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Batch-058

Day: _____

Zaim

Date: _____

Q#1: The evolution of the democratic system has always remained a dilemma in Pakistan, even after passing more than seven decades of its existence democracy could not get its roots. Discuss in details.

Ans:

Introduction:

Although, Pakistan gained independence based on democratic principles of Quaid-e-Azam. However, the consolidation of democratic political system has remained a dilemma in Pakistan due to certain structural issues, which include, absence of a robust political culture and constitutionalism. Furthermore, Pakistan is a new democracy compared to Western democratic states. Thus, it will take some time for democratic political system to consolidate itself, as the famous adage goes, "Rome was not built in an year." The positive factor that plays a key role in strengthening

democracy in any country is the aspirations of its people. However, the aspirations of the people of Pakistan are fully aligned with democracy and road-map provided by the founder of country, Quaid-i-Azam M. Ali Jinnah.

1- Causes which hindered the consolidation of democratic political system in Pakistan;

Following are the causes, which hindered Pakistan's democratic consolidation in its true letter and spirit:

1.1: Early Demise of Quaid-i-Azam and Liaquat Ali Khan left nation without any guidance:

Unlike, India, Pakistan was not much fortunate to have its leaders for guiding the nation out of troubled times. In fact, the early demise of Quaid-i-Azam and assassination of his lieutenant PM Liaquat Ali Khan in 1948 and 1951.

respectively, made Pakistan vulnerable on many fronts. Quaid-i-Azam was the glue holding different ethnic groups and leaders of diverse backgrounds together. However, as Quaid disappeared from scene, these entities started to re-assert themselves, undermining the vision and ideology of Pakistan.

1.2: Delay in Constitution-Making gave way to machinations and undemocratic principles.

Quaid-i-Azam was the first President of the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan, under his guidance Pakistan could have formed a constitution. However, early demise of Quaid paved the way for debates on the nature of Constitution, whether it should be Islamic or democratic. All these factors delayed the making of Constitution and Pakistan retained Indian Act of 1935 as official-interim constitution. Thus, the colonial nature of 1935 Act provided an impetus to authoritarianism and palace intrigues, resulting in dismissal of

Ayub Khurro's government in Sindh and Khan Brothers' government in NWFP (erstwhile FATA now KPIL).

1-3: Weakening of All India Muslim League and emergence of ethno-nationalist political parties;

All India Muslim League (AIML) was the political party that spearheaded the movement for independence under the leadership of Quaid-i-Azam. However, in post-partition period, the AIML degenerated into different interest groups and lobbies resulting in different off-shoots. Unlike Indian National Congress, the AIML lacked second or third generation of political leaders, it became much more difficult in the absence of Quaid and PM Liaquat. Thus, all these factors helped in the rise of ethno-nationalist political parties like United Front in Bengal and Red Shirts in NWFP. Therefore, all energies of government were concentrated towards such issues and their redressal.

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1.4. Absence of democratic political culture in areas constituting modern-day Pakistan:

The core of the AIML leadership was from either United Provinces (UP) or Bengal, the leadership in areas constituting post-Partition Pakistan lacked effective political leadership. These areas were neglected with the ~~other~~ exception of Punjab and were ruled with the help of feudal leadership by government in Delhi. According to S. Akbar Zaidi, "the areas constituting Pakistan had neither a democratic political culture nor exposure to democratic governance."

— S. Akbar Zaidi; Military, Civil Society & Democratization in Pakistan.

1.5: Institutional Imbalances and weak polity hindered democracy in Pakistan:

Pakistan inherited the governance model based on British steel-frame from its colonial masters.

However, over-reliance of government on this steel-frame resulted in institutional imbalances, where democratic institutions could not develop. According to Hamza Alavi, "Pakistan inherited an over-developed state structure from Britain, which resulted in the underdeveloped polity." Thus, bureaucracy under the leadership of Governor General Ghulam Muhammad and Field Marshall Ayub Khan became dominant in decision-making.

2. Impacts of lack of consolidation of democracy in Pakistan;

Following are the impacts of lack of consolidation of democracy in Pakistan, which affect state and society even today:

2.1: Emergence of weak political parties and political instability in Pakistan;

Due to absence of sound and robust democratic precedents set by the political leaders of Pakistan, weaker political parties emerged.

Such parties paid no heed to democratic principles and fair-play. According to Shuja Nawaz, "opposition parties are consistently trying to pull the rug from under the feet of ruling government, which results in a game of musical chairs?" - Shuja-Nawaz; *Crossed Swords*.

2.2: Arbitrary culture of governance leading to economic instability:

The British in India brought unique concept of 'State of Law', inspired from Enlightenment philosophers like Montesquieu and John Locke. It replaced the arbitrary culture of power of Indian Continental Democratic empires, by giving paramountcy to rule of law. However, the political leaders of Pakistan discarded that principle. According to Ishaq Niaz, "the rule of law prevented rulers and bureaucracy to treat state as the personal estate of the ruler. However, Pakistan's political leaders re-introduced the culture of arbitrary exercise of power

that hindered consolidation of democratic ethos and pluralism." - Iqbal Niaz; The Culture of Power and Governance in Pakistan. Thus, arbitrary exercise of power and governance leads to unsustainable economic policies, as political instability hinders it. Therefore, Pakistan's economy is a major victim of political instability stemming from absence of democratic consolidation.

2.3: Crisis of Civil-Military relations stems from lack of democratic consolidation in Pakistan:

As political instability leads towards economic and institutional meltdown, it creates a vacuum, which is eventually filled by military leadership. Being one of the finest fighting power, professional ethos and strong accountability, the military remains the most organized and modernized institution in Pakistan. Thus, when political leaders fail to take responsibility of fixing the mess they create, the military leadership sees it as the only disciplined institution that

can lead Pakistan out of choppy waters. This results in a crisis of civil-military relations, which causes military leadership to take over. According to Samuel. P. Huntington, "modern militaries are not personal estate of rulers, rather military of ally country, is guided by vigorous discipline and ethics of professionalism. Furthermore, militaries see themselves as part of state and security related decision-making." Samuel. P. Huntington; *The Soldier and the State*.
 Due to breakdown of governmental authority, repeatedly in Pakistan, four military leaders have assumed control. According to Dr. Hassan Askari Rizvi, "military perceives internal turmoil due to political instability as a security issue, which civilian leaders fail to understand, thus, military leadership eventually assume control to bring normalcy." Dr. Hassan Askari Rizvi; *Military, State and Society in Pakistan*.

Conclusion :

The consolidation of democratic system of governance has remained a

dilemma in Pakistan. Several factors, which include, the early demise of Quaid, assassination of PM Liaqut Ali Khan, rise of ethno-nationalism, absence of democratic political culture, and delay in constitution-making, all played a key role in hindering democratic systems to take root in Pakistan. As a result, Pakistan is struggling on many fronts including economy. However, the aspirations of people in Pakistan are still aligned with the ideals of its founding-father Quaid-i-Azam M. Ali Jinnah. If "home was not built in an year," then Pakistan will also need some time in order to materialise that dream in its true letter and spirit.

