

Pakistan Affairs Mode I

Part - II.

Q.No.09

Since the military coup of October 1999, Pakistan's political system and culture have undergone recurring cycles of military dominance, judicial activism, civilian resurgence, and constitutional engineering. These developments collectively shaped Pakistan's democratic continuity and the quality of governance. The post 1999 era has witnessed both democratic breakthrough and persistent structural distortions. While constitutional reforms especially the 18th and 17th amendment aimed to restore parliamentary supremacy and decentralization, political culture remained marred by elite fragmentation, personality based politics and civil military imbalance. Thus, the evolution of Pakistan's political system since 1999 presents a paradox of institutional progress amid enduring instability.

Evolution Of Pakistan's Political System After 1999.

The 1999 military coup and the Musharraf Regime. (1999-2008)

General Pervez Musharraf's coup in October 1999 suspended the 1973 constitution and replaced democratic governance with military rule under the guise of "stability and accountability". Musharraf's Legal Framework Order (LFO) 2002 became the instrument of constitution restructuring. It centralized executive power, expanded the president's authority to dissolve ~~authority~~ parliament and legalized the coup retrospectively. Although elections were held in 2002, Pakistan's political system during this period was hybrid formally democratic but substantively authoritarian. The creation of National Security Council institutionalized military oversight of civilian politics. The 17th amendment (2003) partially legitimized

Musharraf's framework but preserved presidential dominance.

1999 coup → Constitution suspended → LFO
2002 → Controlled elections 2002 → 17th amendment 2003 → Presidential parliamentary hybrid system.

Judicial Activism And Lawyer's Movement (2007-2009)

The suspension of Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry in 2007 catalyzed an unprecedented lawyer's movement, uniting civil society, media, and opposition parties in defense of judicial independence. This movement transformed Pakistan's political culture. It shifts from elite patronage to constitutionalism and rule of law. Although, Musharraf declared Emergency Rule in November 2007, his resignation in 2008 and the restoration of judges in 2009 symbolizes the judiciary's rise as a powerful political actor.

Return To Civilian Rule and Parliamentary Consolidation (2008-2013)

With PPP forming government after 2008 election, Pakistan re-entered a civilian democratic phase. The charter of democracy (2006) between PPP and PML-N provided a consensus foundation for institutional reforms. This culminated in the 18th amendment (2010).

The 18th Amendment (2010): A Turning Point.

The 18th amendment:

- Restored parliamentary supremacy by removing president's power to dissolve the National Assembly (Article 58(2)(b)).
- Enhanced provincial autonomy.
- Established independent commissions.
- Strengthened civil liberties.

These reforms represented an attempt to heal decades of centralized authoritarianism and re-anchor democracy within a federal, parliamentary framework.

Political Culture after 1999: between Personalism and Polarization.

Despite constitutional progress, Pakistan's political culture remained personality driven. Political parties revolve around charismatic leadership. Musharraf's "King Party" (PML-Q), Bhutto's PPP, Sharif's PML-N and later Imran Khan's PTI. The absence of intra-party democracy sustained clientalism and hindered maturity.

The 2013-18 PML-N government emphasized development and centralization but faced tensions with the judiciary and military. The Panama papers case (2017), leading to the disqualification of Nawaz Sharif, reflected judicial interventionism and selective accountability.

Democratic Continuity and Governance After 1999.

Democratic Continuity:

Despite recurring crisis, democratic continuity meaning regular elections and

transfer of power persisted from 2008 onwards. Three elected governments (PPP, PML-M PTI) completed parliamentary terms or oversaw peaceful transitions, a first in Pakistan's history. This continuity, however, remained procedural rather than substantive as deep state influence, judicial overreach and political intolerance limited genuine pluralism.

Governance and Federalism.

The 18th amendment revolutionized governance by devolving power to provinces, but uneven fiscal capacity and administrative readiness created new coordination challenges. Provincial government gained autonomy without sufficient institutional strengthening, leading to governance asymmetry. Moreover, central agencies retained fiscal dominance.

Critical Evaluation.

The evolution of Pakistan's political system after 1999 is best described

as institutionally progressive but culturally stagnant. Constitutional developments provided frameworks for democracy but the political culture lagged behind.

- 17th amendment institutionalized authoritarian residue under civilian disguise.
- The 18th amendment corrected imbalances but introduced administrative strains.
- The judiciary's empowerment safeguarded constitutionalism yet politicized justice.

Hence, constitutional text improved, but political practice remained inconsistent with democratic norms.

Conclusion:

Since 1999, Pakistan's political evolution has moved from overt military rule to hybrid but electorally sustained democracy. Constitutional amendment especially 18th strengthened parliamentary

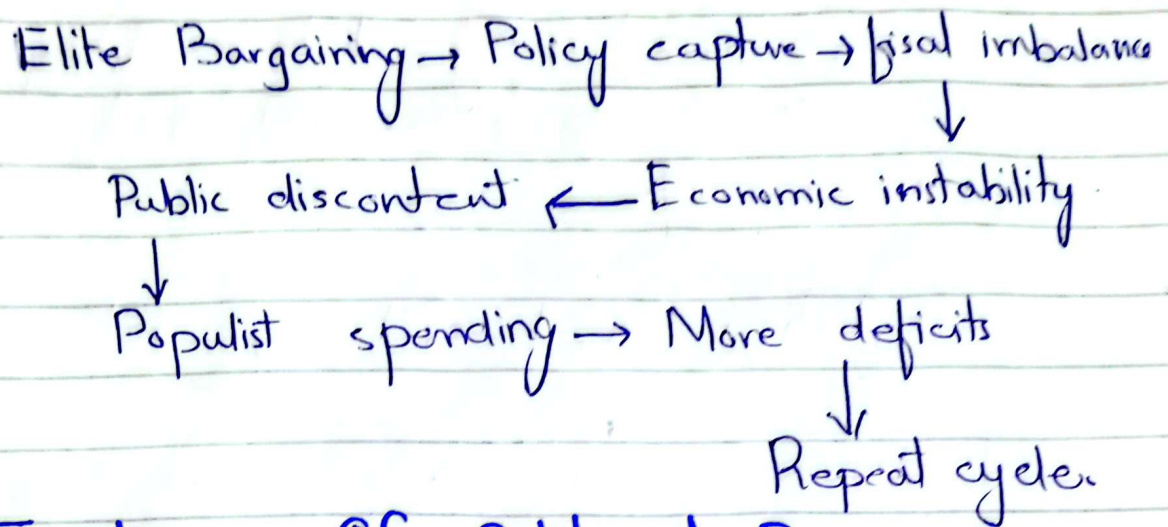
rule and federalism, ensuring formal democratic continuity. Yet, persistent political polarization, weak institutions, and entrenched extra constitutional influence continue to undermine effective governance. Pakistan's experience shows that constitutional reforms can create democracy's framework, but political culture must uphold its spirit.

Q.No.3:

The Current Economic Challenges Of Pakistan: A crisis Of Political Economy.

Pakistan's persistent economic crisis like debt dependency, dependency, inflation, low productivity and fiscal imbalance are not merely outcomes of structural flaws in the economy but are primarily rooted in the political economy of governance. The economic structure has evolved under political incentive that favour short term populism, elite capture, capture, and weak institutional autonomy. Pakistan's economic challenges are fundamentally political in nature, reflecting the way power is distributed and exercised rather than purely technical or structural deficiencies.

Core Political Economy Loop in Pakistan.



Evidence Of Political Economy

Rooted Challenges.

1. Fiscal imbalance and Debt dependency.

Chronic fiscal deficits arise not just from poor tax capacity but from political reluctance to tax capacity powerful sectors such as real estates, traders, and large agriculture. The resulting debt trap sustains dependence on external financing, particularly IMF programs.

2. Energy crisis and Circular Debts.

Energy subsidies are maintained for

political popularity, not economic efficiency. Delays in tariff rationalization and non-payment by state entities reflect governance failures, not structural incapacity.

3. Inflation and exchange rate instability.

Exchange rate policies are frequently manipulated to contain inflation before elections, undermining market confidence and foreign reserves. This political interference distorts economic fundamentals.

4. Low productivity and Weak Industrial Base.

Instead of strategic industrial policy, successive governments relied on import-based consumptions for short-term growth. Rent-seeking behavior and patronage driven allocations discouraged genuine productivity enhancement.

Why it is not merely structured?

Pakistan's structural flaws like narrow industrial base, weak export diversification, and energy inefficiency are symptoms not causes. Each structural flaw persists because political incentives protect inefficiency.

Structural Issues	Political Economy Causes
Low tax Base	Political protection of elites
Trade Deficit	Policy capture by import lobbies
Public Sector losses	Political appointments and patronage.
Deindustrialization.	Lack of consistent industrial policy due to political turnover.

Thus, structural weaknesses endure because the political system rewards short-term gain over institutional reform.

Policy Measures to Address Political Economy Challenges.

1. Reform Political incentives.

- Introduction of fiscal responsibility laws binding all government to maintain deficit and debt limits.
- Creation of independent fiscal and monetary councils.

2. Broaden the tax Base through Political Consensus.

- implementation of agriculture income and property taxation with provincial cooperation
- Usage of digital tax administration.

3. Rationalize Subsidies and expenditure.

- Phasing out from untariffed energy

subsidies.

- Reallocation of resources to education, health, and innovation.

4. Institutional Strengthening.

- Strengthening of State Bank and planning commission autonomy for policy continuity.
- Depolitize appointments in public enterprises through merit based selection.

5. Enhance Federal-provincial Co-ordination.

- Reviewing of NFC award to link transfers with fiscal responsibility.
- Promotion of joint planning and data sharing among provinces.

Conclusion:

Pakistan economic crisis is not merely structural, it is deeply political. The roots lie in elite capture, weak institutions and policy inconsistency born of political expediency. Sustainable recovery demands depoliticized governance, equitable taxation, and institutional autonomy. Only when politics serves economics, not the other way around can Pakistan achieve stable and inclusive growth.

Q.No.4.

Since the return of Taliban in August 2021, Pakistan-Afghanistan relations have followed a volatile, transactional trajectory. Pragmatic engagement and limited diplomatic normalization have co-existed with repeated security flare-ups, large population movements and shifting regional alignments. The relationship remains transactional, shaped more by security and survival than by long-term strategy.

1. Overall Trajectory (2021-2025)

After Taliban takeover, Pakistan adopted a cautious engagement policy, balancing diplomatic outreach with security concerns. By 2023-24, tensions grew over cross-border militant attacks and border management. In 2025, heavy clashes at Torkham and Chaman led to temporary border closures and ceasefires.

reflecting deep mistrust despite regular dialogue.

2. Border Security.

The Durand line remains disputed politically and porous militarily. Pakistan accuses the Taliban of harboring TTP while Kabul denies involvement. Frequent firing incidents and checkpoints disputes have caused casualties and trade disruptions.

3. Refugee Issues.

Pakistan still hosts about 2.8 million Afghans with large inflows after 2021. Crackdowns on undocumented migrants and mass returns in 2023-25 created humanitarian stress and diplomatic strain.

4. Regional realignments.

After 2021, China, Iran, and Russia increased engagement with Kabul, reducing Pakistan's traditional influence.

Pakistan has joined regional talks (Doha, Moscow, Beijing formats) seeking stability but struggles to secure unilateral influence. These realignments mean Afghanistan now relies on multiple regional partners, making Pakistan, one actor among several.

5. Policy recommendation

1. Short term De-escalation

- Establishment of joint border coordination mechanisms.
- Keeping humanitarian corridor open with UNHCR assistance to manage returns.

2. Medium-term institutionalization.

- Signing a border and counter military protocol.
- creating joint trade facilitation cells at Torkham and Chaman.

Conclusion.

Post-2021, Pakistan-Afghanistan relations oscillate between cooperation and confrontation. Border clashes, refugees crisis, and new regional alignments continually test diplomatic patience. Lasting stability requires institutionalized border management, humane refugee coordination, and regional cooperation linking economic incentives with security commitments.

Only a rule based, mutual security framework can move both countries beyond the cycle of suspicion and crisis.

Q.No.6.

Role Of Ideology in Pakistan's Nation-Building and evolving Interpretation.

Ideology has been central to Pakistan's creation and nation building. Rooted in Two Nation theory, it defined Muslims of subcontinent as a distinct political and cultural community needing a separate homeland.

Post independence, this ideology became both a unifying force and underlying reference point in politics, governance, and identity.

1. Ideology and Nation Building (1947-71)

In early years ideology provided national identity among diverse ethnic groups. The objective resolution (1949) made Islam central to constitution.

2. Reinterpretation after 1971

The loss of East Pakistan exposed the limits of religion as sole unifier. Bhutto promoted "Islamic socialism" blending faith with welfare.

Zia-ul-Haq regime redefined ideology through strict Islamization.

3. Post Contemporary Discourse (1988-Present)

Post-Zia government and civil society emphasized moderation, democracy, and pluralism. After 9/11 the state sought to counter extremism with moderate Islamic identity.

Conclusion:

Pakistan ideology evolved from a religious identity to complex blend of Islam, democracy and nationalism.

A balanced, inclusive interpretation remains vital for stable nation building.