

PA (Test #2)

Question #1

Critically examine the evolution of Pakistan's democratic system since 1971. How have civil-military relations shaped democratic continuity and stability?

1- Introduction

The evolution of democratic system of Pakistan has been a long journey of twists and turns. Since 1971, Pakistan's democratic evolution has seen multiple transitions from Bhutto's rebirth of democracy after decade-long military regime to return of authoritarian military rule of Zia-ul-Haq in 1977. Moreover, the evolution process continues after 1988 democratic restoration and musical chair politics of PPP and PMLN to 1999 military coup of Gen. Pervez Musharraf. And 2008 onwards, the democratic consolidation, hybrid democracy, and political polarization played role in evolution of democratic system in Pakistan. As far as impacts of civil-military relations on democratic continuity and stability are concerned, it led to shallow democratic consolidation, weak institutions, continuous military interventions, and erosion of democratic norms. Thus, the democratic evolution in Pakistan has been game of thrones, and civil-military relations profoundly shaping democratic continuity

and stability.

2- Understanding the evolution of democratic system in Pakistan

2.1) Bhutto's Era from 1971-1977

In 1971, after separation of East Pakistan, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto has come into power, and ensured the rebirth of democracy in Pakistan after a decade-long period of military rule. Bhutto also prepared 1973 constitution of Pakistan, providing a federal form of government to the country. With Zia's 1977 military coup, the era of Bhutto has come to an end.

2.2) Zia's military regime from 1977-88

Next, Zia's authoritative military coup has abrogated democratic order in Pakistan and held the constitution in abeyance. Zia also introduced the notorious 8th amendment, giving power to president for dissolving National Assembly. This era was more authoritarian than democracy. So, the period of Zia's military coup ended with his plane crash in 1988.

2.3) Democratic restoration and instability from 1988-1999.

In this era, democratic evolution was advanced by democratic restoration after Zia's military rule. This era was greatly referred as musical chair of politics due to change of four fragile governments of PPP and PMLN, leading to political instability in the country. Thus, it ended with 1999 coup of Gen. Musharraf.

2.4) Gen. Musharraf's military coup from 1999-2008

Moreover, the military coup of Gen. Musharraf has ended the flawed democracy in Pakistan. The democracy under Musharraf was greatly controlled. Musharraf has introduced Local Government System in 2001 and conducted elections in 2002 under LFO. Thus, this era ended with Musharraf's resignation in 2008 due to surge in demand of democratic system.

2.5) Democratic consolidation from 2008-2018

In this era, the evolution

of democratic system in Pakistan was based on institutionalization and democratic consolidation.

With PPP's enactment of 18th Amendment, the supremacy of Parliament was ensured. Moreover, in 2013 election, first civilian to civilian transition in Pakistan's history has happened. However, the instability continued with ouster of Nawaz Sharif due to vote of no confidence in 2018.

2.6) Inception of hybrid democracy from 2018-2022

In this phase of democratic evolution, hybrid democracy was more prominent in Pakistan. The country faced political polarization, erosion of civil-military relations, and weakening of parliamentary discourse. As a result, once again the prime minister of that time was removed through vote of no confidence, thereby weakening the democratic spirit in the country.

2.7) Democratic evolution from 2022 to present

Currently, the democratic evolution in Pakistan is a matter of concern. It is due to dwindling economic growth, political instability, lack of implementation of tenets of democracy. So, the democratic evolution

in Pakistan is fraught with ^{unlimited} challenges and unending obstacles.

3- Civil-military relation shaping democratic continuity and instability

3.1) Continuous military intervention

First, due to civil-military relations, the military regimes have always shown up to fill the vacuum by civilian politics and intervene in the politics, shaping democratic continuity and instability.

For example, the three successful military regimes of Ayub Khan, Zia ul Haq, and Gen. Musharraf respectively is a glaring example of continuous military intervention.

3.2) Manipulating constitution time and again

Moreover, each military regime and even civilian government has manipulated the constitution to fulfil their vested interests, which profoundly undermined democratic continuity and encourage instability in the country.

In this regard, 8th amendment and 17th amendment are notable examples.

3.3, Shallow democratic consolidation

Furthermore, due to civil-military imbalance, the democratic consolidation in Pakistan has always remained shallow and illusive, significantly shaping democratic continuity and instability.

Such as, according to the World Bank report,

"No democratic government in Pakistan has completed its 5-year term."

3.4) Intensified political polarization

The notorious civil-military relations in Pakistan has intensified political polarization in the country, ultimately leading to instability and discontinuity of democracy in the country.

As an illustration, the violent protests of 9th May due to ouster of Imran Khan clearly shows political polarization.

3.5) Weakened institutions

Additionally, the continuous military intervention and weak civil governments have led to the weakened institutions, leading to the menace of governance crisis, corruption, and absence of rule of law. Thus, all this ultimately transformed

continuity and instability.

3.6, Accountability deficit

Due to fraught civil-military relations, the military remained unaccountable, which created accountability deficit and imbalance of power, ultimately undermining democratic principle of check and balance.

For instance, legitimization of military regimes due to "doctrine of necessity." shows accountability deficit in the country.

3.7, Erosion of democratic norms

The democratic norms has remained underdeveloped due to repeated interruptions, consequently leading to erosion of institutions and democratic norms and shaping democratic continuity and instability.

For example, the erosion of democratic norms include executive dominance over parliament, politicized ~~dem~~ bureaucracy, and uncertain judicial independence.

4- Conclusion

In conclusion, since 1971, Pakistan has experienced many ups and downs in its democratic evolution. These include from civilian breakthroughs to continuous military interventions. In this regard, Hasan Rizvi said, "Pakistan democratic evolution lacks democracy." More, the civil-military relations have shaped democratic continuity and instability by providing room to military interventions, eroding democratic norms, weakening state institutions, and leading to shallow democratic consolidation in the country.



Question #2

Compare and contrast the parliamentary and presidential forms of government experienced in Pakistan. What lessons can be drawn from the oscillation between the two systems?

1- Introduction

The presidential and parliamentary systems both as a form of government hold significant importance. Pakistan as a democratic state experienced both the system during its

constitutional development. Both the systems aim to ensure effective governance and balance of power. There are certain contrasts between both the systems, namely in structure and function. As far as their comparison is concerned, both the systems support democratic values and representative system. By experiencing both the systems, Pakistan can draw the lessons that stability in political environ requires supremacy of institutions, political consensus, decentralization of powers, and prioritization of democratic norms.

2. Overview of Pakistan's oscillating history of Presidential and Parliamentary systems.

1947 - 1956	→ Westminster style Parliamentary model
1956 - 1958	→ First Parliamentary constitution
1962 - 1972	→ Ayub Khan presidential system.
1973 - 1977	→ Bhutto's parliamentary rebirth.
1977 - 1989	→ Zia's controlled Presidential system
1988 - 1999	→ Parliamentary system

1999-2008

→ Musharraf presidential domination

2008 - Present

→ Parliamentary restoration and supremacy.

3- Comparisons of presidential and parliamentary systems

3.1) Support democratic values

Both the systems function within the framework of democratic principles and values, emphasizing accountability, public participation, and rule of law.

3.2) Backed by cabinet

A cabinet in both the systems supports the executive although its structure and functions differ.

3.3) Representative system

In both the systems, elected officials represent the people, and the legislative serves as a forum for debate and law making.

3.4) Role of elections

Regular elections are

held in both systems to ensure public participation, legitimacy, and accountability in governance.

3.5, Rule of law

Both systems operate under the rule of law, ensuring that leaders and institutions are subject to legal frameworks and held accountable for their actions.

4) Contrasts between parliamentary and presidential systems

4.1) Structure of government

In presidential system, executive and legislative branches are separate entities, and President is not member of legislature. While in parliamentary system, executive and legislative branches are interconnected, and PM is a member of legislature.

4.2) The Head of state and government

In presidential system, same person is considered both as head of state and government. In contrast, in parliamentary system, head of state is president, and head of government is PM.

4.3, Selection of executive

In presidential system, the executive is either selected directly or through electoral college. On the flip side, in parliamentary system, executive is selected by the legislature.

4.4, Term of office

In presidential system, the term of president is fixed. However, in parliamentary system, the tenure of PM depends on legislative support.

4.5, Accountability mechanism

The executive in presidential system is not directly accountable to legislature. In contrast, in parliamentary system, executive is directly accountable to legislative branch.

4.6, Appointment of ministers

In presidential system, person outside the legislature can be appointed as minister. On the other hand, in parliamentary system, only members of parliament can be appointed as ministers.

5) Lessons that Pakistan can draw from oscillation between the two systems

5.1) Supremacy of democratic institutions

First and foremost, the most important lesson that Pakistan can learn is that supremacy of democratic institutions is the only path ahead for stability. Thus, stable democracy only requires strong institutions not any specific form of government.

5.2) Requirement of political consensus and will

Moreover, due to oscillation between the two systems, the country should have learned that political consensus and will is the only panacea to its dwindling political conditions.

For example, political consensus by the time of 18th amendment can take as an illustration.

5.3) Decentralization of powers

Another lesson that can be drawn is the decentralization of

powers is the need of hour. Centralization of powers only breeds alienation and regional grievances, which cannot be cured by any system either presidential or parliamentary.

For instance, the glaring example is separation of East Pakistan in 1971 due to centralization of powers.

5.4) Prioritization of democratic norms

Furthermore, prioritization of democratic norm is the other reason that the country can draw. In fact, true reforms and development are based on ensuring democratic tenets in letter and true spirit not in alternating parliamentary and presidential systems.

5.5) Balance of civil-military relations

Besides, the balance of civil-military relations is crucial for flourishing of true democracy in a country in either form of government.

For example, due to imbalance in civil-military relations, Pakistan faced three successful military regimes.

5.6) Domination of civilian government

Another lesson that the country can draw is that domination of civilian government is essential for maintaining the true essence of a democracy otherwise any vacuum will be filled by the establishment.

In this regard, Article # 58(2)(b) abrogation is perfect example.

6) Conclusion

To cap it all, Pakistan throughout its political and constitutional development have experienced both presidential and parliamentary system. Both the systems have comparative factors, like working on democratic values and supporting representative system. However, the contrasts in both the systems are also present, such as its structure, tenure of executives, and selection of executive. Moreover, by oscillating between both the systems, Pakistan can draw many important lessons, like supremacy of democratic institutions, importance of political will, and balance of civil-military relations.