

## **The Nexus of Federalism and Economic Development: A Politico-Economic Analysis of Balochistan, Pakistan**

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**Abstract :** Balochistan, the largest landmass named after and dominated by the 55% Baloch population, which has had a difficult anti-center history like their brothers the Kurds of Middle East, reluctantly acceded to Pakistan in 1947. The region, which attained the status of a province after two decades of accession, has lagged behind in social development and economic growth as compared to the other three federating units. The province has seen the least financial autonomy and administrative decentralization both in autocratic and democratic dispensations under geostrategic and security considerations. Significant corrections have been recently made in the policy framework through changing the formula for intra-provincial National Finance Award, curtailing the number of subjects under federal control, and reactivating the Council of Common Interests. Yet policymaking remains overwhelmingly bureaucratic under a weak parliamentary oversight. The provincial coalition governments are unwieldy and directionless. The government machinery has much less than the optimal capability, character, integrity, will, and opportunity to perform. Decentralization further loses its semblance in the absence of local governments for long intervals and with the hold of hereditary tribal chiefs. Increased allocations failed to make an impact in the highest per capita cost environment due to long distances and scattered settlements. Decentralization, the basic ingredient of federalism has remained mortgaged to geo-strategic factors, internal security perceptions, autocratic and individualistic styles of governments, bureaucratic policymaking structures, bad governance, non-existent local governments, and feudalistic tribal lords. This suboptimal federalism speaks for the present underdevelopment in Balochistan and will earmark the milestones in the future.

**Keywords :** Balochistan, economic development, federalism, political economy

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