

Political institutions, Growth and Development in Pakistan (2008 - 2013)

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Abstract

This paper deals with empirical facts regarding political institutions, growth and development in Pakistan from 2008 to 2013. There are two aims of this study, first to understand the nature of political institutions in Pakistan and second their impact on socio-political and economic growth that lead to development. Institution may be defined as a mechanism, organization, body, or company where people work collectively for any constructive objective that could lead the country as a whole towards development. It is very difficult to provide any definition for the understanding of political institutions. For the paper we can define, Political institutions are institutions that seek authority through legitimacy, enforce laws, and punish the transgressor. It includes political parties, legislature, executive and judiciary. After having sensible political institutions one can think about growth, that is an evolutionary process for change. The change is development. Therefore, Pakistan is one of the countries in the world where so-called¹ political institutions are working for the growth and development of few individuals, few families, few media channels and few religious groups. Although it has been everywhere in the world but intensity of pragmatism makes the political institutions fruitful. It follows with growth and development with same intensity. Thus, Pakistan needs realistic political institutions that believe in the growth of a common person and development of the whole. Individualistic and holistic theories are used for understanding the whole phenomenon.

Key Words: institution, growth, development, dynastic politics

Introduction

Political institutions are a prerequisite for the growth and development of any country. In Pakistan, political institutions are hardly ever developed on professional basis. The primary reason for this is dynastic politics in Pakistan.

¹ So-called because they are not political institutions in the strict sense.

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In which family, party and individual interests are preferred instead of national interests. Therefore, growth restricts itself to few families. Development at large seems little. Here we describe the major political institutions in Pakistan. As far as the definition of the political institution is concerned as, we mentioned earlier there is no pragmatic political institution in Pakistan. However, the edifices of the political institutions without their pragmatism do exist in this country named as parliament, executive and judiciary. These three major political institutions are the backbone of any state. Military and civil bureaucracies assist the major institutions. Media in Pakistan is a bridge between people and the political institutions. The time is chosen for this study is 2008-13 because it is the first time in the history of Pakistan that a democratic government completed its five years term. We see in detail that how these political institutions work in Pakistan and work for the growth and development at large.

Theoretical Framework

Pakistan is an Islamic Republic where democracy is the law of the land. Constitution is Federal by nature. Bureaucracy and military have been assigned duties to perform. Citizens are guaranteed all fundamental rights written in the 1973 constitution. There are twenty constitutional amendments since 1973 to date.

Theoretically, political institutions do exist in Pakistan. Dynastic politics is occupying over the three major political institutions and few families abducted the economic resources of the country. These families are not only occupying the economic resources but also delivering the economic fruits according to their own heart. For example, we find that political institutions patronized by feudal lords who give employment to their Kins. This top to down hierarchy of employment keeps the decision-making in the hands of feudal lords who run this country. It creates paucity in wisdom among the decision makers as few families hardly comply the needs and demands of the whole country. It does not end here but this nepotism travels in civil and military bureaucracies who in return help the major political institutions. It is true that in military and civil bureaucracies most of the employees recruited on merit but top positions are filled on political grounds. It create mess in the longer run as those individuals who even do not belong directly to feudal lineage but enjoy the authority and power they could never attain on merit. They become such individuals who believe in wagging their tails after incapable top elite of the country for sustaining status quo. They are usually educated individuals who assist the major political institutions by suggesting different legitimate acts that has been inherited from the British rule.

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Britishers were the masters and intended to control their subjects. Thus, they made laws accordingly while after partition in 1947, few individuals who grabbed lands from their master for giving them undue favours became decision maker and controlled over maximum economic resources of Pakistan. They started ruling over Pakistan the way Britishers ruled. This is where the shoe pinches. The people of Pakistan are still slaves who wag their tails and bow before their masters. Few good, honest officers in every institution of Pakistan believe in the independence of Pakistan, respect the people of the country, and believe in rule of law.² The ongoing status of Pakistan is just because of those few people. Let us see how these theoretical apprehensions work in operational framework.

Operational Framework

There is a triangle as well as a vicious circle that is holding the economic resources in few hands and that circle is a real hurdle in growth and development at the grass root level in the country. Look at this equation:

Feudal Lords (FLs) = political demagogues

Military= Kins of FLs+ puppets+ Soldiers

Bureaucracy= Kins of FLs+ individuals

Opportunitists/Ethnic and ideological groups = Extremists + student leaders + Mullah

In this equation, we can see that Feudal lords are at the top tier of the society and make the ruling class with political demagogue. In Pakistan, there is no politician by the definition of politics. In any ordinary to professional dictionary, you would find the meaning of a politician as “A leader engaged in civil administration” at national as well as international levels or “A person active in party politics” or “A schemer who tries to gain advantage in an organization in sly or underhanded ways.” Just consider these three definitions of a politician finds in a WordWeb online dictionary. The first definition shows, there is not a single leader in Pakistan who has been engaged in civil administration. May be, few people are thinking about Shahbaz Sharief in Punjab and Mustafa Kamal in Sindh are engaged in civil administration. It is untrue; Shahbaz Sharief belongs to the second tier who belongs to that puppets produced by military establishment and Mustafa Kamal to the last tier created by ethnic group MQM.

² Rule of law means everyone is equal before law and no one can be detained without committing any crime along with restriction of discretionary powers of the rulers against the fundamental rights of the people.

However, one can believe that so what if people belong to any tier if they are working for the growth and development of the state. It is not the case. They never work for the growth and development of the state but for the growth and development of their, party, family or group. Second and third definitions are real reflection of the political demagogues not of politicians. These political demagogues make interest groups not political parties. Consequently, there is no political party in Pakistan yet by the definition of political science. There are interest groups who work for their personal, party, group or family interests. The definition of a political party usually start with word like “A political Organization,” in Pakistan Jamait-i-Islami (JI) has an ethnic organization in which it involved people of specific minds but no organization as a political party in general. For example, JI has a hierarchy in its designations but you can never find any liberal in their circles. In the same way MQM works. Therefore, there is no political party in Pakistan that has organization in itself. Thus, all parties in Pakistan are in fact interest groups.

Military is at the second tier that ruled over the country. Since 1947 to date military has been in power for more than thirty years and keep on deteriorating political processes and consequently political institutions. This overlapping by non-political elite over the political elite created de alignment among masses and leadership. FLs and military, used bureaucracy as their tool. Bureaucracy intentionally remained under the thumb of the FLs and military as both work at the front, bureaucracy remains at the backdrop and earns less bad name as compare to other tiers of authority.

Since 1947 to date, we can see that same political demagogues and their families are ruling in Pakistan. Same military families are sharing the posts of Generals and lieutenant generals. In a very recent promotions in military a brigadier did not promoted at the post of general even remained at the top in all departmental exams and professional courses. Because he is not Kin of one of the military families but belong to a general strata of the society. The military of Pakistan shares the upper posts among their Kins who belong to FLs directly or indirectly (means became family out of marriage or any other like relations). Military establishment produces their puppets and keep the strings of those puppets in their hands. They use such puppets for personal advantages. All defence and cantonment areas are very well organized and well protected why not the whole Pakistan. It shows the segregation and fragmentation of the society on the basis of status. Military soldiers are the only asset of Pakistan who defend our borders but unfortunately, they are scarifying their lives not against enemies but against Pakistani denizens. It keeps our society restive and hampers growth owing to the intermittent shocks

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and setbacks in the forms of martial laws (1958, 1970, 1977, and 1999) and dismemberment (1971) of the country respectively.

The insurgency³ in the Northern and Southern areas of Pakistan is an alarming situation that may give us another setback like East Pakistan. Dialogue and redressing the grievances of the aggrieved parties are better options for suppressing insurgencies. Owing to nepotism, the top echelon of military belongs to FLs who dictate them not their wisdom. In the presence of insurgencies, growth and development of political institutions resist automatically.

Third tier belongs to bureaucracy that based on the departments, which are considered very important in the development of a country. Although newly recruited civil servants are known as servants, yet they always behave as masters. This pragmatic difference keep society deprived of their fundamental rights. As mostly, bureaucrats consider themselves above the common man and keep utilizing their powers against innocent people. This nuisance value increase lust or greed for power in the society. Every graduate tries to include himself in this power stratum due to authority not owing to serving the people.

All the inspector general of police, secretaries of important and lucrative departments, chief secretaries of provinces and other key posts are filled by nepotism hardly on merit. Any department that works on nepotism cannot give any healthy environment for economic growth. This is how this tier of the country restricts political institutions to grow and develop as they work against the essence of institution that comprised of serving people not controlling people. Bureaucrats usually control people not serve them.

Fourth tier of society is a result of that fragmentation of the society that discussed earlier. FLs, military and bureaucracy divide the society on immoral grounds. It bankrupts us morally. End of morality may lead to religious extremism, parochialism⁴, and sheer deprivation at different levels of society. For example, Altaf Hussain leader of MQM believes that he came in politics out of revenge his college time fight with Islami Jamiat Tulaba (IJT) a sub group of JI.

The Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in 1979, gave Ziaulhaq, (the Chief Martial Law Administrator of Pakistan) a free hand in utilizing the land of

³ Insurgency is a rebellion against the government policies different from cessation that usually believes in separation from the federation and focus on an independent status.

⁴ Parochialism is ideological, regional, or linguistic narrow mindedness or chauvinistic feeling about any religion, language or region.

Pakistan in a dictatorial manner. He fought a proxy war with Russia with the help of the U.S. He used religious mudrassas for fighting in Afghanistan and Kashmir. He gave arms, ammunition and financial support to the mudrassas' young students who were beguiled by illiterate mullahs. Such illiterate mullahs brain washed the youth or students of mudrassas by alluring them towards a reward of Janna for fighting against infidels in Afghanistan and Kashmir.

After the former Soviet Union's withdrawal from Afghanistan and American forces aloofness from the region created a vacuum that filled by the Taliban who emerged as power in Afghanistan in 1994 and started ruling over Afghanistan peacefully. Contrary to this, mudrassas in Pakistan became affluent financially started empowering themselves on ethnic grounds. It started Shia-Sunny conflict in Pakistan. Although it also involves foreign influence but the mudrassas that have been a source of Islamic learning in the past became a seat of extremism in Pakistan in the wake of Afghan-Russia war. During Afghanistan war with Russia more than thirty million Afghan Muhajreen came to Pakistan and settled here as the citizen of Pakistan. According to some UN sources there are now 18 million registered Afghan Muhajreens in Pakistan and almost six to ten million are unregistered.

These Muhajreen started organizing mudrassas themselves or sent their children in these mudrassas for learning Quran by heart or nazira. At present, a report shows that there are almost eighteen to twenty four thousands registered along with many unregistered mudrassas in Pakistan. (Haque, 2012) In these mudrassas in Punjab only, out of 329 foreign students, only 31 have valid visa. (Kharal, 2012) These foreign students belong to these countries, "Afghanistan, Bangladesh, China, Comoros, Dutch, Djibouti, Ethiopia, France, Indonesia, Jordan, Kyrgyzstan, Malaysia, Mali, Myanmar, Morocco, Philippine, Netherlands, Russia, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Thailand and Turkey." (Kharal, 2012).

The so-called religious parties created their sub groups in academic political institutions of Pakistan to control youth and utilizing the same for their protests, and monopoly in the masjids. IJT, and Imamia Student Organization, (ISO) are the major sub groups of JI and Shia ulemas respectively. Quaid-i-Azam Student Federation, Muslim Student Federation, PML (N) Peoples' Student Federation, (PPP) and Insaf Student Federation (PTI) are the sub groups of so-called political parties in Pakistan.

Media being a bridge between people and the political institutions play a vital role in the development of political institutions. It is extremely commercial and for sale. Everyone can buy time for his propagation. Media ethics seems nowhere in Pakistan. Therefore, media owners have become conglomerated.

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This conglomeration is giving awareness to the people as well as misdirecting them drastically. For example, big TV channels and newspapers are focusing on such content that makes our society unstable. In the recent wave of violence out of hate film made by a U.S. origin Basseley Nakoula, all TV channels showed the violent scenes instead of showing peaceful protests in the country for getting high rating. In the same way, the media shows live coverage of bomb blast, suicide bombing, police shooting with terrorists etc. and other scenes that are not shown in any civilized country of the world.

The corruption scandal of real estate owner Malik Riaz recently came at front showing the talk show anchors' underhand connivance with the infamous people. Therefore, the credibility of media is at stake owing to the non-professional and less educated so-called journalists. The mushroom growth of TV channels in Pervaiz Musharraf (former president of Pakistan) era is the real cause of corruption in media. Pervaiz Musharraf gave freedom of speech in media just to provide a platform to his rivals to ventilate against him sitting at the TV channels' studios not on roads but later on the same media propagated against him. In Pakistan, TV channels are a real source of ventilation for public. Talk shows and other programs like, Hum Sub Umeed say Hain, Hasb-i-Haal, Khabarnaak, ButTamizian, BNN, Dar aur Darling, and many other programs are a real source of ventilation for people. Such ventilation makes people docile who keep smiling out of these entertaining shows. It suits best to the ruling party. As, they never correct themselves out of criticism made in these programs. For example, thousands of episodes of these programs have been gone on air in last ten to twelve years; crises in Pakistan are increasing and even getting worst. The political institutions went down in their performance rather going up. Hence, media should play its positive role and show some genuine content based on institution building, nation building, educational issues, social issues that could wake up people from their deep slumber.

Consolidation

There is only one way of development that is promoting or working for the national interest instead of personal, party and family interests. Unfortunately in Pakistan, ruling elite to a common man usually protects individual and personal interests and never try to be the part of political system. It alienates people from the mainstream politics in Pakistan. Thus, leadership in Pakistan remains unsuccessful in bridging the gap between elite and masses. This creates an everlasting lacuna between leaders and the led and deprivations start here. We usually concentrate over our rights instead of duties. It shows the apathy on the part of the individual in Pakistan. Eternal vigilance has been the fundamental value of individual liberty but in Pakistan we remain lethargic

and sluggish for our duties and demand for undeserving rights. Since we know rights are conditioned with duties.

Therefore, from top to bottom people in Pakistan are emotional, irrational but talented. That is why west usually called us a country that is growing without development as we are unsuccessful in developing our institutions for any permanent mechanism of development. Today Imran khan chairman Pakistan Tehrik-i-Insaaf is working for the development of institutions in Pakistan but people on the other hand just want change and revolution in Pakistan just sitting in front of TV channels. Judiciary, parliament, executive all are resisting him for such a meaningful development. The culture of a status quo is preferred by the ruling elite and they are unwilling to change the prevailing system. The people of Pakistan are fed up of bad working of political institutions in Pakistan but unable to wake up for their duty to live respectfully. They are always looking for any divine blessing to resolve their problems.

We the people of Pakistan have to wake up from deep slumber and work for the development of political institutions. The institution building is in the hands of people of Pakistan not in any single individual. The day, we people of Pakistan will decide to correct ourselves, political institutions will start working professionally. It would cause economic growth that would give way to development in all sectors. What we have to do is to promote meritocracy instead of kleptocracy. It will make our political institutions developed. The ongoing situation suit to our rulers they want this country in crises as crises keep common people aloof from politics. Despite of energy crises, insecurity and indignity in Pakistan, rulers love to rule. Unvigilant behaviour of the people will keep the rulers in power.

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