POLITICAL POLARIZATION; GOVERNANCE AND SOCIETY

Date:

OUTLINE:

1) **Introduction:**

Political polarization has positive as well as negative impact on governance and society. Impacts on governance include policy deadlocks, weakening of institutes, insuitability in war and crisis, prioritization of parochial interest, scrutiny of government policy, increase in accoutability and strengthening of democracy. Impacts on society include absence of workable solution for problems, erosion of social cohesion, unequal development in a country, rise of separatist tendencies, strengthening of electoral process, protection from dictatorship of one party and promotion of political awareness.

> political polarization and opposition leaders are two different things

2) **Impacts of Political Polarization on Governance.**

(a) **Positive Impacts:**

(i) Scrutiny of government policies

(ii) Strengthening of accountability.

(iii) Promotion of democracy.

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(b) Negative Impacts:

(i) Rise in policy deadlocks

(ii) Weakening of institutions

(iii) Unsuitability in war and crisis

(IV) Prioritization of parochial interest

(3) Impacts of Political Polarization on Society

(a) Positive Impacts:

(i) Wide choices of selection of leaders

(ii) Protection of masses from dictatorship of one party

(iii) Increase in political awareness among masses.

(b) Negative Impacts:

(i) No workable solution for the problem of common man

(ii) Erosion of social cohesion

(iii) Unequal development in a country

(iv) Fuelling up of separtist tendencies.

(4) Conclusion

Weak Argumentation
Lack of evidences
Make a strong attention grabber
Avoid Grammatical mistakes
Write the summary of your
outline in the introduction
Properly follow the structure of the
Introduction
political polarization threatens
democracy or strengthens
democracy

Date:

It is natural that people differ in their opinion / selection and choices. Different people of various backgrounds, knowledge and race look at different things in different way and then form their opinon on the basis of their analysis - This results in polarization. This polarization can be of different types like social polarization, religious polarization and political polarization. Political polarization means people divide into two opposite poles having different political opinion. People with different political opinion look at problem in different angles and purpose different solution for it. Political polarization is not a new phenomena - It can be traced back to the history of Athen and Rome where political difference appeared between aristocrats and common citizens. Then, the conflict between Royalists and Parliamentarians during the English War was also a form of political polarization. Another famous form of political polarization in recent history is the difference in political ideology of Capital and

Communist forces. This political polarization then impacts governance and society. This essay delve into the positive as well as negative impacts of political polarization on society and governance.

Starting with the positive impacts of political polarization on governance, one can see that political polarization results into scrutiny of government policy. Government is responsible for framing policies regarding different matters. These policies are then presented in parliament where its advantages are told by government and its hidden motives or disadvantages are exposed by opposition. A study by Pew Research Center revealed that highly polarized congress members are more likely to demand investigations and reviews of policies purposed by other side. Thus, political polarization ensures strict examination of government policies.

Another positive impact of political polarization is increase in accountability of government leaders. Opposition parties keep their eyes on the actions, projects and policies of government leaders. If they find the ruling party leaders indulged in corruption or ill-mannered activity, they never

waste that opportunity in holding the leaders accountable for their activity. Same goes for ruling party in holding opposition leaders accountable for their fraudualent activity. Ousting of PM Nawaz Sharif and PM Imran Khan from their position is one such example of it. Hence, increase in accountability is one of the benefits of political polarization.

Moreover, polarization strengthen democracy in a country. Democracy means government of the people, for the people and by the people. A democratic country prioritize the interest of people, safeguard their rights, ensures accountability of leaders and provides justice to all. Political polarization results in scurting of government policy, accountability of leaders and eradication of threat of dictatorship. All this results in protection and strengthening of democracy. Largest democracies like USA, UK and India have intense political polarization among political rivals. Hence, health of democracy improves in political polarization.

Along with positive impacts, the negative impacts of political polarization on society are unavoidable.

First negative impact is the rise in policy deadlocks. Opposition and rulling party have different reservations and different views on different policies. If consensus is not achieved then it can create an unnecessary delays and stalemate in the process of policy making. The US has faced multiple government shutdowns due to contrasting opinions of Republicians and Democrats over economic budget and immigaration policies. In 2018-2019, US faced its longest government shutdown for 35 days on the topic of funding of border wall. Hence political polarization results in deadlocks over policy making.

Furthermore, political polarization results in weakening of institutions. Parliament, judiciary and executive fails to work in full swing because of political polarization. Rulling party tries to fill the institutions with party loyalists. This results into weakening of checks and balance on exercise of power by government. One of biggest motive of rulling party is to make judical appointments by considering party loyalty so that they can alter consitution to capture more power and to avoid check

and balances. They also try to fit party loyalists in electoral offices. For example, in Pakistan, ECP and NAB are considered to be the tool of ruling party to coerce opposition and to rig the election because the appointments for these offices are made by the party in power. Hence, institutions loses their neutrality in political polarized environment.

Political polarization is unsuitable in war and crisis. In war and crisis, swift decision making is important to avert losses and damages. In political polarized assemblies, achieving consensus and approval on bills and policies is time taking that multiply the resulting danger. During COVID-19 crisis, the deadlocks on the imposition of lockdowns, usage of masks and inoculation with vaccines resulted in higher death tolls in polarized politics of USA, Brazil and India as compare to consensus based societies like South Korea and New Zealand. Therefore, political polarization worsens the danger due to war and crisis.

Another peril of political polarization is the prioritization of parochial interest

over national interest. Political leaders prioritize the interest of the people of those areas from where they have received the highest votes and gained power. This pushes the national interest to the back seat. He prioritizes and funds those project that gives benefit to his people. The benefits of his policies are pre-dominately directed to his people. If one looks at Pakistan then it is clear that different parties have strong hold in various provinces. When different parties form the government then they always favour the people of provinces where they have strong voter base. Hence, prioritization of parochial interests in polarized politics is one of its negative impact.

Another area of the essay is the impacts of political polarization on society. This also includes positive and negative impacts. Starting with positive effects, political polarization results in wide choices for selecting @ political leaders. In political homogenous society, choices to select political leaders are limited. The ideology supported by large section of society is dominant political ideology.

This results into suppression of marginal voices and dissents. However, in political polarized society, people can select leader whose ideology allign with their ones. If any political leader fails to deliver the desired result then people and parliament can democratically pass vote of no confidence against that political leader and select any other political leader. Hence, in political polarized societies, wide choice for selecting a political leader is available.

Another positive impact is the protection of masses from the dictatorship of one party. In the absence of multi-party system, ruling party is free to do anything. It never faces any criticism, accountability and scrutiny. This results in despotism which oppresses people. Political polarization ensures accoutability, scrutiny and justified criticism on the actions of ruling party; thereby, preventing them to exercise absolute power. Hitler banned all opposition parties and eliminated dissent. The rights of people were usurped. Coercion and killing became the tool of Hitler to control people. Therefore, security of people

lies in politically polarized society.

Moreover, political polarization results in an increase in the political awareness of people. In politically homogenous society, the other side of story is never known. People only know what is showed to them. However, critics and opposition always expose hidden motives of government action which ultimately increases political awareness of populace. With the support of opposition, media also exposes secrets and hidden angles of different bills & policies of government. For example, Modi's false claims of downing Pakistani jets in recent Pakistan-India clash was exposed by opposition parties. Hence, political awareness increases in politically polarized society.

Switching to the negative effects of political polarization on society, first one is the absence of workable solution for the problem of common man. Deadlocks and stalemates are the part and parcel of political polarization. This results in delay in implementation of policies beneficial to common man. For example, political polarization in Greece between pro-austerity and anti-austerity parties caused delay in agreements on bail out packages with EU that

worsened the debt crisis. International investors often reluctant to invest in highly politically polarized society. This investment can uplift the living standards of people. Hence, political polarization add fuel to the injuries of common man.

Moreover, political polarization results in erosion of social cohesion. People are divided into different groups. This gives birth to us vs them mentality. This mars national integration. Political leaders often emotionally blackmail their supporters. and provoke them against their political opponents. This breeds intolerance and hate speech. Supporters of different parties often resort to physical fights in their confrontation. For example, Brexit split Britain into 'Leave' and 'Remain' camps. Families, workplaces and communities reported divisions and hostility. Hence, political polarization destroys social cohesion.

Furthermore, political polarization results in unequal development of different parts of country. Political leaders favour the people of those areas from where they receive majority of votes. They construct

roads, schools, hospitals, airports, railways, water projects and other social sector projects in those areas. This result in marginalization of one segment of society. One part of society enjoys luxurious of life and other one can hardly afford the basic necessities of life. People of Balochistan and rural Sindh are facing abject poverty in which they do not have even access to clean drinking water. While, people of Punjab and Karachi are living a life full of comfort. Thus, disparities in development of country are the result of political polarization.

In addition to that, political polarization fuels up separatist tendencies. Abnormal political polarization loses the grip of center to hold all segments and parts of a country together. People of various parts of countries are provoked by political leaders to bring revolution and create their own state where they can live a life according to their rules and policies and create a system that align with their interests. Unequal development and usurption of just demands and rights of people due to political polarization also give rise to separatist tendency.

Cession of East Pakistan, now Bangladesh, is an example of it where separatists with the help of India was succeeded in creating their own state. Hence, political polarization proves to be a fertile ground for separatist tendencies.

In a nutshell, political polarization has both negative and positive impacts on governance and society. Normal political polarization with just few criticism, positive checks and balance and constructive scrutiny can bring positive results. This is also very important for working of system. However, if polarization exceeds its limits, it can produce negative results and inflict irreparable damages to society. Therefore, some measures and steps can be implemented to support positive criticism and suppress deconstructive objections. This can include strengthening of electoral watchdogs, increasing literacy of country, providing public services to all without discrimination, suppressing hate speeches and protecting country from non-state actors. These steps have potential to promote positive and fruitful polarization. One should never become desperate at the

political
current affairs of state. Changes
are always uncertain but when they come
they bring all the seeds of accoutability,
progress and positivity.