated a number of suggestions, which might be useful for holding free and fair elections. According to the local government plan (2000) the nazims and naib nazims of both
the tehsil and district councils are required to hold at least matriculation/secondary school certificate or equivalent. For members of the union councils including union nazims and union naib nazims, this condition is not deemed necessary. It is imperative to specify an educational criterion for all candidates contesting elections at any level of local government. A large number of respondents suggested that union councilors should at least hold secondary school certificate (S.S.C) and the union nazims and naib union nazims should hold higher secondary school certificate (H.S.S.C). Similarly, it was considered desirable for the nazims and naib nazims of both tehsil and district councils to possess bachelor level qualification.

Instead of electing both the union nazims and naib union nazims as well as nazims and naib nazims of both tehsil and district councils as joint candidates, separate elections should be held for the offices of both nazims and naib nazims at all the levels i.e. union, tehsil and district. And more importantly, they should be elected on the basis of adult franchise rather than by the union councilors. Open balloting should be used for electing the district nazims.

Elections of union councilors should be held on ward system rather than multi-member ward system (union council). Number of seats for the general councilors should be decreased. In order to make sure that returning and presiding officers (election staff) do not interfere the election process, they should be appointed from far flung areas. Candidates should be allowed to participate in the elections on party basis or other wise effective mechanisms should be put in place to prevent interference by political parties, local elites and other such entities. Seats should also be reserved for the disabled persons. Candidates intending to stand for elections should be interviewed by a jury. Efforts should also be made to make public aware of the rules/laws/regulations regarding the election process. Other suggestions included; improving arrangement at the polling station i.e. improving security measures, training of election staff, increase in the number of both polling stations and polling staff and enforcement of other regulations set out for participating in the election process.

5.3.12 Devolution of power: actual or nominal
The local government plan (2000) unveiled on 14th of August 2000, was intended to reform the democratic institutions and to empower the people at the grassroots through the transfer
of political, administrative and fiscal powers to the lower tiers of government (ICG 2004). Since the discussion on motivation for the decentralization reforms in Pakistan indicates that the aim was and has always been regime legitimacy, state control and survival (Cheema et al. 2005; ICG 2004), the question as to whether or not and the extent to which political, administrative and financial powers have been devolved to the lower tiers is central to assessing the nature of the Devolution Plan (2000). Because transfer of adequate powers is a crucial condition for decentralization to be effective (Manor 1997).

A thorough knowledge and understanding of the devolved powers and responsibilities is as important as the transfer of power itself. Almost half (48.64%) of the elected representatives were either partially or wholly unaware of the powers being devolved to the lower tiers of government. About half of them (51.35%), however, were able to elucidate their powers and responsibilities. According to them powers and responsibilities assigned to them included; monitoring various devolved departments, maintaining law and order situation, generating local revenues, approving the number of posts in the devolved departments, power to transfer government employees up to grade eleven, planning and approval of community development projects and allocation of funds for development projects. In addition to this, they were also responsible for electing and reviewing of monitoring committees.

Two points are worth mentioning here. First, majority of the respondents (including both those who were not aware of the powers and those who had knowledge of the devolved powers and responsibilities) insist on two factors responsible for their lack of knowledge of the devolved powers and responsibilities. The first thing they pointed out is that the system is new and secondly it is ambiguous. Regarding the exercise of powers, in addition to other factors (will be discussed soon) the ambiguous nature of the system also serves as a major constrain. Another dominant perception among the elected representatives is that the changes introduced exist in theory and not in practice. They also complained of facing strong resistance especially from the civil bureaucracy and pointed out that the system lack specific mechanisms for specifying the powers of different interest groups i.e. elected representatives, MNA’s and MPA’s and the civil bureaucracy.
Another important issue raised by majority of the union councilors is about power relations at the union council level. They complained that both the union nazims and naib union nazims comparatively enjoy maximum powers with most of the development funds at their disposal. Both the union nazims and union naib nazims being members of the tehsil and district councils respectively are politically dominant. The heads of both the tehsil and district councils mainly seek their consultation and suggestions regarding development projects with in their respective union councils. The union councilors stated that they can rarely influence the decisions taken by the tehsil and district heads. Another important issue raised by the union councilors is about the use of funds for development works. They pointed out that funds for development projects at the union level are mostly used on the basis of patronage. At the time of initiating any development project, it is not unusual for the nazims of the union council to give preference to those areas in his electorate where from he got most of his votes. Consequently, other rural areas receiving none or very small amount of funds for development remain underdeveloped. The utilization of funds on the basis of patronage is considered as one of the major factors for the uneven development pattern. The existing set of power relations at the union level was perceived as a major constraint affecting the ability of the union councilors to exercise their powers.

5.3.13 Impacts on political and civil bureaucracy
Prior to decentralization, the country was divided into four administrative units: the center, the province, the division and the district. Both the central and provincial governments were elected and parliamentary. Administration and funding was controlled by the center. Deputy Commissioner used to be the head of the district administration who controlled all the executive, judicial and developmental functions (Keefer et al. 2005). Similarly, both the MNA’s and MPA’s enjoyed substantial powers. In addition to performing legislation responsibilities, they are carried out development works at the local levels and as such had control over the allocation of funds for the proposed projects. According to the Devolution Plan (2000) responsibility for development works was assigned to the local governments. Now elected representatives have been assigned the responsibility for undertaking development tasks with in their constituencies. Local governments propose and allocate budget for the proposed development projects with in their jurisdiction.
Decentralization has also resulted in a shift in powers of the civil bureaucracy as well as the MNA’s and MPA’s. The head of the district government is now an elected nazim. Deputy Commissioner, the head of the district administration is now called District Coordination Officer (DCO) who is answerable to the elected head of the district i.e. zila nazim. The DCO has lost many of his powers and no longer remains the district magistrate or the district collector\textsuperscript{17}.

The most significant change in the powers and responsibilities of MNA’s and MPA’s is the loss of their control over the execution of development projects. The resulting shift in powers and responsibilities is crucial in a number of ways e.g. prior to devolution both the national and the provincial level politicians’ (MNA’s/MPA’s) mainly focused on community development works, now their major focus is on the making and implementation of laws. However, according to ICG (2004), the inclusion of devolution in the sixth schedule of the constitution has limited their role as legislators. There was a general perception among the elected representatives that devolution of power plan has profound impacts on the civil bureaucracy, which has experienced a considerable decrease in its powers. Both the MNA’s and MPA’s have also experienced a considerable loss in their powers. This study, however, finds that the devolution’s impact on the powers of both MNA’s and MPA’s is comparatively marginal because they still have a virtual rather than a direct control over the local governments especially the district governments.

To further elaborate this point, it is worth referring to the section on electoral reforms where majority of respondents unveiled a number of important issues. Two of them are important to mention here. First, that the local government elections were interfered by different political parties and secondly, that elections were actually contested under the banners of different parties. Consequently, most of the candidates elected to the union councils had affiliation with one or another political party. In the next phase, elections were to be held for the tehsil and district nazims and naib nazims. These elections were not based on adult franchise, rather the union councilors had to directly elect both the nazims and naib nazims of the tehsil and

\textsuperscript{17} Cheema et al. (2005)
district councils. Since these councilors were the nominees of different political parties during the local governments’ elections, they could best serve their parties in electing their party’s nominees to the office of nazims and naib nazims at both the district and tehsil levels respectively. Being members of political parties, it is not unusual for the heads of both the tehsil and district councils to serve the interest of their respective parties at the local levels. It can thus be stated that both the MNA’s and MPA’s representing the political party to which the heads of the local governments belong must behave in a friendly manner. This study thus finds that the response of politicians to the new local government system has been positive because of their perception of having a virtual control over the local government system. However, it is also worth pointing out that this virtual control is not a common phenomenon rather it persists in cases where the heads of the district governments belong to the party in power either in the center or in the province. On the contrary, where the heads of district governments belong to a party other than the party in power, the relationship is more like rivals.

Despite substantial decrease in powers of the civil bureaucracy, it is difficult to predict any positive change in their attitude. So for they have been offering resistance to the new reforms. It has been revealed that in a number of cases when development projects were sent to their offices for approval, they showed little interest to cooperate. It is interesting to quote a general councilor who revealed that once the district nazim was insulted by the Superintendent of police (DCO). The nazim complained about his insult in the High Court. In the decision by the court, the DCO was urged to remain accountable to the district nazim. There is a general consensus among the elected representatives that the response of civil bureaucracy to the local government system has been negative.
Figure 5.4 Elected representatives’ perceptions on their ability to exercise their powers, change in powers of both MNAs/MPAs and civil servants and their response to the recent devolution process.
SECTION II

5.4 Introduction
This chapter is interested in assessing the impacts of the recent devolution process on participation, accountability and transparency and the delivery of services in the study area. Participation in this study will be used in two major contexts; democratic participation and participation in the delivery of services. The criterion used for assessing the level of public participation differs in both the contexts. Impacts on accountability will be evaluated on the basis of the existence of formal and informal mechanisms and their level of effectiveness. An assessment of transparency will largely be based on participation mechanisms. Finally, there will be discussion on the impact of the devolution on the delivery of services.

5.5 Participation
One of the major promises of decentralization is to enhance citizens’ participation both in politics as well as the delivery of services. Participation may be defined in a number of ways and used in a number of contexts. In the discussion to follow, the term ‘participation’ will be used in two major contexts. The first relates to politics and the second to the delivery of services. This section intends to assess the impacts of the recent devolution process on citizens’ participation both in politics as well as the delivery of services. It is important to point out that different criteria will be used to assess the devolution’s impacts on participation in both the contexts. Political participation will be evaluated on the basis of any change in citizens’ interest in local politics, the degree of their involvement in the local government elections and the turn out in local elections. On the other hand, participation in the delivery of services will be assessed on basis of whether or not, how (mechanisms for participation) and to what extent, citizens are involved in the decisions regarding the delivery of different services. Participation in the delivery of services (community level development projects) by ordinary people would thus mean that their voices are being heard and taken into account in decisions regarding the choosing, planning, implementation, managing, monitoring and controlling of the community development projects in the locality.
Participation ensures that ordinary people become part of the decision-making processes. It thus avoids the risk that decisions will be taken by few. When citizens become a part of or are being able to influence the decisions, the services provided would match their preferences. Similarly, when services provided will satisfy their preferences, it might create willingness among them to pay for them which in turn might be useful for improving the delivery of those services. It is, however, important to distinguish participation from community contribution.

5.5.1 Participation in politics

About 50% of the respondents [elected representatives (56.75%) and the local people (50%)] confessed that participation of local people in the local government elections was high. However, according to 27.02% of elected representatives and (25%) of local people, participation was low. Some of the respondents [elected representatives (16.21%) and local people (25%)] stated that the number of people who cast their votes was moderate. Based on information provided by respondents, the average turn out of voters in all the union councils is approximately 45%. Participation of female voters according to a large number of local people (60.71%) was low. However, almost an equal number of elected representatives (62.16%) stated that female participation was moderate. According to the information provided on female participation in the recent local government election, approximately 20-25% of the women cast their votes. This percentage (20-25%) is not so high. It, however, indicates that women in the selected union councils for the proposed study had participated in the election process. A study conducted by Aurat Foundation (2004) describes district Mardan as one of those districts where organized campaigns had been launched during the 2001 local government elections to stop women from casting vote. Other districts of the NWFP where such campaigns were carried out include, Swabi, Upper and Lower Dir, Battagram and Kohistan. The major constrains to female participation in the election process according to respondents include religious factors, insecurity problems and unawareness among female voters about the importance of casting their votes.

There is a general consensus among citizens that the devolution process has enhanced citizens’ participation in politics. A number of arguments can be stated to support this notion.
The first and foremost is the fact that it is not possible for ordinary people to contest elections to become members of either the Provincial or the National Assemblies. Because both the provincial and the national level politics is quite demanding in terms of having a strong political background, strong affiliation with a political party and having enormous resources which the local level politicians usually lack. Thus, contrary to the past, where only the rich and the landlords had access to politics, the Devolution Plan (2000) has provided the opportunity to the ordinary people to stand for election and get elected as representatives of the people.

Secondly, citizens’ ties with local level politicians are comparatively stronger than both the provincial and the national level politicians. Two points are worth mentioning here, first, ordinary people hardly have any access to high-level politicians because they mostly stay in capital cities. Secondly, even if any access is possible that is usually through a third party (e.g. the local elites, party workers) and such an access might not be available to majority of the population. As a result, during the parliamentary elections, people are not so much concerned as to who must win and who should lose. Contrary to this, local level politicians usually live with in the constituencies of their electorate. Usually they have strong ties with the local people. In most of the cases, the blood and friendship relations provide strength to such ties. This obviously has positive impacts on the interest and involvement of local people in local politics. It was evident during the previous local government elections, that most of the candidates in addition to other factors (support from political parties) got support on the basis of kinship and friendship. On the one hand, this development enhanced democratic participation and on the other resulted in social conflicts and unrest.

Similarly, prior to devolution, marginalized groups in society e.g. females, minorities, peasants and labor did not have any political representation at both the local and national levels. Devolution has provided an opportunity to these marginalized groups to have political representation at the local as well as national levels. An obvious example of this is the reservation of seats for these groups at the union, tehsil and district levels and also in the provincial and national assemblies. According to the LG Plan (2000), 33% seats have been reserved for women, 5% for minorities and 5% each for peasants and workers. Additionally,
the national and provincial assemblies and the senate have a minimum of 17% seats for women. Over 40000 women got elected to the local councils.

5.5.2 Participation in service delivery
According to Hirschman (1970 in IRIS 1999) the various mechanisms through which people can participate in service delivery and express their preference for public policies can be categorized as voice and exist mechanisms.

a) Voice
Mechanisms that enable local population to participate in the service delivery through expressing both their views about their preferences for different services as well as the problems associated with the delivery of such services. In addition to this, participation through these mechanisms can take several other forms like making choices; being involved in projects and service management. These mechanisms include; elections, surveys, town meetings and public hearings, direct community involvement in service delivery, demonstrations, legal recourse and local referenda (IRIS 1999).

b) Exit
The second mechanism through which citizens can make their voices heard is ‘exit’ which refers to stop using the service. Citizens usually opt for ‘exit’ when voice mechanisms do not exist altogether or when voice mechanisms do not have any positive impacts on the service delivery. When citizens opt to exit, they usually switch to alternative service providers with in the same jurisdiction or move to another jurisdiction (IRIS 1999).

In the discussion to follow, participation in the context of service delivery means participation in the decision making process regarding the delivery of different services. This section will focus on two points. In the first instance, it will try to identify various mechanisms used by elected representatives for involving local population in the delivery of services. Afterwards, it will try to assess the impacts of the devolution process on citizens’ participation in the delivery of services.
Based on the information provided by the elected representatives and the local people, communities in the study area (all union councils) confronted more or less the same types of problems. They include poor infrastructure (roads, bridges etc.), lack of educational facilities, poor access to clean drinking water, sanitation problems, lack of health facilities, high unemployment rates and poverty.

a) Elected representatives’ point of view

Majority of the elected representatives stated that they have an in-depth knowledge of the local problems and that they make special visits for this purpose. They urged that their role in identifying problems in their respective constituencies is vital and in doing so they involve community members. However, mechanisms used by elected representatives for involving local population in problem identification and implementation of community level development projects differed sharply from each other. Some of the elected representatives did not acknowledge the importance of involving local population in problems identification and implementation of projects. They argued that since they are being a part of the community, they are well aware of local problems and better know what to do? Some of them confessed that they get acquaintance with the problems through members of the community i.e. in case when people are facing any problem, they visit us and discuss their problems. Some of them stated that they get information about local problems through local newspapers.

Majority of them, however, revealed that they consult their respective communities in order to know their problems as well as to involve them in the proposed projects. This category of elected representatives considers community as a major stakeholder in development works. They pointed out that lack of participation from communities’ in decisions regarding the delivery of various services would have negative impacts on the process. According to them there are a number of risks associated with the lack of participation by communities. For example, without community participation, it would be difficult to find out the type, location and extent of the existing problems. Similarly, it might be possible that the services provided might not match the preferences of the local population. They urged that since a union council (which usually comprises 5-7 villages) is generally a big area. It is sometimes not
possible for the elected representatives to get acquainted with all the problems in the whole area. Similarly, they also supported the notion that projects cannot be successfully undertaken without participation from community members. They urged that the local councilors representing specific areas usually possess sound knowledge of the problems in their localities. However, they also acknowledged the fact that local people know their problems more than others. Elected representatives used a number of mechanisms for involving local population in the identification of problems relating to the delivery of services.

The most commonly used procedure for involving community in the identification of problems as well as implementation of any related development project is to arrange meetings with the community. Such meetings are important for understanding the nature, severity and importance of the problems. Accordingly, priority is given to problems that are problems of the common. These meetings are usually in the form of Jerga, a type of meeting in which the heads of the local community are invited to participate. In the Jerga, both the local heads and the elected representative try to identify and discuss local problems. Since such meetings (Jerga) are mostly arranged at public places e.g. hugras, it is not possible for the females to participate. Once any problem is identified, say for example, a problem regarding having access to clean drinking water, the elected representative then address the problem is in the council meeting and demands for action. Once the budget is approved and the project designed, again information about the proposed project is shared with the community and accordingly their suggestions are incorporate in the project plan. Local people are rarely invited to participate in the council’s meetings (at the union level) for addressing their problems.

According to a small number of elected representatives community participation in the identification and implementation of community development projects has been poor. Majority, however, admitted that the level of citizens’ participation in delivery of services has been satisfactory. For example, some of the elected representatives pointed out that community’s response in most of the cases has been exemplary. They take keen interest in discussing their problems with the elected representatives and share their expertise as well as
a certain amount of the total cost of the development projects. For example, it was found that in one of the union councils in the study area, community has been willingly sharing almost 20% of the cost of the projects. Community also helped in facilitating the contractor and the government officials in the identification and implementation of development works. It was also found that in some cases community also provided labor force for the projects to be undertaken in the area.

There is a general perception among the elected representatives that the overall impacts of decentralization on local people’s participation in service delivery have been positive. According to the elected representatives since they belong to the same localities, people have easy access to them. The close coordination between the people and their representatives has enabled them to address their issues either through their representatives or directly in their meetings. Devolution has developed a sense of self-responsibility among the citizens. People have acknowledged the fact that the problems confronting their communities are their own problems, consequently they have started to cooperate equally with those who try to solve them. It has increased awareness among the local people about local issues. Decentralization has also developed leadership qualities and decision-making skills among the local people.

The above discussion on whether or not and how the elected representatives involve local populations in the delivery of services was solely based on information provided by the elected representatives. Since it involved only the providers, it is equally important to know the point of view of the users as well.

**b) Local people’s point of view:**

The local people also confessed that elected representatives are aware of the local problems. However, they did not attribute their awareness to the various mechanisms used by elected representatives (discussed earlier). A large number of local people (71.42%) stated that the elected representatives do not make any special visits for identifying and discussing local problems. They visit the local communities occasionally. One can see them only on special occasions e.g. when attending the death or marriage ceremonies taking place in the localities. Such participation is mainly intended to get sympathies of voters. Even when they make any
visit to a local area, it is mostly for political purposes. They can be seen quite often during their election campaigns.

Similarly, 64.28% of the local people said that the elected representatives neither share information with the local people on the proposed projects nor do they get any feedback from the community. They said the elected representative do things without taking into account views and suggestions of the community members. According to 67.85% of the local people, they never attended any of the council’s meetings. They stated a number of reasons for doing so. For example, elected representatives do not provide information on the schedule of their meetings. Similarly, they do not invite people to their meetings. Most of them raised an interesting question that is in the absence of any invitation, how could it be possible for them to participate in the meetings? They also pointed out that there is a lack of coordination between the elected representatives and their electorates. Some of them even did not show any interest in attending the meetings because they considered such meetings as useless. 32.14% of the local people said they have attended the meetings quite a few times. However, only 11.11 of them confessed that have been able to address local issue in the meetings. The rest 88.88% revealed that they could not address local issues in the meetings because the elected representatives dominated the discussion, especially the nazims who generally decides things on their own and not on the basis of general consensus.

![Figure 5.5 Impacts of the devolution process on citizens’ Participation in politics and service delivery](image)

*Figure 5.5 Impacts of the devolution process on citizens’ Participation in politics and service delivery*
5.6 Sources of local revenue

According to the respondents (both elected representatives and the local people), the pre-existing taxes which local population is obliged to pay include, income tax, tax on agricultural land or land revenue (maalya), tax on general bus stands and toll tax. The local union administration has introduced some new taxes, which include fees on birth, death and nikah registrations. A substantial number of the elected representatives (75.67%) pointed out that local people are not responsive to taxation. Most of them were not satisfied with the revenue performance of their respective union administrations. Since any improvements in revenue generation would have positive impacts on service delivery it was imperative to find out whether the elected representatives have taken any measures to arise people consciousness about their tax obligations. There were two distinct views on whether to impose any additional taxes on citizens. A relatively large number of elected representatives (62.16%) opposed the notion of further taxation. They urged that people are already paying a number of taxes. The elected representatives pointed out that being aware of their socio-economic conditions, they recognize the fact that ordinary people are not in a position to pay any additional taxes. They urged that instead of introducing new taxes, it is advisable to reduce the existing burden of taxes on the citizens. Political factors also constrained elected representatives from introducing new taxes. Because when they are campaigning for
election, their slogans mostly include promises such as making living conditions better and easier for the people. When they get elected to the office, they try to avoid sensitive issues like taxation because this might have adverse impacts on their future political career.

Proponents of taxation also understand the fact that this might worsen the living conditions of the local population. They, however, deem it necessary for improving the delivery of services. They insist on taking delicate measures for introducing new taxes in order to increase the local revenue performance. They include e.g. increasing awareness among people about how taxation can help develop their communities. Similarly, it is also important gain confidence of the local population that the taxes they pay will be spent only on development related activities in the area.

Table 5.3 Sources of revenue generation of different union councils

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Union Councils</th>
<th>Source of Revenues</th>
<th>New sources introduced</th>
<th>Revenue performance</th>
<th>L.P. response to taxation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sherghar</td>
<td>Bus stands, Local markets</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Reasonable</td>
<td>Negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makori</td>
<td>bus stands, agriculture</td>
<td>Fees on birth/death certificates</td>
<td>Not satisfactory</td>
<td>Negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lundwhawar</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hathiyan</td>
<td>Bus stands, Markets, Land, agriculture, Mila mal muashee</td>
<td>Fees on birth/death registrations</td>
<td>Not satisfactory</td>
<td>Negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Takkar</td>
<td>Market, Bus stands, agriculture, Maalya</td>
<td>Fees on birth/death registration</td>
<td>Reasonable</td>
<td>Negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pat Baba</td>
<td>Property, Maila toll tax</td>
<td>Birth/death/nikah registration</td>
<td>Reasonable</td>
<td>Negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mian Issa</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.7 Accountability and transparency

This section is interested in exploring both the formal and informal mechanisms in place for ensuring accountability and transparency of the local government systems. In doing so, it is also deemed necessary to assess the effectiveness of these mechanisms. Accountability and transparency are two distinct words that cannot be used synonymously. In order to be able to differentiate between the two words, it is important to define them in the first instance. Accountability means answerability i.e. being accountable means being responsible to
answer questions regarding decisions and actions (Schedler 1999 cited in Brinkerhoff 2001). According to Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary (2000) to be accountable to somebody or something means to be “responsible for your decisions or actions and expected to explain them when you are asked”. It defines transparency as “the quality of something, such as a situation or an argument, that makes it easy to understand”. An insight of the distinction between the two terms is important for identify situations related to accountability and transparency.

According to the elected representatives, a number of committees are in place at the union, tehsil and district levels for monitoring and evaluating the activities of the local governments. These include: accounts committee, union public safety committee and ethics or code of conduct committee. The formulation of such committees is intended to increase the efficiency and accountability of the elected representatives as well as the public servants. Each committee is assigned specific tasks. For example, the accounts committee monitors the use of public funds. It identifies cases of corruption, misuse or waste of the public funds by reviewing the annual audit reports. The public safety committees monitor the performance of police in relation to prevention of crimes and maintenance of general security. It reports citizens’ complaints to the district nazim and the district public safety commission for further action. The ethics committee monitors the misuse of public resources. It also tries to find out whether the elected representatives abide by the oath of office in letter as well as in spirit.

The elected representatives also pointed out some informal mechanisms, which they sought to be effective in making them accountable. They stated that citizens have the right to criticize their actions. Citizens can publish complaints in the newspapers about their wrongdoings. The close contacts between the elected representatives and the people also prohibit them from being involved in corruption. According to the elected representatives, the role of election in enhancing accountability is crucial. The fear that their misdeeds might endanger their political career keeps them on the right track.

A large number of elected representatives (67.56%) stated that they share information with the local population on the type, design and costs of the proposed projects. Such details
according to them are disclosed in a public meeting before the implementation phase. Elected representatives (64.86%) also pointed out the local people usually participate in the union council’s monthly meetings where the exchange of information between the two takes place. In the meetings an overview of the ongoing projects in the area is presented and at the same time planning is done for undertaking projects in future. There is also a question/answer session regarding local issues and ongoing community development projects. In order to make the use of funds more transparent, project committees are formulated which supervise the use of funds. Furthermore, the allocation of funds for different projects takes place through citizens’ community boards (CCB). Such measures are proving effective in minimizing the level of corruption or misuse of funds.

Regardless showing a substantial level of satisfaction about the existing state of accountability and transparency, a large number of elected representatives (62.16%), however, showed their dissatisfaction with the allocation of funds for development works. They pointed out that funds allocation for community development projects at the district as well as union level is mostly based on nepotism.

5.8 Service delivery

According to respondents in the study area, there have been no increases in the number of health, agricultural and educational facilities at the union level since the introduction of the devolution process. Similarly, there have been no increases in the number of staff in both the health as well as educational facilities. It is important to point out that apparently any increase in the number of such facilities has a direct relationship with the provision of services. Since the number remains the same as it was before 2001, improvements in the delivery of services relating to health and education are hardly predictable. Respondents in the study area emphasized the need for establishing educational institutions and basic health units at the union levels. According to elected representatives, their inability to establish new facilities is mainly due to lack of financial resources. They, however, urged that the provision of health and educational services could still be improved with the existing facilities through their effective monitoring.
The elected representatives had launched a number of projects for improving the infrastructure, access to clean drinking water and the sanitation in their localities. It is generally perceived that substantial improvements have occurred in the delivery of some basic services. Majority of the people confessed that they have comparatively greater access to clean drinking water during the post devolution period. There has been substantial improvements in sanitation. Similarly, a number of roads have been cemented in rural areas and efforts have also been made to maintain the existing roads in the area. Table shows details of the number, type and total costs of community development projects undertaken in the study area.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Union councils</th>
<th>No. of projects</th>
<th>Name of the service</th>
<th>Total costs incurred</th>
<th>Total Costs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shergarh</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Drainage program</td>
<td>Rs. 1,800,000</td>
<td>Rs. 2600000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Road Construction</td>
<td>Rs. 800,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makori</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Electricity</td>
<td>Rs. 900,000</td>
<td>Rs. 1800000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Roads</td>
<td>Rs. 300,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sanitation/Sewerage system</td>
<td>Rs. 600,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landkhwar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hathiyan</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Electricity</td>
<td>Rs. 150,000</td>
<td>Rs. 1450000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sanitation/drainage</td>
<td>Rs. 100,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pavement of Streets</td>
<td>Rs. 300,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Roads</td>
<td>Rs. 900,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Takkar</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Rs. 10 million</td>
<td>Rs. 10700000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Health</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Drainage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Roads</td>
<td>Rs. 700,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Put Baba</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Pavement of streets</td>
<td>Rs. 1.6 million</td>
<td>Rs. 2500000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Drainage</td>
<td>Rs. 300,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Roads</td>
<td>Rs. 600,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mian Issa</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Community development projects are financed both through local revenues as well as provincial resources. However, the major source of funding is the provincial government. Most of the elected representatives (62.16%) showed reservations on the allocation of funds for development. They stated a number of reasons for their dissatisfaction. For instance, the district nazim and naib-nazim allocate more funds for development works to their own
constituencies. At the same time, while allocating funds for the union councils, they are more biased towards the union nazims who are either their political allies or are closely associated with them in other ways. The situation at the union level is not much different. Funds are mostly at the disposal of both the union nazi and naib union nazim. They follow in the footsteps of the district nazim, allocating more funds for development in their own constituencies and distributing the remaining on the basis of nepotism. Elected representatives showed some additional concern about their dissatisfaction regarding the allocation of funds. For example, they stated that funds are not allocated for the planned projects within due time. Funds are not allocated on equal basis. Similarly, funds are allocated in small amounts that can hardly compensate for the costs of the projects.

The impacts of decentralization on the level of crime in the area are hardly predictable. It is difficult to say whether there has been a decrease in the crime level after decentralization. The elected representative, however, revealed that in case of any conflict, they try to resolve the issue by peaceful means. They try to bring both parties closer to each other and try to convince them to solve their issue through negotiation. In doing so, they also get assistance from the local police authorities.
SECTION III

5.9 Introduction
The devolution plan promulgated on August 14\textsuperscript{th} 2001, resulted in the transfer of functions of all service delivery line departments including agricultural extension from provinces to the newly elected district governments. This transfer of responsibilities to the lower levels was aimed at improving the efficiency of the existing set up (Malik 2003). This section is mainly intended to assess the impacts of decentralization on agricultural extension services in the study area. In assessing the impacts, the study has taken into account the post-decentralization changes in; capacity and resources of the extension department, number of visits made by extension staff, number of trainings arranged for the farmers and the level of coordination of extension staff with farmers and the elected representatives. The discussion begins with a brief overview of agriculture in the study area, followed by an emphasis on the structural and functional changes introduced in agricultural extension after decentralization.

5.10 A brief overview of agriculture in the study area
Agricultural land in the study area was mostly canal irrigated. The major crops grown in the study area included; sugarcane, sugar beet, wheat, maize, tobacco and vegetables. Farmers were using a mix of both the traditional and modern agricultural practices. They showed great interest in the use of modern agricultural practices due to a number of reasons, for example, such practices save time, reduce labor-force and increase production. However, owing to the fact that agriculture in the area is not fully mechanized, they urged that without traditional practices, it would be difficult for them to carry out farming activities. A considerable number of farmers (67.85\%) stated that they get assistance from other household members in carrying out agricultural activities, the rest (32.14\%) were dependent only on hired labor. None of them, however, confessed to involve or hire females in the farming activities. They pointed out that the major hindrances to female participation in agricultural activities are the cultural norms. However, this might be true only in case of the area selected for the proposed study and should, therefore, not be employed to farming at other places within the same or the rest of the provinces. Women do play an important role in agriculture. To further elaborate this, it is important to point out that women’s participation
rate in agriculture according to 1980 agricultural census was 73% and that they provided 25% of all full time and 75% of all part-time workers in agricultural households (ESCAP 1996). Similarly, according to the 1991-1992 Labour Force Survey the proportion of rural women (79.4%) engaged in agricultural sector is comparatively higher than rural men (60.8%) (UNDP 1997). Especially in areas where agricultural land is mostly rain fed, crop production is usually not sufficient for meeting the subsistent needs of the household. In such cases, male members of the household usually try to seek employment in sectors other than agriculture. This results in an increase in the burden of work on female members of the household. Similarly, productions of certain crops like cotton have also generated substantial demands for female labour. All such factors have feminized agriculture in Pakistan to a great extent (GOP 1995).

Farmers in the study area were confronting a number of problems. The problems included; water logging, salinity, crops’ and vegetables’ diseases prevalent in the area, insects and pests attacks, higher costs of production, lower prices of crops, taxes on farming community, lack of incentives such as no interest free loans for small farmers; no cost recovery in case of natural disasters, shortage of irrigation water, marketing problems, lack of farm to market roads, high prices of inputs (insecticides, pesticides, seeds, fertilizers), low quality of inputs, non-availability of good quality of inputs, high rates of illiteracy among farmers and lack of information.

5.11 Structural and functional changes introduced
Agricultural extension reforms are mainly categorized into (a) market reforms and (b) non-market reforms. Market reforms include; revision of public sector extension systems, pluralism, cost recovery and total privatization where as the non-market reforms comprise (1) decentralization which is the transfer of central government authority to lower tiers of government and (2) subsidiary which is the delegation of responsibility to the lower levels (Porter 2001). The market reforms are proposed to privatize the management of agricultural and rural extension systems wholly or partially and directly or indirectly where as the non-market reforms are proposed to relieve the burden of financial and management responsibilities on the central government (FAO 2001).
Prior to devolution, the Directorate General of agricultural extension administered all the extension activities at the provincial, district as well as the union council’ levels. Agricultural extension like other bureaucratic agencies used top-down approaches in planning and implementation of programmes. Similarly, its links with research, education and other farm support system were also tenuous (Malik 2003). Devolution has brought some structural and functional changes in agricultural extension. According to the District Officer Agriculture (DOA), the major structural changes introduced include: the creation of a new post, the ‘Executive District Officer Agriculture (EDOA)’ at the district level; the designation of Extra Assistant Director of Agriculture (EADA) has been abolished and replaced by DOA. Similarly, prior to decentralization, agricultural officers were recruited through the provincial public service commission where the field assistants and the field workers were recruited by the Director General Agriculture (DGA). Decentralization has brought about some changes in the recruitment procedure as well. Agricultural staff above BPS-11 are still recruited by the provincial public service commission. However, extension staff up to BPS-11 is now recruited by district government.

Similarly, among the functional changes introduced after decentralization, the most prominent is to bring the activities of other line departments such livestock, agricultural extension, water management, soil conservation, fisheries and forestry under the supervision of the EDOA. The DOA works under the EDOA who in turn is answerable to the District Coordination Officer (DCO). The DCO reports to the district nazim. The Directorate General of Agriculture Extension is now mainly responsible for keeping coordination with the District Extension Services and providing them technical support. However, the DG Agricultural Extension also retains responsibility for agricultural training and information, adaptive research, in-service training, plant protection and quality control, agricultural planning and statistics, and coordination.

The structural and functional changes promulgated seems to have positive impacts on strengthening the existing set up and efficiency of agricultural extension. Contrary to the past, when the whole extension network was administered by a single body, the DGAE and
the approaches used for planning were mostly top-down, the district government now administer agricultural extension which comparatively possess a better knowledge and understanding of local issues and problems related to agriculture. Malik (2003) points out that due to decentralization of the extension services in Pakistan, problems and issues relating to agriculture are now addressed at the local level. Similarly, planning and implementation of agricultural programmes is also done at the local level.

The recruitment of staff up to BPS-11 by district might have positive impacts on the delivery of services. Since the staff is recruited by the district government, hence they are likely to be accountable to the elected public representatives which might increase their efficiency. At the same time, it might be feasible for them to work in their home district. However, there is also a risk associated with the transfer of authority to district government for recruiting extension staff i.e. the politicization of staff recruitment. This might adversely affect the quality of the extension services because the extension staff recruited on the basis of patronage would lack the required technical skills. Malvicini (1996) points out politicization of staff recruitment as a major factor responsible for degrading the quality of extension services in the Philippines. Owning to the politicization risk of staff recruitment, the retention of previous selection procedure (i.e. through Provincial Public Service Commission) for staff above BPS-11 seems genuine. Furthermore, the selection criterion in this case comparatively demands substantial technical know how which the elected representatives often lack. Thus extension staff selected on the basis of patronage coupled with the lack of required technical knowledge on part of the elected representatives might result in recruitment of non-suitable personnel, which may finally lead to the collapse of the extension network.

The merging of different agricultural departments under the supervision of one person i.e. EDOA is crucial for improving coordination among these departments. Malik (2003) urges that once coordination is established among different line departments, it would improve their efficiency and effectiveness on the one hand and avoid duplication, wastage of time, energy and other resources on the other hand. He also points out that the abrupt merger of other departments with agricultural extension has also created a lot of confusion. In many
cases, on the basis of seniority, officers other than the agricultural extension staff became the EDOA.

An important feature of the decentralization reforms is the devolution of functions to the district government only for the agricultural extension services. Agricultural research, adaptive research, agricultural engineering and agricultural education still continue to be under the control of the provincial government. This might further exacerbate the existing tenuous research-extension-education linkages. Similarly, the dissociation of extension services from the DGAE might reduce the technical support it used to receive from the DGAE (Malik 2003).

**5.12 Changes in capacity and resources**

Extension services at the union level are mostly carried out by field assistants and field workers. In a single union council there is one field assistant and one field worker. The desirable qualification for the field assistants include; possession of secondary school certificate (S.S.C) and one year training in the field of agricultural extension which entitle them to hold a diploma in agricultural extension. The training is provided by the DG Agricultural Extension/by the provincial agricultural extension services. Field workers are illiterate. At both the union and the district levels, no female was serving as extension staff in the extension department. It is interesting to highlight the response of field assistants in this regard who stated that during recruitment, priority is mostly given to males because conditions in the field are often challenging for the female extension staff. Challenges are mostly posed by cultural norms as well as security situation in the filed. The cultural norms prohibit contacts of females with individuals outside the family domain. Even if the cultural values are put aside, there is no guarantee to ensure their safety during their visits to remote areas. Secondly, females’ role in the filed is still not recognized. It is worth quoting a field assistant who stated, “*During 1984, almost hundred females got training as field assistants. However, most of them were associated with producing juices*."

The number of extension staff serving in a single union council remains the same (field assistant & field worker one each/union council) even after decentralization. Similarly, decentralization has not resulted in any increases in the salaries or other incentives of the extension staff.
According to the DOA, the number of ongoing agricultural projects in the district is four. The names, location and estimated costs of these projects are given in table 5.5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Name of the project</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Costs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Integrated Management of Fruit fly</td>
<td>Entire district</td>
<td>Rs. 800,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Integrated Management of Termites</td>
<td>Entire district</td>
<td>Rs. 800,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Farmers’ Field Schools</td>
<td>Hathian, Taru and Ghari Kapura</td>
<td>Rs. 10,00,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Integration of Agricultural Research &amp; Extension Activities</td>
<td>Not known</td>
<td>Not known</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Similarly, the number of extension programmes undertaken at different localities in the district is four. Table 5.6 shows the names and locations of the extension programmes in the entire district.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Name of Extension Programme</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Farm Service Center</td>
<td>Kaatlung, Turu, Ghari Kapura, Chargulli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Farmer Support Units</td>
<td>Hathian, Takht Bhai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Frontier Seed Corporation</td>
<td>Takht Bhai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Seed Production</td>
<td>Jamra Farm Takht Bhai</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The DOA confessed that there has been no increase in the number of either the ongoing agricultural projects or the extension programmes in the district after decentralization. The major sources of funding for these projects and programmes are both the provincial and the federal governments. He also admitted that in addition to the provincial and federal
governments, the district government also allocate budget for agricultural extension. However, the allocated amount is too small for covering the expenses related to the salaries, staff development and other extension services. The extension staff at the union level, however, did not confirm any budgetary allocation for agricultural extension programmes by the union administration. Both the DOA and the extension staff at the union levels pointed out that so far, the extension department has not taken any step to negotiate with farmers’ or farmers’ organizations to share the costs of the extension services. Similarly, it was also mentioned that so far, no women focused extension programmes have been launched at the district as well as the union levels.

According to Smith (1997), central governments decentralize agricultural services because of the complexity of the local issues or due their inability to finance the entire network of the agricultural services. Similarly, FAO (2001) urges that decentralization of the agricultural extension are often proposed to relieve the burden of both financial and management responsibilities on the central government.

5.13 Service Delivery
5.13.1 Visits by extension staff
According to the field assistants, they carry out regular field visits to contact farmers. During their field visits, they try to identify problems in the field e.g. disease outbreaks, insects/pests attacks and accordingly give suggestions to farmers on control measures. They also try to persuade farmers to use new breeds in order to increase production of different crops. They urged that during their visits, they contact farmers regardless of their landholding size or social status. Farmers are, however, contacted on individual basis. When inquired as to whether they possess the requisite skills to satisfy their clients, they confessed to be deficient in the technical know how because there are no proper and regular training opportunities available to them. The extension staff pointed out that decentralization has not so far incurred any impacts on the frequency of their visits i.e. the number of visits remain the same as it used to be prior to decentralization of agricultural extension.
Farmers’ viewpoint in this regard varies substantially. Their viewpoint contradicts with that of the extension staff in two ways. First, they do not accept the claims of extension staff about the frequency of their visits. They pointed out that the extension staff visit them rarely. They mentioned two options available to them in case they are confronting any problem in the field. The first option is to personally visit the nearby extension department and the second is to contact a local dealer. The number of farmers using the first option was 25% compared to those (46.42%) who preferred to contact a local dealer. The rest (28.57%) confessed to have been using both the options.

Farmers also provided information on the number of visits conducted before and after decentralization. Even though the frequency of visits both during the pre and post decentralization periods is quite low. It is, however, interesting to note that a comparison of the pre and post decentralization visits by extension staff shows that there has been an increase in the number of visits to some degree. For example, 46.42% of farmers stated that prior to decentralization, the extension staff used to visit them 4-6 times a year. 21.42% said that they were being visited once a month while the rest (32.14%) stated that the extension staff never visited them. During the post decentralization period, the number of farmers confessing to have been visited every month is 60.71%. Similarly, 28.57% stated that they were being visited 8-10 times during a year. While only 10.71% stated that they were never being visited by extension staff. A substantial number of farmers (64.28%) also complained that extension staff is more interested in making contacts with big landowners.

From the above information it is evident that both the DOA and the extension staff admit that there has not been any increase in the number of filed visits of extension staff after decentralization. At the same time it is also evident that during the post decentralization period there has been an increase in the number of visits to some extent. It points towards an important issue i.e. whether this increase should be attributed to the decentralization reforms or to other factors.

As far decentralization is concerned, we see no change in the capacity and resources of the extension department i.e. the number of staff, their salaries and other incentives, number of
extension facilities and programmes are the same as these used to be prior to decentralization. Increase in efficiency of the staff apparently has a direct relation with improvement in the capacity and resources of the extension department. With the existing resources, it might not be possible to frequently reach majority of the farmers. A more or less the same concern was shown by majority of the extension staff who urged that decentralization must be followed by an increase in the number of field assistants in order to reduce the burden of responsibility on the present staff. The field assistants should be provided motor cycles in order to enhance their ability to contact large numbers of farmers. Similarly, if field assistants were provided additional incentives like medical and house allowances, this will also enable them to work more efficiency.

At this point, we are now left to discussing factors other than decentralization, which might have had positive impacts on the efficiency of extension staff. It is important to point out that a number of private companies are also involved in seeds and pesticides business in the area. They include: BAYER Crop Science, Dow Agro Chemicals, Syngenta Pakistan, Angro Seeds, Kargoon Corporation Ltd., Pakistan Tobacco Board, Lekson Tobacco Board and Kissan Supplier Services. They have their dealers in the local areas. Since these companies are competing with each other, in addition to their own staff, they also tend to seek services of local extension staff in marketing of their products. The dealers also follow the same principle i.e. they make a deal with the local extension staff to get a specific percentage in return for marketing their products. It is interesting to note that some of the extension staff showed their affiliation with different companies and confessed that they work for promoting their products. Hence, it is important to point out that any improvement in service delivery and increase in production that might have had occurred in the area during the post decentralization period may largely be attributed to the degree of interest and involvement of the private companies in the area.

5.13.2 Training facilities
Except the extension staff in one union council i.e. Hathian where extension programmes were established in the form of farmers’ field schools and farmers’ support units, staff in the rest of the union councils confessed that training facilities available to the farmers are
nominal. Even after decentralization, no special measures have been taken to provide training facilities to the farmers. Farmers in the study area also showed unawareness about any training opportunities available to them. The DOA, however, stated that the extension department provides training facilities to the farmers. He also mentioned the areas in which training is being provided to them. The areas in which training is provided include:

1. Control of termites, fruit fly and other insects/pests.
2. Cultivation of major crops
3. Safe use of pesticides

According to the DOA, trainings are usually arranged at agricultural officer circle level. Normally 2-3 trainings are arranged per circle per month. Since 2001, about two thousand farmers have been trained in the above-mentioned areas. Number of training provided before 2001 is not known.

One can see a huge contradiction between the information provided by the extension staff at the union levels and that provided by the District Agricultural Officer. The information provided by the extension staff at the union level apparently seems genuine because it closely matches the information provided by the farmers in the study area. To support this notion, first we revert to the section on capacity and resources of the extension department that contains information on the ongoing agricultural projects as well as agricultural extension programmes in the district. It is evident that the total number of extension programmes is four, which are established at eight different locations in the entire district (for details, please refer to table-). The table shows that out of seven union councils where this study was conducted, agricultural extension programmes have been established in only one union council (Hathian). In the absence of well-established programmes, it is less likely to believe that there will be opportunities for the farmers to get trained.

Similarly, the information provided by the DOA on the number of trainings provided per month (which is 2-3 time/month) and the number of farmers who got the training opportunity (which is about 2000 since 2001) seems to be less likely support the notion that farmer
throughout the entire district do have training opportunities. Because this study was carried out during December 2004. Since 2001 until 2004, the duration comprised of four years. Multiplying the number of years by the number of months in a year, we get 48 months. Now multiplying the number of months (48) by the number of trainings provided each month (say for example 3), we get the total number of trainings, which is 144. Dividing the total number of trainees (2000) by the total number of trainings (144), we get 13.88, which represent the total number farmers trained in a single training session. This figure does not look so bad. However, it is important to point out that the total number of union councils in the district is 74. In order to find out the total number of farmers from each union council participating in a single training session, we divide the total number of farmers (13.88) participating in a single training session by the total number of union councils in the district (74) and get 5.33. Which means that only 0.18 farmers from a single union council has the opportunity to get trained. Similarly, it might be possible that figure 0.18 might not be representative of the all union councils in the district.

Hence, even if it is assumed that the extension department do provide training opportunities to farmers, owing to the limitation of such opportunities, it might be stated that these can hardly serve the interest of majority of the farmers, the interest to get trained in the technical know how.

5.14 Coordination between extension staff and elected representatives

Farmers have been given representation at the union, tehsil and district levels through the reservation of seats in the form of male/female peasants/worker (kissan councilors) (LG Plan 2000). According to kissan councilors, being representatives of the farming communities, their major concern is to work for development of the agriculture in their constituencies. They stated that they keep regular contacts with farmers’ to get acquainted with their problems. They address those problems in the council’s meetings and give suggestions for taking remedial actions. It was also revealed that they also take measures for ensuring increased availability of agricultural inputs such as seeds, pesticides and fertilizers and keep a check on the quality of the these inputs as well. Majority of the elected representatives including kissan councilors confessed that they do not have any coordination with the extension staff and that there is no mechanism in place for monitoring the level of services
they provide. They complained that most of the field assistants do not perform their duties. They urged that they lack the authority to make them accountable for the inefficiency in delivering their services.

The union administration, so far, has not allocated any budget for undertaking any agricultural specific projects. The elected representatives stated that agriculture is on the priority list during allocation of budget. Priority, however, is given to community development works like drinking water supply, sanitation, and pavement of streets. The elected representatives stated that their local revenue performance is poor and the funds received from the district government is hardly enough for covering the costs of social service delivery. They urged that because of financial constraints, it is not possible for the union administration to allocate funds for agriculture.

On the other hand, the extension staff at the union level also did not seem satisfied with the level of interest and commitment of elected representatives especially the ‘kissan councilors’ towards agriculture. They stated that so far, the union administration has not been able to allocate budget for initiating extension programmes in the area. The DOA, however, confessed that attitude of elected representatives’ towards extension has been positive. They work in coordination with the extension department through the Agricultural Committee at the district level. The extension department tries to involve them in the activities of different programmes arranged from time to time. The DOA urged that since the elected representatives live in their constituencies, they keep regular contacts with the extension staff. This has resulted in profound impacts on the interest and moral of the extension staff. The decentralized extension services are comparatively more responsive to the needs of local farmers because elected representatives can make extension staff accountable for their inefficiency and lack of interest in fulfilling their obligations.

It is evident that there is a lack of coordination between the extension staff and the elected representatives at the union level. On the contrary, at the district level, coordination between the extension department and the district government exists to some degree. The existence of coordination between the agricultural extension staff and the elected representatives is due to
a number of factors. For example, the DOA and EDOA are accountable to the district nazim. Similarly, the district government also allocates some funds for the ongoing agricultural projects and extension programmes. And most importantly, at the district level an agricultural committee exists which serves to facilitate this coordination. The existence of these factors at the union level is nominal.
CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

Promulgated on August 14th 2001, the devolution plan devised to strengthen the democratic institutions and to empower people at the grassroots through the introduction of local governments is similar to the previous two attempts at decentralization in Pakistan especially in its context. That is, another military coup took place on October 12, 1999 and resulted in the overthrown of a democratic government through the use of force. Consequently, shortly after the coup, the non-representative regime announced the devolution of power to the grassroots. This contextual resemblance with the previous local government reforms is crucial to understanding the regime’s motivation for the recent decentralization move, which most probably is to legitimize control over the state and to ensure future survival. Cheema et al. (2005), rightly point out that an understanding of the historical context of previous local government reforms is imperative for understanding the recent decentralization in Pakistan. From the historical context it is evident that local government reforms introduced both during the pre and post-independence periods share an important characteristic that is the reforms have always been promulgated by non-representative regimes, for instance, the British during the pre-independence period and the military during the post-independence period. During the post-independence period, the reforms have mainly been used as a means for gaining legitimacy by sidelining the political forces at the provincial and national levels.

Despite exhibiting some continuations, the recent devolution plan, however, is considerably distinct from the previous local government reforms as far its substance and structure is concerned. Its most prominent distinguishing features include; the devolution of political, administrative as well as fiscal powers to the lower tiers (union, tehsil and district) of government, the direct election of the union councils’ heads (union nazims and naib union nazims), reservation of seats for women, minorities and workers & peasants at the union, tehsil and district levels, integration of rural and urban areas, political and electoral integration of the lower tier (union council) into higher tiers (teshil and district councils) of local government and the devolution of provincial functions to the local governments.
There is a general perception among the elected representatives that contrary to the previous devolution attempts, the current devolution process has devolved substantial political, administrative and fiscal powers to the lower tiers of government. However, due to its ambiguous nature, the system lacks mechanisms to specify powers of different interest groups i.e. elected representatives, MNA’s and MPA’s and the civil bureaucracy. It is due to this ambiguous nature of the new local government system that elected representatives are neither aware of the devolved powers and responsibilities nor can they exercise their powers. Power relations at the union level also hamper elected representatives’ ability to exercise their powers because the union nazims and naib union nazims being politically dominant always have an upper hand in decision making.

The ambiguous nature of the system is further exacerbated by the fact that the decentralization process is incomplete in many respects. For example, Cheema et al. (2005) point out that there has been devolution of provincial powers to the district and lower levels of government but there is no transfer of federal powers either to the provinces or the local levels. Similarly, the process is not uniform across all administrative departments. For example, the police and irrigation departments were retained by the province even after decentralization. In a similar vein, not all services within a given department have been decentralized. Malik (2003) points out that only agricultural extension services have been devolved within the agricultural department while research and extension still remains a provincial subject (Malik 2003).

The two important continuations of previous local government reforms in the current devolution plan include; the lack of effective mechanisms for providing protection to local governments in the long run and the non-party based local governments’ elections. Cheema et al. (2005) and Zaidi (2005) point out that despite the establishment of local governments’ structure, Pakistan still continues to be a two level federal state. Even though local governments have been provided constitutional protection for a period of only six years, they are still not recognized as the third tier of government by the 1973 Constitution. The higher tiers i.e. the provinces and the center still retain the power to suspend local governments. The second important continuation which the Local Government Plan (2000) explicitly describes
is the holding of local elections on non-party basis (LG Plan 2000). Hence for the local
governments to survive in the long run, it is crucial to give them constitutional recognition or
otherwise it is most probable that history might repeat itself. At the same time, it is also
important to make this tier of government acceptable for the provincial and national level
politicians because the resistance offered by them is often considered as an important factor
responsible for the consistent fragile nature of local government systems in Pakistan as
Cheema et al. (2005) and Zaidi (2005) have rightly pointed out that while military’s politics
supported local governments, elected governments always undermined them.

The very reason of resistance offered by politicians is the fear to lose powers and incentives
in case the third tier of government is being recognized. An interesting finding of this study,
however, is that the response of both MNA’s and MPA’s to the newly established local
government system has been positive so far. It is because candidates contesting local
government elections were representing different political parties. This enabled political
parties to exist at the lower tiers (union, tehsil and district levels) of government. Thus the
notion that their interests being safeguarded at the lower levels as such has resulted in a
decline in the amount of resistance offered by higher level politicians. It is, therefore,
important to underpin that involving political parties in the political process at the lower
levels might prove vital for the future survival of the local government system in Pakistan.
More or less the same comments have been stated by Gibson and Hanson (1996) who urge
that involvement of political parties in local elections might be useful for integrating local
governments with representative structures at the higher levels. It might also be useful in
settling conflicts between central government and the local bodies. Similarly, the
involvement of parties in local election might have positive impacts on the transparency of
the election process since this study perceives interference by political parties in the local
elections as one of the major factors responsible for making the election process non-
transparent.

Regardless of the various bottlenecks the current devolution process possesses, it is
interesting to point out that the current local government system has got enormous
recognition among majority of the people. Contrary to the past when people rarely had any
access to both MNA’s and MPA’s and that high level politicians rarely had any knowledge and understanding of local level problems and issues, the devolution plan has brought the government closer to the people. Since elected representatives live in the constituencies of their electorate, they have comparatively strong ties with the local people. Consequently they have comparatively better understanding of local issues and are easily accessible to the public than the higher-level politicians. In addition to this, the existence of strong kinship and friendship relations at the local level further strengthen these ties which obviously has positive impacts on the interest and involvement of local people in local politics. It is, however, worth noting that the strong kinship and friendship relations have also resulted in social conflicts. In addition to increased participation in politics, the devolution process has also provided increased opportunities for the ordinary people to get representation. Since both provincial and national level politics is quite demanding in terms of having considerable political experience, strong political background and other resources, which the ordinary people often lack. The reservation of seats has enabled marginalized groups especially women, minorities and peasants & workers to get representation at the local as well as the provincial and national levels.

Elected representatives pointed out different mechanisms for involving ordinary people in the delivery of services. These include; making of frequent visits to local communities, arrangement of public meetings, carrying out consultation and participation of people in the meetings of representatives. Local people, however, revealed that the so-called mechanisms do exist but are rarely practiced. Elected representative according to them can only be seen on special occasions, for example, marriage and death ceremonies. They do not share any information with community on the proposed projects. Furthermore, due to lack of coordination the people and their representative, local people’s participation in their meetings is minimal. Hence, devolution impacts, if any, on participation in the delivery of service are nominal.

In the study area, there has not been any increase either in the number of health or educational facilities or the number of staff in such facilities during the post devolution period. The union administrations, however, have undertaken a number of small-scale
community development projects relating to construction and repairing of rural roads, pavement of streets, sanitation and electricity. It is generally perceived that there has been improvement in the delivery of social services during the post devolution period. Elected representatives showed great commitment for undertaking small-scale community development projects. Financial constraints, however, hampered their commitment. Since their local revenue performance was poor, they simply relied on limited provincial resources. Elected representatives showed their dissatisfaction over the allocation of funds. Resource allocation was based on patronage and nepotism, a phenomenon prevalent at all the three levels of local government.

As earlier mentioned, the recent decentralization process in Pakistan in not uniform across all departments and services with a given department. The same is true in case of agriculture where responsibility for agricultural extension services has been devolved to the lower levels while agricultural research and education administered by provinces. The changes introduced in agricultural extension after devolution have both merits and demerits. For example, planning and implementation of agricultural and extension programmes will now take place at the local level. Recruitment of agricultural staff by district government might be useful for enhancing their efficiency because it might be feasible for them to work in their own district. This, however, might politicize the recruitment procedure, which might have adverse impacts on the quality of extension services as the staff recruited on the basis of patronage might lack the requisite skills.

The merging of different agricultural departments under the supervision of one person i.e. EDOA might improve coordination among these departments. The abrupt merger of other departments with agricultural extension has also created a lot of confusion (Malik 2003).

As far as capacity and resources of agricultural extension department is concerned, no significant changes have taken place so far. The number of extension staff as well as agricultural and extension programmes remains the same as prior to decentralization. Agricultural extension department still receive most of the funds from the provincial and federal governments for the execution of projects. The district government also allocates
some budget for the agricultural extension. At the union level, there is no allocation of funds for agriculture. Similarly, at the district level, there is coordination between the district government and the agricultural extension department while at the union level such coordination is nominal.

Since there has not been any change in the capacity and resources of the agricultural extension department after decentralization, it is difficult to predict any improvement in the delivery of services, hence there has neither been any change in the number of visits by agricultural extension staff nor in the number of trainings for both the staff and the farmers. If any improvement in the present state of agricultural in the study has occurred so far, it might be attributed to the efforts made by private companies.
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Appendix 1

Department of International Environment & Development Studies
(NORAGRIC)
Norwegian University of Life Sciences (UMB)

Questionnaire for the Elected Representatives

Questionnaire No.-------------------------

District------------------------------------

Union Council---------------------------

Name of the interviewee-------------------------

Personal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Marital status</th>
<th>Size of household</th>
<th>No. of children</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

1. For how long have you been engaged in politics?

2. State the name of the political party you represented during the previous elections?

3. What inspired you to become an elected representative?

Decentralization

4. Do you understand the meaning (concept) of decentralization/devolution?

5. Do you think that the current decentralization process has taken place as a result of a political will?

6. If its not the result of a political will, please state what are the real motives for introducing the decentralization process?

7. In what respect does the current local governments system differs from the local governments’ systems during the Ayub and Zia’s eras?

8. Which of the following political systems do you like most?

   (a) the current democratic system
(b) the democratic system which was replaced by the current system after October 12, 1999.

9. How would you categorize the current decentralization process?
   (a) is it political decentralization
   (b) is it administrative decentralization
   (c) is it fiscal decentralization
   (d) is it economic or market decentralization

10. Which of the above forms of decentralization do you think is the most appropriate form of decentralization and why?

11. Do you think that decentralization has resulted in political stability and national unity?

**Elections**

12. How would you categorize the recent elections held for appointing the elected representatives?
   (a) party based
   (b) non-party based

13. What was the level of participation of the local people in the electoral/election process?

14. How would you categorize the election process?
   (a) elections were fair
   (b) elections were not fair

15. If the elections were not fair, what factors/reasons do you think are responsible for it?

16. What was the level of participation of female voters in the election process?

17. What do you think were the major drawbacks in the election process?

18. As compared to the previous local governments’ elections (Ayub/Zia’s ear), what major changes have been introduced in the electoral process after the devolution?

19. Do you have any suggestions for future improvement of the election process?

**Powers and Responsibilities**

20. What powers/responsibilities have been transferred to the elected representatives by the center?

21. Do you have full authority to exercise the powers/responsibilities at your disposal?
22. In case you are not able to exercise your powers, what reasons would state for being unable to exercise the powers?

23. How has the shift in powers/responsibilities affected the powers/responsibilities of the MNA’s/MPA’s and the civil servants e.g. the DCOs etc?

24. How has decentralization affected their control over allocation of resources (funds/others) and their decision making power?

25. What is the response of different groups (social/political/religious/others) to the decentralization process?

**Participation**

26. What are the major developmental problems/issues confronting the local community?

27. What procedures do you use for the identification of problems in the community?

28. Do you involve the community in the identification of problems?

29. State the number, types and costs of community development projects (works) undertaken during the last five years?

30. How do the community members participate in the identification and implementation of community development projects (works)?

31. What is the level of participation of the community members?

32. Do you think that the decentralization process has broaden participation of the local people in political, economic and social activities?

33. How are the community development works (projects) financed?

34. How are the resources/funds distributed/allocated at the district level?

35. Are you satisfied with the distribution/allocation of funds/resources?

36. If you are not satisfied with the distribution of funds, state your reasons for the dissatisfaction?

37. What are the main sources of your local revenue?

38. What new sources of revenue have you introduced during the last five years?
39. What was your local revenue performance during the last five years?

40. How responsive are the people to taxation?

41. What measure have you taken to arouse people consciousness about their tax obligations?

Accountability

42. What criteria is used for the allocation of funds for community development works at the union council level?

43. What mechanisms are in place for assuring transparency in the use of funds on community development works?

44. Do you think that the elected representatives are accountable to the local people/community?

45. Has there been an increase in the accountability and transparency of the public sector (Government departments)?

46. What measures have been taken for increasing accountability and transparency (of both the elected representatives as well as the public sector) after devolution?

Provision of services

47. Has there been any improvement in the provision of services (education, health services etc.) after decentralization?

48. Has there any increase in the number of staff in the above departments after decentralization?

Agriculture

49. What are the major agricultural problems in the area?

50. Is there any sort of representation in the local assembly (union council/district) for the local farmers?

51. In addition to other community development projects, do you also allocate funds for agricultural specific projects?

52. Are there any projects in place in the area for the agricultural development?

53. Do you work in coordination with the agricultural extension department in the areas?

54. Do your monitor the activities of the extension workers in the area?
55. Are you satisfied with level of services provided by the extension workers in the area?

56. Has there been any improvement in the level of services provided by the extension workers in the area after decentralization?

57. Do you think that the agricultural extension workers are accountable to the local elected representatives?

58. How would you explain the overall impacts of the decentralization on agriculture in the area?

59. Any other comments:
Appendix 2

Department of International Environment & Development Studies
(NORAGRIC)
Norwegian University of Life Sciences (UMB)

Questionnaire for the Community Members

Questionnaire No.-------------------------
District------------------------------------
Union Council-----------------------------
Name of the interviewee-----------------------------

Personal:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Marital status</th>
<th>Size of household</th>
<th>No. of children</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Decentralization**

1. Do you understand the meaning (concept) of decentralization?

2. Do you think that the current decentralization process has taken place as a result of political will?

3. If it’s not the result of any political will, please state what were the real motives for introducing the decentralization process?

4. In what respect does the current local governments system differ from the local governments systems during the Ayub and Zia’s eras?

5. Which political systems do you prefer most and why?
   
   (c) the current democratic system with powers being devolved to the lower levels
   (d) the democratic system which was replaced by the current system after October 12, 1999.

6. How would you categorize the current decentralization process?
(e) is it political decentralization
(f) is it administrative decentralization
(g) is it fiscal decentralization
(h) is it economic or market decentralization

7. Which of the above forms of decentralization do you think is the most appropriate form of decentralization and why?

8. Do you think that decentralization has resulted in political stability and national unity?

9. Has there been any change in the political, social and economic activities at the local level after the decentralization reforms?

10. Any other comments on decentralization in general:

**Elections**

11. How would you categorize the recent elections held for appointing the elected representatives?

   (b) party based   (b) non-party based

12. What was the level of participation of the local people in the electoral/election process?

   (a) high   (b) low   (c) moderate

13. State the approximate turn out of voters in percentage (in your locality)?

14. How would you categorize the electoral/election process?

   (b) elections were transparent   (b) elections were not transparent

15. If the electoral/election process was not transparent, what factors/reasons do you think are responsible for it?

16. What was the level of participation of female voters in the election process?

   (a) high   (b) low   (c) moderate

17. State the approximate turn out of female voters in percentage (your locality)?

18. What do you think were the major drawbacks in the election process?

19. As compared to the previous local government elections in the past, what major changes have been introduced in the electoral process after the devolution process?
20. Do you have any suggestions for future improvement of the election process?

21. What criteria did you follow for voting/supporting a candidate during the elections?

**Candidates**

22. Are you satisfied with the criteria set out for participating in the local elections?

23. Do you think that the elected representative possess the requisite qualities (qualification as well as other skills) to represent the local community?

24. During their election campaigns, what promises were made by the elected representatives to draw voters attention/support?

25. How far they have been successful in keeping their promises after being successful to become councilors/nazims?

26. If they have not been able to keep the promises they made at the time of election, what reasons would you state for their inability to put their words into action?

27. Do you think that the elected representatives are best serving the community?

28. In case of any problem do you have easy access to the office of your local elected representative?

29. Do you think that the elected representatives enjoy full authority/power to make significant decisions on local issues/problems?

**Participation**

30. What are the major developmental problems/issues confronting the local community?

31. What is the level of awareness of the elected representatives about local problems?

32. How frequent do the elected representatives visit you or your fellow villagers?

33. What usually is the purpose of such visits?

34. State the number, types and costs of community development projects (works) undertaken during the last five years?

35. 19. Do the elected representatives involve the community in the design and implementation of the projects?

36. How do the community members participate in the design and implementation of such projects?
37. What is the level of participation of the community members in development projects undertaken by the elected representatives?

38. Do the elected representatives arrange any meetings to hear suggestions from the local community regarding the development projects/works?

39. Did you ever attend the monthly meetings (assembly) of the local elected representatives?

40. How frequent do you attend such meetings?

41. Have you ever got a chance to address local issues/problems in the assembly meeting of the local representatives?

42. If you haven’t participated in meetings of the local assembly, what reasons would you like to state for being unable to participate?

43. Is there any institutional structure for facilitating participation of the local people in decision making, community development works etc.?

44. Do you pay any tax/revenue?

45. State the types of taxes that you pay?

46. Do you willingly pay the taxes?

47. Do you think that the decentralization process has broaden participation of the local people in political, economic and social activities?

**Accountability**

48. Are there any local social structures/organizations in the area to monitor the elected representatives?

49. Do the elected representatives share information on the costs of the community development projects with the local people?

50. Do they invite the local community members to participate in their monthly meetings?

51. Is there any question/answer session in such meetings regarding local issues?

52. In case of any complaint, do they answer the questions put by the local people OR are they ready to defend their actions?

53. Is there any case where the local representative has made wrong use of public funds?
54. Is there any mechanism in place to monitor the use of public funds?

55. What has been the impact of decentralization on corruption?

56. Is there any system to monitor that the doctors regularly arrive at the local health facilities and the teachers regularly showing up at the educational institutions?

57. Do you think there been an increase in the accountability and transparency of the public sector (departments) after the decentralization reforms?

58. What measures/mechanism are in place for increasing accountability and transparency (of both the elected representatives as well as the public sector) after devolution?

59. What in your view can increase accountability of both the elected representatives as well as the public sector employers?

**Provision of services**

60. Give a general description of the major problems in the area regarding health, education, sanitation, transportation, drinking water, access to justice etc.?

61. What is the number of public health facilities (hospitals, dispensaries etc.) in the locality?

62. Any new public health facilities established in the locality after 2001?

63. Do you think any improvement has taken place in having easy access to health facilities after 2001?

64. What is the number of educational facilities (schools, colleges etc.) in the area?

65. Has there been any increase in the number of educational facilities in the locality after 2001?

66. Any increase in the number of staff in the educational facilities?

67. Has any improvement taken place in having increased access to education in the area after 2001?

68. Do you have access to clean drinking water?

69. How do you get water for drinking?

70. Has any efforts made by the local councilor/naib nazim/nazim to provide clean
drinking water to all the households in the area?

71. Has any improvement occurred in having increased access to clean drinking water after 2001?

72. Are there any sanitation problems in the area?

73. Has the local elected representative done anything to improve the sanitation situation in the area?

74. Briefly state the problems associated with infrastructure (roads, streets etc.)?

75. Has there been any improvement in the infrastructure (roads, streets, street lights) after 2001?

76. How frequent do the elected representatives visit you or your fellow villagers?

77. Have you ever contacted any local representative about an issue/problem affecting your village?

78. If yes, did you find the elected representative helpful?

79. Did you find the person contacted as “honest” and fair-minded”?

80. What is the level of crimes in the locality?

81. What has been the impact of decentralization on the level of crimes in the area?

82. Do you think that elected representatives have any role to play to keep the crime level at the minimum?

83. Do you think decentralization has improved access to justice for the local people?

84. Any other comments regarding provision of services:

85. Any other comments on decentralization
Appendix 3

Department of International Environment & Development Studies
(NORAGRIC)
Norwegian University of Life Sciences (UMB)

Questionnaire for Agricultural Extension Staff

Questionnaire No.-------------------------
District------------------------------------
Union Council----------------------------
Name of the interviewee-------------------------------------

1. Rank/designation of the interviewee:
   (a) Executive District Officer of Agriculture (EDOA)
   (b) District Officer Agriculture (DOA)
   © District Coordination Officer (DCO)
   (d) Extension officer
   (e) Field worker

2. What is your educational level?
3. For how long have you been serving in this department?
4. State the names and locations of agricultural extension facilities (departments) in the
district (or union council):
5. What structural and functional changes have been introduced into the agricultural
extension services after the decentralization reforms?
6. Has there been any increase in number of agricultural extension facilities
   (departments) and resources in the district after the decentralization reforms?
7. Has there been any increase in the number of extension staff after the
decentralization reforms?
8. If yes, state the number of extension staff before 2001 and between 2001 and 2005?
9. What is the number of extension staff per union council?
10. Are there any female extension staff in the department?

11. What was the procedure for the recruitment of the extension staff before 2001?

12. Is the recruitment procedure remains the same as applicable before 2001 OR changes have been introduced after 2001?

13. If the recruitment procedures have been changed, state its effects on the quality of services of the agricultural extension staff?

14. What are the effects of the decentralization on the career development opportunities and incentives of the extension staff?

15. Has there been any increase in the salaries/other incentives of the extension staff after the decentralization reforms?

16. State the number, names and locations of the ongoing agricultural development projects in the district (or union council)?

17. What was the number of such projects before 2001? State their names and location?

18. Has there been any new project/ projects launched in the district (union council) after 2001?

19. Is the community involved in the identification, design, selection and implementation of the projects?

20. State the estimated costs of the ongoing projects in the district (or union council)?

21. Indicate the sources of funding of the projects?

22. How are the operational costs for the extension services covered?

23. Does the local government/district assembly allocate budget for agriculture/extension services?

24. Is the budget allocated by local government/district assembly enough for the salaries, staff development and other extension activities?

25. Have you negotiated with farmers/farmers organizations to share the costs of the extension services?

26. How frequent did the extension staff used to visit the farmers/fields before 2001?

27. How frequent have the extension staff/field workers been visiting the farmers after
28. Is the visit conducted to contact individual farmers or farmers’ organizations?

29. What is the main purpose of the visit?

30. While conducting a field visit, preference is given mostly to which category of farmers?

31. How well equipped is the extension staff with the skills needed for identifying the problems and meeting the farmers’ needs?

32. Do you think that the decentralization reforms have brought the extension staff more close to the clients (farmers)?

33. Are there any farmers’ associations/organizations in the area?

34. Who established these farmers’ organizations?

35. Do you work in coordination with the farmers’ associations/organizations?

36. What is the level of farmers’ interest and participation in the meetings arranged by the extension staff?

37. Does the extension department provide training facilities to the farmers?

38. State the number of trainings being arranged in each union council per month or per year after 2001?

39. How many farmers have got training so far?

40. State the number of trainings provided before 2001?

41. State the number, names and locations of the extension programmes in the district?

42. Have you launched/initiated any women focused extension programmes in the district (or union council)?

43. Are there any NGO’s/private sector agencies/projects working in partnership with extension department in the district (or union council)?

44. State the number, names and locations of the research facilities/centres functioning in the district (area)?

45. If research centres/facilities exist in the district (area), state the nature of the linkage between the extension department and the research facilities?
46. If there is no research facility/centre in the area, state the nature of the extension department linkages with the central research facilities?

47. Do you think that decentralization has resulted in improved institutional responsiveness and accountability with in the extension department/services?

48. What in your view lead the government to decentralize the agricultural extension?

49. In what respect does the current decentralized agricultural extension differs from the previous extension approaches (e.g. The Village Cooperative Movement, The Village-AID, BDS, IRDP and T and V System)?

50. What is the level of interest and commitment of the elected representatives towards agriculture?

51. Does the District Government (elected representatives) work in coordination with the extension department?

52. Is there any relationship between the level of interest of the elected representatives and the morale and motivation of the agricultural extension staff?

53. Do you think that the present (decentralized) agricultural extension services have become more responsive to the needs of the local farmers especially small scale farmers?

54. What are the overall impacts of the decentralized agricultural extension services on agricultural production in the district (area)?

55. Any other comments you wish to make about decentralization, agriculture, agricultural extension?
Appendix 4

Department of International Environment & Development Studies
(NORAGRIC)
Norwegian University of Life Sciences (UMB)

Questionnaire for the Farmers

Questionnaire No.-------------------------

District-----------------------------

Union Council------------------------

Name of the interviewee------------------------

1. How old are you?
2. What is your educational level?
3. What is your marital status?
4. What is the size of your household?
5. How many children do you have?
6. What is your landholding size?
7. How long have you been engaged in farming?
8. Are you engaged in a business other than farming/agriculture?
9. Do you get assistance from the rest of the household members in carrying out the farming activities?
10. If the female members of the household participate in the farm work, state the form and level of their contribution/participation in the farming?
11. Is your farmland canal irrigated or is rain fed?
12. State the names of the crops you grow?
13. In carrying out the farming activities, which agricultural practices do you use/follow?

   (a) Traditional agricultural practices   (b) Modern agricultural practices
14. If you still use the traditional agricultural practices, state your reasons for doing so?

15. If you use modern agricultural practices/techniques, state
   (a) What inspired you to adopt such practices
   (b) State the source you use to get acquainted with the modern agricultural techniques

16. What are the major agricultural problems in the area?

17. What is your plan of action when you confront any problem (e.g. disease, insect/pest attack, any other) in the field?

18. Do you have any agricultural extension facility/department in the area/vicinity?

19. In case of any problem, do you visit the extension department yourself or staff from the department makes regular visits to the area?

20. How frequent do the extension staff visit you/the area?

21. How frequent the extension staff used to visit you/the area five years ago?

22. Which category of farmers does the extension staff visit most frequently?

23. What activities are carried out by the extension staff during their visit?

24. State the form and level of assistance you get from the extension staff in case of any problem?

25. Besides individual visits, does the extension staff also arrange meetings for the farmers where they can address their problems?

26. What used to be the number of such meetings five years ago (i.e. before 2001)?

27. What is your level of interest and participation in the meetings arranged by the extension staff?

28. Does the extension department in the area provide training facilities to the farmers in the field of agriculture?

29. State the number of training programmes arranged for the local farmers during the last five years?
30. What used to be the number of such training programmes five years ago (i.e. before 2001)?

31. How well equipped in your view is the extension staff with the skills needed for identifying the problems and meeting the farmers' needs?

32. Do you think that the decentralization reforms of the agricultural extension services have positive impacts on the quality of service of the extension staff?

33. Do you think that the decentralization reforms have brought the extension staff more close to the farmers?

34. How would you describe the attitude of the extension staff five years ago (i.e. before 2001)?

35. Do you think that the services delivered by the extension agents satisfy the needs of the farmers?

36. Are the extension agents answerable/accountable to the local communities and farmers’ organizations?

37. Do you think that the local communities or farmers’ organizations have control over the management of the extension services?

38. Do the farmers (or farmers’ organizations) have the power to appoint or withdraw individual extension staff?

39. Do you have any farmers’ organizations in area?

40. Who established these farmers’ organization?

41. Did the extension staff/department offered any assistance in the establishment of these organizations?

42. What are the main goals/objectives to be achieved through the farmers’ organizations?

43. How successful are the farmers’ organizations in achieving these goals/objectives?

44. Does the extension staff/department work in coordination with the farmers’ organizations?

45. Name the agricultural development projects/programmes undertaken by the agricultural extension department in the area during the last five years?
46. Is community involved in the selection, design and implementation of such projects/programmes?

47. Name any NGO/Private company/agency working for agricultural development in the area?

48. State the form and level of their cooperation?

49. What in your view is the level of interest and commitment of the elected representatives towards agriculture in the area?

50. Do you (the farmers) have representation in the local assembly?

51. State the form and level of contribution of the kissan councilor in the development of agriculture in the area?

52. How far is your farm from the market?

53. Do you have farm to market road facility?

54. Has there been any improvement in the development of rural infrastructure (e.g. construction and maintenance of irrigation facilities, rural roads etc.) during the last five years?

55. Has there been any improvement in the availability of seeds and planting material and other farm inputs like fertilizers, pesticides, farm machinery etc. during the last five years?

56. Do you think that the decentralization reforms has resulted in bringing new area under cultivation?

57. Has there been any increase in the average yield/acre during the last five years?

58. Any other comments you wish to make about decentralization, local government plan, agriculture, agricultural extension.