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Pakistan Affairs

Q NO = 2

Parliamentary &

Presidential forms of systems in Pakistan

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- ① Introduction

Since Independence, Pakistan has faced continuous struggle between parliamentary and Presidential systems of government. In Parliamentary form of government, the head of government is Prime Minister and head of state is President and Prime Minister is answerable to Parliament only and Parliament represents the people and provinces. In this system there is power-sharing and promotion of democracy. In contrast, ⁱⁿ Presidential

form of government, the all powers go to only one person that is president act as both the head of government and head of state. In this role of parliament is very less. Both systems reflect a deeper tension between civilian supremacy, institutional weakness and centralized executive control. Pakistan has faced both systems many times. Both system has distinct impacts on Pakistan politically stability, governance and evolution of democratic institutions.

② Parliamentary System: Concept and Practice in Pakistan

⇒ The parliamentary system in Pakistan is inspired by westminster model, in which Prime minister is chief executive and elected by and accountable to parliament. All powers in hand of Prime minister and parliament.

→ The President is only ceremonial head of state.

⇒ It is founded on principle of collective responsibility and legislative oversight, ensuring that executive remains answerable

to legislature.

Practice in Pakistan

- In Pakistan it is first time adopted under 1956 Constitution but it was short-lived due to political instability and frequent changes of governments.
- It is revived again under 1973 Constitution, remains as corner stone in Pakistan's democratic framework.
- But from 1985 to 1999, frequent dissolution of assemblies under article 58(2)(b) weakened the Parliamentary democracy.
- It again restored in 2008 and finally in 2010, 18th amendment restore ~~the~~ the spirit of parliamentarism by reducing powers of president and strengthening prime minister and parliament.

Strengths of Parliamentary System

It encourages the accountability through parliament. It also balance the power between federation and provinces. It also brings coalition building and

consenses among diverse political forces.

Weaknesses in Parliamentary system

⇒ But here are some weaknesses in this system like there is frequent government shifts and political fragmentation.

⇒ There is also party defections and dependence on personalities rather than on policies.

It also suffers from weak institutionalization and Patronage culture.

* Despite these flaws, Pakistan's Parliamentary system remains more compatible with Pakistan's federal and democratic structure.

③ Presidential form of government: Concept and practice in Pakistan

In presidential form of government, all Powers are concentrated in one person, president. He acts as both head of state and head of government.

Unlike parliamentary model, where prime minister depends on parliament confidence, the president is directly elected by the people and ~~exercise~~ exercises

significant administrative Powers independently.

→ It brings strong leadership, political stability and quick decision making but it also reduces the role of legislature and weakens the principle of collective accountability.

Experience in Pakistan

→ In Pakistan this system came ^{into being by} ~~under~~ Ayub Khan under 1962 constitution, replacing the parliamentary setup. His version of presidency / ~~is~~ Presidential rule was supported through the "Basic Democracies" system but, eventually led to centralized control and public discontent.

→ Later on, General Zia-ul-Haq in (1977-1988) and General Musharraf (1999-2008) restored it and made it more strengthened by constitutional amendments and ordinances, by sidelining the Parliament and concentrating authority in the executive branch.

→ In Pakistan, Presidential form of government came under military regimes mainly.

→ Strengths of system

- This system, no doubt brings the stable and strong leadership.
- It reduces the political fragmentation and bring political stability
 - It usually comes under national emergency to take quick-decisions.

~~Weak~~ Weakness of the system

This system have also many weaknesses like:-

- It encourages authoritarianism and weak the parliament.
- It undermines the autonomy of the federal and provinces
- It erodes the checks and balances that results in weak institutions
- There is no public participation and concept of democracy.

Thus, Pakistan's experience shows that while the presidential model provides strong leadership, it weakens the parliamentary democracy and disrupts the balance of power among state institutions.

④ Comparative Analysis

Features	Parliamentary System	Presidential System
Head of state	Ceremonial President	Executive President
Head of Government	Prime Minister (Parliamentary majority)	President (directly elected)
Accountability	Collective, to Parliament	Limited, to the electorate
Separation of Powers	Fused	Clear, but often centralized
Stability	Coalition instability	Personalized stability
Pakistan's Experience	Democratic but fragile	Stable but authoritarian

⑤ Lessons from Pakistan's Oscillation Between the two systems

Pakistan's repeated shift between presidential and parliamentary systems offer several important lessons for the stability of democratic governance. Like:-

① Strong Institutions matter more than any single system

The first and most crucial lesson is strong institutions. Both systems failed to deliver consistent results because governance in

Pakistan often revolved around individual personalities rather than state institutions. Without institutional continuity, no model of governance can effectively work.

② Maintain balance of powers between different organs:-

The balance of power is very essential. A weak Parliament or an overly powerful president has repeatedly led to political instability and constitutional crises. True democracy can only survive, when executive, legislative and judicial powers operate within their defined ^{constitutional} limits.

③ Need to rationalize civil-military relations

There is need of rationalize relationship among civilian and military. The presidential system in Pakistan historically created space for military dominance, while the continuity of parliamentary democracy helps to strength civilian authority and democratize accountability.

④ Constitutional continuity: build democratic culture:-

Constitutional continuity is vital for building democratic culture. Frequent suspensions and abrogations of constitutions under military regimes weakened the public trust in democracy and delayed institutional development.

⑤ Political maturity and consensus building

It is necessary for sustainable democracy. Party discipline, tolerance and respect for the rule of law are more important than the choice of system itself. Only, when political actors learn to work within constitutional frameworks and ~~prioritize~~ prioritize national interests over personal power, Pakistan can achieve long-term stability and good governance.

⑥ Conclusion

The constitutional history of Pakistan reveals that the success of governance not lies in choosing between the parliamentary or presidential system, but in ensuring the strength of democratic institutions and adhering to

rule of law. Both of the systems have failed at different times because of weak political culture, power concentration and frequent constitutional disruptions. A stable and inclusive democracy requires institutional ~~democracy~~ continuity, mutual respects among state organs and political maturity within parties. The ~~Pakistan~~ Parliamentary system, despite its flaws, aligns more closely with Pakistan's federal and democratic nature, as envisioned in 1973 constitution. The ultimate lesson is that good governance depends on accountability, balance of power and institutional stability, not merely on constitutional design. True resilience will emerge only when Pakistan strengthens democracy through continuity, consensus and commitment to constitutional principles.

Q NO = 3

"Crisis of Governance in Pakistan" rooted in Political Culture

- ① Introduction
- ② Political Culture and Its Role in Governance
- ③ Civil Society
- ④ Political Leadership
- ⑤ Institutional Performance
- ⑥ Interplay Between Culture and Institutions
- ⑦ Conclusion

Introduction

Governance in Pakistan has remained fragile since its inception, characterized by political instability, weak institutions and inconsistent policy frameworks. However, the roots of this governance crisis lie much deeper in Pakistan's political culture, which defines how power is acquired, exercised and sustained. This culture has long been shaped by personal loyalty, patronage politics and elite dominance rather than merit, accountability and institutional supremacy. As a result,

State's administrative and democratic institutions have often been undermined by short-term political gains and individual ambitions. Civil society, political leadership and public institutions have all reflected this cultural pattern, leading to cycles of inefficiency, corruption and mistrust.

② Understanding Political Culture and Governance

Political culture

Refers to the collective orientations, values and behaviors of citizen and leader towards the political system. A democratic political culture promotes accountability, inclusiveness and rule of law.

Governance

Refers to processes and mechanism through which authority is exercised, decision are made and public affairs are managed. Good governance requires transparency, merit, participation and institutional efficiency.

→ Both are directly linked to each other.

② Political Culture and its Impact on governance

① Personalized and Dynastic Politics

One of the most defining features of Pakistan's political culture is the dominance of dynastic and personality-driven politics. Leadership is often inherited rather than earned through merit or vision as seen in Bhutto and Sharif families. Political loyalty is based on kinship, ethnicity or patronage rather than ideology or performance. Results in weak democratic institutions, disengaged internal party democracy. As a result governance suffers from inconsistency and short-term populism.

② Patronage Network and Corruption

Patron-client relationship form the backbone of Pakistan's political system. Elected representatives often use public office as a means of distributing state resources to secure loyalty. Bureaucratic appointments, development funds and public funds contracts are frequently politicized. This undermines merits, efficiency and institutional independence. Consequently, corruption becomes normalized.

and public trust in governance declines. Transparency International's rankings repeatedly place Pakistan among countries struggling with high perceptions of corruption, indicating deep cultural tolerance for non-transparent practices.

③ Weak Democratic Values

Democracy thrives on debate, tolerance and respect for opposition, all of which are weak in Pakistan's political culture. Political discourse is often confrontational, with rival parties prioritizing revenge over reform. Boycotts, protests and agitation frequently replace parliamentary dialogue. This hindered consistent policy making and fostered political instability. Civilian leaders, instead of strengthening democratic institutions, have at times invited extra-constitutional interventions, perpetuating a cycle of instability.

④ Civil Society and Public Accountability

Civil societies in Pakistan plays a limited and often fragmented role in promoting good governance. Despite the presence of media, NGOs and social movements

most segments of society remain politically passive and dependent on elite narratives. Patronage networks, ethnic division and low literacy have weakened civic engagement. Instead of acting as watchdogs, parts of civil society are co-opted by political and economic elites, diluting their capacity to hold governments accountable. A weak culture of civic participation thus allows corruption, mismanagement and poor public service delivery to persist.

⑤ Political leadership and Governance Culture

Pakistan's political leadership has often prioritized personal and party interests over national welfare. Political parties, instead of being democratic institutions, function as family enterprises or personality cults. Leadership transitions are rarely merit-based, reinforcing loyalty over competence. This dynastic and patronage-driven politics discourages institutional decision-making, fosters corruption and leads to policy inconsistency. Military intervention have further

distorted political evolution by empowering unelected elites and weakening democratic traditions. Hence, Pakistan political leadership has contributed significantly to the crisis of governance through short-term populism and institutional disregard.

⑥ Institutional Performance and Structural Weakness

Institutions in Pakistan, from bureaucracy and judiciary to parliament, have suffered from politicization, inefficiency and lack of autonomy. Bureaucrats often serve political masters instead of public interests, while frequent dismissals of elected governments have eroded the continuity of policies. The civil-military imbalance^{has} further disrupted institutional harmony, concentrating power in unelected quarters. Weak rule of law and poor accountability mechanisms have allowed governance failures to persist, undermining the public trust in the state.

⑦ Interplay between Culture and Institutions

This vicious cycle continues and weak institutions allow poor political practices and poor political culture further erodes institutions.

Way Forward

① Cultural Transformation

The transformation of political culture is essential for sustainable governance. Civic education, awareness campaigns and academic reforms can help citizens understand their rights and responsibilities. Democratic values, such as tolerance, merit and service must be cultivated at both individual and institutional levels.

② Strengthening Institutions

Institutions, not individuals, should define Pakistan's governance structure. Ensuring bureaucratic independence, judicial transparency and parliamentary effectiveness is key. Strengthening local governments can also improve accountability and service delivery.

③ Leadership Reform

Merit-based

and visionary leadership is vital. Internal democracy within parties must be enforced to encourage capable and ethical leaders. The focus should shift from personality cults to performance based legitimacy.

④ Empowering Civil Society

A vibrant and informed civil society can act as watch dog of democracy. Strengthening media ethics, promoting grassroots participation and expanding civic platforms can enhance public accountability and participation in governance.

⑤ Civil-military Equilibrium

civil-military relations must be institutionalized under constitutional limits. The military should remain apolitical, while civilian leadership must demonstrate competence and responsibility to regain institutional balance.

Conclusion

The governance crisis in Pakistan is not merely

administrative; it is cultural and systemic. Until the Political culture evolves from personalized rule to institutional governance, reform will remain superficial. Strengthening democracy requires transforming attitudes from loyalty to leaders to loyalty to the law - only through cultural and institutional change can Pakistan move towards accountable, transparent and effective governance.