

Polarized Politics; The Issue and challenges to the Democracy of Pakistan.

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How can a country establish democratic principles when it is surrounded by Political Polarization? Undoubtedly, no country can succeed in establishing democratic principles if it compromises political pluralism, undermining democratic values and institutions. However, political polarization has always been a key factor for delivering democracy in any country across the globe. As far as Pakistan's democracy is concerned, it has faced various issues and challenges since the very beginning of its independence. It has witnessed military rule, ethnic divide, and many challenges such as threat to democratic values, difficulty in policy implementation, and rise of populist leaders. Besides, Pakistan has gone through divides among political sections, ideological group and regions. This polarized politics disrupts governance, undermines public trust in democratic processes, and threatens the stability of

the nation. However, a healthy democracy needs a healthy atmosphere of public opinions and democratic principles.

This essay defines the factors of political politics in Pakistan. On the other hand, it also defines the issues and challenges to the democracy of Pakistan.

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Political Polarization in Pakistan

has deep roots that have undermined democratic values and principles at large. Soon after Pakistan got independence, it started facing a number of challenges in unifying a diverse population across ethnic and linguistic lines. Additionally, successive military intervention that started from 1950s, it stunted democratic development. It also paved the way for sidelining democratic institutions and preventing a culture of tolerance and compromise from taking root. As time passed, it contributed to the fragmentation of Pakistan's political landscape where

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issues are often approached from conflicting ideological and regional perspectives. Moving ahead, the growth of dynastic politics has also contributed to polarization. In dynastic politics, most of the times, political parties rotate around certain families that do not let other emerging political parties to grow and set policy platforms. Moreover, the concentration of power among a few has restricted political innovations resulting in divisions driven by personal rivalries as much as ideological differences. Such dynamics have made consensus-building a herculean task as personal agendas are often prioritized over collective national goals.

One of the factors of polarization in Pakistan is ethnic and provincial tensions. Pakistan is divided into four provinces: Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan. Each province has

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distinct identities and concerns. This has led to a persistent tug-of-war between the central government and provincial governments. Tensions that arise from ethnic groups and provinces are autonomy in politics, and political and economic affairs too. Mostly, the citizens of the provinces belonging to different ethnicity and regions have grievances that they are discriminated from the central government and marginalised by the political system. Thus, it becomes the factor of polarised politics in Pakistan.

After the ethnic and provincial tensions here comes another factor that is economic inequality and class division that has also contributed to the polarised politics in Pakistan.

There is no any doubt, Pakistan witnesses economic inequality and class divide since its inception. People find a gap between the

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Wealthy elite and the struggling class
On the one hand, there are certain families who continuously rule the country, getting the most of economic needs. On the other hand, there are poor people who even struggle to both end meet, compromising their health, time and wishes. It let them feel more saddened and pained when they find the government more responsive to elite class rather than the broader population. Hence, this economic gap creates a sense of "us versus them" that divides society into pieces.

Moving ahead, Pakistan has also witnessed ideological divides among the religious and secular political parties. As far as the politics of Pakistan is concerned, it includes both religious and secular factions, having different schools of thought. On the one hand, there are

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some religious factions and parties such as Jul-E Jamait-e-Islami and within them they have factions like Suni, Shii and Brelvi which carry their own clashes and influence. On the other hand, there are secular political parties which are often termed as liberal ones that have their own clashes and influence over the matters of legislation, judicial ruling, and everyday social interaction. Recently it also created a fault line in the way of upholding democratic principles in the country.

Last but not the least, influence of foreign powers has also shaped the politics of Pakistan, creating conflicts over foreign policy. Foreign powers such as the United States of America, China, and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia **Have always interfered** various roles. The external influence has often aligned

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with specific political factions, further dividing the nation along with ideological lines and creating conflict over the matter of foreign policy. Hence, the influence of foreign powers has also historically shaped Pakistani politics as well.

After having gone through the factors that are responsible for political polarisation in Pakistan, it is time to discuss certain issues and challenges of to the democracy of Pakistan.

One of the biggest issues that Pakistan faces is weakening of democratic institutions. Political polarisation contributes in undermining one of the key democratic institutions - parliament which often experiences gridlock and dysfunction. It happens when the political parties prioritise partisanship over governance. Resultantly, legislative productivity and consistency in policy suffer significantly, leaving behind urgent and dire

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issues unheard and unaddressed as well. However, democracy requires a good deal of policies on key issues that are made by democratic institutions. When they do not give importance to these issues, governmental democracy does not succeed in its objectives. Thus, people do not trust in the democratic process due to the negligence of democratic institutions.

The Rule of law is very essential to democracy that boosts up the confidence of the people to trust and support the government. In Pakistan, people always cry over the matter of justice and rule of law because their concerns are not heard timely. According to World Justice Project Rule of Law Index, Pakistan ranks 128 out of 142 countries in the world. Political interferences usually influence the judicial decisions in Pakistan. There are

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Thousands of cases unheard in the courts of Pakistan. Rule of law has double standards, it works differently for the wealthy and powerful people, giving them speedy justice. While unwealthy and powerless people struggle for years to get justice come date increases day by day that frustrates the common masses and their everyday life's activities as well. Hence, it results in ~~undermining~~ public faith in the justice system.

Undermining national unity is another big and serious issue that undermines the democratic principles in Pakistan. ~~Do not start with due to~~ ~~Undermining~~ Pakistan's social fabric gets disturbed. People start dividing themselves in the name of ethnicity, language, groups and they end up becoming disintegrated. Apart from this, when regions and ethnic groups feel marginalized, it ~~takes~~ gives

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birth to distrust and dissatisfaction that also weakens the federal structure too. Thus, it also becomes one of the issues of democracy in Pakistan.

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~~Another~~ big issue that Pakistan has been facing since long time is ~~undermining~~ national security. National security is very important for the protection of nation's borders, resources, institutions, and people as well. It is also fundamental for the sovereignty and stability of the country. Pakistan, being a strategically important state, faces internal and external security issues. Terrorism, extremism, sectarian violence and internal conflicts pave the way for insecurity and threats. For this, Pakistan has to face some serious threats that affect the stability, economy and global standing as well. Resultantly, democracy of Pakistan has to witness national security

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issues that also exacerbates the situation ever more worse since the time to come.

As political stability is considered to be effective tool for effective democratic process. In Pakistan, it is not less than miracle to let the politics be stable. Pakistan, since its inception has been facing political instability, often driven by power struggles among political parties, military influence and economic pressures. In addition to this, frequent changes in governments, allegations of corruption and security concerns have exacerbated the political instability. It affects public confidence in the government. Additionally, political interference, protests, not building up national consensus, and regional tensions, especially with India and Afghanistan have also contributed significantly to the democratic process of Pakistan.

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Loss of public trust in democratic process in Pakistan has forced to question whether democracy can essentially address their needs and aspirations or not. This is an alarming situation of for any country's democratic process because democracy is the government of the people, for the people, and by the people. Public trust has vanished away due to political instability, frequent government changes, military interventions and court dismissals. Besides this, allegations of rigged elections, poor governance and lack of accountability among leaders have further eroded public confidence. However, it is not the fault on the part of democracy, but the actual fault lies in the leaders and members who are responsible for what they have done to the democracy of the country.

After discussing the issues of

democracy in Pakistan, it is time to discuss certain challenges that are faced by the democracy of Pakistan. The greatest threat to democracy in Pakistan is a big challenge for the democracy to exist. As democracy believes in freedom of expression, justice, and equality regardless of any difference or external forces. In Pakistan, people enjoy freedom of expression, justice and equality but at certain level. Moreover, democratic values in Pakistan are also compromised when there is an involvement of the military in politics directly or indirectly. Additionally, limiting freedom of expression, the press and the torturing, murdering and harassing journalists paves the way for threatening democratic values. Challenges such as these contribute to less effective democratic values that do not let the democratic state to be stable and developed.

The rise of populist leaders in Pakistan is another challenge to the democracy of Pakistan. They often sideline institutions and rule of law in order to present their charismatic personality that is driven by their charisma and leadership. These type of leaders use people's dissatisfaction with certain systemic issues, bypassing institutional checks and balances. Pakistan also come across this challenge. It can erode democratic values because populists sometimes prioritize loyalty over accountability. Besides, they centralize authority by weakening institutional oversight. As a result, populist politics in Pakistan can deepen polarization and undermine democratic principles like transparency and fair representation.

In the democracy of Pakistan,
difficulty in policy implementation is
a major challenge. As ineffectiveness

in the policies of government leads to public frustration and weakens trust in democratic institutions. Bureaucratic inefficiency, political interference, and frequent changes in the leadership make it hard to execute policies consistently and effectively. It disrupts development programs and restricts the ability of a government to address critical issues, such as poverty, education, and healthcare.

Ultimately, the inability to deliver on promises damages public confidence in the elected leaders that leads to difficulty in policy implementation.

Frequent military intervention in Pakistan has been a significant challenge to democratic stability. It disrupts the continuity and development of democratic institutions. Since its inception, Pakistan has witnessed multiple military coups and periods of direct and indirect rule which have weakened civilian authority and

political processes. Additionally, military interference usually sidelines elected leaders, restricting political freedoms. It also undermines democratic accountability. This cyclical interference does not allow the maturation of democratic institutions, fosters political instability, and erodes public trust in the democratic system. Thus, it makes it difficult for Pakistan to establish a stable and enduring democracy.

Vulnerability to extremism in Pakistan poses a serious threat to democracy. There are certain extremist groups that undermine democratic institutions and come up with their own ideologies which oppose pluralism and tolerance. The militant organizations mostly exploit economic hardship and **Plz exam amplify** restrict the ability of government to maintain order. In addition to this, extremism violence and intimidation also discourage political participation and

limit the freedom of expression. It creates an atmosphere of fear and division. Hence, this environment weakens democratic processes and makes it difficult for democratic values to take root, hindering Pakistan's progress towards a peaceful and inclusive society.

In a nutshell, political polarization in Pakistan poses a significant challenge and issues to the democracy of Pakistan. Since its inception, Pakistan has been facing issues and challenges such as military rule, ethnic divide, threat to democratic values, populist leaders, and difficulty in policy implementation. It has also witnessed divides among political factions, ideological groups and regions. This political polarization creates hindrances in governance, undermines the trust of people in the process of democracy and threatens the stability of the country. Healthy

democracy needs a healthy atmosphere of public opinions and democratic principles. Hence, to have a better form of democracy in Pakistan, it is very important to bridge political divide by prioritizing national unity. By doing this, Pakistan will be capable enough to make a difference.