

Pakistan Affairs

LMS ID: 39207

Part-II

(Q5)

Identify the political, economic, and administrative factors that undermine federal cohesion in Pakistan. What lessons can be drawn to prevent regional alienation in the present context?

Introduction:

Multiple Political, economic and administrative factors pose risk to federal cohesion in Pakistan. Inconsistent policies, unequal resource distribution, lack of integration and consensus in decision making, poor management, unjust taxation, ignorance toward backward areas are some common factors that aggravate the instability, tension, social unrest, thereby threatening federal cohesion and sovereignty.

National Cohesion: Important for Survival

National Cohesion refers to unity and coordination of domestic entities of the state

ensuring survival of the state. Without federal cohesion, Risk of separation, tension, unrest, instability increases, contributing to insecurity among masses and state institutions. This could provide an easy target to ^{foreign} hostile countries and extremist groups, thereby endangering the sovereignty of state.

Separation of East Pakistan - An Example from History

Separation of East Pakistan has inflicted so much pain to Pakistan. The lesson Pakistan learnt from separation of Bangladesh is that certain apparently small factors could sometimes lead to such tragic loss if not handled properly in time. Unequal representation in Political institutions, improperly denying demands of making Bengali a national language, unequal resource distribution were some of the triggering factors that contributed to separation of East Pakistan, fuelled by external hostile countries like India. Therefore, timely handling of grievances

could protect a country from huge loss.

Factors undermining Federal Cohesion:

Political, administrative and economic factors that undermine federal cohesion are serious security threat to integrity of a state.

All these factors equally contribute to alienation and also make conditions conducive for opponents.

1- Political Factors:

Political factors including under-representation in political institutions, policy making contribute to undermining federal cohesion.

(i) Unequal representation in Political Institutions:

Representation in Political Institutions mainly depend on population size. Owing to this, Province like Balochistan despite having large land have less representatives in such institutions. Moreover, in a province, representatives from backward and far flung areas are less. This underrepresentation of people from backward, under-developed and far flung areas undermine their inclusion in policy and

decision making. This results in compromised rights, ultimately leading to alienation from center and developed areas. It is a serious threat to national cohesion.

2) Missing Persons Case: Political Mishandling.

Case of missing persons in Balochistan that has led to massive protests, national and international media coverages has contributed to grievances of people especially young minds. This could have far-reaching implications. Such things need to be handled properly by addressing the concerns of masses. Such cases also lead to mistrust in government.

3) Economic Factors:

Unequal Budget distribution, Unfair taxation, Unequal developmental spending exacerbate tension, instability and mistrust, leading to alienation and marginalization.

1) Unequal Budget Distribution Among Provinces:

Horizontal distribution of Budget among provinces is defined mainly by population size. Balochistan, underpopulated province always had grievances to this criteria of Budget distribution. Local governments ought to manage all provincial activities with that budget. This less spending on development has developed sense of separation among Baloch masses. This gap is also being utilized by terrorist organizations to attract youth and train them against state and state machinery, further exacerbating the worse conditions.

2) Unequal Intra-provincial Developmental Projects:

Intra-provincial unequal spending on developmental projects has inculcated sense of inequality among the masses, leading to hatred toward state machinery and people of developed areas. It has ability to create social unrest, ultimately threatening national cohesion. For instance, In Punjab, people find Lahore, Rawalpindi more developed than other areas like Thal and other small cities.

Similarly in Balochistan, Quetta is far more developed than other cities. Similarly Karachi in Sindh and Peshawar in KPK is considered to be more developed.

This also lead to rapid urbanization and pose burden on resources of such cities. making living conditions even more miserable.

3- Equal Taxation rate: Unfair to lower class

In Pakistan, majority population constitutes middle class and lower class. They consider it unfair to pay equal ^{Sales Tax on basic commodities.} tax as upper class had to pay despite earning much less than upper class. This also lead to hatred among different classes. For instance, in inequality report, it was found that top 1% hold and control 24% of nation's wealth. Therefore, these economic factions also lead to hatred and destroyed social fabric. It could also potentially lead to separatist tendencies.

3) Administrative Factors:

There are multiple administrative factors that contribute to alienation. These include mismanagement of resources, weak institutions, poor governance, lack of consensus in decision making.

1) Mismanagement of resources:

Pakistan has limited resources which are further mismanaged and are not used fairly that lead to distrust on government. This results in alienation.

2) Weak and inefficient Institutions:

Weak institutions that are unable to perform their tasks efficiently lose the public trust and compel public to find poor alternatives. For instance, weak judicial system could compel masses to transition to jirga and Panchayat system that are predominantly controlled by feudal and elites. This creates a parallel system against state institutions thus weakening state orders, its integrity and its authority.

3) Poor Governance: Lack of consensus.

Lack of consensus of provincial authorities on national projects could also nullify those projects. Government need to consider the opinion and consensus of all stakeholders. Otherwise, it lead to conflict which threaten national cohesion directly. In dam and canal projects, it was seen practically that consensus is very important for stability and proper execution of project as well as national cohesion.

Lessons to Prevent Regional Alienation:

In its history, Pakistan has itself borne the brunt of separation followed by alienation. It can not afford further loss by repeating same mistakes.

The lessons to prevent regional alienation include:

1) Inclusive Decision Making.

Pakistan should ensure inclusive decision making based on consensus of all stakeholders. This step of inclusion will develop a sense of being Pakistani citizen and will

strengthen national cohesion.

2) Equal developmental Spending:

Government should consider equal developmental spending in all provinces and cities. This will reduce burden related to rapid urbanization, pollution. Though dense population need more resources; however, government need to spend more money collaterally on underdeveloped areas. This step will take time but provide a relief in long run.

3) Reduced Tariffs on Basic Commodities:

Poverty could also contribute to alienation. State should consider reducing sales tax on basic commodities. Though taxation is main source of revenue generation, It is possible to reduce tariff on basic commodities only while keeping high taxes on high end luxurious products. This will not impact revenue generation and solve issues of majority of Pakistani population.

4) Strengthening State Institutions.

Strengthening state institutions especially police and judiciary will help masses feel safe. This sense of security will strengthen national cohesion by preventing people to be an easy target of terrorist organizations and parallel feudal structures.

5) Including local representatives in Decision making process.

Including local representatives from grassroots level will help higher authorities identify the issues of masses. This will increase sense of inclusiveness, thereby strengthening national cohesion.

Conclusion:

In a nutshell, certain political, administrative and economic factors contribute to marginalization and alienation of masses. If grievances of masses are addressed properly and in time, it could prevent national disintegration and separation.

Mam/Sir,

I am unable to know clear difference between administrative, political and economic factors.

I even tried previously to find this difference as I came across such questions in previous mocks. Could you guide me or recommend me any source for this?

Moreover, I do not know the cause but I feel and I know My writing speed is so low and it is not improving, I don't know how would I improve it? Also, I am unable to properly write good headings.

I don't know if it is genuinely issue of my writing speed or I don't have knowledge upto the mark. Please guide and suggest me something to improve my writing speed and gathering relevant knowledge. I shall be very thankful to you.