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Democratic Unrest in Pakistan: Causes and Consequences.

Outline:

A. Introduction

Thesis Statement: Pakistan suffers many democratic challenges including lack of transparency and accountability, political polarisation and other social and economical disruptions which result in overall political and economic instability. Moreover, it also disrupts the national and international image of a state.

B. Causes of Democratic Unrest in Pakistan:

- 1- Lack of transparency and accountability among politicians and office holders create distrust and democratic unrest in Pakistan.
- 2- Increase in corruption purges personal gain instead of public welfare.

3- Financial dependence and increasing debt crisis leaves the country vulnerable and people undeveloped.

4- Inadequate allocation of resources leading towards centre-provincial conflict ultimately lead towards democratic unrest.

5- Polarised and regional politics further expands non-cooperation between opposition parties and their supporters.

6- Incompletion of tenure and rapid shift in leadership creates democratic unrest by hindering the effectiveness of ongoing projects and political efforts.

C. Consequences of Democratic Unrest in Pakistan:

1- Political instability and decline in national image due to vulnerable democratic shifts.

2- Decline in Foreign Direct Investment leading towards economic instability and infrastructural decline.

3- Poverty and unemployment due to lack of infrastructural and industrial projects.

4- Increased aggressiveness and more chances of war due to democratic failure and military dominance.

5- Democratic failure results in foreign interventions leading towards terrorism and military in a state.

6- The concept of brain drain among youth to leave the country for their basic needs to survive due to democratic unrest in Pakistan.

D. Conclusion

Abraham Lincoln once said, "Democracy is of the people, by the people and for the people." This statement emphasises that democracy should be for the welfare of public instead of personal gain.

South Asia is the hub of democracy, consisting of 40% of democracy of the world, it just needs to be

revived and corrected. Democratic unrest in Palestine is the significant challenge, causing national decline. The lack of transparency and accountability among politicians and office holders causing democratic unrest in Palestine. Moreover, increasing corruption due to personal gains, while sidelining the public welfare, increasing debt crisis and inadequate allocation of resources are the ultimate causes of democratic decline in a country. Furthermore, the lack of cooperation and increasing polarised and regional politics, rapid leadership shifts hinder the overall democracy of the state. Consequently, the democratic instability lead towards the dissatisfaction of foreign investors which would ultimately result in economic decline. Moreover, increasing poverty and unemployment are the results of democratic unrest. Democratic failure

increases military dominance leading towards the increased chances of war. The state becomes more prone to foreign interventions. Hence, Pakistan suffers many democratic challenges which results in overall political and economic decline of a nation.

In Pakistan, the lack of accountability and transparency in state affairs among office holders and politicians is the one of the major causes of democratic unrest in Pakistan. The accountability institutes lack efficiency and effectiveness in their assigned roles. According to Public Perception of Accountability, Institutions like NAB, FIA and anti-corruption establishments are used for political victimization rather than general accountability (68% of Pakistani's perception). This study shows that how much public is aware of their leaders sincerity. Hence, the lack of accountability and transparency is the significant

cause of democratic unrest in Pakistan.

In addition to this, corruption is another ultimate cause of democratic decline. Politicians favor personal gain and luxuries instead of public welfare and development. It creates the distrust among public and their leaders. For instance, Pakistan ranks 135th out of 180 in Corruption Perception Index (CPI). The leaders successfully sideline the responsibilities of public which is their first and foremost duty. Hence, this increase in corruption makes the country vulnerable and exposed to traditional and non-traditional threats either within or beyond the state.

Moreover, economic dependency, fiscal and debt crisis is another cause of democratic instability. It makes Pakistan and its people underdeveloped and vulnerable to foreign austerity measures and conditions in Pakistan's

national and international policies. According to National Economic Survey, 47% of revenue goes to debt servicing annually (2025 report). Along with this, IMF subsidies and austerity measures interfere and guide national policy making hindering democratic stability. Hence, economic dependence is a significant cause of democratic decline in Pakistan.

Furthermore, the centre and provincial conflict cause democratic instability due to inadequate allocation of resources. There are limited efforts in resolving this issue, which is making it even more strengthened and deep-rooted. For instance, the 7th NFC Award of 2010, is still active with no amendments providing 57.5% of divisible pool to provinces on population basis. The limited resources is not the only factor, instead their inadequate allocation is major concern which causes democratic unrest in a

country.

Additionally, polarised and factional politics further expands non-cooperation among opposition parties and their supporters causing democracy to decline. The leaders of political parties keep on degrading and abusing others instead of giving them chance and telling them do better for the state. For instance, closing of schools, industries and offices due to aggressive protests and burning of tyres and green belts are the significant evidence of polarised politics in Pakistan's history of last decade. Hence, these internal factors create democratic unrest leading the country towards significant vulnerabilities causing national and international decline of the sovereignty of a state.

Last but not the least, the rapid political shifts in Pakistan without the completion of tenure creates democratic unrest by hindering the

effectiveness of ongoing projects and political efforts. Incomplete tenures leave the country on the hands of interim governments to lead with little or no experience. For instance, in the history of Pakistan, none of leaders have completed their tenure and overthrown either on the basis of corruption and no vote of confidence.

However, all the above mentioned causes creates democratic unrest which have certain and long-term consequences that a country faces on a regular basis.

In Pakistan, political instability is the result of democratic unrest which results in national decline. The instant democratic shifts leaves the country vulnerable to foreign interventions. Moreover, it creates democratic backlog. For instance, the 2022 vote of no confidence against Imran Khan triggered nationwide protests and institutional standoffs between

executive, judiciary and military reflecting severe democratic unrest. Hence, these consistent uncertainties of Pakistan's democracy consequently resulting in overall political and democratic decline.

In addition to this, the economic instability is another consequence of democratic unrest in Pakistan. The decline in Foreign Direct Investment creating industrial shutdown and no new infrastructural projects. For instance, according to World Economic Forum, FDI in 2025 was increased to \$4.02 billion with a increase of 2.72% from previous year (2024). Despite significant increase, it would not become consistent due to one democratic shift and again a significant decline. Hence, for economic stability, the democratic consistency is necessary.

Moreover, the rising poverty and unemployment is the major consequence

of democratic unrest in Pakistan. It is mainly because of the lack of industrial and infrastructural projects that creates employment in a state and ultimately decreases the societal unrest. According to International Labor Organization (ILO), around 1 million Pakistani graduates enter labor market annually and faces unemployment. Therefore, this consequently results in large proportion of unemployment and more than 40% of population of Pakistan lives below poverty line due to democratic unrest.

Furthermore, the democratic failure increases military dominance in domestic affairs. This creates the civil-military disbalance and makes the country vulnerable and more prone to the chances of war. For instance, Samuel P. Huntington said, "In a praetorian state, the military intervenes because it is the only institution strong enough to do so." The aggressive attitude

of military in national affairs disrupts the overall balance of a state.

Last but not the least, democratic failure results in foreign interventions and rise in militancy and terrorism in a state. It ultimately makes the state more prone to traditional security threats. In a recent decade, the terrorism has again rose to unacceptable levels.

According to global terrorism Index, Pakistan ranked second out of 163 countries in the world. This fact is strong enough to estimate the level of insurgency in Pakistan that needs to be countered on first and foremost priority.

In a nutshell, there are many significant causes of democratic unrest in Pakistan. The lack of sincerity of political leaders is the major factor of this unrest. Nelson Mandela one

said, "A nation should not be judged by how it treats its highest citizens, but its lowest ones." The leaders in Pakistan often work hard for personal gains leaving the public vulnerable to its consequences. The above statement clearly emphasises on the poor people of Pakistan which are approximately 45% of the total population. The question arises, how could such a nation succeed? This democratic unrest exposes the country and its people to the world's vulnerabilities and leading them to suffer for their right to live. This democratic instability drains the youth mindset that they could have career opportunities in Pakistan and around million people leaves the country annually for their ultimate survival. Hence, such factors that creates democratic unrest results in significant consequences that are proven even more harsh for the public.