

...the subject and may or may not, then why?

Q. 4. Discuss the Geo-Strategic importance of Pakistan. Do you agree that it has greatly affected the development of social and political institutions in Pakistan? (20)

Q) : Discuss the geo-strategic importance of Pakistan? Do you agree it affected the development of social and political institutions of Pak?

Ans. Introduction:

Since its inception, Pakistan has faced multiples of external and internal threats. Its geo-strategic location has imposed more security challenges as compared to benefits. While external threats emanate from its eastern neighbour India that has grown significantly in its character and intensity. On other hand, internal threats arose by signing Mutual Defense Agreement with US against Soviet Union in 1980s and joining GWOT since 2001 posed its own challenges and opportunities.

External Threats:

Pakistan decided to join US led war on terror against Al Qaida and Taliban as it did not has much choices and it had to pay huge prices for joining alliance. Pakistan

has always been concerned about India's growing influence in Afghanistan as a grave threat to its national security. because it undermines the Pakistan's national security and economic interests in the south and central Asia -

The "strategic pact" between India and Afghanistan ^{in 2011} increased concerns of Pakistan manifold. Over last four decades Pakistan's security challenges increased on three accounts: firstly, being a frontline state against Soviet Union's occupation from 1979-89, secondly, post war 9/11, for its participation in post US led alliance in GWOT and lastly US withdrawal from Afghanistan -

Internal factors:

On the internal front, lack of political inst stability, illiteracy, religious and ethnic diversity and exponential population growth are the main reasons that hampered Pakistan's path towards prosperity.

The past two decades have been externally turbulent for Pakistan and it has endured the major spill over effect of US led war on terror in Afghanistan resulting in huge costs to its economy and loss of over 70,000 lives.

Security challenges in context of geography.

The region has been a flashpoint for great power politics for the last four decades. Change in strategic interests of US towards Pakistan over an extended period of time has numerous implications for latter and it faced various internal and external security pressures in form of rise of extremism, terrorism acts and economic depreciation. During "Cold war" US had pursued aggressive policy of containment of former SU and Pakistan remained part of US alliance. However, soon, after disintegration of SU, US had ultimately achieved its

objective and abandoned Afghanistan amidst civil war. In this line of action, Pakistan was left to deal with menace of ongoing civil war in its neighbourhood to bear the burden of Afghan refugees influx.

Continual shift of US strategic orientation

During the period of post cold war, US strategic interests remained marginal while US-Indo cooperation strengthened immensely. After 9/11 Pakistan once again came into spotlight to protect the security interests of US and western allies. Pakistan was declared as non-NATO ally by US. However, Pakistan US relations with Pakistan remained restricted solely to the extent of seeking cooperation in Pakistan Afghanistan. With end of cold war, gradual shift of US strategic orientation

, in order to contain china, the US started started building relations with India. To placate India, in a brush move the US renamed the region as Indo-Pacific and has signed several strategic movement agreements along with supply of military equipments.

Geographical location may enervate growth prospects.

Against the backdrop of, 1998 working paper by Gallup, Sachs and Mellinger suggests that a tropical location could adversely enervate growth prospects of country because of greater disease burden, lower agricultural productivity and lesser distance from sea. Recent floods of and Pakistan's subsequent appeal for international aid has indeed magnified geographical woes, and economic vulnerabilities.

Disease spread due to geography

It is noted that incidents of malaria is more in countries close to sea. In case of Pakistan, diseases like Dengue, malaria, diarrhoea, scabies and ^{other} skin diseases could easily be associated with its geography, floods, and proximity with sea which arguably increase economic burden of country.

○ ~~rel.~~ relying on natural resources:

The term 'geostategic location' does not revolve around geography and politics, it rather involves the delicate gossamer of economic, social, political, institutional, industrial and environmental factors. because growth takes place in multiple sectors. In this context, Pakistan's proximity with oil rich Persian Gulf, and superpowers like China, Russia, has not yielded desired economic benefits.

It is because the country's strategic economic focus has, prima facie, shifted from entrepreneurship to seeking international aid and over-relying on available natural resources like urban lands.

Dragged into regional conflicts:

It is the Pakistan's geostrategic location that dragged Pakistan into regional conflicts - and US led WOT. Consequently, instead of attaining higher growth rates, Pakistan had to pay a heavy economic price in these conflicts - This suggests that the notion of Pakistan's geostrategic location has so far acted as another type of 'paradox of plenty' and its pernicious implications are nothing else less than hoarding huge natural resources.

Way Forward.

As compared to ^{Pakistan} Bangladesh is geostategically far away from oil rich persian Contiguity Gulf. Its geostategic contiguity is with East Asia where it closely watched the economic boom of region.

Although country has similar natural disaster as Pakistan, it could avoid active involvement in international conflicts because of its geography - while Pakistan was dragged into Afghanistan war and Bangladesh was witnessing technological advancements

In erudite business practices in neighbouring East Asian countries where containerisation in international aid made the economic boom possible

Pakistan needs to shift its strategic focus away from oil rich nations to technologically advanced countries.