

DAY: Monday

DATE: 8-10-25

Syeda Taseed Fatima Gillani

CSS'26

Essay Mock # 5

Topic:

Democratic unrest in Pakistan:
causes and consequences

Outline

1. Introduction

(i) Attention grabber

(ii) General sentences

(iii) Thesis statement: Democratic unrest in Pakistan fueled by political polarization, short-term governments, rule by law, constitutional and institutional decay, abuse of freedom of speech and no separation of power has been resulted in protests and instability, governance failures, weak economy, lack of trust, injustice challenging the writ of state.

2. Quick glance at the history of democratic unrest in Pakistan

- (i) Military coup of Gen Zia-ul-Haq against Zulfikar Ali Bhutto 1977
- (ii) Military coup of Pervez Musharraf against Nawaz Sharif
- (iii) Vote of no confidence against former prime minister Imran Khan

Causes of democratic unrest in Pak

3. Political fragmentation in state

- (i) Misunderstandings and resentment between political leaders
- (ii) Political polarization among civilians
- (iii) Extreme and populist political narratives

4. Short-term governments in Pakistan

- (i) Recurrent rise and fall of governments
- (ii) Military coups
- (iii) Not a single government has completed its term in Pakistan.
- (iv) Massive corruption scandals

DAY: _____

DATE: _____

5. Rule by law instead of rule of law

- (i) Abuse of power
- (ii) weak laws and poor implementation
- (iii) Authoritarian regimes.

6. Constitutional and institutional decay

- (i) Recurrent constitutional amendments
- (ii) No separation of power among institutions

Consequences of democratic unrest in Pak

7. Protest and instability across Pakistan

- (i) Extremis and chaos among civilians
- (ii) Mob violence and killings
- (iii) Massive protest of 9 May, 2023
- (iv) Separation of west Pakistan

8. Governance failure and unstable economy

- (i) Deteriorates effectiveness of government
- (ii) weak implementation of policies
- (iii) Destabilizes the economy

9. Injustice, inequality and lack of trust

- (i) Abuse of balance of power within Pakistan
- (ii) Inequality among elites and commoners
- (iii) long-term grievances create lack of trust

10. Challenges the writ of state

- (i) Constitutional failure creates a shallow state
- (ii) Authority of state and government is challenged.

11. Hopes against all odds to the democracy of Pakistan

- (i) Maintenance of rule of law
- (ii) Managing separation of power among institutions
- (iii) Effective implementation of constitution

12. Conclusion

Practice over promises.

DAY: _____

DATE: _____

THE ESSAY

"I disagree what you say but I will defend to death your right to say it"

-Voltaire " Democracies are born out of such revolutionary and enlightened thoughts. Thoughts of Voltaire, a great French thinker, gave rise to democracies in 17th century. A benevolent democracy is an anti-dote to monarchy and dictatorship. But when the democracies are lashed to corruption, inefficiency, governance failures and authoritarianism, they lead to chaos and instability. After the cold war, the world has shut down the ideas of authoritarianism and expansionism by promoting globalization and democracy. Scandinavian and western countries are the living examples of best democracies. But unlike those countries democracy in Pakistan is subjected to chaos, instability, unrest and uncompatibility. Since the independence, the democratic structure of Pakistan has been a victim of multiple military coups,

DAY: _____

DATE: _____

corruption and political unrest. The democratic unrest in Pakistan is multi-dimensional often caused by political polarization, short-term governments, rule by law, constitutional and institutional decay, abuse of power. This democratic unrest has pushed Pakistan at the brink of collapse by creating massive protest, governance failures, default economy, injustice and inequality challenging the writ of state.

The democratic unrest in Pakistan is deeply rooted in its constitutional and institutional failure. It requires some strict and effective action to extract out these deep rooted issues in order to achieve a benevolent democracy in Pakistan.

Let's discuss in detail what causes and consequences of democratic unrest is keeping Pakistan in grey waters.

A famous book by Hamid Khan "Constitutional and political history of Pakistan" is a written evidence to support the argument democratic unrest in Pakistan is a result of military and governance.

DAY: _____

DATE: _____

failures. This book proves that the history bears witnesses of democratic failure in Pakistan. This democratic unrest is not new rather it is historical and now deeply rooted in institutional failure of Pakistan. The military coup of (1977) General Zia-ul-Haq against prime minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and the military coup of General Pervez Musharraf (1999) against prime minister Nawaz Sharif depicts how military interventions over the time deteriorated the democratic structure of Pakistan leading to extreme unrest and instability in state. The unstable democratic history of Pakistan shows how the democracy in Pakistan has been oscillated between military and government throughout the years. Vote of no confidence motion and extension of General Bajwa again appeared as a threat to the democracy of Pakistan in 2023 and eventually it lead the state towards miserable chaos and instability.

In the contemporary times, the foremost reason of pro democratic unrest in Pakistan is political fragmentation in state. Currently, Pakistan is subjected to extreme political polarization and fragmentation. Political fragmentation of different parties is creating unrest and division among provinces regarding resource division and NFC award. The opposing governments in the provinces of Pakistan are busy in criticizing each other while the democratic structure is collapsing. Their long-term grievances against each other have created political polarization among civilians as well. This political polarization is fueling ethnical division in Pakistan among Sindhis, Punjabis, Balochs, Pashtuns, Pathans, Saraikis and Hazaras. The strong political narratives must not be used against a democratic state. This is how political fragmentation fuels ethnic division and this ethnic division eventually creates an unrest in the democratic state.

DAY: _____

DATE: _____

Another issue that has silently poisoned the roots of democratic structure in Pakistan is short-term governments and their corruption scandals. Recurrent change of government regimes has eroded the democratic fibre of Pakistan making it difficult to perform. For instance, multiple military coups, vote of no confidence motion against Imran Khan and Panama leaks corruption scandal against Nawaz Sharif has restricted the democracy of Pakistan through out the time. Democracy performs when it is given time and space to work effectively. Unfortunately, in an unstable state like Pakistan, governments and their regimes are opposed by strong hinderances that disrupt their performance. The irony is that no government has completed its regime in Pakistan since independence. This shows the political instability in Pakistan. Recurrent rise and fall of governments bring chaos and instability in state. Democracy ensures the supremacy of state and government. But

DAY: _____

DATE: _____

unlike in Pakistan where governments are challenged and exposed to massive corruptions and military coups, such weak democracy brings only unrest in state.

Moreover another reason that is causing democratic unrest in Pakistan is rule by law instead of rule of law. The government of Pakistan is performing on the idea of rule of by law. A state where law is subjected to class division and power. The decision making elite of Pakistan decides the unequal implementation of law. A state where law is stricter for weak and ineffective for elite. The violence caused by feudalism in Pakistan is subjugated from state laws and government e.g. The case of Mukhtaram Mai and many more. The abuse of power done in the name of law is miserable in Pakistan. Thousands of cases has been shut down in Pakistan because state was unable to provide justice due to involvement of some feudal Landlord or ruling elite in Pakistan.

DAY: _____

DATE: _____

Democracy is ineffective unless it is supported by strong government and rule of Pakistan. In an authoritarian state like Pakistan, where power and money is misused, prevailing democracy is quite difficult.

In addition to this, another reason that is adding fuel to the fire of democratic unrest in Pakistan is constitutional and institutional decay. The constitution and institutions of Pakistan are decaying day by day. As General Zia-ul-Hq said, "Constitution of Pakistan is nothing but mere a piece of paper." A weak constitution is amended time to time and constitution of Pakistan has been amended 27 times since independence. This depicts how weak the constitution. Moreover, the implementation of constitution of Pakistan is quite effective. It is made to support the decisions of ruling elites. It does not address public interest or their issues and it has never been amended for the interest of civilians. This shows decay of

DAY: _____

DATE: _____

constitution. Likewise, the institutions like military, judiciary, executive, legislative and politics are not separated. They keep on interfering in their decisions. No separation of power and among institution promises a weak democracy. The 26th amendment in constitution is a proof of limiting powers of judiciary and disrupting separation of power among executive and judicial body. Thus, constitutional and institutional decay creates democratic unrest in Pakistan.

Let's dive deep into the foreseen consequences of democratic unrest in Pakistan and above all is protest and instability across Pakistan. Protests are the cornerstone of political or democratic unrest in Pakistan leading to violence and instability. Protests has remained a decisive factor in the democracy of Pakistan. Protests of 1971, west Pakistan against East Pakistan resulted in the independence of Bangladesh. Although protests play a decisive factor and peaceful protests are right of citizen. But when

DAY: _____

DATE: _____

the protest are fueled by extreme narratives and political stances. They create chaos and instability in state.

For instance, protests of 9 May 2023 brought a huge wave of chaos across the country. In an extreme exchange of violence between police and civilians, many were killed and hundreds of people were injured. Thus, extreme protest bring mass killings, mob violence and chaos across the state, creating democratic unrest. Because in a democratic state protests are not fueled by extreme political narratives against governments.

In addition to this short-term governments in Pakistan have lead to governance failure and unstable economies creating a democratic unrest. Hindered economic growth and slow progress of development projects like CPEC and BRI are core examples of governance failures and their short terms. Recurrent change in regimes creates governance failures and

these failures hinder the growth of economy. The democratic unrest in Pakistan is also fueled by governance failures and weak implementation of policies. Recurrent changes in policies and their formations affects the state's performance pushing Pakistan at the brink of default and unstable democracy.

Moreover abuse of balance of power in Pakistan is so evident as it is mentioned in book "Pakistan. A Hard Country" by Anatol Lieven. This abuse of power creates injustice and inequality among elite and common civilians. Implementation of laws in Pakistan is determined on the basis of power and money and hence the lower class is the most suffered one. Unlike a monarchy followed by bloodline and dictatorship fueled by fear, democracy prevails upon trust. But democracy in Pakistan lacks public trust due to its flawed structure and abuse of power. The long-term grievances of civilians with

DAY: _____

DATE: _____

The state of Pakistan creates democratic unrest in form of protest, inequality and injustice.

Proceeding onwards The constitutional and institutional decay ~~re~~ challenges the writ of state creating a democratic unrest in Pakistan. When any constitution is amended multiple times and still can't be implemented effectively it affects the democratic structure of country like Pakistan. Abusing or refusing to the constitution is challenging the writ of state. And in Pakistan where constitution is no more than a piece of paper, the writ of state is challenged from local/state councils to the supreme court of Pakistan. This frames The clear picture how constitutional failure is hiding The democratic progress of Pakistan creating a situation of unacceptance and unrest. The constitution of a state is the supreme order in democracy and it must be observed rightfully by all means.

Although, the democracy in Pakistan is subjected to some serious challenges like political politization, short-term governments, unstable economy, abuse of power creating mass protest, violence, injustice, inequality and chaos. But achieving a stable democracy is still not an illusive dream to achieve in Pakistan. Democracy in Pakistan require few strict actions in order to recover from a state of unrest and instability. By maintaining rule of law without abuse of power, maintaining the separation of power between military, judiciary, executive and legislative bodies and by maintaining the supreme authority of constitution of Pakistan above all, Pakistan can become a true democratic state. A collective effort of civilians, military and government can bring a huge change in dear homeland. Thus, by taking these following measures Pakistan can shut down the democratic unrest in state.

DAY: _____

DATE: _____

"Democracy is never an ending process, it is a constant struggle-Vaclav Havel"

As Vaclav Havel says, so by following up his idea the democratic unrest in Pakistan is not everlasting. If it is corrected and continue evolving then to have a stable democratic Pakistan is an illusive and delusional dream to achieve. The democratic unrest in Pakistan fueled by political polarization, short-term governments and rule by law creating abuse of power, instability, injustice challenging the writ of state is a part of struggle to ~~and~~ achieve a true democratic state. The people of Pakistan, hope against all odds that one day Pakistan would be a democratic state in its all meanings. As it is a beautiful couplet by Faiz Ahmad,

دل نا افسردہ نہیں نا کام ہی تو ہے
لمبی ہے غم کی شام مگر شام ہی تو ہے

"Heart is not hopeless, just momentarily undone
The night of sorrow is long but it is just
a night"