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The far-reaching effects of political instability in Pakistan.

OUTLINE

1. Introduction

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2. Political instability and its effects on Pakistan; an overview.

3. Causes of Political instability in Pakistan

- a. tussle for power politics
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The far-reaching effects of political instability in Pakistan

I used to drop my father to the office daily. It was our third day in the week that we got stuck in the traffic. As usual, people from different backgrounds were protesting in front of Punjab assembly against inflation. This unrest is the result of political instability in the country. Undoubtedly, political instability has caused great havoc around the globe. It jolts a state socially, politically, and, most importantly, economically. Pakistan is,

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unfortunately, one of them. Tussle for power politics, dynastic politics and political polarization remained as major causes of political instability in Pakistan. They effected the national policies and give birth to confrontational politics, which in return killing the national integrity. Terrorism, extra-constitutional interventions, currency devaluation and decrease in Foreign Direct investment (FDI) are the outcomes of political instability in the country.

However, transparent and unbiased elections, intra-institutional harmony, enforcement of constitutional laws, and public participation in political process is a ray of hope in this grim situation. Moreover, political instability has serious implications for inclusive and sustainable development of Pakistan. As a result of political instability the country remained entangled within the backwardness and totalitarian clutches.

However, through collective will we can ensure political stability in Pakistan.

Political stability is the sum of the activities of the government, legislative bodies and people authorised to influence

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the country's affairs in a manner that sustainably confirms the established political principles and practices. But in Pakistan, due to consecutive change of federal and provincial government through vote of no-confidence give rise to political instability. It affected the governmental affairs and national policy.

There are many causes of political instability in Pakistan but one of them is tussle for power politics. The political elite of the country is always in the race to gain central authority. As Lord Acton said in his essay on "Freedom and power" that "Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely". After being in power, they compromise the national interest and focuses on personal gains. In this way, country leads to social unrest. After being ousted, they try to gain public sympathy through different means like rhetoric expressions 'Mujhi @ Nikala' and 'regime change conspiracies'.

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Another cause of political instability is the trend of dynastic politics.

In Pakistan, major political parties like PMLN, PPP, and JUI F are practicing dynastic politics. Due to which young and talented people cannot show their leadership tendencies because the front had been hijacked by the political elite. In this way the masses are exploited by the hands of political leadership. The common flock did not stand a chance to the leader of the majority party.

Political polarization and political engineering also served as one of the main causes of political instability in Pakistan. Due to political polarization public is divided and politically charged. When former prime minister Imran Khan was ousted through the vote of no-confidence, his supporters protested all over the country in huge numbers. These protests demonstrate the polarization of public and could be the cause of instability of the country whether economically, socially or political. This has almost derailed democracy

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and left far-reaching implications for the country.

One of the effects of political instability is inconsistency in government policies. Due to frequent change in government, the designed policies for a specified period of time by the government cannot implement successfully.

For instance, CPEC was launched in 2015 in the government of PMLN but when PTI came in to government, the working pace of CPEC was slow down to a greater extent. In

Seventy Five years of history, political instability has affected the implementation of national policies to a great extent.

Another effect of political instability is confrontational politics.

When a party cannot complete its tenure and are being ousted from the house through vote of no confidence or any other means, try to confront the newly elected government. When

former prime minister Imran Khan was removed from the chair through vote of no confidence, he announced protests all over the country and Long

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march towards the capital territory to pressurize the government. Moreover, confrontational politics leads to selective accountability. The party in power, try to target the opposition leaders and form cases of corruption on them. This confrontational politics effects the national integrity.

National integrity is also effected due to political instability. National integrity is the functioning of the pillars of government according to norms and law of the land.

According to Transparency International there are different pillars of national integrity. They are Legislative branch of government, Executive branch, Judiciary, public sector, Law enforcement and many more.

When all the pillars are functioning well, corruption remains in check. Due to

political instability, National integrity of Pakistan is badly effected.

According to Transparency International Report 2022, police are perceived to be the most corrupt sector of Pakistan at national level, followed by tendering

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and contracting, judiciary and education as the second, third and fourth, respectively. By strengthening national integrity promotes better governance across all aspects of a society and contributes to a more just society overall.

Political instability also give chance to terrorism and extremism.

In politically instable environment, terrorist and extremist factions of society escalate their activities. According to infographics of Islamabad Policy Research Institute, Five hundred plus terrorist attacks were recorded in Pakistan in the calender year of 2022 in which Three hundred plus attacks were recorded in Khyber Pukhtunkhwa only.

Such a huge number of attacks created social and economic unrest in the country.

Law and order situation in the country paves the way for extra-constitutional interventions. It is the most relevant effect of political instability in the case of Pakistan. By evoking the doctrine of state necessity, in the time of political crisis/instability, military

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leadership had enacted the constitution for three major times. Tracing it from the first military takeover to most recent one, Moeen Cheema, assistant professor of Law and policy at LUMS, says the army chiefs take six important steps to legitimize and strengthen their role. These major extra-constitutional measures badly effected the flight of democracy in Pakistan. Measure had taken by civilian governments to counter it in the form of 18th Amendment.

The political stability of a country is directly proportional to its economic stability. In Pakistan, political instability has effected the currency of the state. In the start of the calendar year of 2018, Rupee was standing at 110 R/s against the Dollar (SBP). However, due to political instability Pakistani rupee is devalue to PKR 230 against the dollar. If the situation is not control now, reports says that it will likely devalue to PKR 270 against the dollar by end of the current fiscal year on June 30, 2023. It shows that for a stable economy, stable political situation

is necessary.

Political instability also affects Foreign Direct Investment.

As we know that political instability affects policy consistency. Foreign investors will not invest their money in a country whose policies are not consistent.

The recent political turmoil has severely affected the FDI. According to Pakistan Economic Survey 2021-2022, the net FDI reached to US\$ 1955.6 million during July-April FY2022 as compared to US\$ 1980.0 million last year, decreased by 1.6 percent. This would be a huge loss to the economy of Pakistan if we did not take measures to counter it.

These far-reaching effects of political instability can be counter through proper policy measures and collective will.

One of the most important steps to counter political instability is to conduct transparent and unbiased election.

The former prime minister Imran Khan is protesting around the country, which created chaos and unrest, and demands to conduct election. However, the stance

of ruling PDM is that there will be no early elections. Due to this power struggle, political instability is spiralling out of control. The ruling PDM and the PTI must practice pragmatism for the larger good of the country. Free, Fair and early elections would help to navigate the country through the political instability.

Another solution to the political instability in Pakistan is intra-institutional harmony. The three branches of government, legislative, executive and judiciary, should work according to the principle of Separation of Power. Intra-institutional harmony would promote a stable political environment that will attract foreign investors. Military should also play its role within constitutional jurisdiction and should not invoke the doctrine of state necessity, again.

To enforce constitutional laws in its true sense could help to stabilize political environment. For instance, eighteenth amendment that restored many of the provisions of the 1973 constitution.

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Even as analyst welcomed the amendment's promise of devolution of powers from centres to the provinces, most believed distribution of revenues from natural resources between central governments and the provinces may be challenging to implement. Washburn University's Ali Khan says, "Constitutional violations will continue to occur until two things happens: Political elites behave within the rule of law, and armed forces decide not to intervene."

Political maturity and harmony; pragmatic political culture and practices; sincere; healthy political competition; and institutional cooperation help set the ground for a stable political landscape. These are the result of public participation in political process. By ensuring public participation in political process will stabilize politically instable environment. Major and successful democracies of the world tries to ensure more public participation in the political process. It creates political maturity in the public and ensures political stability.

In a nutshell, we can say that political instability has devoured the economic, social, moral, and democratic fiber of Pakistan. But by acting out the suggested remedies Pakistan can again be set on the path to progress.

Where there is a will, there is always a way!