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Understanding the Root Causes of the Political Instability in the Developing Democracies: A Case Study of Pakistan

Dr. Sharaf Ali

Associate Lecturer in the Department of Political Science & I.R., University of Gujrat, Punjab, Pakistan

| ***Corresponding Author:** | haseebatta786@gmail.com |

ABSTRACT

This study mainly aimed to explore the structural bases of the state and society of Pakistan i.e. for finding out the basic roots of the political instability in Pakistan. This research has followed the case study research methods, and for the purpose of achieving the main objectives of this study, this research has employed the Dessler's (1989) 'structural-functional" model and the Historico-dialectical approach of Ejiogu (2001). The results of the study indicated that the basic roots of the political instability in Pakistan lied in the state structure, and which have been resulted through the problems in the respective 'state construction', 'state entrenchment', and the 'state transformation' processes of the state i.e. Pakistan. The study concluded that the major roots of the political instability mainly lied in the policies of the federal government i.e. pertaining to the issues of national integration, national ideology, supremacy of constitution, rule of law, the flawed political culture, and camouflaged colonial state structure which has failed to comply with the political aspirations of the general public. The study recommended that for uprooting the root causes of the persistent political instability Pakistan, the national political leadership shall have to change their own mindset first, and later, they have to devise a serious plan/strategy to bring the pre-requisite changes in the constitution and state structure i.e. for infusing a sense of acceptability and belongingness among the general public, and the major political groups living in Pakistan.

| **KEYWORDS:** | Issues in State and Society of Pakistan, Political Culture of Pakistan, Political Instability in Pakistan, Political Stability in Pakistan, Structure of State and Society in Pakistan |

Introduction

Democracy as a system of government is expected to bring peace and harmony in society because the very basic feature of democratic government is the rule of majority and it also guarantees to guard the interests of the minority groups. Democratic System of the government is essentially featured with the regular electoral contests i.e. among the various political parties for winning the legitimate executive authority in state, and where transfer of power from one political regime which loses election to the election winning political regime is not only peaceful but a routine practice too. Unfortunately, this has not been the case with the democratic system which is being practiced in Pakistan.

Despite of observing the explicit patterns of experiencing a constant state of political instability i.e. as a main reason behind the virtually failed democratic system in Pakistan, most of the original research studying the failure of democracy in Pakistan have focused to study role of political leadership, political parties, state institutions e.g. military/bureaucracy (for example see Collard, 1957, Alavi, 1972; Rizvi, 2003; Mehmood, 2000; Khan, 2019 i.e. just to count a few). Further, the other scholarly significant themes i.e. in the literature explaining the problems of the democratic culture in Pakistan

included systemic issues in electoral process; problems in the smooth transition of power; struggle for the supremacy of the civilian leadership (for example see Waseem, 1989; Taylor, 1992; Rais, 1997, etc.).

The literature explaining the basic nature and scope of the basic root causes of the political instability i.e. in Pakistan is quite scanty. The phenomenon of political instability is being considered as a leading challenge for the future of democracy in any state, as it exacerbates the intra-state political conflicts in the developing states e.g. Pakistan (Ejiogo, 2011). In this context, it is quite significant to explore the root causes of the political stability, so as the concerned policy quarters may take suitable policy actions i.e. for the purpose of uprooting the main causes of political instability from Pakistan. This study mainly aimed to explore and explain the major root causes of the long standing and persistent culture of political instability in Pakistan. Additionally, the main objective of this study is to develop a theoretical framework for analyzing the root causes of the political instability in the developing states, especially, with reference to the case of Pakistan.

Literature Review

During the past seventy-five years, Pakistan has experienced thirty-one governments in total, including eight interim caretaker governments and four military governments. In the political context, during the aforesaid period Pakistan had almost all forms of the government e.g. democracy, military dictatorship, presidential, parliamentary etc (Khan, 2019). During the whole course of its history, the political culture of Pakistan has been found to be constantly suffering from the negative effects of political instability. Since the last half century, the traditional scholarship i.e. reviewing the political culture of Pakistan have tried to justify the prevalent political instability in the politics of Pakistan by mainly re-coursing to some conspiracy theories. For example, some scholars claimed that the mainstream political parties have tried to develop a political discourse according to which the general public believes that our traditional enemy India has ganged up with the global powers e.g. USA, UK, IMF, and World Bank. And for the purpose of achieving their own ulterior policy objectives, all of the aforesaid international powers are trying to manipulate the political system of Pakistan i.e. through constantly creating certain conditions which lead to infuse political instability in Pakistan (Iqtidar, 2016; Akhtar & Ahmad, 2015). But the answers suggested by the aforesaid conspiracy theories seem quite naïve because such answers do not provide/require any sort of the tangible evidence, and such answers normally lead to further deepen the misunderstanding about the factual root causes of the problem i.e. the constant political instability in Pakistan.

Any viable alternate approach for exploring the actual root causes of the political instability in Pakistan should be based upon some scientifically verifiable theoretical framework. For example, Steinberg (2012) tried to encapsulate the main causes of instability in the relatively unstable states by projecting multiple indicators along with the brief description of the historical illustrations explaining the nature and impact of those indicators. On the side, Baumgratner and Jones (1993) studied the patterns of the long standing political stability in the political stability in the political system of USA by using the equilibrium theory which proposed that the political system of the USA is essentially characterized with a system of the very balanced institutional arrangement between the 'triangle of power' i.e. the major political interest groups, their representatives in the Congress and Bureaucracy of USA is considered to be heavily dependent upon the operations of the very powerful social institutions . Therefore, the level of stability in the US political system can be readily assessed through evaluating the behavioral dynamics of the aforementioned very powerful social institutions which are working as the power base of the political system of the USA.

Dessler (1989) proposed the 'structural-functional" model for understanding the social/institutional conditions which played a vital role for regulating "the change in political behavior" in a particular state/society. He claimed that typically a "structure" should not be understood as a "container" of the social/political action, rather, the-institutional -structure of the state and society should be understood as a "medium" of social/political action i.e. for the various agents of change which are working in any state/society e.g. political parties, civil society, interest groups, bureaucracy etc. The aforesaid 'structural-functional" model further proclaims that the "structures" as medium of change create the "basic conditions" for the chances of bringing some kind of change, and such basic conditions created by the respective structures of some society are shaped in the light of the "capabilities and sense of responsibility" which is possessed by the agents who can actively respond to the aforesaid conditions of the actions created by the respective structures of state and society. In simple words, according to the Dessler's (1989) 'structural-functional" approach, the root causes of the political instability can be traced through analyzing the functional condition of the various vital 'structures' i.e. which are being operated in a particular state and society. Another related historico-dialectical model i.e. for locating the root causes of the political instability was developed by Ejiogu (2001) which was based on the articulation of three basic concepts: state construction, state entrenchment, and state transformation. He argued that the modern nation states, especially comprising the early dominions of some colonial power, cannot achieve political stability haphazardly or through artificial means i.e. without going through the aforesaid processes of the state construction, state entrenchment, and state transformation.

Further, the scholarship studying the phenomenon of political/economic instability normally prefers to use the interdisciplinary approaches which have become a common practice in the social sciences i.e. in general (Keynes, 2017). By using the same interdisciplinary approach, the researchers in the field of political science can opt to adopt the case study approach i.e. for understanding the nature and scope of the root causes of the political instability in a particular state. Such case studies i.e. aiming to explore the structural causes of political instability in a particular state may help to provide useful insights e.g. about the structural issues being faced by the political economy of that particular state as well (Odell, 2001).

Material and Methods

This study mainly aimed to explore the nature and scope of the root causes of the political instability in Pakistan. Keeping view of the nature and objectives of the study, this study has employed the case study research methods. For achieving the purpose of this research the researcher has primarily used the secondary data sources, and accordingly, the researchers have conducted a systematic literature review of the relevant published material i.e. Books, published reports of the various think tanks, periodicals, research journals, news reports etc. Further, this research has mainly employed the Dessler's (1989) 'structural-functional" model in combination with the Historico-dialectical approach of Ejiogu (2001) i.e. for exploring the nature and scope of the root causes of the political instability in Pakistan. After conducting an extensive and systematic literature review, the researchers have presented the relevant facts in the form of results/discussion and conclusion i.e. by adjusting those facts according to the scope of this research.

Results and Discussion

According to Ejiogu (2001) The kind of political stability one can see in USA and Europe is the result of the prerequisite conditions which these states have successfully achieved through following their respective very crucial stages of the 'state construction', 'state entrenchment', and the 'state transformation'. As per the theoretical framework

proposed by the Ejiogu (2001) the root causes of the political instability being prevalent in Pakistan can be traced through critically examining the issues which Pakistan has been facing in the aforesaid crucial stages of its "formation", "entrenchment", and "transformation". Following lines would provide a contextual overview of the aforesaid stages i.e. locating the root causes of the political instability in Pakistan.

'State Construction' oriented causes of Political Instability in Pakistan

According to Ejiogu (2001) the term 'state construction' signifies the creation of a legal framework for the functioning of an effective administration over a defined territory by providing an independent identity to the individuals and groups living in that particular territorial unit i.e. state. In the modern sense of the word, the same concept is applied to the post-colonial "nation states" (Mansbash, Ferguson & Lampert 1976). England dividing its colonial territory of the Indian subcontinent created Pakistan, along with the India, in August 1947 on the basis of two nation theory which was based upon the notion that the muslims living in the sub-continent belong to a separate "nation", i.e. in the modern sense of the word, having their independent identity on the basis of their religion e.g. Islam (Hassan, 2011). Whereas, the native society which was inherited by Pakistan consisted of a culturally heterogeneous society. The most basic challenges for the newly born state of Pakistan i.e. during its formative or "state construction" phase were related with the issues pertaining to the state consolidation and the national integration i.e. for creating an environment of national political harmony. Further, the problem of the cultural differences i.e. among the major ethno-political groups was aggravated by a huge geographical distance between the eastern and western parts of the state (Quddus, 1972).

'National Integration' may be equated with the psychological dimension of the political identities which essentially comprises the political belief system, and the general behavior of the general public towards the political system. The survival of modern state is always dependent on the support from all the politically relevant groups i.e. in case of being a plural society, and in case if any major political group willfully opts to decline their support to the political system of such, the state would ultimately collapse (Rabushka & Shepselfs, 1972). In the context of Pakistan, the state was composed of many major cultural groups, and Bengalis being the largest cultural group which was living in east Pakistan. From the date of its inception, Pakistan has been constantly struggling to deal with the issue of national integration. The federal government has been trying to forcefully impose her political agenda upon the provinces in the name of 'national harmony' and 'national integration' which had been constantly resisted by the marginalized political groups and provincial nationalist parties, and hence such policies of the federal government became a major constant source of political instability in Pakistan (Shah & Ishaque, 2017).

For, example the federal government tried to forcefully impose the Urdu as a single national language against the will of the majority population of the state e.g. of the East-Pakistan i.e. under the garb of national integration, and such policy of the federal government created political unrest in the east Pakistan unnecessarily. The other example of such undue format of national integration oriented federal policies was the creation of one unit by forcefully clubbing all regions/provinces of the west Pakistan i.e. against the will of the major political groups living in that part of the state, and the result was not very much different from the experience in East Pakistan. The federal government tried to kept on her aforesaid policies in the both wings of state through forceful/artificial means, but the dissenting regional political groups never acceded to those policies of the federal government, and the end result of such policies was the disintegration of the states i.e. which occurred in 1971 when East Pakistan ceded to become a new state named Bangladesh (Majeed, 2014).

The federal government is still following the same policies i.e. in the name of creating the 'national harmony' and for ensuring the 'national integration' which is resulting to sustain a sense of political victimization in many marginalized political groups e.g. in the small provinces. For example, the quota system in the Sindh province has created a sense of political resentment in the local Sindhi population of the rural sindh i.e. against the federal government and the 'muhajirs' (the migrated community) mainly living in the urban areas of the Sindh province. There remains constant political unrest, especially in the urban areas of Karachi and Hyderabad, in the Sindh province. Further in the contemporary context of the political instability in Pakistan, the same type of policies has been resulting in creating a permanent political divide in the rest of the provinces too.

'State Entrenchment' oriented causes of the Political Instability in Pakistan

The issues of national integration which were ought to be addressed at the "state construction" phase had not been settled because the federal government failed to promote and guarantee such political conditions which could have resulted to create a genuine sense of political integration i.e. among the various politically marginalized groups, especially, belonging to the small provinces. So, the very basic issues of 'national integration' and 'national harmony' became perpetuated in the politics of Pakistan, and resulted in creating problems during the "state entrenchment" phase for Pakistan also. At the state entrenchment phase the early issues of the 'national integration' and 'national harmony' were translated into the issues of institutional disharmony i.e. being constantly indicated through the presence of the "strained center-province relations" and "conflicting state institutions". Further, the aforesaid problems have resulted in creating a socio-political culture in which 'rule of law' and 'supremacy of the constitution' is still a far away dream.

After the early phase of 'state construction', a state is supposed to have entered into the "state entrenchment" phase. According to Ejiogu (2001), the main objective behind the processes involving the "state entrenchment" phase is to successfully build some essentially needed state institutions i.e. comprising the effective executive, legislative, and judicial organs of the government which in turn result to ensure political stability in the state. In simple words, the state entrenchment procedures create an effective, hitherto positive, link between the state institutions and the citizens of a particular state. The scholars maintained that a state's relative effectiveness i.e. "state entrenchment" is heavily dependent upon the nature of the relationship between the state institutions and the general public. The general public policy decisions of the government i.e. which is being operated through the state institutions created through following some positive ""state entrenchment" processes would regularly take guidance from the public opinion projected by the civil-society, hitherto, the main public policy initiatives are taken through engaging with the civic communities living in particular state (Migdal, Kohli and Shue, 1994).

In the aforesaid context, the post-colonial state of Pakistan seems to be a mutant successor of its predecessor colonial power i.e. England, because over the course of its history, it has remained 'un-entrenched' and disconnected from both the general public and its representative civil society. One can clearly notice both the reasons and the respective consequences of the persistently suspended "state entrenchment" phase in Pakistan. At the 'state entrenchment' phase, normally, a state is expected to develop a national consensus for creating a national level political consensus for adopting an effective institutional framework i.e. constitution for running the normal business of state. But Pakistan had simply been unable to create a national level consensus for developing a workable constitution which would have accommodated the political interests of all the major political groups in Pakistan. During the last seventy-five years, Pakistan has had three constitutions i.e. of 1956, 1962, 1973, and two abridged versions

of the 1973's constitution which were imposed by military dictators in 1985 and 2001, respectively. The aforesaid abridged versions of the 1973's constitutions were restored by the respective civilian governments through amending the constitution in 1998 and 2010, respectively (Khan, 2017). The aforesaid picture of the constitutional history of Pakistan clearly manifested that how the competing political interest i.e. for amending the constitution would have resulted to promote an unstable political environment in Pakistan. It is quite unfortunate to acknowledge this harsh fact that the political culture of Pakistan is essentially featured with some inherent inconsistencies due to the irresponsible, hitherto, localized self-interest oriented political leadership.

Further, the consolidation of the national economy is another important area of concern i.e. during the 'state entrenchment' phase. Normally, the consolidated efforts of the state institutions i.e. functioning on the basis of a constitution lead to overcoming the negative effects of the ethnic diversity, but it did not happen in Pakistan. There exists plenty of evidence that the issues of national integration e.g. to regulate the ethnic diversity have also negatively impacted the process of economic consolidation in Pakistan, and hence, resulted in political instability in Pakistan. The main reason behind the economic factor's oriented political instability is that the provinces have converted themselves as entities which aim to protect the economic/political interests of the major ethnic groups living in the respective provinces. The local political leadership representing the majority ethno-cultural group of each province uses the conflicting ethnic interests to exacerbate their self-interest e.g. under the garb of the protests against price inflation or demand/supply oriented issues of the economy i.e. against the federal government (Hussain, 2012).

'State Transformation' oriented causes of Political Instability in Pakistan

In the State building process, the next logical step i.e. after the "state-entrenchment" would be "state-transformation". Mann (1986) defined the phrase 'transformation of state' as "the capacity of a state to penetrate in its civil society, and its ability to implement her political decisions throughout its boundaries i.e. with the consent and approval of its civil society". The 'state-entrenchment' and 'state transformation' are achieved through the civic-engagement oriented activities of the general public i.e. enjoying the rights of citizenship in a particular state (Skocpol & Florina, 2004). The 'state-transformation' is supposed to be started if a necessary minimum level of the mutual trust between the state and society gets established. According to Ejiogu (2001), 'transformation' in a particular state would be an indicative condition which reflects that the state institutions have acquired legitimacy among the minds of the general public or various political groups inhibiting within the administrative boundaries of that particular state. He further provided that once the process of the "state-transformation" is smoothly operating in a particular state, it would lead to create socio-political conditions through which the minimally required productive-legal roles of the citizenship become institutionalized, and are habitually practiced by a great majority of public i.e. in that particular state.

For analyzing the "state-transformation" process of Pakistan it is quite significant to understand the ideology of Pakistan, and issues in the constitution framing process i.e. to indicate the true nature of the relationship of the state and society of Pakistan. The basic popular slogan which was politically used during the campaign for the demand of a new state, in the British colony of the Indian subcontinent i.e. Pakistan , was composed of a simple question and its respective answer, and there was no confusion (at least, at the public level) about the nature of its impact upon the constitution of the demanded state. The basic question indicative of the basic ideology of Pakistan was "Pakistan ka matlab kya?" (what is the purpose behind the demand of Pakistan) with the readily accepted popular answer "La Elaaha ill-Allah" (There is no sovereign authority but Allah). From the date of its inception, the people of Pakistan have accepted and placed the role

of Islam as the reason d'tere and the most fundamental feature for defining the 'nation' and locus of 'sovereignty' i.e. in the constitutional context of Pakistan (Alavi, 1988).

However, despite the aforesaid ideological resolve of the general public of Pakistan, the state institutions, the political structures, and political leadership willfully stood far short of the aforesaid political ideals of the general public. The scholars suggested that the aforesaid gap between the ideological aspirations of the general public and the willful neglect of the state institutions to comply with those popular aspirations has resulted to create political tension via fueling religious conflicts and political instability in Pakistan (Ahmad & Brasted, 2020). In context of the state's failure to provide some elaborate institutional mechanism for channelizing and upholding the Islamic principles, a mushroom of religious political parties have been developed in all across the state which regularly come to the streets with their respective demands for rectification of the policies (i.e. which are promulgated by the state institutions/government from time to time) according to the principles of Islam. This is quite evident that the current state apparatus of Pakistan is hardly indicative of the concept of the "Sovereignty of Allah'' i.e. as enshrined in the Islamic principles, hitherto, in the constitution of Pakistan. Rather, the institutional infrastructure of Pakistan is a bare replica of the British colonial state structure which best serves the interests of the various state institutions and the political leadership. Any kind of the radical "state transformation" in light of the Islamic principles is considered to be diametrically opposite to the interests of the ruling elite e.g. in Pakistan (Zaman, 2002).

The "state entrenchment" and "state transformation" processes in a particular state are dependent upon the constitution of a particular state, because conceptually the constitution is considered as a broad 'social contract' between the government and the citizens of that particular state (Huemer, 2012). But in the context of Pakistan the aforesaid conception i.e. about the nature and role of the constitution is hardly true because the ideological aspiration of the general public have been missing in all of the constitutions i.e. which Pakistan have tried up till today. All of the constitutions which have been tried in Pakistan e.g. the constitution of 1956, 1962, and 1973 did not arise as result of the open public debate, rather, they have been imposed upon the general public i.e. after being authored and negotiated behind the closed doors (Ahmad & Brasted, 2020). That is why the constitution is frequently contested through both the peaceful and violent political means (Jaffrelot, 2015). For example, the frequently observed sectarian violence, and the public agitation campaigns of the various religious political parties are indicative of their lack of trust in the constitutional institutions and policies of the government i.e. in Pakistan (Ahmad, 1998; Lau, 2005). The foremost reasons for the political instability in Pakistan has emerged from the state's failure in the state's "state entrenchment" and "state transformation" processes. The so called independence did not bring any fundamental change in the colonial structure of state, and it merely changed the nomenclature of the state and state institutions, and all constitutions are in fact the replica of the Government of India Act 1935 i.e. with slight change of style and nomenclature state of Pakistan (Ahmad, 2017). Pakistan can hardly become in a position to overcome the ever-worsening conditions of political stability until it seriously considers to thoroughly revise its constitutional infrastructure i.e. via potently accommodating the popular ideological aspirations e.g. in true letter and spirit.

Conclusion

The explicit patterns of political instability have resulted to create some serious problems for the sustainability of the democratic system in Pakistan. Most of the original research explaining the failure of democracy in Pakistan has mainly focused on reviewing the role of political leadership, political parties, state institutions e.g. military/bureaucracy i.e. as the main factors contributing to exacerbation of the political instability in Pakistan. Some other key researches on this important issue tried to relate

the systemic issues in the electoral process; problems in the smooth transition of power; struggle for the supremacy of the civilian leadership i.e. with the phenomena of political stability in Pakistan. The scholars have paid less attention to explore and explain the structural root causes of the political instability in Pakistan. To fill the aforesaid gap in the literature, this study mainly aimed to reconfigure the structural bases of the state and society of Pakistan for finding out the basic roots of the political instability in Pakistan. The results of the study indicated that the basic roots of the political instability in Pakistan lied in the state structure, and which have been resulted through the problems in the respective 'state construction', 'state entrenchment', and the 'state transformation' processes of the state i.e. Pakistan. The study concluded that the major roots of the political instability mainly lied in the policies of the federal government i.e. pertaining to the issues of national integration, national ideology, supremacy of constitution, rule of law, the flawed political culture, and camouflaged colonial state structure which has failed to comply with the political aspirations of the general public.

This study provided that the basic roots of the political instability in Pakistan lay in the structure of the state and the nature of relationship which existed between the state institutions and the general public/major political groups i.e. in the constitutional context. Further, the results of this study highlighted that the constitutional infrastructure of Pakistan i.e. which has been implemented through promulgating the constitutions of 1956, 1962, and 1973 was a bare replica of the British colonial state structure which best serves the interests of the various state institutions and the political leadership. Any kind of the radical "state transformation" in light of the popular ideological aspiration i.e. Islamic principles/ideals stand diametrically opposite to the interests of the ruling elite and the vital institutions of state. Probably, that is why the state institutions in liaison with the political leadership have become the guardian of the institutional 'status quo' in Pakistan i.e. through the sustained implementation of the colonial laws and policies for dealing with the routine state affairs.

This study further concluded that the foremost reasons for the political instability in Pakistan has emerged from the state's failure in the state's "state entrenchment" and "state transformation" processes. The so called independence did not bring any fundamental change in the colonial structure of state, and it merely changed the nomenclature of the state and state institutions, and all constitutions are in fact the replica of the Government of India Act 1935 i.e. with slight change of style and nomenclature state of Pakistan. Pakistan can hardly become in a position to overcome the ever-worsening conditions of political stability until it seriously considers to thoroughly revise its constitutional infrastructure i.e. via potently accommodating the popular ideological aspirations e.g. in true letter and spirit.

Recommendations

The study recommended that for uprooting the root causes of the persistent political instability Pakistan, the national political leadership shall have to change their own mindset first, and later, they have to devise a serious plan/strategy to bring the pre-requisite changes in the constitution and state structure i.e. for infusing a sense of acceptability and belongingness among the general public and the major political groups living in Pakistan.

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