

THE FUTURE OF DEMOCRACY IN PAKISTAN

Outline:

(I) Introduction

(II) Why does the future of democracy look bright in Pakistan.

(A) People are becoming more politically active due to social media.

(B) Successive transfers of power from one democratic government to next ~~from~~ ^{Since} 2008.

(C) More and more people turn up to cast their votes.

(D) Awareness of women rights is being spread.

(E) Role of Judiciary in the recent years has been positive.

(F) Literacy rate is expected to rise.

(III) Some threats to the future of democracy still haunt Pakistan

(A) Existing illiteracy and democracy cannot go on hand in hand.

(B) There is a severe lack of political forbearance in the political parties.

- (C) Gender discrimination is being eliminated but at a snail's speed.
- (D) Political instability can lead to the complete death of democracy.
- (E) Feudal systems are barriers that stop the promotion of democracy.
- (F) Independent judiciary has taken parts in politics.
- (G) Pakistan's political history has engraved in ^{the} minds of people that true democracy may not be something achievable.

(IV) Following measures shall be taken to safeguard the future of democracy in Pakistan.

- (A) Removing illiteracy and ensuring the provision of purposive education.
- (B) Promotion of culture of political forbearance and eliminating political instability.
- (C) Independent and un-biased judiciary.
- (D) Elimination of feudal systems and nepotism.
- (E) Promotion of merit system in all sectors.
- (F) Accountability of the leaders.

(V) Democratization in Europe was also slow.

(VI) Conclusion

Since its inception, Pakistan has been constantly struggling to develop a true spirit of democracy. Of the total 76 years of Pakistan's age, 30 years were under martial law rule and first 11 years did not observe any proper election. The constant onslaughts with passive citizenry have always hindered the development and promotion of democracy. Be as it may, not all ~~the~~ hope is lost. Recent years have shown that Pakistan can still achieve the true spirit of democracy that its forefathers wished for. It is the right of people to have their own government, chosen by themselves, that works for their welfare. The future of democracy in Pakistan looks bright due to successive transfers of power democratically, rising political awareness of people, ^{rising} literacy rates, rising awareness of women rights and can be speed up and maintained by reforms in political, education, judicial and social sectors. Furthermore, ensuring fundamental rights of people and full and practical implementation of the 18th amendment can not only sustain this development but can promote it to newer heights.

In this age of technology, people are becoming politically active thanks to social media. People in Pakistan, especially young generation, is expressing their views on politics, government and its policies, their own rights and other subjects. Social media has given the people of Pakistan, a platform to participate in the politics and choose their own destiny. Although social media is a double edged sword that with rising political awareness of people can also produce immoral values among the people, it is the need of hour. For example the rising political awareness because of social media has resulted in successive transfer of power from one democratic government to the next from 2008.

There has been no undemocratic leadership in Pakistan since the end of martial law in 2008. This positive development is an indicator to the bright future of democracy in Pakistan. Pakistan has not seen such prolonged democratic period in its history and it is only expected to last longer. This has only been possible because people of Pakistan have decided to choose their

their own leaders and stop being passive.

People of a country can only participate in the politics by casting their votes and, the number of vote casters in Pakistan has been rising each year.

People have stopped from being passive or casting their votes in accordance with ^{the} wishes of Feudal

lords. They have decided to take their destiny

into their own hands and move forward. Rigging

in elections can also be countered by the increasing

number of voters turning up at electoral booth to

cast their votes themselves. In this regard, participation

of Females have been equally astonishing.

Women rights such as right to vote and right to education are ~~are~~ coming to light. Although the

constitution of Pakistan has always given these rights,

their awareness among people has been low.

Women make up about 52% of the total population

of Pakistan. If women do not participate in politics

or do not cast their votes, it would mean that

more than half of the population of Pakistan is

being passive and not participating. In such circumstances,

achieving true and sustainable democracy is

impossible. ~~is~~ Rise in women participation in

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in politics and spreading of awareness of women rights is also an indicator that shows the bright future of democracy in Pakistan. Subjects like gender studies and women studies are now being included in the syllabi in the education sector for the awareness of people. In ensuring the provision of women rights, judiciary can also play a vital role.

In the recent years, judiciary has played positive roles in ensuring a sustainable democracy. It made sure that the election were held in due time and that the corrupt politicians and leader are held accountable for their crimes. It banned such corrupt leaders from participating in the politics and thus eliminating dangers to the democracy. Although the previous discussed factors have contributed to the promotion of democracy, without educated people, it is all in vain.

Pakistan's literacy rate of ~~58%~~ is expected to rise in the future. This is mostly due to public awareness, technological advancements and realization of growing needs of education by the people. Rise of literacy rate of Pakistan can directly

elevate its democratic culture. It's because more and more people will participate in the politics and there will be the promotion of merit system.

Additionally, discouragement of feudal system and nepotism can also only be resulted through the promotion of education.

Pakistan's democracy faces some threats that can darken its future. Although these threats are not impossible to deal with, they can be lethal to Pakistan's economy if ignored.

First and foremost, illiteracy is the biggest threat to democracy. Development of democracy requires elimination of illiteracy. Both of these are like oil and water. Development of one means the death of other. Illiterate people cannot participate in the process of choosing the destiny of the country as these people are either not aware of their rights or they get influenced by feudal lords and false and corrupt leaders, by their lies. Their local lords or politicians produce so much hate for the other politicians that they never cast their votes to other politicians even if these politicians were better leaders.

Political forbearance has been absent from

Pakistan's political culture since its inception.

One political party comes into power and its starts making policies against its opposition rather than working for the welfare of the country.

Similarly, the opposition accuse the government of rigging in the elections and question its legitimacy. Supporters of these two groups start fighting among each other and as a result the people of country are divided. In their book,

"How democracies die", Daniel Ziblatt and Steven Levitsky emphasize that mutual tolerance and institutional forbearance

preserve democracy. Similarly, the lack of these two cultures can result in the death of democracy.

Such hateful competition among politicians does not let them focus on the actual issues of the country such as illiteracy, economy, gender discrimination etc.

Although recent years have been enlightening in regards to gender discrimination, the process of its elimination is too slow to be called productive.

Women constitute 52% of the total population

of Pakistan and ~~the~~ discrimination against them, violation of their rights and their lack of participation constitute major hindrances to the development of true spirit of democracy.

According to Article 25 of Pakistan's constitution, there shall be no discrimination on the basis of sex alone. Similarly Article 25(3) and 26(2) allow the state to make special provisions for the protection of women and children. Despite the provisions provided in Pakistan's constitution for the elimination of gender discrimination, it is still present and threatening the democracy. Political instability is one of the cause that does not let politicians focus on these issues.

Political instability has been part of Pakistan's political culture since 1947. This ~~was~~^{was} also the reason that delayed the making of constitution, separation of East Pakistan and martial law rule that took 30 years of Pakistan's total age. Although the country has seen successive years of transfer of power democratically, the allegations of rigging in elections, protests, public unrest and infightings in political parties have accompanied this process of transfer

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of power. All these factors in accordance with "Why nations fail" by Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson start a "Vicious Cycle" that is based on Extractive political system and hinders the participation of all the people of the country. Democracy is the rule of people which cannot be produced in its earnest if people themselves cannot take part in politics. Inclusion of Judiciary in the politics has added salt to the wound.

Judiciary is the ~~sm~~ symbol of justice for the people and its inclusion in the politics, and the resulting biasness can deal a serious blow to the democracy of a country. In Pakistan's history, the judiciary has intervened in politics from time to time. Moreover it has also legalized martial laws and plunged Pakistan into democratic crisis.

If the Judiciary becomes biased, the legitimacy of the system becomes questionable. Hence it is imperative that the judiciary should not act out of its concerned jurisdiction and provide justice to the people of the country. Almost 0.6 million cases are unsolved but the judiciary has

taken Sole motto action from time to time.

Such discouraging history has negative effects on the thinking of the people.

People ~~of~~ of Pakistan have ~~accepted~~ accepted that neither their contribution nor the government policies can produce a healthy democratic culture in the country. As discussed above, Pakistan's history has not been promising in regards to sustainable democracy. People's mind have been engraved with this thinking. People in Pakistan specially from middle and lower class believe, "صیرے ایک ووٹ سے تیار ہوتا؟"

And this thinking has spread like a wildfire. If more people start believing this, then the legitimacy of election system itself will be questionable. These threats, although, are dangerous, they are not impossible to counter. By reforming some key departments such as education, judiciary, politics, as well as elimination of corruption, feudal system, nepotism, illiteracy and implementation of 18th amendment, Pakistan can get back on its feet in regards to Democracy.

As discussed before, illiteracy is a major hurdle to the flourishing of democracy and thus

its elimination can result in the development of democratic culture in Pakistan. Additionally, reforming the education sector and ensuring ~~the~~ purposive education will make people aware of their roles and duties. With purposive education students not only learn the knowledge itself but also learn how to use the knowledge they learnt in the classroom in practical life. Additionally, it can also help remove gender discrimination, nepotism, feudal systems and can lead to the promotion of education and democracy. Educated politicians can also help to decrease political instability.

Political forbearance can lead to a stable and tolerant political culture which is one of the basic needs of democracy. According to Daniel Ziblatt and Steven Levitsky in their book, "How democracies die", norms of mutual tolerance and forbearance preserve democracy.

Political instability has been called one of the reasons of martial laws, so eliminating it directly promotes democracy. A stable political system also demands that judiciary should not be a

part of it.

Independent and unbiased judiciary is a source of justice and accountability in a democratic country. As long ~~long~~ as judiciary plays its role independently and honestly, the other sectors will also be set in the right direction. It is because judiciary punishes those who break the law of the constitution and to promote democracy, total promulgation of constitution is absolutely necessary. If judiciary does not withhold its decrees due to favouritism or pressure and punishes the exploiters of law and constitution then democracy will surely develop in Pakistan.

Feudal systems and nepotism are the killers of merit system and their elimination is also needed for the promotion of democracy in Pakistan. Feudal lords not only prevent their ^{local} people from getting education or taking parts in politics but also place their children in their places after they retire. In this way, a generational cycle of incompetent leaders start. Eliminating such systems will help competent and deserving people to come to the top and take the charge, which in

turn will promote democracy.

Merit system is also one of the biggest needs of democracy. In education, jobs and politics, if this system is lacking then it means a total fall down of the democracy. In Pakistan, Feudal lords and their nepotistic practices have hampered the merit system from 1947. As a result, the country is left with incompetent and undeserving leadership. Hence merit system should be promoted in education and political sector. Without this, it is impossible to achieve and sustain democracy. In this regard, Feudal lords should be held accountable for their ill practices.

Equality before law is one of the milestones that Pakistan has yet to achieve. Although, ~~article~~ **article 25 ensures equality before law and equal protection of the law and states.....**, it is still not present in Pakistan. Rich people can get away with anything while poor get caught and punished because of crimes they did not even commit. In such a state, democracy cannot flourish. Hence, people should be equal before law. In this regard, most stressed should be

put on the leaders of the Leaders as they are responsible for the whole of population of the country. Corrupt leaders should be punished and an example should be set that if someone were to use his/her power wrongly, they would meet the same fate.

All these problems cannot be solved overnight because even Europe, the place from where democracy originated, took almost a century to develop its democratic system. 2500 years ago, Democracy started by Athenians but it only lasted for 200 years. The real development of democracy in Europe constitute three waves from 19th century's first wave to 1970s third wave.

Considering this, one can ~~assume~~ ^{tell} that democratization process is a long and painstaking one. Most of the countries in the world are struggling with this problem and Pakistan is one of them. According to democratic index, compiled by the Economist Intelligence Unit, only 21 countries are fully functioning democratic countries.

Unfortunately, Pakistan in the same index is classified as a weak democracy. But as discussed

above, many countries are trying to become fully functional democracy. So it is not time to give up but to put rigorous effort to make Pakistan a fully developed democratic country.

In conclusion, Pakistan's democracy faces several threats to its future but not all hope is lost. By reforming education and political sectors as well as promoting merit system and elimination of feudal system can put Pakistan's democracy back on its tracks. Additionally, independent and unbiased judiciary, implementation of 18th amendment, accountability of leaders and equality before law can greatly promote democratic culture of Pakistan. Pakistan has gained its freedom from colonists and it has also faced several wars and infighting. As a result, its democracy has faced major setbacks. But democracy is necessary for the development of Pakistan and it was also the vision of the forefathers of Pakistan for it to become a democratic country. As Margaret Mead said, "Never doubt that a small group of citizens can change the world".