

Q) Discuss the Role of regional and nationalist Political parties in Pakistani Politics. How far are these parties necessary for political system?

1) Introduction:

"Political parties are the conduits through which citizens' aspirations are translated into policies that influence the course of a nation" - (Justin Trudeau). The dictum set forth by the prime minister of Canada aptly accentuates on the significance of political parties. Diverse, well-rounded political parties are imperative for a flourishing democracy, and without well-structured political parties, democratic structures of a country cannot function. Being a democratic country as it is, the situation in Pakistan is no different. The country requires well-nurtured political parties to support and maintain the democratic pillars.

2) What are regional and nationalist political parties:

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2.1) Regional Political Parties:

Regional Political parties are primarily focused on representing the interests of a particular geographical area within a country. These types of political parties are mostly present in countries comprising of diverse cultural, linguistic populace.

2.2) Nationalist Political Parties:

Nationalist Political parties emphasise the preservation and promotion of specific ethnic or cultural identity within a country. They aim to protect and assert the rights and interests of their ethnic or cultural group.

2.3) Examples of Regional and Nationalist Political Parties:

- 1) Awami National Party (ANP)
- 2) Pashtun Tahafuz movement (PTM)
- 3) Balochistan National Party - Mengal (BNP-M)
- 4) Balochistan National Party (BNP)
- 5) Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM)

3) Role of Nationalist and Regional Political parties in Pakistan:

3.1) Representation of Locals:

Being a country comprised of multitude of ethnicities, Pakistan requires political parties that can represent its minorities. Mainstream political parties most focus on national issues such as employment, economy etc. Hence, there is a dire need for a platform that can address the locals. The nationalist and regional political parties furnish this platform by highlighting the demands of locals.

3.2) Grievances of Ethnic People:

A country with such diversity is eventually susceptible to suffer from disparity amongst different ethnicity. These political parties underscore the injustices or mistreatment faced by the people they represent, and in doing so pressurise the central government to ameliorate the issues.

Example: The regional political party aptly underscored the injustices and ordeal

Faced by the hazard community and demanded that their issues should be addressed by the central / provincial governments

3.3) Active Part in Law Making:

These Political Parties play a crucial role in law making. Ensuring that the law propounded does not negatively affect the minorities or any specific regions, the parties can vote for it. They also have to check if the law resonates with the desires of the people they represent.

3.4) Decentralisation:

These parties have a strong ^{role} in decentralising powers from the centre. Such parties are, more often than not, adamant to decentralise power and any action that inhibits this is met with tremendous resistance.

Example During 2020-21, 18th Amendment, which basically decentralises power from centre, came under heavy criticism for granting extra ordinary powers to provinces by the centre. In the face of this regional parties like MCM, PPP, took

a strong stance in defending this amendment and cautioning the centre to refrain from abrogating it.

3.5) Check and Balance :

These parties also serve as a means to keep a tight check over the more mainstream political parties. This ensures that no political party, irrespective of its position, can misuse their power without having serious repercussions.

4) Necessity of Regional and Nationalist Political Parties :

4.1) Representation of Diversity :

These parties represent the diverse ethnicities and communities dwelling in Pakistan. In often diverse communities, when a certain ethnicity does not have adequate representation, they feel alienated and grow hostile towards others. By providing such communities with sufficient representation to address their issue, it is ensured that no community is isolated.

and the friendly ambience of neighborhood is preserved.

4.2) National Unity:

By adequate representation no community feel that their rights are overlooked or cast aside, hence, inducing a feeling of belonging and love for the country ultimately reinforces national unity between different communities.

4.3) Balancing National Interest:

These parties can act as a counterbalance for policies that disproportionately favor certain regions over others. Hence they are instrumental in ensuring that interests of all the regions are considered before a policy can be implemented.

4.4) Appropriat distribution of financial distribution:

These parties ensure that not only sufficient funds are transferred to provinces but these resources are further, aptly, distributed to regions and districts

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in order to address the issues of people.

5) Conclusion :

There remains no ambivalence that regional and nationalist parties have had an instrumental role in the evolving democratic process of Pakistan and their significance in maintaining national unity or preserving the rights of minorities cannot be overlooked either.

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