

Section B

Q7 The prevalence of dynastic politics and interest groups in political parties have weakened the polity in Pakistan. Discuss.

Introduction

Dynastic politics, a deeply entrenched phenomenon in Pakistan's politics, states the foundation of country's polity.

Unfortunately, politics has become a family business in Pakistan. Few families dominate Pakistan's political system. In the book "Beyond the Crisis State", Maleeha Lathi highlights that Pakistan is a victim of political dynasticism, and the political dynasties have damaged the democratic system of Pakistan. It has detrimental effects on state's democracy by shunning off its basic features. Ostensibly, political dynasties and interest groups prioritize their own personal interests over national interests. Hence, they diminish political competition, weaken accountability mechanism, ignore basic human rights, and curb the nation's liberties especially freedom of speech which ultimately results in weak polity. In this way, they deteriorate the democratic values of the state. Furthermore, due to poor governance by incompetent political dynasties and ~~personal~~ interest of interest groups, the country has become entangled in the web of political, social and economic crisis.

However, the menace of dynastic politics and fragile democracy can be mitigated in the country by following the footsteps of Norway, the most democratic state in the world, and by prioritizing freedom of expression. Thus, dynastic politics and interest groups are one of the main reasons for weakening the polity in Pakistan.

Expanding the term "dynastic Politics"

Dynastic politics means when members of the same family occupy elected positions in government. It is an amalgamation of different elements, such as political background and consecutive wins. Certainly dynastic rule is not unwanted in the world. According to the research article 'Impact of Dynastic politics on the Democracy of Pakistan' by Amanullah, the ratio of dynastic politics in following states:

Dynastic Politics	Ratio
Phillippines	60%
Pakistan	52%
India	29%
United States	6.2%

The fact indicates that political dynasties exist globally and are more common in developing states. Moreover, it has an inverse relationship with the development and democracy of the state. To sum up, third world countries are entrenched in a phenomenon of political dynasticism.

Delineating the term "Polity" "Democracy" and its Principles

Polity refers to a political system or organization that governs a state or a society. It serves as the back bone of the nation, shaping its laws, institutions, and governance structure. The salient features of polity play a crucial role in defining its character, functionality, and the relationship between the state and its citizens. Moreover, light has been shed on seven key features of ^{state} polity in a state. The key features include:

Key Features of Polity

Constitutionalism

Democracy

Human Rights

Rule of Law

Pluralism and diversity

Decentralisation and Subsidiarity

Good Governance

An Overview of Pakistan's dynastic Politics and Weak Polity

Unfortunately, like other South Asian states, Pakistan is also entangled in a web of political dynasties for almost three decades, deteriorating the polity in state. Family politics is not restricted to the heads of political parties; it prevails at the ground level as well.

Family member of politicians are seen in the seats of MNAs, MPAs, and senators.

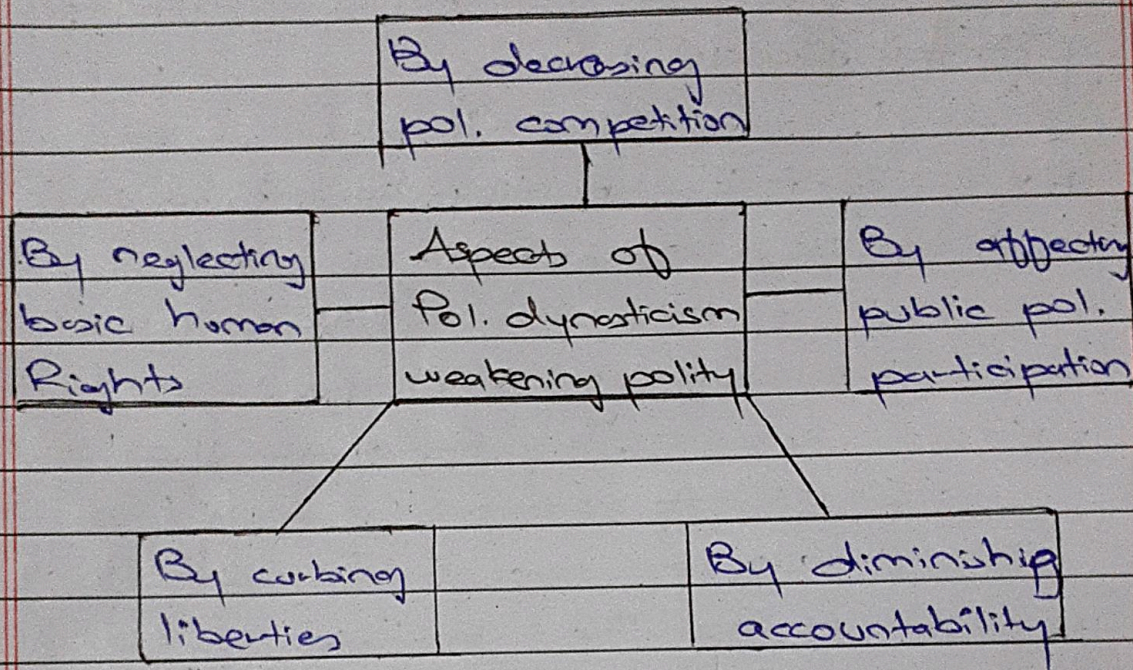
The power is concentrated with certain political families, which undermines political diversity and raises concerns about meritocracy and accountability, thereby weakening polity in a state. Dynastic politics is a scourge for polity in Pakistan, as dynasties come after burying political competition, meritocracy, social liberties, human rights and accountability. As per Economist States on Pakistan, fell 11 pieces, as it ranked 128th in 2024 out of 167 states on the global democracy index."

~(Economist Intelligence Unit Report, 2024)

Thus, dynastic politics has weakened the efficacy of democracy in Pakistan.

Role of dynastic politics in weakening Pakistan's polity

Dynastic politics has subverted democracy in Pakistan by neglecting its basic features



a **By decreasing political Competition**
First, political dynasties raise the opportunity cost for contesting the elections and discourage non-dynastic candidates from working efficiently for the state. Hence, Non-dynastic candidates have no choice but to merge with these dynasties. In this way, political dynasticism decreases political competition in the electoral process, ignoring the vital feature of polity, which is a multi-party political system. For instance, only three major political parties compete for the leadership. This

fact undermines the opportunities of new faces to bring reforms to the state. So short, dynastic politics undermines the political competition in the state, weakening Pakistan's democracy.

b. By affecting public political participation

Second, dynastic politics decreases public political participation, in a state. When political competition diminishes, the state citizens are left with no choice but to cast votes for these political dynasties. This undermines the people's will to change the state's political system through the electoral process. As the state has not achieved substantial progress in the political, social, and economic sectors after the decades-long rule of the political dynasties, the mistrust between the political parties and citizens has widened. Consequently, voters turnout in the electoral process decreases.

"The electoral voter turnout in the year 2024 elections was 48%." 2024
~ Election Commission of Pakistan Report.

This indicates that political dynasties disrupt the democratic process by lowering political competition in the state; therefore political participation is reduced. Hence, dynastic politics stunts polity in Pakistan.

c By neglecting basic human rights:
 Third, political dynasticism is a significant reason for socio-economic plight in Pakistan. They undermine political competition, leading to poor governance. The socio-economic conditions of interior Sindh in Pakistan are miserable; people live in extreme poverty and hunger; no access to clean water; they are ^{even} deprived of basic human rights.
 "Sindh's human development index is 0.517."

Source: Human Development Index (HDI), 2021

This all resulted due to one party rule in Sindh for decades. Verily, when the government ignores basic feature of polity, which is providing basic human rights to the citizens, polity in the state weakens. In short, political dynasties shake the foundation of polity in the state by ignoring human rights.

d By Curbing liberties

Fourth, dynastic politics has weakened the polity in Pakistan by curbing the liberties of the nation. Basically, to stifle ^{dissent} and opposition. They criminalize any criticism against government by following the British-era legacy. Such black laws curtail freedom of expression. They suppress the voices of people advocating for change, making polity feeble.

e By diminishing accountability Fifth, political dynasticism hinders the process of accountability in the state. Unequivocally, corruption has plagued Pakistan for many decades highlighting the poor governance of the political dynasties that have been ruling the state for many years.

"Pakistan ranks 133 out of 180 countries in the world."

~ Corruption Perception Index, 2023

This fact indicates that Pakistan faces a high level of corruption. Evidently, an anti-corruption agency named the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) was formed in 1999 to curb the menace of corruption, yet it fails to reduce corruption due to political influence.

Consequently, accountability issues weaken the polity in state.

Recommendations to foster polity in Pakistan

Although dynastic politics and weak polity lie at the heart of Pakistan's multiple problems. These issues are not ban without solutions. Here, some viable measures are suggested that may provide helpful solution to the problem.

Critical Analysis

Critically, political dynasticism has deteriorated polity in Pakistan, ultimately, Pakistan has been grappling with the menace of stunted economic growth, the energy crunch, inflation, poverty, illiteracy, and a lack of proper health facilities, making the state dance to the tunes of foreign donors. Evidently, after the long rule of political dynasties, Pakistan has become a debt-based economy instead of an export-based. The features of polity have been brushed aside by political dynasties, making the state's citizens suffer by depriving them of their basic rights. In short, Pakistan's polity is in grave danger due to the dominance of oligarchies in the political system of the state.

Conclusion

Conclusively, dynastic politics play an imperative role in wrecking polity in Pakistan. Basically, to pursue their personal goals, they ignore the state's collective interests, halting the nation's progress. They have weakened accountability, restricted the nation's liberties, ignored basic human rights, diminished political competition, and affected the public political participation of citizens,

pushing the state into an abyss of failure. However, by following the successful political model and by fostering freedom of expression in the state, the problems of dynastic politics and feeble polity can be minimized. To sum up, political dynasticism is a scourge on polity in Pakistan.