Political Instability in Pakistan: Causes and Consequences

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Abstract

Particularly in developing and poor countries, political instability has grown to be a severe and dangerous issue. It is causing serious issues and impeding these nations' progress. This article's main concern is Pakistan's lack of political stability in light of its ongoing identity and legitimacy crises. Maintaining social cohesion and governmental legitimacy both depend heavily on political stability. It is a requirement for a state's economic growth, social integration, and legal supremacy. The processes of building a nation and a state are directly impacted by the political system's stability. For both of them to develop and prosper, stable political regimes are necessary. Without a strong and well-organized political system, the development of a country and a state is impossible, and politics devolves into a tug-of-war between competing interest groups. In conclusion, the article aims to investigate the potential causes and consequences of political instability in Pakistan.

Keywords: Political instability, Terrorism, Pakistan, Development

Introduction

A politically unstable state is the result of the unpredictability of the administration, the ineffectiveness of the political parties, and a weak political culture. Particularly for developing and underdeveloped states, political instability has become a severe issue. This issue is linked to a number of other issues in various sectors. For a multiethnic country with citizens from many cultural backgrounds, the issue of political instability becomes more significant. In a politically stable state, each segment of society receives its fair share and is content to live in a multiethnic society, which ultimately contributes to nation-building. When the conditions are stable, people are motivated to work for the nation's growth.

Political party formation is directly impacted by political stability, which is necessary for attaining nation-building objectives including political advancement and national integration. The emergence of modern or modernizing regimes is made possible by the various degrees of political "stability". It might be viewed of as essential to preserve peace, harmony, enduring constitutional satisfactions, governmental institutions, and civic order. (Stein, 1971). It frequently refers to the stability of democratic politics.Of course, there are other types of regimes with rather solid political structures, as those in China, Egypt, and so forth.

It is possible to understand the level of political stability by looking at how flexible the State and Society are as institutions. The two are interconnected, so any changes made in one will impact the other.Even while the social system is changing, it still has the potential to do so in a way that will make it simple to get beyond all of the obstacles that political progress

presents.Many underdeveloped nations in Asia and Africa, including Pakistan, have struggled to address the issues of centralized power, national integration, economic growth, political participation, and social welfare of modernizing societies that have simultaneously grown in these states' political systems.

Identifying the factors that contribute to political instability in developing countries will help to better understand it. Leonard Binder outlined five issues that many states are dealing with in order to maintain the stability needed for their democratic systems. Among these are crises in identity, legitimacy, penetration, involvement, and distribution (Pye, 1971). Despite the fact that all of these undoubtedly contribute significantly to political instability, the researcher will only focus on and explore the first two problems raised in this brief article like the legitimacy problem and the identity crisis—while taking Pakistan's specific circumstances into consideration.

Causes

There are several ways to look at how the identity problem affects politics. Generally speaking, it communicates feelings of nationalism and the need for people to live in harmony somewhere.It indicates that an identity crisis is brought on by a person's sense of identification with the political system. When the rules that a community had once undoubtedly accepted as the psychological and physical parts of its collective self are no longer acceptable under new geographical circumstances, a group experiences an identity crisis during a political upheaval (Huntington, 1971). This is best illustrated by the dissolution of East Pakistan and the current devastation in Sindh and Baluchistan.

Since scattered populations have grown more conscious and ultimately assisted in restoring the political system's sense of unity anytime its essential forms are dramatically altered, the massive dispersion of communication has also contributed to this problem (Huntington, 1968). Lack of national identification or national loyalty is the inability or reluctance of a person to feel a sense of belonging to the nation.

Pluralistic societies have experienced this issue in the form of section on ethnicity, language, tribes, and religion. India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan Russia and Nigeria are currently included in this category, where the federal government's basic existence is under question. The rate, magnitude, and content of regional demands heavily influence the type of federal crises (Huntington, 1971). When regional demands are taken to an extreme and the national system is unable to respond adequately, a desire for separation or secession from the federation may emerge.This type of cause contributed to the dissolution of East Pakistan in 1971. With the uprising in East Punjab and the occupation of Kashmir, India is almost confronted with the same issue. Canada is now dealing with the Quebec issue. Regionalism "is always a source of potential danger, which may ultimately diminish the federal system's maintenance capacity" as a result of coups and civil wars that have occurred in Nigeria (Pye, 1971).

It is evident from the information provided that "the issues of centralization of authority, national integration, economic development, political participating, social mobilization, and social 'welfare, which have arisen simultaneously in the political order" are to blame for the decline of the political system in pluralistic societies of developing states, including Pakistan (Javaid, 1991).Issues with identity and legitimacy are closely related to one another. During the process of political socialization, people frequently acquire a greater feeling of national identity, which also aids in the justification of authority. A sense of identity may also be established by

acknowledging the validity of the authority.According to Macridis and Brown, "the performance capacity of the system and the attitudes of the people toward the authority" are actually linked to a system's legitimacy(Brown, 1972). This suggests that the congruence between the widespread desire for involvement and the supportive elite response to the society's boundless expectations are not satisfied, ultimately leading to stark divisions and occasionally to a situation of virtual civil war.

This problem can be connected to the detrimental impacts of the huge opposition to General Ayub Khan's rule and the unethical manipulation of some seats during the 1977 elections, which took place during Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto's government. As a result, the military frequently steps in to curtail the federation's power. This shows that finding a balance between expectations and satisfactions, supports and restrictions, demands and compromises, may help to develop a sense of consensus among various people in favor of national unification.

Along with the power of the leadership and the forms of governmental institutions, the legitimacy question is frequently taken into account. Another way to put it is as "a breakdown in the constitutional order and the government's functioning due to conflicts over the proper nature of the political system of authority" (Huntington, 1971).

According to this viewpoint, closely related events in Pakistan include the establishment of a single unit in 1956, the introduction of the 1962 constitution by Ayub Khan, the numerous amendments to the constitution by Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, and the mal-treatment of General Zia-ul-Haq under the 1973 constitution (Khan, 2012).

Misinterpretations of history and promises made by the political elite to the public can also undermine legitimacy. This crisis will start when people reject the leader's assertions based on historical evidence and his promises that his actions will be carried out. When the promises made for the advancement of society are not kept, the leaders are removed. This kind of projection is extremely typical in developing societies. In an effort to solidify their position of power, the leaders appeal to the emotions of the people by promising a brighter future. A crisis of authority finally results when these promises are not kept. In the same way, Ayub Khan created "guided democracy," which ultimately contributed to his collapse(Nawaz, 2008).

Pakistan's leadership institutions have remained incredibly feeble, and they are always arranged from top to bottom. In Pakistan, family and heredity-based traits are used to determine leadership. In reality, the path to leadership begins at the bottom and works its way up, with social welfare work being the first step before joining the political sphere. Individuals in Pakistan have a history of being viewed as leaders because they are the sons or daughters of influential people and have leadership genes.

Due to a lack of education, individuals are drawn to the charm of family leadership. Since Pakistanis make decisions based on their emotions and the charisma of leaders, their low literacy rate has been a significant factor in helping them make the best decision possible. The two most significant causes of Pakistan's political unrest are a lack of education and a decline in leadership. It is clear from Pakistan's experience that leadership and a stable political system are impossible without high-quality education. Given that sensitive issues related to language, religion, and ethnicities arise in heterogeneous cultures, the position of the leader becomes more crucial in these situations than any other component.

Especially when it comes to a state and society like Pakistan, where people of different races and sects live and who established one nation based on their common religious beliefs and goals rather than being able to do so in the unified India, where other religions prohibited them from coexisting in peace. The challenges of legitimacy and identity started when Pakistan's institution of leadership fractured into layers at the sub-national/ethnic, provincial, and religious/sectarian levels, and over time, they got more serious. In these multiple levels of leadership, the theme of a national leadership was lost.

The leadership crisis of legitimacy and identity was caused by this leadership fragmentation, which grew worse over time. People start questioning their existence and identity when they are dissatisfied with the conduct of political parties and the government, which makes them feel bad about the government and the entire system.

Dictatorship has been the other type of government in Pakistan for a long time. About nearly three decades of army control followed, and during this time, democratic politics in a newly formed state were unable to establish themselves. The experience of military control in a newly formed state is worse than in a state with a stable political system.

Every area of life was to be structured and directed with the establishment of a new state here in Pakistan, even the politics that had been skewed by frequent military intervention. According to K.K. Aziz, the distinction between political leadership and dictatorship is that the former depends on compromise, give and take, and consultation, whereas the latter lacks an accountability mechanism and sees the heads of other parties as competitors. Hindus and those who took part in and made sacrifices to end foreign rule have been the groups most affected by this military regime (Aziz, 2001).

The Indian Muslims wanted to establish their own society. The political culture was tainted over these decades because it was impossible to create a truly democratic system, and the ramifications of this malpractice were felt long after.Political parties had been splintered by the dictatorial political system, which allowed many political coalitions and organizations to become part of the mainstream of the country's politics. Obviously, none of these groups were motivated by a desire to restore democracy; rather, they were only interested in power sharing.

The second factor that influences Pakistan's unstable political environment is the political parties' inadequate organizational structure.The lack of party elections, the dominance of any family, group, or ethnicity within the party, and the improper internal organization of Pakistan's political parties all contribute to the country's political parties' small voter base and loss of their national character. Political parties are poorly organized and function improperly, which allows coalition governments to form. These governments put all of their effort into maintaining the coalition structure while also being under constant pressure from their coalition partners.

It has an impact on both internal and external policymaking processes. Strong public support is necessary for both domestic and foreign policies to be implemented successfully, but when political parties function poorly, they do not give the public a platform but instead divide and take advantage of popular opinion for their own gain. The political landscape has become a chaotic game where everyone is playing by his own rules and prioritizing his own interests as a result of the mushrooming of religious and ethnic parties and groupings inside the parties. Leaders manipulate people's emotions for their own ends by appealing to their sense of religion, sect, or ethnicity. Since religion has continued to be a sensitive topic in society, most political

leaders include religion into their decisions. People do not have a clear choice among these same parties since they are unable to use their political rights and create their own party instead of relying on the same old parties and traditional politics owing to a lack of information.

Consequences

The current unrest in Pakistan is a result of the current political tendency, which is the formation of coalitions between various political parties. In every political environment around the world, coalition formation is regarded as a temporary arrangement since it is founded on the interests of diverse groups, and when those interests are not met, the coalition breaks down and creates more unstable situations.

The fact that no political party has a clear majority also indicates that the public does not trust any of these alliance partners, which explains why each one has less support. A stable political system supported by the vast majority of the population is established by the people's unambiguous will, which is the manifestation of their choice.

The breakdown of the federal government is another important aspect that has contributed to and made the issue of political instability worse. Due to flaws in the maintaining of a just federal system, the efforts made by people of different cultures to establish a separate homeland where they can prosper were destroyed. Due to this, people began to have less faith in national leaders and more faith in ethnic leaders who took advantage of people's emotions for their own personal gain. After independence, people began to question the identity and legitimacy of the leaders anew because of their irrational and impassioned behaviors; Bangladesh is the clearest illustration of this.

Without a spirit of partnership and cooperation between the provinces and the center, a federation cannot exist or endure. The cornerstones of any federal structure's success are fairness and respect for one another. Pakistan could only exist through democratic institutions due to its geopolitical, socioeconomic, and cultural diversity as well as the separation of its two wings, where the two wings' respective populations can share authority fairly. Politicians in Pakistan who supported centralized management did so mainly to advance their personal interests and the interests of the ruling class.

Even though smaller provinces like Sindh, the North West Frontier, and Baluchistan also endured the same levels of exploitation and neglect, only East Pakistan was participating in the process.The geographical situation is the reason why the meddling of foreign powers from outside for their own selfish goals is another element that indirectly contributes to the worsening political scenario. Their interference made the situation worse in the already chaotic environment. The search for resources and Pakistan’s position as a gateway to the hot waters has made it a desirable nation for foreign powers. Pakistan is rich in significant minerals, gas, and important coasts.

A study claims that developing countries in Asia and Africa have shown more interest in strengthening the issue of national unity and authority than in the expansion of theireconomies (Apter, 1965).If we take Pakistan as an example, it seems quite obvious that solid institutions in the political order are necessary for adequate economic growth to be achievable. If both the institutional and individual legitimacy of the ruler are resolved, political stability can be attained.

Discussion

Nation-building is a process required for a nation's existence and development, and political stability is a prerequisite for it. The nation-building process has two purposes: first, it helps a nation develop its identity, which leads to social integration; second, it helps a nation develop its state, which includes creating the state's administrative infrastructure.Economic, social, and political spheres all have to deal with the effects of political stability. Pakistan, a country with abundant natural resources, fertile land, intelligent citizens, a key strategic location, and the ability to produce nuclear weapons, is a case of serious political instability. The globe society has begun to wonder about its future because of its poor and ineffective internal and external policy-making, the discontinuation of policies, a less unified society, and a murky reputation on the worldwide stage.A stable political state accommodates pluralities and satisfies all facets of society; As a result, individuals become more devoted to the government, a sense of nationalism grows among them, and citizens begin to feel as though they belong to the wider national community despite their differences.Developed states are a good example in this regard. In contrast to Pakistan, industrialized nations' societies are more pluralistic, cogent, and dedicated to accomplishing common national goals.The main factor is effective leadership that has shaped society's dimensions. Instead of being based on communities, sects, or ethnic groupings, the leadership in these states is structured over ideologies. In accordance with beliefs, society also forms opinions about which candidate they think should lead the country.

The educated people in modern nations are more politically aware and have a distinct public opinion on issues of national significance. In comparison to a less developed and less educated society, the contribution of a learned society to politics is manifestly different. Through education, people are motivated to work hard to create a strong nation and a civil society. Another important point is that, in addition to providing education, industrialized states also ensure that their residents have access to all fundamental necessities, something that is lacking in societies that are less developed.

The main negative impact of political instability is that it creates many rifts in society since all parts of society are unhappy with how governments are doing and there is a general atmosphere of suspicion. A society that is dissatisfied and distrustful will pursue its own interests while being unaware of the interests of the nation or the entire society. Unstable conditions undoubtedly help the negative forces both internal and external by creating a vacuum.

The issue of political stability in Pakistan has gotten worse within the context of identity and legitimacy crisis as a result of the effects of rapid sociopolitical mobilization and the excessive and institutionalized role of civil and military bureaucracy, which have unbalanced the entire political system of the country.Due to social and economic progress, political demands have grown and political engagement has risen.The task of establishing new bases of political organizations and institutions has been greatly compounded by these changes, which have "undermined established political institutions"(Huntington, 1971).

Inability of political institutions to respond to the escalating demands has ultimately resulted in Pakistan's identity and legitimacy crisis. The competition among various communities for limited resources and the escalating demands for those resources has politicized communal tensions and divisions between provinces. The optimum opportunity for foreign intervention, anti-state forces, and pressure groups to further their own self-serving goals may be found in

every state when there is political instability.For Pakistan's society and state, the current political upheaval has produced both domestic and external challenges.Significant challenges are being faced by Pakistan, particularly in the political and economic arenas.The vast amounts of foreign aid that are being given to Pakistan from all around the world are having no beneficial consequences in the face of dishonest leadership and unstable political conditions.

The major problems that every state in the modern world must overcome include statesmanship, diplomacy, effective policymaking, and a strong economy.Today's globalized world is characterized by fierce competition in every industry. Any state with political instability will experience anarchy and disorder inside its institutions.

With these alliances, a state is elevated to the position of a major participant in the international world, following the global trend of forming substantial regional blocs with other governments and establishing economic and security alliances.Currently, joining these alliances requires a state to have strong political and economic prerequisites;no state will accept weak states as its global partners if a country is not stable enough in these areas, thus they will be left behind on the international stage.Because of the repeated coups and unstable democratic regimes, the future of the Pakistani people is in jeopardy.Due to political upheaval, Pakistan has already suffered considerable losses in the form of the division of its East wing, and it continues to encounter internal conflicts within the units.Political instability is having a major negative influence on all of the federating units, but particularly Baluchistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The instability creates problems for the nation's economy, societal cohesion, national security, dealing with the terrorism war, formulating policies, and integrating into global politics and the global economy. The mismanagement of the fight against terrorism is the most significant and immediate threat posed by Pakistan's political unrest. Despite its ending, this conflict had long-lasting impacts on the political stability of the state.

The state's domestic circumstances and its international connections are both being negatively impacted by the war on terrorism.The insecure political environment prevented any clear and effective counter-terrorism measures or programs from being implemented. Under the guise of fighting terrorism and searching for terrorists who may be hiding in these areas, the United States, supported by NATO soldiers, has been attacking Pakistan's border regions since September 2008. These attacks are becoming more frequent (Lodhi, 2011).

Pakistan already suffers greatly from terrorism, and more foreign incursions into its borders have exacerbated the problem. The people of Pakistan, particularly those who live in frontier regions, experience emotions of fear and mistrust toward the government and army, and these feelings could ultimately end in violent outcomes. The ongoing worst domestic conditions brought on by internal terrorism and external threats have nearly brought the economy to ruin and deterred foreign direct investment.

The biggest challenge for Pakistan now is to deal with both external pressure and internal responses, including a severely unstable economy, resentment among the population, terrorist attacks in major cities, isolation from the rest of the world, including the calling back of diplomats' families to the station because Pakistan is no longer a safe place to live, a lack of trust in the government and hatred for the military, a withdrawal of support for those policies and actions, and the closure of diplomatic missions.

The future of Pakistani citizens, who now view their country as unstable, is now in jeopardy. It is a challenge for the government of Pakistan to maintain Pakistan's national security in the face of external pressure from the international community and increasing persistent external involvement. Pakistan is under turmoil on both the inside and the outside. Pakistan's survival is under risk due to global security. The situation has gotten worse and poses a serious threat to Pakistan's national interest because of ignorance of its sovereign status, lack of awareness of the outside world and crucial strategic facts about the region, public opinion, and a lack of proper investigation and clear strategies towards a solution.

Pakistan desperately needs a stable political structure in order to manage demands from its allies, neighbors, and the international community that Pakistan is behaving responsibly to address the issue, combat internal extremism, and convince its own people that this war was vital. In this setting, only Pakistan is aware of the actual circumstances. The lack of trust between Pakistanis is the major issue in this situation, and the allies and neighbors continue to take advantage of it. The negative repercussions of the Cold War have been felt by Pakistan as well as by half of the world. Pakistani society and the economy have yet to fully recover from the negative effects of the Cold War after the events of September 11, 2001, and the War on Terror poses new difficulties for world politics. Future developments in Pakistan will be greatly influenced by how the government handles the serious issues brought on by and resulting from the fight against terrorism, such as those affecting the economy and society.

The immediate impact of this worst law and order crisis is terrible for Pakistan's already aid-dependent economy. The economy is stagnating and becoming more dependent on foreign aid as a result of the lack of interest from international investors in making foreign direct investments and Pakistan's access to attractive markets. The misuse of help after major catastrophes like the 2005 earthquake and the 2010 flood's aftermath has damaged donors' willingness to provide Pakistan with adequate support, especially during its most trying times. Because of the instability of the system and the public servants' consequent lack of accountability to the general population, corruption has become a widespread practice.Foreign nations brought up the mishandling of the issues and made it clear that they preferred nonprofit organizations to carry out the assignment rather than providing direct assistance to government workers. The people of Pakistan, who are the true victims of all this, including a weak economy, natural calamities, and political instability, face a complex predicament as a result of the foreign community's mistrust of Pakistan's governmental systems.The stability of the political system of the state and a solution to any potential illnesses resulting from the system's malfunction are absolutely necessary for the prosperity and health of society and the economy.

Conclusion

In Pakistan, political unrest is a persistent problem that has impeded social growth, undermined the economy, and dispersed people due to a number of issues.However, the ineffective leadership, disintegration of coalitions, and dysfunctional activity of political parties are the basic reasons of a paralyzed political system.Pakistan thus faces a variety of issues, including general dissatisfaction, a fragile economy, and dangers from both domestic and foreign forces.A stable political environment in Pakistan is ultimately required, and this can only be achieved if the government and opposition put their differences aside and work together to further the nation's interests rather than their own.

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