



RESEARCH ARTICLE

**Political Parties and Devolution of Power in Punjab after the 18th Amendment**

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*In Pakistan, there has been an interesting relationship between the political parties and the local governments, marred by distrust and suspicion. Political parties see the local governments as the rivals due to the historical ties of the latter with the military regimes. In the democratic periods, the political parties have changed the power dynamics by taking off the municipal powers from the local governments and handing them back to the provinces. Even after the 18<sup>th</sup> amendment, in Punjab, there was a weak devolution of fiscal and administrative powers during the PML-N era. Article 140A has remained a hollow constitutional promise due to lack of interest and reluctance of political parties in devolution of power. The PTI government in Punjab dissolved the existing local government in March 2019 through an ordinance. The Punjab Local Government Act (PLGA) 2021 was introduced by the PTI government with a promise of devolution and community development. The province with a population of almost 110 million is being governed through the offices of the district commissioners. This paper is based on qualitative research which aims to find out the factors responsible for barring the ruling political parties from empowering the third tier of the government in Punjab.*

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