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Pakistan Affairs

Test - 2

Question No. 3

"The crisis of governance in Pakistan is deeply rooted in political culture." Do you agree? Discuss with reference to civil society, political leadership, and institutional performance.

I. Introduction

The crisis of governance in Pakistan can largely be attributed to its political culture. The political culture in Pakistan is marked by patron-client relations, abusive political discourse, poor citizen engagement, significant religious influences, and weak political institutions. This political culture has left the governance system highly ineffective as it sustains political instability and polarization and dents any democratic

progress. It is imperative to transform the political culture in Pakistan as per democratic ideals of tolerance, pluralism, and liberties in order to improve governance systems.

II. Manifestations of Pakistan's Political Culture Aggravating its Governance Crisis

The political culture of Pakistan has had significant repercussions for the governance and democratic progress decline as elaborated upon:

A. Politics Characterized by Patron-Client Relations

The political culture in Pakistan is dominated by the concept and practice of clientalism wherein political support and loyalties are rewarded with jobs, contracts, and financial favors. This undermines meritocracy in the country, leaving the governance in a mess. This idea of 'Clientalist Politics' has also been endorsed by 'Maleeha Lodhi in her book,'

Pakistan: Beyond the Crisis State"

B. Deepening Political Intolerance

Pakistan's political culture has also been increasingly marked by a political intolerance as indecent remarks in political speeches by the leaders come to the surface very often. The acerbic language used in political rallies leaves no space for constructive debate.

C. Poor Citizen Engagement

Citizen's engagement in the governance process has not been very active even though it is essential to ensure informed policymaking and implementation. Hence, the governance has been responsive and efficient.

D. Weak Political Institutions

Pakistan's political institutions, primarily the legislature, judiciary, the mass media, and the executive are fragile and vulnerable to manipulation. The judiciary is

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often politicized and manipulated by unconstitutional forces. ~~Poor~~ Weak political institutions translate into poor governance outcomes and service delivery.

E. Significant Religious Influences in the Political Structure

Religious influences are prominent in the country's political culture which not only appeals to the masses in the political rhetoric but religiously-inspired political parties enjoy significant political support among the electorate. However, the use of religious rhetoric by political leaders to appeal to the masses often serves to overshadow their actual policies and substance behind their decisions.

F. Dynastic Politics

The political culture is greatly dominated by family-led politics wherein few elite families dominate the political scene. For instance, the two dynastic parties such as PML-N and

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Pakistan People's Party are led by the Sharif and Bhutto families respectively. This dynastic politics deprives the political culture of democratic norms.

G. Political Populism

Politics in Pakistan seems more to be personalized, working on the basis of individuals, ~~or~~ wherein individual leaders are looked upto instead of policies or political ideologies of the parties. Popular rhetorics appears more appealing to the masses and this leaves substantive policies and decision-making worthless in the face of the majority.

III Way Forward to Transforming Political Culture for an Effective Governance in Pakistan

The intolerant political culture can be transformed into one of tolerance and pluralism, leading to democratic norms and better governance outcomes.

A. Enhancing the Role of

Civil Society and Mass Media in Governance

Civil Society organizations and mass media are two inalienable parts of a modern democratic state. Enhancing their role by empowering them can work as a watchdog on the governments, increasing transparency and accountability.

B. Strengthen and Depoliticizing Political Institutions

The political institutions such as the judiciary need to be empowered and depoliticized as they form the foundations of governance in a country.

C. Fostering a Vibrant Democratic Culture

Pakistan's political culture must be democratized into one of pluralism, liberties, constructive public discourses in order for democracy to flourish and governance to improve.

D. Reduce Political Polarization

A significant barrier of deepening political divides needs to be dealt with by calling All-party dialogues to foster political tolerance and create common ground among the various political stakeholders.

IV. Conclusion

To sum up, Pakistan's governance crisis can significantly be attributed to its political culture of intolerance, clientalism, and weakening political institutions. This has disrupted continued policies and political stability reducing the effectiveness of service delivery. However, Pakistan's political culture can be transformed by reducing political differences, fostering a vibrant democratic culture, and controlling political polarization.

Question No. 1

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

I. Introduction

Pakistan's democratic system since its inception in 1947 has witnessed significant hurdles in its evolutionary journey. The challenges consistently persisted after 1971 too. The democratic system saw extended military regimes, consistent political instability, and considerable military influence during civilian rules. Hence, the civilian institutions could not evolve into strong and vibrant democratic institutions. The country could not develop a democratic political culture, one that could portray democratic ideals. However, democracy can be consolidated by strengthening political institutions, restoring political stability, and maintaining a clear separation of powers.

II. Overview of Democratic

Evolution Since 1971

Democratic system in Pakistan saw extended military coups after 1971. General Zia's ouster of Z.A. Bhutto in 1977 led to an extensive military regime led by General Zia-ul-Haq as the military dictator that lasted till 1988.

The decade that followed saw the return of civilian government back to power. However, this period (1988-1999) saw significant political instability as Nawaz Sharif and Benazir Bhutto alternated in power.

However, this political progress was again disrupted by the return of military coup as General Musharraf imposed Martial law and remained till 2008. The period between onwards again saw the return of civilian governments which persists to date. However, the civilian governments continue to suffer from considerable military influence to date which has impacted the evolution of democracy in the country.

III. The Evolution of Pakistan's Democratic System and the

Civil-Military Relations

The evolution of Pakistan's democratic system has seen significant challenges since 1971 and has been particularly affected by the worsening civil-military ties.

A. Frequent and Extended Military Coups

The major challenge experienced by the democratic evolution has been the significantly extensive rules of military. E.g. Zia's rule (1977-1988) and Gen. Musharraf's rule (1999-2008) hindered any democratic progress and let authoritarian norms flourish in the country.

B. Persistent Political Instability

The democratic evolution has been characterized by consistent political instability, marked by frequent change of governments. For instance, the decade (1988-1999) saw considerable political instability with Sharif and Benazir alternating in power. This instability has

⇨ persisted to date.

C. Considerable Influence of Military in Civilian Government

Democracy in Pakistan could also not evolve because even during civilian rule, the military enjoys significant influence, particularly in Defense and foreign policy of the country. The military also ~~reportedly~~ ^{allegedly} works as power brokers between the political parties.

D. Weak Political Institutions

Due to frequent military coups and consistent political instability, the political institutions in the country could not evolve and were left with weak foundations and submerged in political and military influences without due autonomy.

E. Absence of Free and Fair Elections

Democracy could not flourish because elections have always been compromised ~~by~~ ^{allegedly} by military

and characterized by significant rigging and manipulation. This not only erodes public trust in the democratic system but also the legitimacy of the elected government.

F. Economic Dependency on Foreign Aids

Pakistan's economic dependency on foreign aids which come with conditionalities has further hindered democratic progress. As these loans come with policy dictations, they tend to compromise the country's sovereignty.

G. Enhanced Political Polarization

The persistent ~~political~~ ^{civil} military tug-of-war has polarized the political atmosphere further, which compromises the democratic norms of tolerance and political stability.

IV. Way Forward to Consolidating Democracy in Pakistan

1. Clear Separation of Powers

There has to be a clear

separation of powers between the judiciary, the legislature, executive and the military in order to avoid abuse of power.

2. Restoring Political Stability

In order for democracy to thrive in Pakistan, there needs to be a political stability and policy consistency which can lead to stronger institutions in the long run.

3. Strengthening Political Institutions

The political institutions need to be strengthened. They must be given due autonomy & and be depoliticized in order for democracy to thrive.

V. Conclusion

To sum up, democratic evolution in Pakistan has been a challenging process since 1971. The evolution saw extended military coups, political instability, and overarching military influence in civilian rules. This rendered

civilian institutions weak and fragile in the long-run. However, to consolidate democracy in Pakistan needs to implement clear separation of powers among the different institutions, and foster a culture of democratic norms and an environment of political stability.