

EVOLUTION OF ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS OF PAKISTAN:
AN OVERVIEW 1951-1998

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The internal structure of the sovereign states is organized and shaped through a complex process of decision-making; a process which is ongoing because the needs of economic development, national reconstruction and political consideration necessitate periodical changes or readjustments in the existing boundaries of the administrative units. In some cases, the government decides to create administrative units on the basis of some cultural or economic criteria so as to aid rational planning and encourage the cooperation of the people involved (Group 2004). In other cases, it decides to make the divisions arbitrary, deliberately breaking up and rearranging traditional or physiographic units so as to weaken the traditional loyalty or forester loyalty to the central authority as has been the case with Nepal where reorganization occurred in 1956 and 1961. The creation of regions in France during 1970's or changes in the UK in 1974 and 1975 reflect that an administrative area is not a sum of spaces. It is much more than that. It comprises man, environment and society (Zaidi 1966, Whitney 1970).

There is, however, evidence to show that the spatial form of such areas change over time and space. Such changes involve the question of location of boundaries, which profoundly affect the entire pattern of linkages and movement behavior of the inhabitants of the affected administrative areas. The factors like growth of urbanization and changes in transportation effecting reduction in distance may be used to justify the need for making changes in the spatial pattern of administrative areas (Massam 1972).

A study of evolution of administrative areas of an area clearly reflects numerous changes as seen in terms of geometry, linkages, interaction and administrative convenience.

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This study investigates the changes that have taken place in the administrative areas of Pakistan since 1951 when first census of population was conducted. Pakistan inherited a hierarchy of administrative system from the colonial British government for their administration in the pre-partitioned sub-continent. However, ever since independence, several changes in the boundaries have taken place and a number of administrative areas have been created and reorganized (Ziring 1998).

The changes in the administrative areas have occurred due to a number of factors. Explosive growth of population since independence accompanied by urbanization, industrialization, growth of agricultural sector, development of transportation etc. necessitating changes in the boundaries of administrative areas and creation of new administrative units for the purpose of this study. All the changes in the boundaries have been carefully prepared with the help of Geographic Information System (GIS) using software ARCVIEW 3.1

In 1951, Pakistan consisted of the hierarchical structure of the following territorial subdivisions as represented in descending order by province, division, district, tehsil / taluka (as called in Sindh) and village, whereas princely states (under direct rule), the tribal areas and the federal capital area of Karachi.

Since 1951, these administrative territories have passed through various stages of development; the province of Punjab was subdivided into divisions and the princely state of Bahawalpur. The divisions of Punjab were further divided into districts while the state of Bahawalpur was under the rule of a Nawab or ruler (Table-1). Sindh province was divided into districts and not divisions. Federal capital area of Karachi, classed as urban, was located in Sindh province. Khairpur State was the only princely state in this province. NWFP was divided into six districts and the tribal areas and states were termed as Frontier Regions. Dir, Chitral and Swat were the princely states of the Frontier Region (Government of Pakistan 1951).

The fourth province of Pakistan namely Balochistan was

divided into two kinds of territorial units: one, Balochistan States union (princely states) and two, Balochistan which was subdivided into districts. Kalat, Kharan, Makran and Lasbela were the princely states in Balochistan State Union. (Figure 1)

Subsequently the princely states were absorbed as administrative districts. The peculiar problems of tribal groups in some areas of NWFP were reorganized by the special arrangements of local and federal government.

The province of Sindh included eight districts and Khairpur state. Karachi was the national capital and thus the federal territory. Punjab included three divisions: Lahore, Multan and Rawalpindi, which were subdivided into sixteen districts and Bahawalpur State. NWFP was divided into districts and frontier regions. There were six districts included in the province. Frontier regions were divided into princely states and tribal agencies.

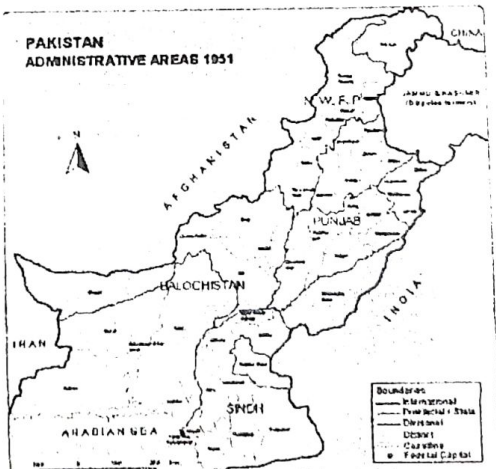


Fig:1

Balochistan was divided into five districts and the State Union comprising of four states. (Figure .1)

In Pakistan, the loyalty to tradition has preserved the provincial map to a large extent in the form inherited at the time of partition. In India, reorganization of constituent states (provinces) took place in the early years of independence on the basis of the dominant languages. In some cases, existing districts have been sub-divided to create more manageable administrative units. The former princely states were also converted into administrative districts under the control of a deputy commissioner.

In the post-partition period, the major changes in the boundaries of the provinces and states was introduced in October of 1955 when all of them were merged to form the unified larger province of West Pakistan (Government of Pakistan 1954) called One Unit.

It is evident that Pakistan inherited the system of administration from the British colonial rulers designed to suit the needs of only colonial government. The main objective and activities centered on the maintenance of law and order and revenue collection (Ziring 1971), it did not fulfill the aspiration and wishes of the people (Hyman 1990).

The system has been studied by the National Planning Commission in the First Five Year Plan (1955-60) and the consecutive plans (Government of Pakistan 1955, 1960, 1965) etc. The Provincial Re-organization Committee (1959-60) and the Provincial Re-organization Committee (1961) also presented reports. The findings have shown that the system did not fulfill the requirements and needs of a young democratic Asian state faced with the task of nation-building and socio-economic planning. Therefore, the above mentioned committee / commissions stressed the need for changes in the functioning of administrative areas as well as changes in the area context.

This formation of One Unit was rationalized, generally, according to the following points, (Dawn November 23, 1954):

1. It will affect savings in the cost of administration.
2. It will help speed up the economic development of all parts of West Pakistan.

3. The task of framing the constitution will be simplified (in which both East and West Pakistan are placed on equal footing).

It is this merger of provinces that necessitated the creation of divisions (before these merger divisions existed only in the Punjab) simply as a link between the provincial government and the districts, without much power (Zaidi 1961). In the absence of divisions there was only one level of coordination for administrative and development functions at the executive stage.

As stated earlier, the decade of 1951-61 witnessed merger of provinces and princely states into One Unit with Lahore as its capital. The Unified larger province of West Pakistan was divided into divisions which in turn, were divided into districts. The division was an administrative innovation, but the usefulness of which has long been debated (Rizvi 1980). Only British colonial authorities had favored this level of administration in the administrative hierarchy.

Census of Population 1961 (Table 2) recorded no specific changes in the administrative areas of Pakistan, the only exception being the creation of divisions as indicated above and the creation of Sanghar district in Hyderabad division (Figure 2) Government of Pakistan 1961).

The experience of the late 1950 and 1960's in Pakistan was promising in the sense that some changes were introduced in the agrarian sector of the economy. This, however, called for more frequent appraisal, which could adequately take note of the rapid changes both in the economy and demography. (Maddick 1970, Mahmood 2003)

It is important to note that throughout the 1950-60 decade, districts had responsibility for all social and economic change. Functionally, the district was charged with the duty of coordinating the activities of all local authorities (both urban and rural) within its jurisdiction. This wide range of functions, therefore, indicated the fact that the district area gained a new character from administrative, development and planning points of view. An area

unit and its administration go together (Fesler 1949, Mahmood 2003) and good governance is not possible until a rationalization of area, boundary and functions is done. It was concerned with the district boundaries, which in 1960 led to the Provincial Administration Commission's recommendations. One of the recommendations was that the larger districts should be partitioned into smaller units taking into consideration the size, population and functions of the districts.

It was late 1969 when One Unit was abolished and the four pre-One Unit provinces of the Punjab, NWFP, Sindh and Balochistan were restored. As a result of 1969 administrative reorganization the divisions were abolished, though not for a longer duration of time. The district administration came under the direct rule of the Home Department of the respective provincial governments.

Another relic of the British colonial administration has been the retention of tribal territories as federally administered areas, later known as FATA (Federally Administered Tribal Areas) and Northern Areas of Gilgit etc. as FANA (Federally Administered Northern Areas).

With the restoration of provinces and the emergence of Islamabad as the capital of Pakistan Karachi ceased to exist as the federal Capital Area in 1969. The capital was first shifted to Rawalpindi which became the foster parent for a new capital to be built at Islamabad. With this, Karachi regained its status and function as the capital of Sindh.

1972 census of population provides a new picture of the administrative areas. Restoration of old provinces of the Punjab, NWFP, Sindh and Balochistan and shifting of national capital from Karachi to Islamabad etc. are the major changes that have occurred in the administrative structure of Pakistan (Table 3). There have been very little increase in the number of districts in the four

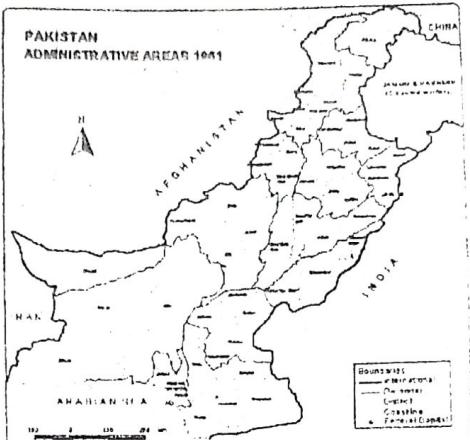


Fig:2

provinces (Government of Pakistan 1972). The other important change introduced was the bifurcation of Kalat district into Kalat and Kachi districts (Figure 3).



Fig:3

According to population census, 1981, the number of divisions rose to sixteen and the number of districts increased to sixty-four, Islamabad continued functioning as Federal Capital territory (Figure 4). Census was held for the first time in the FATA (Table 4) Government of Pakistan 1981).



Fig:4

The next decennial census could not be held ten years later in 1991 owing to very strange circumstances. It was actually held under the military supervision seventeen years later in January 1998 (Table 5) (Government of Pakistan 1998).

In 1998, the number of districts had almost doubled compared with the 1972 census (Figure 5). It took approximately twenty-five years when such major changes occurred in the district



Fig:5

boundaries of Pakistan (Government of Pakistan 1998). The reorganisation and or creation of new administrative areas is an ongoing process considering the needs of the growing population of a country and in view of day to day problems of administrative nature.

An overview of the five decennial censuses shows that very few changes have taken place in administrative areas in the first three decades of the country's life (Figure 6).

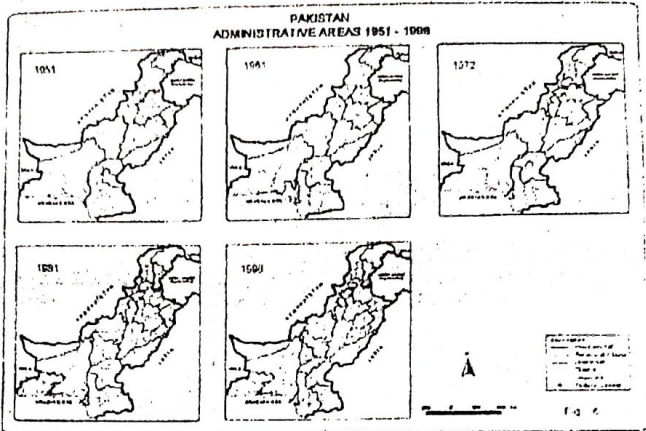


Fig:6

There are areas where a complex pattern of smaller districts have emerged due to tremendous increase in the size of population, for example, northeastern Balochistan or central NWFP (Figure 7).

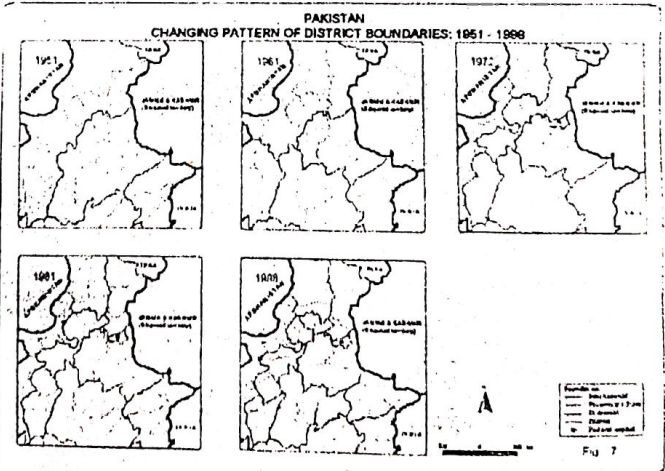


Fig:7

Table I
ADMINISTRATIVE AREAS 1951

Province	Division / State	District	Province	Division / State	District
Sindh		Dadu			Kohat
		Hyderabad			Mardan
		Larkana			Peshawar
		Nawabshah	Frontier Regions	Malakand	Chitral State
		Sukkur			Dir State
		Tharparkar			Kalam State
		Thatta			Swat State
		Upper Sindh Frontier			Malakand Protected Area
		Khairpur State		Agencies	Khyber
Punjab	Lahore	Gujranwala			Kurrum
		Lahore			North Waziristan
		Sheikhpura			South Waziristan
		Sialkot		Tribal Area Adjoining Districts	Bannu
	Multan	Dera Gazi Khan			Dera Ismail Khan
		Jhang			Hazara
		Lyallpur			Kohat
		Montgomery			Mardan
		Multan			Peshwar
		Muzaffargarh	Baluchistan		Chagai
	Rawalpindi	Campbellpur			Loralai
		Gujrat			Quetta-Pishin
		Jhelum			Sibi
		Mianwali			Zhob
		Rawalpindi	Baluchistan State Union	Kalat State	
	Shahpur		Kharan State		
	Bahawalpur State		Lasbela State		
N.W.F.P.		Bannu		Makran State	
		Dera Ismail Khan	Federal Territory		Karachi
		Hazara			

Table 2
ADMINISTRATIVE AREAS 1961

Province	Division	District	Province	Division	District
West Pakistan	Hyderabad	Dadu			Lyallpur
		Hyderabad			Mianwali
		Sanghar			Sargodha
		Tharparkar		Dera Ismail Khan	Bannu
		Thatta			Dera Ismail Khan
	Khairpur	Jacobabad			North Waziristan
		Khairpur			South Waziristan
		Larkana		Peshawar	Hazara
		Nawabshah			Kohat
		Sukkur			Mardan
	Bahawalpur	Bahawalnagar			Peshawar
		Bahawalpur			Khyber Agency
		Rahim Yar Khan			Kurram Agency
	Lahore	Gujranwala			Mahmand Agency
		Lahore			Malakand Agency
		Sheikhpura		Kalat	Kalat
		Sialkot			Kharan
	Multan	Dera Gazi Khan			Makran
		Montgomery		Quetta	Chagai
		Multan			Loralai
		Muzaffargarh			Quetta-Pishin
	Rawalpindi	Campbellpur			Sibi
		Gujrat			Zhob
		Jhelum		Federal Territory	Karachi
		Rawalpindi			Lasbela
	Sargodha	Jhang			

Table 3
ADMINISTRATIVE AREAS 1972

Province	Division	District	Province	Division	District
Sindh	Hyderabad	Dadu	N.W.F.P.	Dera Ismail Khan	Bannu
		Hyderabad			Dera Ismail Khan
		Sanghar		Malakand	Chitral
		Tharparkar			Dir
		Thatta			Malakand
	Karachi	Karachi East			Swat
		Karachi South		Peshawar	Hazara
		Karachi West			Kohat
	Khairpur	Jacobabad			Mardan
		Khairpur			Peshawar
		Larkana	Baluchistan	Kalat	Kalat
		Nawabshah			Kharan
		Sukkur			Lasbela
Punjab	Bahawalpur	Bahawalnagar			Makran
		Bahawalpur		Quetta	Chagai
		Rahim Yar Khan			Loralai
	Lahore	Gujranwala			Quetta
		Lahore			Zhob
		Sheikhpura		Sibi	Kachhi
		Sialkot			Sibi
	Multan	Dera Gazi Khan	F.A.T.A.		Bajur
		Multan			Khyber
		Muzaffargarh			Kurrum
		Sahwal			Mahmand
	Rawalpindi	Campbellpur			North Waziristan
		Gujrat			Orakzai
		Jhelum			South Waziristan
		Rawalpindi			Ad. Area Bannu
	Sargodha	Faisalabad			Ad. Area D. I. Khan
		Jhang			Ad. Area Kohat
		Mianwali			Ad. Area Peshawar
		Sargodha	Fed. Territory		Islamabad

Table 4
ADMINISTRATIVE AREAS 1981

Province	Division	District	Province	Division	District
Sindh	Hyderabad	Badin		Hazara	Abbottabad
		Dadu			Kohistan
		Hyderabad			Mansehra
		Sanghar		Malakand	Chitral
		Tharparkar			Dir
		Thatta			Malakand
	Karachi	Karachi East			Swat
		Karachi South		Peshawar	Kohat
		Karachi West			Mardan
	Sukkur	Jacobabad			Peshawar
		Khairpur	Baluchistan	Kalat	Kalat
		Larkana			Kharan
		Nawabshah			Khuzdar
		Shikarpur			Lasbela
		Sukkur		Makran	Gawader
	Punjab	Bahawalpur	Bahawalnagar		
Bahawalpur					Turbat
Rahim Yar Khan				Quetta	Chagai
Lahore		Gujranwala			Loralai
		Kasur			Pishin
		Lahore			Quetta
		Sheikhpura			Zhob
		Siakot		Sibi	Kachhi
Multan		Dera Gazi Khan			Kohlu
		Multan			Nasirabad
		Muzaffargarh			Sibi
		Sahiwal	F.A.T.A.		Bajur
		Vehari			Khyber
Rawalpindi		Attock			Kurram
		Gujrat			Mahmand
		Jhelum			North Waziristan
	Rawalpindi			Orakzai	
Sargodha	Faisalabad			South Waziristan	
	Jhang			Ad. Area Bannu	
	Mianwali			Ad. Area D. I. Khan	

		Sargodha			Ad. Area Kohat
N.W.F.P.	Dera Ismail Khan	Bannu			Ad. Area Peshawar
		Dera Ismail Khan	Fed. Territory		Islamabad

Table 5
ADMINISTRATIVE AREAS 1998

Province	Division	District	Province	Division	District
Sindh	Hyderabad	Badin			Batagram
		Dadu			Haripur
		Hyderabad			Kohistan
		Thatta			Mansehra
	Karachi	Karachi Central		Kohat	Hangu
		Karachi East			Karak
		Karachi South			Kohat
		Karachi West		Malakand	Buner
		Malir			Chitral
	Larkana	Jacobabad			Lower Dir
		Larkana			Malakand
		Shikarpur			Shangla
	Sukkur	Ghotki			Swat
		Khairpur			Upper Dir
		Naushero Firoze		Mardan	Mardan
		Nawabshah			Swabi
		Sukkur		Peshawar	Charsadda
	Mirpur Khas	Mirpurkhas			Nowshera
		Sanghar			Peshawar
		Tharparkar	Baluchistan	Kalat	Awaran
		Umar Kot			Kalat
Punjab	Bahawalpur	Bahawalnagar			Kharan
		Bahawalpur			Khuzdar
		Rahim Yar Khan			Lasbela
	Dera Gazi Khan	Dera Gazi Khan			Mastung
		Layyah		Makran	Gwadar
		Muzaffargarh			Kech
		Rajanpur			Panjour
	Faisalabad	Faisalabad		Nasirabad	Bolan
		Jhang			Jafarabad
		Toba Tek Singh			Jhal Magsi

	Gujranwala	Gujranwala			Nasirabad
		Gujrat		Quetta	Chagai
		Hafizabad			Killa Abdullah
		Mandi Bahauddin			Pishin
		Narowal			Quetta
		Sialkot		Sibi	Dera Bugti
Lahore		Kasur			Kohlu
		Lahore			Sibi
		Okara			Ziarat
		Sheikhupura		Zhob	Barkhan
Multan		Khanewal			Killa Saifullah
		Lodhran			Loralai
		Multan			Musa Khal
		Pakpattan			Zhob
		Sahiwal	F.A.T.A.		Bajur
		Vehari			Khyber
Rawalpindi		Attock			Kurram
		Chakwal			Mahmand
		Jhelum			North Waziristan
		Rawalpindi			Orakzai
Sargodha		Bhakkar			South Waziristan
		Khushab			Ad. Area Bannu
		Mianwali			Ad. Area D I. Khan
		Sargodha			Ad. Area Kohat
N.W.F.P.	Bannu	Bannu			Ad. Area Lakki Marwat
		Lakki Marwat			Ad. Area Peshawar
	Dera Ismail Khan	Dera Ismail Khan			Ad. Area Tank
		Tank	Fed. Territory		Islamabad
	Hazara	Abbottabad			

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