

Essay

Democratic unrest in Pakistan: Causes and Consequences.

Outline:-

I. Introduction

Thesis statement: Democratic unrest in Pakistan is a product of various factors such as election rigging, lack of informed voters and judicial activism which lead ^{country} to economic, social and political unrest. ~~in the country~~

II. Democratic Unrest in Pakistan: A Bird's Eye View

Democratic journey of Pakistan had been facing crisis since its birth

III. Causes of Democratic Unrest in Pakistan

A. Historical Causes

- 1) Role of governor general
- 2) Military interventions

B. Political Causes

- 1) Selfish politicians
- 2) Lack of free and fair elections

C. Economic Causes

- 1) Poverty and crime
- 2) Lack of election funds for transparent

elections

D. Social: Causes

- 1) Tribalism not democracy
- 2) Feudal system curtail democracy.

E. Judicial activism

- 1) ^{Almost} All democratic governments impacted due to judicial activism.

F. Other Causes

- 1) Lack of literate masses.
- 2) Impact of social media.

IV. Consequences of Democratic Unrest in Pakistan

A. Political impacts

- 1) Internal instability
- 2) Intolerance and politics of abuse

B. Economic Impacts

- 1) Foreign investment reduced
- 2) Inflation, unemployment increased
- 3) Corruption and nepotism prevailed.

C. Social impacts

- 1) Internal fabric country weakened.
- 2) Crime rate and political vendetta have become common.

D. Impacts of Governance

- 1) Accountability process reduced
- 2) Inefficient public service delivery.

E. Regional Impacts.

D Policies with regional countries such as Afghanistan weakened.

F other impacts

1) ~~HRDI~~ Human Development Index (HDI) score low as compared to regional states.

2) Literacy rate is less in the country

V. How to Reduce the Democratic Unrest in Pakistan

VI. Conclusion

Democratic unrest has become a part and parcel in the journey of democracy in Pakistan. The death of Quaid-e-Azam was the first blow to the journey of democracy in Pakistan. Later on, the assassination of First Prime Minister ^{Liaquat Ali} and role of Governor General in 1954 set a precedent of undemocratic legacy. Similarly, selfish politicians, lack of free and fair elections have also fueled the democratic unrest. Economic constraints, feudal and tribal factors have been the persistent reasons of democratic unrest in Pakistan. Not only this but judiciary ^{also} played ~~also~~ played a key role in subjugating ^{the} democratic transition in the country. Each military coup was validated by judiciary, creating a chaos in political arena of Pakistan. Last but not least, illiterate masses and role of social media in contemporary era are perhaps the biggest reasons of democratic unrest in Pakistan.

Democratic unrest have left deep impacts on Pakistan. For example, internal stability and intolerance have increased in the country.

In the same way, foreign investment significantly reduced due to political unrest. Coupled with this inflation, unemployment and corruption have also increased in the

country. Crimes and political vendetta have weakened social fabric of

Pakistan. The distance between public and institutions have increased. In

same manner, Pakistan could not foster better relations with regional neighbours,

and could not improve human capital index, the reason for all

these failures can be traced back to democratic unrest in country.

In short, democratic in Pakistan is a product of various factors such as election rigging, lack of informed voters and judicial activism which lead country to economic, social and political unrest.

Before jumping to causes

and consequences of democratic unrest, it is important to have an overview of democracy in Pakistan. Jinnah dreamed a ~~real~~ democratic Pakistan but unfortunately his sudden demise in 1948 lead country to long race of democratic unrest. Only, From 1951- to 1957, nine prime ministers had got changed due to political instability. This lead to four military coups subsequently. Civilian rules, which are supposed to be the guardian of democracy, have been weakened and frequently substituted by military rulers. The constitution of 1973 was a big win for democracy of Pakistan but that too was marred by dictators by introducing amendments such as 8th and 17th amendments. Nonetheless, 18th amendment became a ray of hope and civilian rule got reinstated. Unfortunately, hybrid regime in 2018 and 2024 again reinvigorated democratic unrest in the country.

There are numerous causes

causes of democratic unrests in Pakistan. From the early years of the country, democracy had been paralysed by the irresponsible behaviour of Governor General Chaudhri Muhammad Ali Jinnah who dissolved the constitutional assembly, and removed civilian government. This weekend constitutional making process paved way for subsequent military interventions. General Ayub's military coup in 1958 was first direct attack on democratic journey of the country. Thus, ~~historically~~ journey of democracy in Pakistan had been historically paralyzed in the early ages of the country.

Beside this, political leaders incapability opened the way of undemocratic forces in to realm. Selfish politicians have become the part of dictators rather strengthening democratic values. ^{For example,} Ayub's Basic Democracy System (BDS)'s members were politicians. Similarly, during Yaqub, Zia and Musharraf martial law

politicians were the part of them. Lack of free and fair elections lead country toward democratic unrest. Unemployment and poverty increased. The policies of government were not aligned with the problem and need of the country. These factors breed undemocratic atmosphere in Pakistan.

Along with this, Feudal system and Tribalism are the other important causes of democratic unrest in Pakistan. For instance, Pakistan has four provinces and numerous ethnicities. It is a common norm here that people vote after their nationality. They do not prefer democracy. One can witness this from increasing provincialism in Pakistan. Political parties usually quarrel with centre for the provinces' ~~interest~~ ^{interest}, in order to secure their vote banks back in provinces. Not only tribalism but feudalism is also a major

cause of democratic unrest in the country. The politics have been granted to feudal lords like an inheritance. No common person can be a politician in Pakistan. The system is made as such in the country. So, one can say, feudalism along with tribalism are causes of lack of democratic values in Pakistan.

Judicial Activism can be another major ^{cause} of democratic unrest in Pakistan. From the very beginning to the contemporary political landscape, judiciary has become a constant bone of contention in democracy of Pakistan. For example, from Muhammad Ali Jinnah then prime minister in 1954 to Benazir Bhutto and from prime minister Imran Khan to Mian Nawaz Sharif each and every democratically elected ruler got removed or justified by the judiciary to be removed from the office.

Thus, almost all the democratic governments impacted due to unconstitutional behaviour of judiciary in Pakistan.

Last but not least, lack of literate masses and most importantly social media are the real reasons of democratic unrest in Pakistan. The people do not know about their importance. They vote online of nationality. ~~and~~ They do not hold their rulers accountable. Similarly, the rise of social media and its use by unaware masses have severely impacted the entire landscape of democracy in Pakistan. Cult following and hero worship increased. Culture of abusive language and intolerance increased by many fold. Decent politics and difference of opinion have lost. In short, the illiterate masses and increasing unbridled social media pose a big threat to democracy ~~unrest~~ of the country.

Democratic unrest have created severe consequence for Pakistan. Today, the country's internal instability is at stake due to political unrest. For example, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and the central government are on the opposite pole in a time when country is facing a severe wave of terrorism. This can be witnessed from the chief minister KP who said he would lead a delegation to Kabul for dialogue without or bypassing the federal government. This is really a serious matter. Things will go apart if this is not mended on time. Intolerance and politics of abuse have become common. Political vendetta by putting democrats in jails create more internal rifts in public. Thus, internal stability of the country is at the stake due to democratic unrest.

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In same manner, country is paying a huge economic cost of democratic unrest.

Foreign Direct Investment have significantly reduced in Pakistan. ~~the~~ Trade, Tourism and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) declined.

Similarly, inflation has become high, and unemployed increased.

According to recent survey of International Labour Organization (ILO) unemployment rate in Pakistan is 7.1%, which a huge one. Corruption increases due to political and democratic unrest. the recent IMF's diagnostic report about Pakistan reveals that 6.5% of GDP go into ^{corrupt} practices in Pakistan. Therefore, democratic unrest has a huge cost on Pakistan.

Moreover, ~~over~~ frequent changes in democratic governments and the hybrid regimes leads to lack of accountability, and inefficient Public Service delivery. Developments embargement and

nepotism prevail. The meritocracy becomes a hollow dream. The officials become the king, the public and ordinary citizens suffer. This is all because of undemocratic trends in the country.

In addition, policies with regional countries such as Afghanistan weakens due to democratic unrest at home. For instance, today there are two political thoughts in Pakistan one that is last government of Imran Khan favoured the dialogue with Taliban; However, the incumbent government is having an opposite thinking. They want ~~elimination~~ ^{elimination} of Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP)'s unconditional surrender or war even at the cost of Pak-Afghan relations. This is just an example that how democratic thinking effect the regional relation of Pakistan.

Last but not least, living standards of people, literacy rate, health and overall HDI index only improves, once a true democratic system got installed in the country. Today, HDI score of Pakistan is low as compared to its regional peers. Similarly, literacy rate of the country is almost stagnant at 60% for last many years. In the same fashion, the health, public infrastructure, roads and schools, etc are in deteriorating conditions because the governments are busy to adjust themselves in the system. They do not focus aforementioned public services. In short, once true democracy culture nourished in the country, then the governments will and could work for the peace, progress and prosperity of the nation and country. Addressing the challenges demands a coherence policy framework. The first and foremost step to address the democratic

unrest in the country is fair elections. Freedom of expression is the Article-19A of constitution must be enforced in true sense. Then the true political parties that must have intraparty democracy needed in curbing democratic unrest from Pakistan. In the same way, educating masses so that they could make a sound choice while selecting their representatives. The steps like 27th amend regarding containing judicial activism are commendable, while keeping in view the institutionalized balanced. Similarly, true implementation of Article 6 of constitution to stop military intervention in future is the need of the hour. Last but not least, curbing the illegal and negative role of social media can play a role in addressing democratic unrest in Pakistan.

In sum, democratic politics has become a challenge since its inception in 1947.

The democratic forces have always been strangled by undemocratic powerful forces. The military dictators and selfish, incapable politicians both are equally blamed for democratic unrest in Pakistan. This caused internal rifts in the society and ^{increased} ~~breeds~~ poverty rate in the country.

Similarly, economic disruption and social unrest ~~also~~ ^{arised} to weak democracy. Accountability, corruption and illiteracy are the byproduct of democratic unrest. The political parties, which are the core for democracy have been at large with each other ~~q~~ since the birth of Pakistan. Nevertheless, 18th amendment and subsequent civilian transition after 2010 proved a ^{blessing} ~~nightmare~~ for dwindling democracy of Pakistan. In a similar fashion, 27th amendment give ray of hope to stop judicial activism and to boost democracy in the country.

