

PAK. AFFAIRS

ANSWER NO. 02 :

STATEMENT:

Critical evaluation of evolution of Pakistan's political system and culture after 1999, and role of constitutional developments in shaping democratic continuity and governance.

INTRODUCTION:

The Political system and political culture of Pakistan since 1999 have been defined by alternating phases of direct military rule, mediated government, judiciaries, democratic deepening and institutional tensions between the judiciary, the elected politicians and the security establishment. These dynamics were shaped both by constitutional interventions and constitutional amendments and legal reforms that alternately expanded and constrained democratic institutions.

Phase 1: THE MUSHARAF INTERREG- NUM AND ITS LEGAL VALIDATION: (1999-2008)

* Event and character:

General Pervez Musharraf's October 1999 coup overthrew a civilian government and installed military rule under the badge of "reform and stability". The coup suspended constitutional norms, concentrated executive authority in the presidency and sidelined the political parties.

* Legal / constitutional consequences:

The 2002-2003 period saw instruments (exempli gratia, the Legal Framework Order^{and} later the 17th Amendment) that validated many of Musharraf's actions within the constitutional text - essentially legalising extra-constitutional change and blurring constitutional boundaries between civilian and military power.

This produced a paradox: a constitution that remained formally in force but whose spirit and constitutional checks were weakened.

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* Effect on Political culture:

Political culture is effected as political actors adapted to "guided democracy" - electoral competition continued, but under a shadow of establishment control; political survival often required accomodation with security actors. Clientelism and personalization of politics persisted.

PHASE 2 :

JUDICIAL ACTIVISM, LAWYERS' MOVEMENT AND RETURN TO CIVILIAN RULE : (2007-2010)

* Judicial assestiveness:

The suspension of Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry (2007) triggered the Lawyers' Movement and mass mobilization demanding restoration of the judiciary. The movement culminated in the restoration of judges and was a key factor in undermining Musharraf's political legitimacy and accelerating his resignation.

* Political Outcome:

Pakistan transitioned back to civilian rule (2008 coalition government) and the judiciary

emerged as an independent, activist actor - reshaping political contestation through public interest litigation, suo motu actions and cases that implicated top figures.

* Cultural effect:

The episode strengthened civil society and signalled that street mobilization and legal activism could ~~also~~ check extra-constitutional power - an important democratic gain though it also introduced a new ingredient of contestation between courts and elected governments.

PHASE III:

CONSTITUTIONAL DEEPENING: THE 18 AMENDMENT AND DECENTRALIZATION: (2010 ONWARDS)

* 18th Amendment (2010):

This is the single most consequential constitutional reform after 1999. It abolished the president's unilateral power to dissolve parliament, curtailed central executive dominance, increased provincial autonomy by returning numerous subjects to provinces, and affirmed

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parliamentary supremacy. The Amendment rebalanced centre-province relations and is widely seen as democratizing reform.

* Governance effects:

The amendment improved constitutional safeguards for Parliamentary rule and provincial empowerment, but implementation revealed capacity, fiscal and political coordination problems that limited the full realization of devolution's promises. Some argue expected local-level service delivery gains remained uneven.

PHASE IV:

PARTY POLITICS, POPULISM AND INSTITUTIONAL CONTEST- ATION: (2013-2023)

* Rise of PTI and populist politics:

The 2010 saw changing party dynamics: traditional party competition (PPP, PML-N) faced a new populist challenger in PTI (Imran Khan), which claimed to disrupt elite politics. PTI's 2018 victory introduced a ~~new~~ more confrontational style of politics and intensified polarization.

* Institutions under Strain:

The 2018-2023 period saw repeated clashes between the executive, judiciary and military's perceived influence; the no-confidence removal of Imran Khan in April 2022 exemplified parliamentary mechanisms being used amid allegations of extra-parliamentary pressure and contestation.

PHASE V:

POST-2022 UNREST , PROSECUTIONS AND CONTESTED CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGE: (2022 - 2025)

* Political unrest and crackdowns:

Mass protests, arrests of PTI leaders, and large-scale prosecutions in the wake of 2022-2023 events weakened opposition space and raised concerns about shrinking democratic space and selective criminalization of politics. Recent mass convictions and legal actions against opposition figures have been criticized domestically and internationally as undermining plural politics.

* Constitutional maneuvers:

In 2024, the Parliament approved amendment that critics say affect judicial independence and extended military chiefs' tenures. Those changes demonstrate how constitutional law remains a live instrument for political actors to reshape the rules of the game.

How CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT SHAPED DEMOCRATIC CONTINUITY AND GOVERNANCE:

Positive Contributions:

1. Restoring Parliamentary Supremacy:

The 18th Amendment reversed many authoritarian legal legacies by limiting presidential excesses and strengthening parliament. This created a clearer constitutional basis for democratic governance.

2. Devolution and formal federalism:

More provincial control over resources and subjects opened space for local

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governance and pluralism — a structural step toward democratic governance and deepening.

3. Electoral and Caretaker Reforms:

Amendment (exempli gratia, 20th) and Judicial oversight sought to strengthen electoral institutions and caretaker mechanisms for fairer polls.

Negative Dynamics:

1. Constitutional legitimization of extra-constitutional acts:

The 17th Amendment and other ~~sub~~ early 2000s measures validated military interventions de jure entrenching a precedent that constitutional texts can be retooled to legitimize interventions — a scourge for democratic continuity.

2. Institutional Politicization:

Courts, election bodies and accountability institutions became arenas of political contest rather than neutral arbiters; frequent amendments and litigations produced legal uncertainty and politicized governance.

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3. Backsliding risks through later amendments and Practices:

Recent parliamentary amendment altering judicial appointment processes and extending military tenures raise concerns about undermining judicial independence and re-entrenching extra-parliamentary influence — threats to democratic checks and balances.

CRITICAL ANALYSIS:

Since 1999, Pakistan's political system has oscillated between authoritarian interlude and corrective democratic reforms. The 18th Amendment and the return to electoral politics represent genuine constitutional and democratic gains. They institutionalized parliamentary primacy and devolution. Yet these advances coexist with persistent tendencies: use of constitutional tools to legalize power grabs, politicization of institutions, and periodic curbs on opposition and civic space. Thus democratic continuity since 1999 is fragile.

and incomplete.

FUTURE RECOMMENDATION:

- (i) Safeguard judicial independence through transparent and merit-based appointment procedures.
- (ii) Strengthen Election Commission of Pakistan and electoral law implementation.
- (iii) Fiscal and administrative devolution follow-through.
- (iv) De-politicize security-civil relations via clearer legal boundaries and parliamentary oversight of security institutions.
- (v) Protect civil liberties and political competition.

ANSWER 2:

STATEMENT:

The current economic challenges of Pakistan

flaws
are challenges of own economy.

INTRODUCTION:

Pakistan's recurring economic crises that are ballooning fiscal deficits, chronic balance-of-payments gaps, deindustrialization, and inflation, have persisted under every regime, civil or military, democratic or authoritarian. This continuity of failure suggests that the roots of the problem lie not merely in political mismanagement but in structural deficiencies of the economy itself. The country's production base, tax structure, export composition, and human-capital foundations are fundamentally weak. These structural distortions - embedded in decades of neglect - have locked Pakistan into a low-productivity, import-dependent, debt-driven trap, regardless of who governs.

NATURE OF PAKISTAN'S STRUCTURAL ECONOMIC PROBLEMS:

Structural flaws refer to

long-term weaknesses in the organisation of an economy that restrict growth and resilience. In **Pakistan's case** they include:

- A narrow and uncompetitive industrial base;
- Over-reliance on agricultural goods and consumption rather than value-added manufacturing.
- A regressive and shallow-tax system;
- Chronic energy inefficiency
- Under-investment in ^{DD} human capital.
- Institutional and Market distortions.
 - ↳ Absence of competitive markets.
 - ↳ Undocumented economy.
- Climate Vulnerability: A new structural constraint that affect Pakistan badly. The 2022 floods alone caused losses exceeding \$30 billion - roughly 10% of GDP.

POLICY MEASURES TO OVERCOME STRUCTURAL FLAWS:

The followings are

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are the policy measures to overcome structural flaws:

a) Industrial and Export diversification:

- Develop technology-driven, value-added industries.
- Establish export-oriented special economic zones (SEZs) linked with CPEC and Central Asia.
- Incentivize research, innovation and local supply chains.

b) Tax and Fiscal Reform:

- Broaden the tax base through digitalization, retail documentation and agricultural taxation.
- Shift from indirect to direct taxation for equity.
- Introduce performance-based fiscal transfers between center and provinces.

(c) Energy and Infrastructure Overhaul:

- Re-negotiate costly IPP contracts and shift toward solar, wind

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and hydropower.

- Modernize transmission systems to reduce line loss.
- Promote domestic energy exploration to cut import bills.

(d) Human Capital and Labour-Market Reform:

- Raise education and health budgets to at least 4% of GDP each.
- Align vocational training with industrial needs.
- Encourage women's labour-force participation through childcare and safety reforms.

(e) Financial - Sector Deepening:

- Promote savings culture via digital banking and micro-finance.
- Channel remittances into productive investment rather than consumption.

(f) Climate-Resilient Development:

- Integrate climate adaptation into economic planning.
- Invest in water-management disaster-resilient infrastructure and green technology.
- Seek climate finance through global partnerships.

COUNTER ARGUMENT:

The Political Economy Connection:

While structural flaws are central, political, economic factors cannot be ignored.

Governance failures have often aggravated structural weaknesses. Yet political instability is itself a reflection of economic fragility. Therefore, reform must begin with restructuring the economic base; political reforms will follow once material stability

is achieved.

CONCLUSION:

Pakistan's economic malaise is not just a crisis of mismanagement, but it is the culmination of systematic distortions built into its production, fiscal, and social structures. The country's narrow industrial base, low savings, uncompetitive exports and weak human capital create a self-perpetuating cycle of dependency and stagnation. Government come and go but the same structural skeleton yields the same outcomes. Only a structural transformation of industry, energy and human capital can convert Pakistan's survival economy into a growth economy.

In essence, Pakistan's Problem is not who governs but what kind of economy is being governed.

