

Topic:

Democratic Unrest in Pakistan: Causes and Consequences

Outline

1. Introduction

- a- Hook
- b- Context of Democratic unrest in country
- c- Thesis Statement

2. Causes of Democratic Unrest in Pakistan

a- Historical and structural Causes

- i- Domination of colonial mindset
- ii- Role of non-political actors in formation of history

b- Weak Political Institutions

- i- Weak parliaments and members with no strength
- ii- Weak local governments
- iii- Pressured bureaucracy and police

c- Leadership Crisis

- i- Rule of few in political parties and decision making
- ii- Essence of Nepotism with no true sense of leadership
- iii- Dominance of patronage networks

d. Weak bonds of Judiciary & Executive

- i- Judiciary being pressurized specially after 26th amendment of constitution
- ii- Weak rule of law creating power tussels

e. Role of Media and Misinformation

- i- Polarisation of media and news channels
- ii- Misinformation turning into Propaganda
- iii- Emotional make-up of information without unbiased debate

3. Consequences of Democratic Unrest

a. Political Instability

- i- Change of governments leading to unrest
- ii- Trust deficit for public in Political institutions and system

b. Breakdown of Governance

- i- Inefficient administration
- ii- Shaking decision making out of the fear of losing power.

c. Economic Decline

- i- ~~More~~ Increasing Fiscal deficit due to poor management and decision making
- ii- Uncertainty of foreign investors due to

changing government.

d- Rise of Lawlessness

- i- Free hand to law breaking entities to use their power by existing governments
- ii- Weak judiciary making decisions without rule of law

e- Weakening Image of country

- i- Changing governments ruining the image of state in world
- ii- Lack of trust of foreign institutions in dealing with over-changing governments.

4. Way Forward

- a- Meritocracy in Political system
- b- Strengthening institutions especially Judiciary
- c- Direct elections within parties to overcome leadership crisis and weak party heads
- d- Awareness among public

5. Conclusion

The Essay

"In Pakistan, democracy is both illusive and elusive. What we have is something that looks like democracy but does not work like one." (Taqi Hussain) Political stability is the lifeline of every democratic state yet Pakistan has always been in decline of this very stability. The portrait of Pakistan is marked with unstable political role, constitutional gaps and unfair electorates which was supported by economic and public unrest. Pakistan is losing the democratic essence for a very long time. It was caused by historical norms and divided institutional structures since its creation. As the time passed various other conditions added and now the state's democracy is in complete chaos. It has become an endangered species and is soon predicted to be the extinct one. The cause behind this unrest is not just structural and normative

Date: ___/___/20___

MON TUE WED THS FRI SAT



but also the weakness of political institutions, lack of leadership within the governments, weakening judiciary and a greater role played by media and information channels. This democratic unrest led to further political instability, bad governance, lawlessness, overall economic decline and poor image of democratic weak state in the world. Although the system has become so weak that it seems almost impossible to recover yet several reforms can give the support to continuously drowning democracy in state.

There are many reasons for the democratic unrest in Pakistan. The major and deep one is historical perspective and structural one. Pakistan was freed from colonial rule in 1947, yet the system and mindset of slavery and colonized was prevailing. It led to the late structural reforms. As we know that the first constitution

came into being in 1956. It was after almost nine years of independence. Pakistan was late in defining its constitution and so the tenure before that were working on the "1935 Act" which was designed by colonizers. It led to the deep rooted structural vulnerabilities which are seen even in present days. The history of Pakistan is also marked by the rule of non-political actors. Army being the ruling party in the name of "Martial Law" for more than two decades collectively led to the complete chaos and loss of democratic picture of ^{the} country. It led to weak political parties and difficult survival for political institutions. State was under stress for all these years and led to the further decline in its democratic image.

Another cause of democratic unrest has been weak political institutions. Although the constitution of Pakistan was made and refined in 1973

but it always remained floating and was panned by various amendments. Parliament has always been under pressure. The elections were always in favour of those looking out for power-holders. Both houses of Parliament never made decisions solely on their own. Either they are driven by majority party's head or by the unknown powers. It led to the decline in government's strength and so for the weak state. Even at present days time there is hardly any free institution that can make decision on their own. Same is the case with local government. Local govt was planned decades ago and now they are completely vanished in thin air. There is hardly any system for institutions to reach the lower class people which was once done by local governments. Bureaucracy and police is not in its powerful condition. Other power structures seem to be driving these institutions. With the

pressured working and weak managements of these political institutions, democracy is losing its essence on institutional level.

Leadership plays important role in democracy. A healthy democratic state is always driven by true leadership. But in Pakistan leadership has always remained a problematic course. Whether in government or opposition, there's never been once felt a true leader in this state. All political parties which make governments are ruled by some powerful people who make decisions. Nepotism is the biggest problem of the country. Heirs of the few leaders will be the children of already existing ~~to~~ party-heads without any consent from other members. Moreover the parties in Pakistani politics work on patronage networks. The rule of populist leads to the decline in authenticity and questions the capability of whole system. These kinds of party-heads are filling up

the 35% of whole parliament. It is leading to further unrest in democracy of the country.

Judiciary in Pakistan is getting weaker after 26th Amendment of constitution. Judiciary is a key pillar of any democratic state as it maintains the rule of law for a state. In Pakistan, judiciary has come under immense pressure due to its weakening bond with executive. Interference of executive in judicial procedures is made lawful in 26th amendment which is a clear sign of caging judiciary with the shackles of constitutional benches and even constitutional courts in 27th constitutional amendment. As a result it is difficult for judicial institutions to work for the betterment of country as it hinders the rule of law. This condition is obviously in the favour of powerful political members.

Another important role played in democratic unrest in Pakistan is by media

Date: ___/___/20___

Media has always remained an important entity in making and shaping public opinion. Unfortunately with the rise of private media, which was supposed to be unbiased of political parties and power structures, has become spokesperson for specific entities. Different news channels support different parties and oppose the other. They sometimes give misinformation or even disinformation which is turned into a propaganda for specific purposes. This is the most dreadful situation specially in present time because public relies if on media for information. Digital media has become the sole source of providing information and hence carry responsibility for shaping public opinion. Many television shows make-up the information to their interest and thus gain the required consequences without taking the instability into consideration. This is really an important factor in democratic unrest of Pakistan.

All these factors are summed up by Tahir Hussain in the words.

"Democracy is a dynamic process but in Pakistan it is 'stuck'. It has become government 'of the elite, for the elite and by the elite'."

The democratic instability caused by previously mentioned factors has given consequences to the state. Political instability is one of them. Due to weak political structuring and leadership crisis governments are changing before completing their constitutional tenure. It is indeed the most disturbing situation for the country. It leads to trust deficit between public and government structures. With everchanging govt, new rules, new schemes and changing policies lead to the lack of trust of people in their nation and it gives a lot of trouble to proletariat specifically.

Another big defect of declining democracy is breaking down of Governance.

Date: ___/___/20__

Bad governance has led to poor administration and management. There are many institutions which need a strong management to keep working. Election commission is one of them. But bad governance has led to weak administration as Aisha Khan (A columnist) once described it as

"It is very 'democracy' that gives the legitimacy to bad governance, produced weak governments and opposed to reforms for fear of losing elections."

Bad governance is the result of declining democracy and it has created the inefficient administration a part of system of the country.

Economy of Pakistan has been on the verge of destruction due to the weak democracy. Poor management and ever changing system of governments has led to the increase in Fiscal deficit with every passed budget. The unrest in market with the weak decision making and management has led

Date: ____/____/20____

MON TUE WED THS FRI SAT

○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

to greater risk to economy and right now the country is facing dangerous condition due to it. Moreover there is hardly any foreign investor in the country.

In fact many businesses have left Pakistan (eg. etc) due to political instability and poor administration. The investors find it difficult to deal with changing policies and shaky decision making bodies so there is complete vacuum in market due to lack of foreign investors.

Rule of law condition is deteriorating. With the shackling of judiciary and dominance of other structures, it has become almost impossible to question a specific group of the country no matter how lawless there is. It is giving a free-hand to mafias and powerful, specially corrupt entities to use to use their power. Judiciary depends mostly on executive to drive itself and executive is driven by those who are in power. So indirectly judiciary is powerless in making

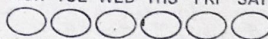
the country a lawful state. Democratic unrest has huge impact on rule of law situation and in Pakistan, it is becoming impossible to derive equal laws for everyone.

With the changing governments and policies, instability and public unrest due to this, the image of Pakistan is more or less tarnished in the world.

The changing foreign policy with changing system has led to a deteriorated image of Pakistan in the world. For once Pakistan was with West, then with Afghans then Pakistan took part in War on Terror against Afghanistan. Pakistan joined hands with Russia, then China and now Pakistan is again favouring Western bloc instead of global south. This is the confusion and is leading to the trust deficit of foreign countries and leadership in Pakistan's leadership. This is ^{the most dangerous consequence} democratic instability has caused the country -

Date: ___/___/20___

MON TUE WED THS FRI SAT



Although the system is almost destroyed and is on the way to more destruction yet there is still hope that some reforms can change the declining democratic conditions. The very cause of democratic unrest is weak political institutions. If right now there is a proper management framework is designed without getting any late, it can help in retrieving the dying administration of political institutions. Freeing bureaucracy from power running cuffs can help in strengthening the administration.

Moreover the solution of leadership crisis is only in meritocracy. There must be a proper system of selecting party heads and leaders. There should be ~~the~~ a system of intra-party elections instead of nepotism based hierarchy. It will lead to the better decision making in party and in government as well.

Institutions especially judiciary must be set free instead of restraining it with executive or constitutional

Date: ____/____/20____

courts' decisions. Similarly election conducting bodies must be administrated by unbiased people instead of voting by cabinet & parliament. It will lead to free and fair election process which is indeed the only solution to declining democracy.

In conclusion, Pakistan is the country facing very difficult condition regarding democratic freedom and stability. The causes are rooted deep in historical and structural system but there are also some causes that are picturing the lack of management and administration. Political & economic instability and bad governance are the major consequences of this situation which is leading to unrest among public spheres and world level as well. Lack of trust of people is the most dangerous thing Pakistan is facing right now. People are in chaos wondering how to

Date: ____/____/20____

make out alive of their poverty and lawlessness in the country. Although the system seems completely destroyed but we must not lose hope. There are still solutions. Since for every problem there is always a better solution, hence if we try and use our conscious understandings we can make our country democratic stable state.