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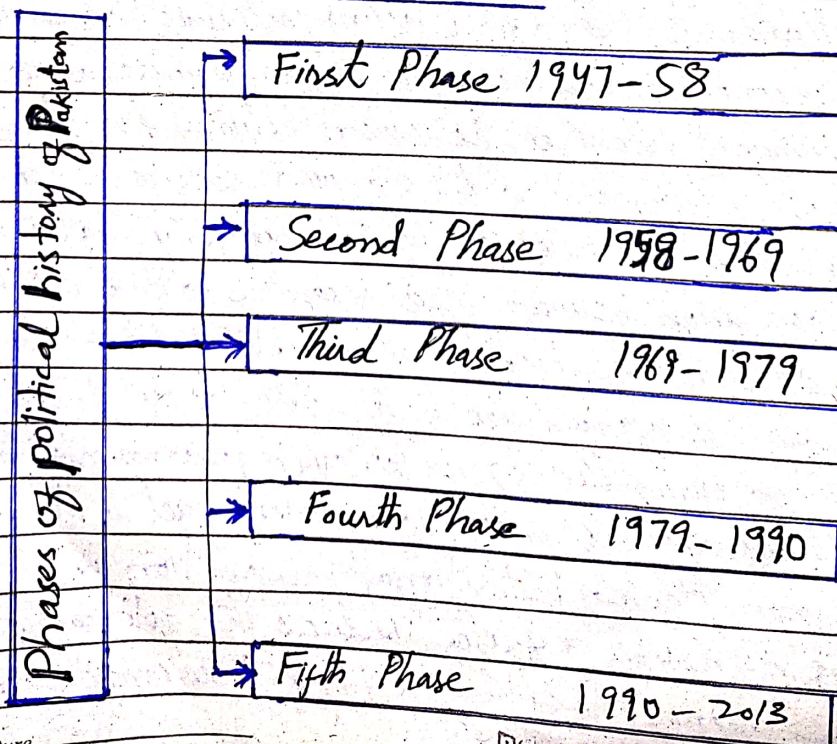
Political stability remains an elusive concept in Pakistan. Explore the factors contributing to the fractured nature of Pakistan's polity and discuss potential reforms to the Constitutional and political structure that could foster stability. (CSS-2024)

① INTRODUCTION

In the 21st century, the political stability of a country is a reiteration of its politico-economic and social development and ensures its international standing. On the other hand, political instability poses a serious threat to its sovereignty. Unfortunately, Pakistan also stands among those countries that have remained indulged in grappling with the political instability that marred its socio-economic growth and development. As it is aptly said by Ishaat Hussain, a Pakistani Economist, in his book 'Governing the ungovernables', economic progress devoid of political legitimacy may prove elusive and transient, leaving no lasting footprints. Moreover, the economy and economic players require a stable political environment. However, the reason behind the chaotic political environment and its absurd crisis is the competition between the provinces for ethnic hegemony that inhibits the cooperation between their respective political parties. In addition, the lack of responsible opposition obstructs the democratic institutionalization of the state polity, leaving a power vacuum filled by authoritarian governments that stimulate the vicious cycles of instability. Adding fuel to the fire, the non-elected institutional interventions in government decision-making further reduces the political legitimacy of the incoming incumbents. Nonetheless, constitutional and

political reforms can help to break the vicious cycle of political instability. Politically, at the party level, there is a dire need for democratic institutionalization and reforms in intra-party elections. Furthermore, the other issues can be abated by involving literate politicians in the political setup, promoting national integrity and unity. Constitutionally, providing constitutional safeguards to a neutral forum that introspects intra-party corruption and applying constitutional limits can help to disintegrate the top-down nexus.

② HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE FRACTURED NATURE OF PAKISTAN'S POLITY



① First phase of political history of Pakistan (1947-1958)

The death of Jinnah led to a leadership crisis, and the Pakistan Muslim League could not morph into a nationalist party. The political instability was high, and seven civilian governments have remained unable to maintain a coalition.

② Second phase of political history of Pakistan (1958-1969)

The military intervened in politics, and martial law was declared by President Iskandar Mirza in 1958. At first, chief martial law suppressed and restricted from indulging in politics. At last, he reluctantly legalized the 'Political Parties Act' and provided access to his political rivals to reinforce his reign.

③ Third phase of political history of Pakistan (1969-1979)

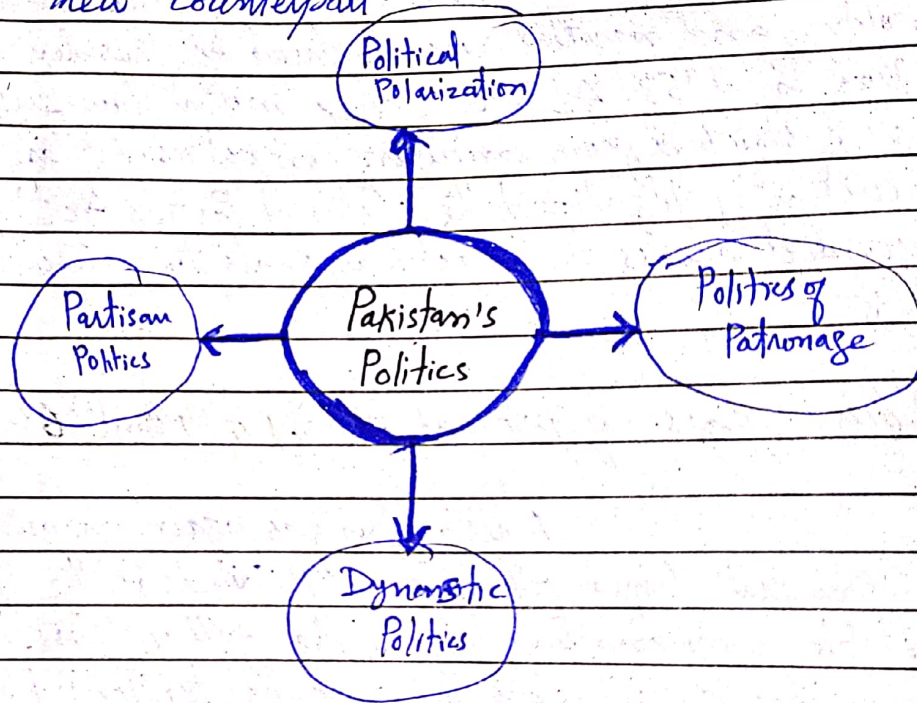
Martial law was again promulgated by General Yahya Khan in 1971, whereas the politically unstable environment led to the fall of Dhaka. The chaos was caused by the ongoing tensions between Z.A Bhutto and Mujib.

④ Fourth phase of political history of Pakistan (1979-1990)

Another decade of military rule shocked the entire political structure to the depth of its roots. In 1990s, the civilian governments got back into the politics by uplifting martial law.

⑤ Fifth phase of political history of Pakistan (1990-2)

An attempt was made again to change the country radically by military personnel General Musharraf. However, he also followed the path of his military counterparts, taking refuge by patronage to legitimize the rule. The dynastic parties, PPP and PML(N) got their power back but could not compete against their counterpart.



③ FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE FRACTURED NATURE OF PAKISTAN'S POLITICS

① The competition b/w the Provinces for ethnic hegemony

② Constitutional loopholes and the issue of loyalty shift by the members of the parties

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE FRACTURED NATURE OF PAKISTAN'S POLITY

③ Governance crisis

④ Lack of responsible opposition

① The competition between the provinces for ethnic hegemony

The lack of cooperation between the political parties has marred the functioning of the political system. The disintegrated political parties representing their local interests have never agreed to sacrifice their interests. However, the dynastical political parties would never allow other political parties to strengthen their designs because the former considered the latter a threat to their hegemony.

② Governance Crisis

The country has a multi-ethnic and linguistic population, and destabilized politics created hurdles in governance by decreasing the legitimacy of the elected governments. However, the fissures and fragmentation in the social fabric contributed to the crisis of governability. According to analysts Adeel Malik and

Maya Tudor, the lack of political legitimacy and achievement of economic stability led to the crisis of governability. As a result, it caused irreparable damage to the political stability.

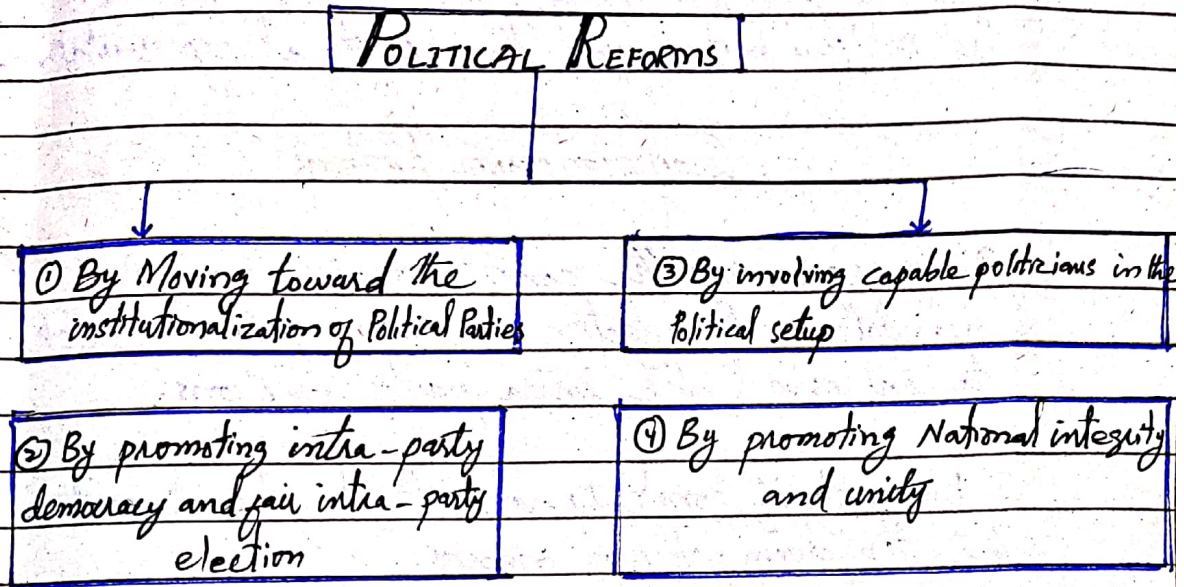
③ Constitutional loopholes and the issues of loyalty
shifted by members of the political parties

In addition at party level political parties had created a path dependent in their formative phase. The feudalistic ethos in the politicians resulted in their choice of shifting loyalty which obstructs the democratic institutionalization of p. To tackle the menace of floor crossing and defection Article 63A of the constitution of 1973 provided for the disqualification of the defecting member of any party. Thus, it ensures the loyalty of the members toward their party. But only de-seating or defecting members for horse-trading not enough to abate this menace.

④ Lack of responsible opposition:

Furthermore, the lack of responsible opposition motivated by individual interests induced great shocks to the political government. According to a factor analysis, Anwar Syed, the feudalistic ethos that pervades politicians resulted in intolerance of rivals, the expectation of subservience to lower orders, a propensity for violence, and disregard for the law. These credentials shocked the whole political setup.

④ POTENTIAL REFORMS TO THE CONSTITUTIONAL AND POLITICAL STRUCTURE



① By moving toward the institutionalization of political parties

The political parties must be institutionalized to foster political stability. As discussed earlier, political parties failed to organize as capable and effective institutions.

② By promoting intraparty democracy and fair intra-party election

Second, taking step toward strengthening intra-party democracy; however, it can be done by promoting free and fair intra-party and general elections.

③ By involving capable politicians in the political setup:

Third, the election at Tehsil level can help to involve literate politicians in the political setup.

④ By promoting National integrity and unity.

Fourth, reforms in politics that promote integrity and unity between the parties. The strengthened unity fosters co-option between the political parties and their political representatives.

CONSTITUTIONAL REFORMS

① By reforming the constitutionally provided mandate of the election commission of Pakistan (EC) to introspect the intra-party elections.

② By applying constitutional limits to disintegrate the top-down political nexus.

③ By revisiting article 63A of the constitution of 1973 to shut the door of defections and floor crossing.

④ By promoting national integrity and unity by constitutionally provided barriers.

⑤ CRITICAL ANALYSIS

Pakistan's political institutions have not evolved at significant pace. However, it has been seventy-seven years since its independence that the country continues to grapple with the political instability that marred its economic governance and international standing.

⑥ CONCLUSION

In a nutshell, the military has filled the power vacuum created by political instability. However, the frequent military interventions in politics weakened democratic governance to the depth of its roots. The fractured state of the polity is because of its inside shattered credentials of political dynamics.