

Question:- Pakistan energy crisis was due to lack of strategy & political will. Discuss?

Introduction:-

The energy crisis in Pakistan is multifaceted issue rooted deeply in combination of structural, policy and political factors, along side other contributing factors like poor governance, corruption and inefficient in energy management. The argument that crisis is due to lack of strategy & political will holds significant weight when we consider several key factors.

Inconsistent policy framework:

One of major contributors to Pakistan's energy crisis is lack of long term consistent energy policy. Over the decade the successive governments have failed to implement a cohesive strategy that addresses energy generation, transmission and distribution effectively. Policy inconsistencies and frequent shift in priorities have hindered sustainable

energy development. For instance,

- Shift In Focus:-

Different governments have prioritize varying energy sources, such as hydropower, thermal or renewable energy, without maintaining a clear, long-term approach. This has led to underdevelopment in critical sectors and lack of diversification in energy sources. Integrated Energy Plan (2005-2025) was never fully implemented, leading to fragmented energy strategy.

- Delayed Projects:-

Many projects, especially related to power generation and infrastructure have been delayed and no framework has done due to lack of political leaderships and conflicts. A clear example of inconsistent policy can be seen in Kaba Bagh Dam Project which has been debated for decades. While experts argue that this could add significant hydropower capacity (about 3600 MW) but political disagreement b/w provinces have blocked its construction.

Political Will & Corruption:

Political will is crucial for success of any long term project. Unfortunately the energy sector has been plagued by a lack of political commitment and widespread corruption.

- Short-term gain over long-term vision:-

Political leaders often prioritize short-term, politically motivated projects that generate immediate gains rather than investing in infrastructure that would have long-term benefits. For example rental power projects were introduced under emergency measures but led to scandals and financial losses.

- Institutional corruption:-

There have been numerous instances of mismanagement and corruption in state-owned enterprises like WAPDA & K-Electric. Political influence on these institutions has resulted in poor governance with funds being diverted or projects abandoned midway.

Lack of investment in Renewable Energy:-

Pakistan

has immense potential for renewable sources like wind, solar and hydropower. However country has not been able to fully exploit this potential due to lack of political will and strategic planning. Country has an estimated potential of 50,000 MW of wind energy (particularly in Sindh coastal areas) & 2.9 million MW of solar energy, renewable energy accounts for only 5-6% of Pakistan's energy mix. But the Alternative Energy Development Board (AEDB) has consistently faced neglect and insufficient funding.

Circular Debt:-

The energy sector in Pakistan has been marked by the issue of circular debt, which occurs when power producers do not receive payments from distribution companies leading to a financial shortfall. This debt has accumulated to alarming levels due to inefficiencies, theft, and poor recovery mechanisms in the system.

As of 2023, circular debt has reached an alarming level of PKR 2.5 trillion. This means government owes massive amounts to power producers, and debt keeps pulling up because of systematic inefficiencies and electricity theft.

Inefficient Energy use & Transmission Losses:- Pakistan

has one of the highest rates of transmission and distribution losses in the world around 19-20%. Poor infrastructure, outdated grid and electricity theft contribute to these losses which result in higher costs and frequent power outages. Successive governments failed to address this issue. According to NEPRA these losses stood at 18.3% in 2022.

Geopolitical & External Dependencies:-

While external factors such as global energy prices and geopolitical dependencies on countries like Saudi Arabia for oil & Qatar for LNG, do play a role in crisis.

Pakistan imported 70% of its energy needs in the form of oil, coal and LNG which make it vulnerable to international price fluctuations. For instance Russia-Ukraine war caused sharp rise global LNG prices.

Conclusion:

The energy crisis in Pakistan is primarily the result of weak strategic planning coupled with a lack of political will to tackle deep rooted issues in this sector. A comprehensive long-term strategy free from political influence and corruption is crucial to resolving the crisis. This would require a strong focus on institutional reforms, investment in renewable energy and development of sustainable financial model for energy distribution and production.

By overcoming these obstacles, Pakistan can not only resolve its energy crisis but also pave the way for economic growth.

Question: Analyze the role of 18th Amendment in shaping the parliamentary system of government in Pakistan. How has this affected federalism & governance?

The 18th amendment to constitution of Pakistan passed on April, 2010, is a landmark reform that has profoundly shaped the country's parliamentary system, federalism, governance. The amendment aim to secure & restore Pakistan's parliamentary democracy by undoing the distortions created by military rule and significantly decentralizing power to the provinces. Its impact on federalism and government is multifaceted and requires a careful analysis.

Key features of 18th Amendment:

① Restoration of parliamentary supremacy:-

The amendment restores the balance of power b/w president and prime minister, shifting executive authority back to the latter in line with a

Article 58(2)b which gave the president, the power to dissolve the National Assembly was repeated. This limited president ability to dismiss elected governments & to destabilizes democratic regimes.

② Devolution of power to provinces :-

The concurrent legislative list was abolished, transferring over 40 subjects from federal govt to provinces. This includes areas such as health, education, environment and local govt giving province greater autonomy in managing their affairs.

The council of common Interests was empowered to ensure greater coordination between federal & provincial governments.

③ Judicial Independence :-

The process of appointing judges was reformed to ensure greater independence of judiciary.

A judicial commission & a Parliamentary committee were created to oversee judicial appointments, reducing executive influence over the judiciary.

④ Strengthening Provincial Autonomy:-

The amendment shifted more fiscal powers to the provinces, allowing them to collect certain taxes and increasing their share of revenue through National Finance Commission (NFC) Award.

Provinces were also given control over natural resources within their territories, an important demand of resource rich but marginalized area provinces like Balochistan & Sindh.

Impact of 18th Amendment on the Parliamentary System:-

① Strengthening the role of PM:-

By restoring executive powers to the Prime Minister, the 18th amendment reinvigorated Pakistan's democracy. This curbed the president's previously broad powers & reinstated the primacy of the National Assembly, making PM truly accountable to parliament. This remove the undue

influence of presidency, a legacy of military rule.

② Checks & Balances:-

The amendment enhanced checks & balances within the government. With the president powers curtailed, Pakistan's governance became more parliamentary in nature, allowing for better accountability and transparency.

The judicial commission & Parliamentary committee on judicial appointments act as mechanisms to prevent concentration of powers in executive, strengthening the rule of law.

Impact on Federalism:-

① Devolution & provincial autonomy:-

- The 18th amendment

marked a significant step towards fiscal & administrative decentralization by transferring powers to provinces that align with federalism.

- By devolving subjects to provinces, the amendment fostered a sense of local ownership & responsibility over development & public services, enhancing provincial governance capacity.

② Improved Intergovernmental relations:

The empowerment of Council of Common Interests (CCI) provided a platform for resolving disputes between federal & provincial governments. This has helped improved coordination & dialogue on national policies, especially in areas where both provincial & federal interest overlap.

Fiscal decentralization: The amendment shifted fiscal equation by providing more control over resources ^{+ revenue collection} to provinces which led to more equitable resources distribution.

③ Strengthening national unity:-

For resource-rich but marginalized provinces like Balochistan & Sindh the 18th amendment's devolution of power & resources was seen as a move toward addressing historical grievances. The amendment helped reduce centre-province tensions that had fueled discontent and calls for greater autonomy.

• Amendment is seen as a step toward strengthening national unity by accommodating the diverse needs of Pakistan's multi ethnic

society.

Challenges & Criticism:-

Capacity issues at Provincial level:-

While amendments transferred substantial responsibilities to the provinces, many provinces have lacked the administrative & financial capacity to effectively manage these new powers. Health, education and local governance have seen mixed results, with some provinces struggling to implement reforms due to inadequate infrastructure, technical expertise and governance challenges.

Tensions over resource allocation:-

The devolution of resources and fiscal powers has at times created tensions b/w federal govt & provinces. NFC award formula for revenue distribution has been a subject of debate particularly from provinces that feel they contribute more than they receive in return.

Concerns of Centralization of Provincial Power:-

While the

Amendment devolve powers to the provinces, critics argue that some provincial governments have been reluctant to further devolve powers to local governments, leading to centralization within provinces. This hindered local governments' effective delivery of services at grass root level.

Federal Government Concerns:-

Some factions in federal govt expressed concerns that 18 Amendment has weakened central government to the point that it struggles to maintain coherent national policies.

Conclusion:-

The 18th Amendment has played a transformative role in shaping Pakistan's parliamentary system, restoring democratic institutions and empowering provinces through devolution. By reinstating the prime minister's authority & shifting powers away from presidency, it has helped stabilize Pakistan's political structure & deepen democratic norms. However, amendment has also brought new challenges, particularly related

to provincial governance ^{capacity} ~~autonomy~~, resource distribution and maintaining national cohesion in critical areas like health & education. Despite these issues amendment represents a crucial step toward federalism and decentralization of power in Pakistan, aligning with country's diverse and multi ethnic makeup. Moving forward, the successful implementation of 18th Amendment will depend upon strengthening provincial capacities, resolving center province tensions and ensuring that devolved power are exercised effectively for benefit of entire population.