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System.

=> **Describe the Political System of Pakistan. Which Form of Government is Suitable to make the Country Politically Stable?**
(Pakistan Affairs 2018)

Introduction:

The quest for a stable and effective political system has been a central theme in Pakistan's history since its inception. The country's political evolution has been marked by experimentation with different constitutional models, frequent military interventions, and ongoing debate over the most suitable structure of governance. Formally, Pakistan is a Federal Parliamentary Republic as enshrined in the 1973 constitution. However, its practical application has often deviated

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ted into a system where
unelected institutions have
wielded significant influence.
Achieving political stability,
therefore, requires a
critical examination of
both the existing system
and viable alternatives.

Description of Pakistan's Political System:

The current political
system of Pakistan, as
defined by the 1973
Constitution — especially after
the landmark 18th Amend-
ment — possesses the
following features:

1- Federal Structure:

Pakistan is a federati-
on of four provinces,
Punjab, Sindh, KPK, and
Balochistan. Powers are
divided between the
central government and
provincial governments as
detailed in the Federal
Legislative List.

2- Parliamentary Democracy:

It follows a parliamentary system where the executive is drawn from and is accountable to the legislature. The parliament of Pakistan is bicameral, consisting of two houses:

i- The Senate:

The Senate, also known as the upper house, provides equal representation to all provinces. It safeguards provincial interests and promotes a sense of autonomy.

ii- The National Assembly:

It is also known as lower house. Its members are directly elected by the people and it has the power to elect the Prime Minister. It can also pass a vote of no-confidence against them.

3- Ceremonial Head of State:

The President is the constitutional head of the State who acts on the binding advice of the Prime Minister. The 18th Amendment drastically reduced the president's powers, notably repealing the controversial Article 58(2)(b) which had allowed presidents to dissolve governments arbitrarily.

4- Head of Government:

The Prime Minister is the chief executive, wielding most executive authority. They are the leader of the majority party or coalition in the National Assembly and are responsible for running the administration.

Gap Between Theory and Practice:

Despite this constitutional framework, Pakistan's

political history reveals a persistent gap between theory and practice. The system has been frequently suspended by martial laws, notably in 1958, 1969, 1977, and 1999, which led to prolonged military rule. Even during civilian eras, the system has been plagued by instability, corruption, dynastic political parties and a tendency to resolve political conflicts outside parliamentary channels, often involving extra-constitutional interventions.

Form of Government Suitable for Political Stability:

Determining the most appropriate form of government for Pakistan is not possible in absolute terms. It must be assessed in the context of the country's unique political realities,

including its federal structure, history of recurring instability, and critical need for consistent and effective policy-making.

A - The Case for a Presidential System:

Proponents argue that a pure presidential system, distinct from the authoritarian 1962 model, could offer solutions:

1 - Stability Through Fixed Tenure:

In presidential government the president is elected for a fixed tenure and except impeachment for the violation of the constitution, he cannot be removed from the office before the expiry of his term. This fixed term would be immune to arbitrary dismissal via votes of no-confidence, ensuring policy continuity and

add and highlight references/examples against these arguments.

long-term planning.

2- Clear Accountability:

The president in presidential system is elected directly by the people. Moreover, there is separation of powers between the executive and the legislature and the power is concentrated solely in the president, who serves both as head of the state and as head of the government. In this way, there is clear accountability. The citizens know exactly who is responsible for government decisions.

3- Expertise-Based Governance:

The president could appoint technocrats and experts to the cabinet, free from the constraints of choosing ministers from within the parliament.

4- Prompt and Bold Decision-Making:

The president can make swift and bold decisions because they do not require prior approval from the legislature for most of the matters and they do not rely on the legislature's vote of confidence.

B- The Case for a Reformed Parliamentary System:

A stronger argument, supported by historical context, advocates for retaining but radically reforming the parliamentary system. This is the most pragmatic path to stability for several reasons:

1- Accommodation of Diversity:

Pakistan is a multi-ethnic, multi-linguistic federation. The parliamentary

System accommodates its diversity by encouraging coalition governments and cabinets that include representatives of different regions and groups, ensuring broader inclusion. In contrast, the presidential system centralizes power in one individual, risking further alienation of smaller provinces.

2- The 18th Amendment and Provincial Autonomy:

The 18th Amendment represents a hard-won consensus that devolved powers to the provinces. It strengthened Pakistan's federal and parliamentary system. While provincial autonomy is formally guaranteed, shifting to a presidential system would weaken it structurally. Unlike a parliamentary prime minister, a directly elected president does not depend on provincial support to remain in office. This reduces the

provinces' leverage in policymaking. As a result, even if autonomy is preserved on paper, the concentration of power in the president would make it largely symbolic. This will undermine the very spirit of the 18th Amendment, which aimed to prevent over-centralization of power as it has historically been exploited by military rulers.

3- Addressing Specific Flaws:

Instead of discarding the system, specific reforms can target its weaknesses:

i- Amending the Vote of No-Confidence:

In the current system of Pakistan, for a no confidence motion to be successful, the support of a simple majority - 172 of the total 342 members in the lower house of Parliament is required.

This should be amended so that a two-thirds majority is required for the removal of Prime Minister. This will prevent attempts driven by political vendetta and will promote political stability.

ii - Strengthening Institutions:

The real need is to fortify institutions such as the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), National Accountability Bureau (NAB), and the judiciary to ensure fairness and rule of law. Moreover, it will also establish a tradition of civilian supremacy.

iii - Promoting Political Culture:

Politics in Pakistan is largely characterized by instability, corruption, power struggles, and weak democratic norms. Personal

interests and vendettas of the political elites often outweigh national priorities. Therefore, a culture of tolerance, consensus building, and unwavering respect for the democratic process among all political actors should be fostered.

IV-Enforcing Intra-Party Democracy:

Regular intra-party elections should be ensured in true sense. This would break the model of dynastic politics and create more accountable, competent, and representative leadership.

Conclusion:

Pakistan's political stability hinges less on choosing between a presidential or parliamentary system and more on strengthening existing institutions. The most practical path forward is to

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reform the current
Parliamentary framework
by making it more
difficult to topple
governments. Moreover, it
should be ensured that
all state institutions
function within their
constitutional boundaries.
Ultimately, lasting stability
depends on a unified
commitment to democratic
principles, the rule of
law, and consistent
policy implementation.

good attempt. but the answer is lengthy and might affect your time management,