Political Instability: A case study of Pakistan

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Abstract

Political instability has become a serious and threatening problem especially in developing and underdeveloped countries. It is creating massive problems and hindering the development of these countries. The theme of this article revolves around the problem of political stability in context of identity and legitimacy crisis in Pakistan. Political stability plays an important role in keeping society integrated and in maintaining legitimacy within the state. It is a prerequisite for the economic development, social integration, and supremacy of law in a state. The stability of political system has direct effects on the processes of nation and state building. These both require stable political systems for their growth and flourishing. The development of nation and state without firm and organized system of politics is not possible and government becomes only a tug of war amongst various interest groups. In sum, article endeavors to explore the possible causes and effects of political instability in Pakistan.

Key words: Pakistan, political instability, problems, development

The instability of government, inefficiency of political parties, and a weak political culture create the scenario for a politically instable state. Political instability has become a serious problem especially for the developing and underdeveloped countries.

This problem is associated with a series of problems in various fields. The problem of political instability generates more serious for a society which is multi ethnic, having people of diverse cultural attributes. In a politically stable state all sections of society get their due shares and are satisfied being a part of a multi ethnic society which ultimately

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leads towards the nation-building. In stable conditions people are empowered and exert their energies for the development of nation. Incase of instability the case is vice versa, people feel unsatisfied and powerless, lose their trust on institutions and they prefer their own interest in front of state and ultimately society leads to split.

Political stability is vitally important for the attainment of nation building, such as political development and national integration, which has direct influence on formation of political parties. The development in states-modern or modernizing, takes place due to the varying degree of political" stability. "It can be regarded as important to maintain peace, harmony, enduring constitutional contentment's, maintenance of government institutions and possession of civic order" (Michael, 1971). It is often used to refer to democratic political stability. There are, of course, other kinds of regimes which have relatively stable political set-ups such as in China, Egypt, Zchecoslvac and so on.

The extent of the political stability can be measured by the adaptability of two institutions: State and Society. The variation occurring in one area will affect the other. In spite of the change in the social system, it has the capacity to allow change in such a way which can easily meet the varying challenges of political development.

Many underdeveloped nations of Asia and Africa including Pakistan have been confounded as how to overcome the problems of centralization of authority, national integration, economic development, political participation and social welfare of the modernizing societies which have grown simultaneously in the political order of these states. The political stability can be understood more by defining the causes of the instability in developing states. There are five issue areas as described by Leonard Binder, which many states are facing while trying to maintain the stability needed in their political system. These areas are: "Identity crises, legitimacy Crisis, Penetration crisis, Participation crisis and distribution crisis" (Lucian, 1971). Without any doubt these all play a significant role in creating the political instability, but here in this short paper, researcher will only discuss and stress upon the first two discussed issues, the identity crisis and the legitimacy crisis, keeping in view the case of Pakistan.

The identity crisis can be interpreted in many ways into the political process. It generally ref1ects the sentiments of nationalism and the desire of the people to live together in a common place. It implies that the identity crisis is the feeling of individual's association with the political system. In the process of political change, an identity crises

occurs "when a community guides that it had once unquestionably accepted as physical and psychological definitions of its collective self are no longer acceptable under new territorial conditions" (Samuel, 1971). The dismemberment of East Pakistan and present alarming situation in Sindh and Balochistan are good examples in this regard.

The vast diffusion of communication have also generated this problem, as the isolated communities have awakened, and eventually helped in rebuilding the sense of unification of the political system must inevitably experience when ever its basic forms are substantially changed" (Samuel, 1968). The lack of national identity or national loyalty refers to the unwillingness or inability of an individual or groups or individuals to feel as a part of the state.

This problem has been found in pluralistic societies in the from of ethnic, linguistic, tribal and religions section. Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka, Nigeria and now Russia can be referred to this category where the very existence of the federal system is challenged.

The nature of federal crisis depends largely on "the rate, volume as well as the content of the regional demands" (Samuel, 1971). When the pressures of regional demands are carried to an extreme and do not get satisfactory output response from the national system, these may transform into a demand for separation or secession from the federation. East Pakistan's break (1971) up was due to reason of this kind. India is almost facing the same problem in the form of uprising in East Punjab and occupied Kashmir. Canada has been confronted with Quebec issue. Nigeria has suffered coups and civil wars, Thus "regionalism is always potential source of danger which may ultimately undermine the federal system's maintenance capability" (Lucian 1971).

Therefore, it is evident from the given facts that deterioration of the political system in pluralistic societies of the developing states, including Pakistan, has resulted from "the issues of centralization of authority, national integration, social mobilization, economic development, political participating and social 'welfare, Which have arisen simultaneously in the political order" (Laghari, 1991).

The problem of identity and legitimacy are closely related to each other. In political socialization process, people generally get more sense of national identity in stable system, which also provide the legitimacy of authority. The sense of identity may also be developed by accepting the legitimacy of the authority. The legitimacy, in fact, is associated with 'the performance capacity of the system and the

feelings of the people towards the authority" (Macridis, and Brown, 1912). This implies that the congruence between mass demand for participation and a positive elite response to those unlimited expectation of the society are not met, ultimately creating sharp differences and. some times leading to a state of virtual civil war. The consequences of the undue play on some seats in 1977 elections during Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto's period and mass agitation against General Ayub Khan's rule can be referred to this problem. It is under those conditions the military often intervenes to control the authority of the federation. This implies that a balance between demands and concessions, supports and restraints, expectations and satisfactions may inculcate the sense of consensus among various communities for national unification.

Generally, the legitimacy crisis is regarded along with the forms of the governmental institutions and the authority of the leadership. it can also be referred to as "a break down in the constitutional structure and the performance of the government that arises out of the differences over the proper nature of the authority for political system" (Samual, 1971).

In Pakistan, the induction of one unit in 1956, introduction of 1962 constitution by Ayub Khan, frequent constitutional amendments by Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and mal-treatment of General Zia-ul -Haq under 1973 constitution are closely related events in this context.

The legitimacy can also be shaken by misinterpretation of history and promises of political elite with the masses. This crisis occurs when people reject the leader's claim based on historical precedence and his promises for the accomplishment of his actions. The leaders are thrown out when they fail to accomplish the promises made for the development of society. In the developing societies, this type of projection is quite common. The leaders try to evoke the emotions of the masses by promising them a better future for the legitimization of their authority. When these promises are not realized, that ultimately leads towards a crisis of authority. Ayub Khan introduced "guided democracy" in the same fashion, which finally became one of the reasons for his downfall.

The institution of leadership in Pakistan has remained so weak and its structure is always from top to bottom. The leadership in Pakistan is based on heredity/ family patterns. In actual the process of becoming a leader starts from bottom to top, in which the fist step is social welfare service then entering in political arena. Trends in Pakistan have always been people are considered leaders because they are the daughters

or sons of leaders and possess leadership in heredity.

The charisma of family leadership is popular amongst the people because of lack of education. The lowest literacy rate in people of Pakistan has played an important role in deciding the right choice for them; since their choice is made on the basis of their emotions and charisma of the personality of leaders. The lack of education and decay of leadership are the two most important contributing factors to the political instability in Pakistan.

Pakistan's experience is evident that quality and stability of political system, and leadership is not possible without quality education. As it has been discussed that pluralistic societies there are sensitive issues of langue, religion and ethnicities, here the role of leader becomes more important than any other factor.

Specially incase of the state and society like Pakistan where various ethnicities and sects are residing and all these different people became one nation on the basis of religious commonness and same aspirations which they could not have in united India where other religions were not letting them live in peace. When the institution of leadership in Pakistan split into the levels of sub-national/ ethnic, provincial and religious/ sectarian by then the problems of legitimacy and identity started and by the passage of time gained momentum. The theme of a national leadership lost in these various levels of leadership.

This fragmentation in the leadership gave birth to the crisis of identity and legitimacy and worsened it by the passage of time. Since people are not satisfied with the actions of political parties and government then they start thinking about their existence and identity which generate negative feelings amongst people for government and all system.

The other form of leadership existed in Pakistan for a long time has been dictatorship.

The army rule spawns about almost on three decades, and these decades did not let the democratic politics take roots in a newly established state. The experience of an army rule for a newly established state is worst as compare to the state which is politically stable.

Here in Pakistan with the establishment of a new state every sphere

was to be set up and directed including politics that was misdirected through recurring military intervention.

K.K Aziz defines the difference between political leadership and dictatorship that political leadership works through compromise, give and take and consultation on the other hand dictator does not work accountability system and he considers leaders of other parties as rivals. The most affected of this military rule has had been the society, means the common people who took part and sacrificed in order to attain freedom from foreign rule and Hindus. The Muslims of India aspired to establish a society of their own. The political culture was corrupted in these decades and its impact continued even after this because a true democratic system could not be evolved. The dictatorial political set up had split the political parties, and splitting of political parties led to the inclusion of various political alliances and groups in the main stream of national politics and obviously all these groups were not aimed at revival of democracy their motive was just to share power. (2001)

Aziz writes about the political trends in Pakistan that "The political history of Pakistan and the way the game of politics has been played so far have ensured a weakening of the democratic spirit and a corresponding strengthening of the dictatorial ghost." (2001:129)

Next contributing factor to the instable political conditions of Pakistan is weak political organization of political parties of Pakistan. Political parties of Pakistan are not properly organized from their inside structure, absence of party elections, domination of any family or group or ethnicity on the party and which limits the scope of party in terms of its voters and specially aims and objects which shrink as well and loses the national character.

The weak organization and improper working of political parties paves the way for coalition governments, which has become a very common set for every government and they exert their whole energy for maintaining the coalition set up and remain in continuous pressure from partner groups.

It also affects the policy making both internal or external arenas. The successful implementation of domestic and foreign policies requires strong support from people, but improper functioning of political parties do not provide people a plat form rather it splits and exploit the public opinion for their own interest. The mushroom growth of religious and ethnic parties and groupings with in the parties has made the political scenario a messy play ground where ever one is playing the game according to his own rules and preferring own interests. Leaders use

religion, sect or ethnicity to raise the emotions of people then exploit them for their own purposes. Since religion has remained a sensitive issue in the society so most of the leaders involve religion in political matters. People do not have any clear choice amongst these same parties, since because of lack of education they cannot use their political rights and make a party of their own rather than depending on old parties and conventional politics.

The present political trend in Pakistan is forming coalitions amongst different political parties, which is the reason of current instable conditions. Coalition set up is considered temporary arrangement in political scenario everywhere in the world; since it is based on interests of various groups and when they are not served it is broken and leads to more instable conditions.

Lack of clear majority of anyone political party also shows that people do not trust any of these partners that is why all enjoy less support. It is the clear will of people which is the expression of their choice and establishes a stable political system strongly supported by the common masses.

Another significant factor which has contributed and worsened the problem of political instability is the dysfunction of federal system. The people of various cultures exerted to obtain a separate home land where they can prosper shattered because of faults in maintaining a just federal system. This led to the increase in mistrust on national leaders and more trust on ethnic leadership who exploited the emotions of people for their selfish interests. The unjustified acts and emotion provoking acts of the leaders made people question their identity and legitimacy again after the independence; the best example of Bangladesh can be referred here.

A federation can not exist or survive without a spirit of partnership and co-operation between the provinces and centre. Equitable treatment and mutual respect are the basic requirement for the success of any federal structure. Considering the geo-political and socio-economic structure of Pakistan, the diverse cultural, tradition and distance of one wing from the other, Pakistan could only survive through democratic institutions. Where power could be shared by the people of the two wings on an equitable basis. In Pakistan the politicians who advocated for centralized administration, only served their own interests and the class interests of the ruling elite. In the process it was only east Pakistan but the other smaller provinces like Sindh, North West Frontier and Balochistan also went through the same process of

neglect and exploitation. Because of the geographical situation

Moreover, the indirectly contributing factor towards the worsening political situation is external interference of other powers for their selfish interests. In the already disturbed conditions their interference made the scenario worst. Pakistan is a rich country in terms of important minerals, gas and important coasts the quest of resources and being a gate way towards the hot waters has made Pakistan an attractive country for external powers.

It has been observed that the "developing countries of Asia and Africa have shown more concern in consolidation the problem of national unity and' authority than in the development of the economics of the nation" (David, 1965). If we consider the case of Pakistan, it seems quite agreeable that adequate economic growth could only be possible if there are stable institutions in the political order. The political stability can be achieved if legitimacy of the institutions and personal legitimacy of the ruler has been solved.

Conclusion:

The political stability is a pre-condition for the nation-building, and nation-building is a process necessary for the survival and development of a nation. The process of nation-building works two-fold, it works towards identity formation of a nation which results in integration of society, and obviously an integrated society plays an important part into state-building that includes the development of administrative infrastructure of the state.

The consequences of political stability are to be felt everywhere in the realms of economics, society and politics. Pakistan a nation having rich resources, fertile land, intelligent people, important strategic location, and being an atomic power is a case of serious political instability which is suffering from weak and ineffective external and internal policy making, discontinuation of policies, less coherent society, an obscure image on the global stage having its future questioned by the world.

A politically stable state satisfies every section of society in all dynamics and accommodates pluralities; a result people become more loyal to the state and the sentiment of nationalism establishes amongst them and citizens regardless of their differences feel a part of the national entity.

The example of developed states can be referred in this context. The

societies of developed states are more pluralistic than Pakistan be more coherent and pursuing the national goals equally. The root cause is the strong leadership that has shaped the contours of society. The leadership in these state is not divided into communities or sects or ethnicities rather on they on ideologies. Society also form their opinion according to ideologies that which one they prefer to come into the government.

The developed societies because of being educated are more politically aware and possess clear public opinion on matters of national importance. The contribution of a learned society towards the politics is obviously different then the underdeveloped and less educated society. Education make the people exert their all energy towards state-building and a healthy approach towards state and society. One more thing is considerable here that along with education, developed state because of sincere leadership provide all basic necessities to their citizens which is missing in underdeveloped societies.

The pompous negative effect of the political instability is, it split's the society on various grounds because all sections of society are not satisfied with the actions of governments and a situation of mistrust prevails in all society.

The dissatisfaction and mistrust of society leads it towards the pursuance of individual interests and ignorance of national/ collective interests. The negative forces external and internal obviously benefit from the vacuum created because of instable conditions.

The problem of political stability in the context of identity and legitimacy crisis in Pakistan has been sharpened mainly due to the effects of rapid socio-political mobilization and, excessive and un institutionalized role of civil and military bureaucracy, which has unbalanced the entire political order of the country. The social and economical change has also multiplied political demands and broadens political participation. These "changes have undermined traditional political institutions and enormously complicated the problem of creating new bases of political associations and institution" (Samuel, 1971).

The escalation of demands and competition of different communities for scarce resources have politicized communal divisions and tensions between provinces, and inability of political institutions to possess the capacity to respond to the escalation of demands has ultimately lead to, the identity and legitimacy crisis in Pakistan.

Political instability in any state is the best opportunity for the external interference, anti-state elements, and pressure groups for the exploitation of their own selfish interests.

The present political instability in Pakistan has raised the external and internal challenges for its society and state. Pakistan is facing serious challenges specially in the realms of politics and economics. The global world is providing aid and assistance to Pakistan but in presence of insincere leadership and political instable conditions the huge foreign aid is not generating any positive results.

The present world is a global world where every field is determined by intense competition: state craft, conduct of diplomacy, effective policy making, and strong economy are the most important challenges every state has to face. Political instability in any state leads to chaos and disorder amongst the units.

In global world the trends of establishing substantial regional blocks with other states and joining economic and security alliances is gaining momentum and these affiliations makes a state an important partner of the global world. Now pre-requisite for joining these alliances is strong political and economic conditions of a state, if a country is not stable enough in political and economic realms no state will be ready to make weak states as their global partners and they will be left behind the global stage.

The recurring coups and destabilization of democratic governments has periled the future of people of Pakistan. Pakistan has already suffered from huge losses in form of separation of its East wing because of political instability and is still suffering from continuous conflicts amongst the units. All federating units especially Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtoonkhwah are experiencing the serious impacts of political instability.

The instability poses challenges in the realms of national security, societal cohesion, national economy, facing war of terrorism, policy making, integrating in the world politics and economy, gaining global support.

The most important and immediate challenge the political instable condition of Pakistan is creating is mishandling of issue of war on terrorism.

The war on terrorism is affecting badly the internal conditions of the

state and as well as its external relations with other states. The instable political set up is not letting any clear and effective measure along with policies for the issue of terrorism.

Since September 2008 USA leading the NATO forces started attacking frontier areas of Pakistan and violated the sovereignty of Pakistan in the name of combating terrorism and chasing the terrorists may be hiding in these areas. These attacks are increasing by the times.

Pakistan is already a victim of severe terrorism, further foreign attacks on its territory has exploited the situation. The people of Pakistan specially residents of frontier areas have feelings of insecurity, lost their trust on government and army, and feeling of this mistrust could lead to furious results ultimately. The persistent worst domestic conditions because of internal terrorism and external threats of attacks have almost bankrupted the economy and discouraged the foreign direct investment. It has become the biggest challenge for Pakistan to cope international pressure and face the internal reactions in shape of severely instable economy, resentment of people, lack of peoples' trust on government and hatred for army, withdrawal of peoples' support to policies and actions of government, terrorist attacks in major cities, isolation in global world like calling back of diplomats' families to station because Pakistan is no more a safe place to live and closure of embassies like UK and USA .

This situation has endangered the future of Pakistani people who are now considering Pakistan an insecure place. The assurance of national security of Pakistan in face of international pressure and increased continuous external interference is a challenge which government has to cope in a way that interests of its own people and global world should be fulfilled. Pakistan is in danger both from external and internal realms. The security of the world has endangered Pakistan's survival. The ignorance of sovereign status of Pakistan, unawareness of external world from important strategic facts about the area, public opinion of the common masses, and lack of proper investigation and clear strategies towards the solution has created the deteriorated scenario and posing a serious danger to its national interest and security.

The present and immediate need of the time is a stable political system, since Pakistan has to combat inside terrorism, has to face and convince its own people that this war is necessary , and Pakistan has to satisfy its allies and as well as neighbors and manage the pressure that Pakistan is taking positive steps to counter the situation. In this

context nobody else knows the ground realities except Pakistan. The main problem in this whole scenario is lack of trust amongst Pakistan and the allies and neighbors keep exploiting the situation. Pakistan and also half of the world has had experienced the adverse effects of Cold War. Pakistani society, and economy have still not recovered from the negative after effects of Cold War and after the incidence of nine eleven this War of Terrorism is another challenge of global politics. In this situation, the future of Pakistan is largely influenced by the way government handles the serious issues relating and arising from war of terrorism like economy and society.

The immediate effect of this worst law and order situation is a worst for the already aid driven economy of Pakistan. The lack of interest by the foreign investors for foreign direct investment, and giving Pakistan access to the lucrative markets are making economy stagnant and more prone to rely on foreign aid. The improper use of aid on the huge disasters like earth quake in 2005 and on the wake of flood in 2010 has lost the trust of donors to support Pakistan sufficiently even in most difficult times. The instability of the system and accordingly the unaccountability of the public servant to the masses has created and raised the practice of corruption as an accepted tradition. The foreign world mentioned the issues mishandling and clearly said that they would prefer the nongovernmental organizations to perform the task rather than giving direct aid too the government employees. The situation of mistrust of the foreign world on political structures of Pakistan has created a complex scenario for the people of Pakistan who are the real suffers of all this situation including weak economy, natural disasters and political instability.

The prosperity and heath of society and economy is not largely but wholly solely dependent on the stability of the political system of the state, and a cure for the possible ills arising from the dysfunction of the system.

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