International Relations · GS - II

The influence of military establishments over civilian institutions has significant implications for democratic consolidation and regional stability in South Asia. Analyse with reference to Pakistan.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
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MARKS	WORD LIMIT
15	~250 words

Answer Hint

Civil-military relations, praetorianism, democratic institutions, military's economic interests, foreign policy influence, regional security, civilian supremacy, institutional reforms

Model Answer

Introduction

Civilian supremacy over the armed forces is a fundamental principle of democratic governance. Pakistan's political history illustrates how sustained military influence can shape governance, economic institutions and foreign policy beyond conventional defence responsibilities.

Factors Behind Military Dominance

- **Historical interventions:** Repeated military coups and prolonged periods of direct military rule weakened democratic continuity.
- **Security-centric state structure:** Persistent tensions with India and internal security challenges have strengthened the military's political influence.
- **Institutional imbalance:** Weak civilian institutions and unstable political coalitions have limited effective civilian oversight.

- **Economic interests:** Military-linked commercial and welfare organisations have expanded its economic influence, creating additional institutional stakes.

Implications

1. **Democratic deficit:** Elected governments may face constraints on independent policymaking and accountability.
2. **Economic governance:** Limited transparency and weak civilian scrutiny can undermine resource allocation and institutional accountability.
3. **Regional instability:** Security-centric policymaking can restrict diplomatic flexibility and complicate conflict resolution.
4. **Institutional trust:** Perceived interference in political processes can weaken public confidence in democratic institutions.

Way Forward

Strengthening parliamentary oversight, judicial independence, transparent defence budgeting and civilian capacity in national security policymaking is essential. Democratic institutions must exercise constitutionally accountable control over all state institutions.

Conclusion

A stable South Asian order requires strong civilian institutions and accountable military establishments. Pakistan's democratic consolidation is therefore important not only for its domestic governance but also for regional peace and cooperation.

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