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GALLUP PAKISTAN POLL FINDINGS ON

SUPPORT FOR ‘CONFEDERATION’ IS LIMITED BUT SIGNIFICANT

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SUPPORT FOR 'CONFEDERATION' IS LIMITED BUT SIGNIFICANT

According to a recent Gallup poll public opinion support for the "Confederation" idea is quite limited, but not insignificant. 12% of the respondents in a nationality representative survey supported the notion that Pakistan should have a confederal structure, which would allow a minimum degree of authority to the Central Government, while the provinces would enjoy a highly autonomous status. 66% of the respondents opposed the confederal idea and supported a federal structure for the country. The remaining 22% did not give any opinion on this matter.

The survey was conducted by Gallup Pakistan in 100 statistically selected villages and 75 urban locations all over the country. These locations were selected through a scientific procedure, which ensured that the sample would be a true cross-section of various regional, linguistic, income and age groups in the country. The findings were later computer processed to analyze the pattern of responses in different segments of the population.

Contrary to common expectations, the support for Confederation is higher among Pushto, Baluchi and even Hindko speaking population compared to the Sindhi speaking population. Whereas only 15% of the Sindhi population supports the Confederation idea, the figure is higher than 20% among the other three linguistic groups. It seems that the Sindhi speaking population is extremely ambiguous on the subject. 42% among them did not give any opinion. Showing that even though they do not positively support the Confederation idea, the Sindhi population is ambiguous about the existing arrangement. Only 38% of them express satisfaction with the existing Federal structure of the country.

It is conceivable that the Sindhi speaking population is viewing the Confederation idea with greater seriousness, and they are withholding their view on it because of greater awareness of its implications, whereas in certain other parts of the country, Confederation is being interpreted as simply more of original autonomy.

The support for the Confederal idea is the least among the Punjabi speaking population, only 5% of whom support this idea.

It is interesting to note that the older generation above 60 years of age shows no interest in the Confederation issues. Only 4% among them hold pro-Confederation position.

Recognizing that the notions of Confederation and Federation would not be easily comprehended by the broad majority of the country, the respondents were given popular meanings of these terms as a brief introduction prior to seeking their views on the subject. The question was worded in the following manner: in the view of certain political leaders, Pakistan should become a Confederation, meaning that the provinces would become completely autonomous and very little authority shall rest with the Centre. Others argue that some authority should rest with the centre, and some of it should rest with the provinces, meaning that Pakistan should be a Federation. What is your view: should Pakistan be a Confederation or a Federation?

The Gallup survey was conducted in the first week of April. Since then major political parties including the PPP, Muslim League and Jamaat-i-Islami have adopted an unambiguously anti-Confederation stance. A Gallup survey in May would examine whether their positions have led some people to revise their views on this subject.