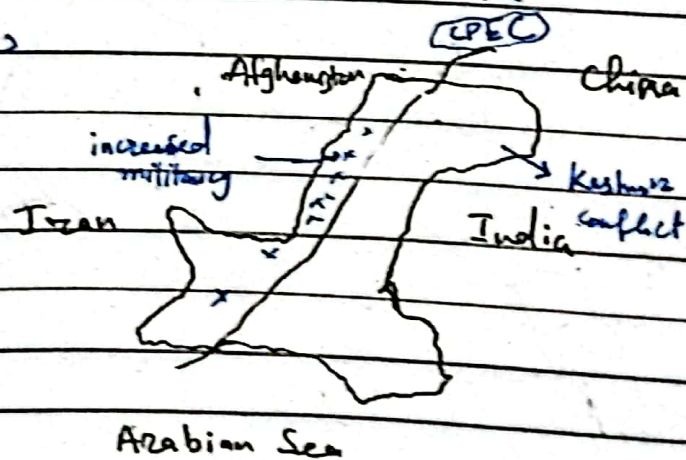


How geostrategic importance of Pakistan has shaped its political and social institutes?

Answer 1 - Introduction

The geographical location of Pakistan makes it one of important countries of the world. It is located at the cross roads of Middle east, south asia and central asia. It's proximity to theaters of global powers conflicts increases its geo-strategic importance by many fold. Due to being nuclear power, it's influence in the region is unignorable. This geostrategic importance has acted as dual sword, causing both positive and negative impact on its social and political institutes. These are discussed in details below



## a- Increased militarization of Politics

Due to facing security issues, Pakistan's military's role in policy making increased. In her book, 'Democracy and Authoritarianism in South Asia' Aisha Jalal explains that inability to shape policy of the countries related to defense and strategic matters rendered civilian institution weak.

## b- Increase in national unity

A positive impact of geostrategic location of Pakistan was that external threats united the nation. This unity helped in developing consensus between various factions of society regarding how to deal with these threats. Passing of NACTA to deal with terrorism is an example of it.

## c- Increase in international investments

Pakistan's geostrategic importance also made it lucrative for foreign powers to invest in Pakistan. Shuja Nawaz explains Anatol Lieven

in his book, 'Pakistan: On the Brink of Change' that it was proximity and access to sea that encouraged China to invest in Pakistan through CPEC. This investment has resulted in infrastructure and energy sector boost in Pakistan.

d - Increased importance of Pakistan's stance in international community

As Pakistan ~~was~~ is neighbour of Afghanistan, which has been a theater of global power rivalry during cold war and America's war on terror. afterwards, its stance on global issues is of importance. This point has been highlighted in 'The Great Game: The Struggle for Empire in Central Asia' by Peter Hopkirk.

e - De-prioritisation of development sector like Education and Healthcare

Due to its geo-

strategic location. Pakistan has been focusing on its defence. This resulted in deprioritisation of sectors like health and education. Pakistan only allocated 1.4% and 1.7% of its GDP to these sectors according to economic survey of Pakistan 22-23. . . \$

f- weak civilian institutions

Due to limited and insufficient budgetary allocations Pakistan's civilian institutions could not develop properly. This has resulted in ~~be~~ bad service delivery to public and contributed toward bad governance.

g- Rise of militancy in Pakistan

Due to its location, Pakistan was at fore front during cold war and was on terror. Hussain Haqqani explain in his book, 'Pakistan between Mosque and Military' that government and military used religion as tool to fight off soviet union during cold war. This gave rise to militancy in Pakistan

which the weak civilian institutes are unable to control.

#### h - Attacks on state institutes

The rise in religious extremism prompted the militants to attack government institutions in Pakistan. In her book, *Democracy and Authoritarianism*, Ayshe Jall explains that militants consider democracy unIslamic way of government. This explains the recent rise of attacks on police, weakening its strength.

### 2. Solutions

#### a - A balanced approach towards security and development

Pakistan can only reap benefits of its geostrategic location if it strikes a balance between spending on its security issues and development. In that way, peace in Pakistan will be sustainable.

#### b - Cooperation with neighbours

Due to security issues,

Pakistan has strained relations with its neighbours i.e. Afghanistan and India. By improving these relations, Pakistan can harness the full potential of its location.

c- Strengthening democratic institutes

The only way to maintain peace is to make its civil institutions strong enough to sustain the growth. According to Anatol Lieven, in his book, 'Pakistan: A Hard Country' people of Pakistan has the spirit of cooperation, as shown by 18th amendment's passing, what needed is the political will to harness it.

3- Conclusion

The geostrategic importance of Pakistan had dual impacts on its political and civil institutions. On one hand, ~~they~~ it enabled Pakistan to gain importance in global community and attract investments, resulting in strengthening of social and political institutions. On the other hand, it increased role of military in policy making and rise of militancy making Pakistan's institutions weak. Only

way to access full benefits of  
geostrategic advantage of Pakistan  
is for it to strike a balance  
~~bt~~ between security and development  
expenditure.