

Overall a fine attempt

Mature your sentence structure and avoid minor grammar mistakes

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## Democracy in Pakistan: Hopes and Challenges

Outlines

1. Introduction
2. History of democracy in Pakistan
  - A. Hopes for democracy in Pakistan
3. Imposing martial law has become a distant dream
  - 3.1. 1973 constitution of Pakistan: Article 6
4. Civilian political parties have become mature
  - 4.1. Found the way of transferring powers on the basis of elections
  - 4.2. Improving performance of the civilian governments
5. Awareness in the public
  - 5.1. Growing middle class in the urban areas
  - 5.2. increasing use of social media
- B. Challenges to democracy in Pakistan
6. Rigging allegations and corruption cases on the civilian leaders
  - 6.1. Eroding public trust
  - 6.2. Voter turnout is decreasing
7. Separation of powers is at stake
  - 7.1. No proper check and balance on legislatures and executives
  - 7.2. 26th amendment in the 1973 constitution of Pakistan
- C. Way Forward to strengthen democracy in the country
8. Electoral reforms
  - 8.1. Implementation of Elections Act 2017

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8.2. ~~ensure~~ <sup>Ensure</sup> of fair and free elections

~~conduction~~

9. ensuring complete separation of power

9.1. ~~making~~ political institutions independent

10. Conclusion

### The Essay

"Democracy, it appears, is a bit chancy. But its chances also depend on what we do ourselves," stated political theorist Robert A. Dahl in his work, *Democracy and Its Critics*. This statement aptly reflects the situation in Pakistan. Since its inception, successive events and activities have taken place that make it clear that there are hopes as well as challenges in the way of democracy in Pakistan. On the one hand, the imposition of martial law has become a distant dream now. Democratic leaders have become mature. The democratic governments have not only transferred power to the winning party, but also shown distinguish performance. Due to social media and urbanization,

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the citizens of the country have become more active and known how to rule. On the other hand, rigging allegations, corruption cases on the civilian leaders, and absence of complete independent political institutions show that democracy is facing hurdles to find its route. Democracy is a ~~n~~ ideal form of governance. To strengthen democracy, there is a need to have electoral reforms and independent institutions to have a proper check and balance on the democratic leaders, ensuring public trust on the political system.

all events act as hurdles in the way of democracy in Pakistan. Thus, it is established that the democracy in Pakistan encounters both hopes and hurdles.

The history of democracy in Pakistan is marked by a series of experiments and challenges since its independence in 1947. As the nation was founded on democratic ideals, Pakistan adopted its first constitution in 1956, setting parliamentary form of government. However, due to political instability and weak constitutional framework, the country was under martial law in 1958 under General Ayub Khan. From then, the country witnessed a cycle of military interventions and civilian eras. With the adoption of 1973 Constitution under Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, late 1980s and 1990s saw altered eras of civilian government led by the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and the <sup>Pakistan</sup> Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N). Finally, Pakistan has seen democratic continuity

ethical governance. These measures will not only maximize AI's

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Since 2002.

The hope for democracy in Pakistan has grown significantly, with martial law now a distant memory of the past. The nation's history has witnessed military interventions, such as Ayub Khan's Coup in 1958, Zia-ul-Haq's regime in 1977, and Pervez Musharraf's takeover in 1999, each disturbing democratic governance. However, constitutional reforms have ensured that martial law becomes a distant dream. This becomes possible by the insertion of Article 6 in the constitution which declares the imposition of martial law a high treason offense. The 18th amendment further strengthened democratic institutions by decentralizing power and reinforcing provincial autonomy, thereby reducing the centralized authority that often enabled military dominance. These changes, coupled with international support for democracy, have made martial law almost unimaginable in the current political climate. Pakistan's journey from repeated coups to a more stable democratic system reflects a collective commitment to constitutional rule and civilian supremacy.

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Secondly, the political parties of the country have become mature now. A political system can be said to have matured when it has found a way of transferring power from one set of contestants to another. Using that as the definition, it can be said with confidence that Pakistan has matured politically. Pakistan has held four elections since the last military ruler left the seat of power in 2008, 2013, 2018, and 2024. In all of them, the party in power was voted out and the reins of authority were passed on to the party in opposition. Additionally, the rise of non-traditional political entities like Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) signifies a shift away from dynastic politics. These developments indicate a gradual evolution towards a more inclusive and resilient democracy. Furthermore, civilian governments have also demonstrated better performance in certain areas, such as infrastructure development, health initiatives, and poverty alleviation. For example, major projects like the construction of the Lahore Orange Line Metro and Gawadar Port were undertaken as part of

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China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

By 2020, approximately \$25 billion worth of energy and infrastructure projects were completed, according to the Ministry of Planning, Development, and Reforms. Transparent allocation of resources and public participation in decision making related to infrastructure fosters trust in democratic institutions.

Thirdly, the growing young population of the country gives a ray of hope for establishing democratic norms in the country. Pakistan has population of 250 million. Around 60-65% of Pakistan's population falls within the age group of 18 years and above. Tens of thousands of individuals above the age of 18 add to the voter list every five years. This population is becoming more and more <sup>aware</sup> of their rights due to various reasons, such as the use of social media and rapid urbanisation. These voters have become active and political aware. They post on social media about their concerns, pressurizing political parties to perform better. Additionally, they vote to the party which perform better and protect citizens' rights.

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This active population is helping to strengthen the roots of democracy in the country.

Despite all the hopes for democracy in the country, there are also some challenges in the way of liberal democracy.

Firstly, rigging allegations and corruption cases on the civilian leaders are eroding the public trust. Elections are the way through which people choose their true democratic representatives. The selected representatives then becomes the voice of his people. He brings policies for the welfare of the people and passes law from legislative institutions.

The people of a state vote on the basis of the performance of the political parties. However, fair and free elections is the foundation of selecting true democratic leader. In the case of Pakistan, common perception is that except the general election of 1970, no other election was fair and free. The Free and Fair Election Network's General Secretary, Sarwar Bari, agreed with the statement. This situation is causing adverse effects on the

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voter turnout. When people don't trust the procedure, they don't go to vote. This is alarming situation. Furthermore, corruption cases on the civilian leaders are detrimental for the establishment of democracy in the country. It means that leaders are not showing responsible and honest behaviour, using the people's tax money for their own luxuries. Democracy is the selecting leaders who protect the nation's money and use that money for the welfare of its people. That is why, corruption cases on the civilian leaders are the big questions on the credibility of the democratic governments.

Secondly, independent political institutions are required to strengthen the democracy in the country. The executive, the legislature, and the judiciary work independently to have a proper check and balance. So that no policy or law can be passed against the rights of the people. In the case of Pakistan, complete separation of powers is a big

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question. To make the situation worse, the recent 26th amendment in the constitution of Pakistan is enough. It is a blow for an independent judiciary and the rule of law. This amendment fundamentally eroded the independence of the judiciary and made it subservient to the executive. The constitutional principle of the separation of powers was seriously undermined. The most significant change is the government arrogating to itself the power to choose the chief justice from a panel of three of the Supreme Court's senior most judges. According to the Karachi Bar association, it is the direct attack on the independence of the judiciary that could obstructs access to justice for ordinary citizens. Furthermore, it is a blow to democracy. Hence, absence of complete separation of powers is the significant hurdles in the way of democracy in Pakistan.

Despite the above mentioned hurdles in the way of democracy, Pakistan is a democratic country. People must not end hope

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and the state institutions must bring reforms to further strengthen the democracy in the country.

Firstly, to strengthen the democracy, electoral reforms are required. Fair and free elections are interlinked with democracy. In this regard, the role of Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) is significant. The institution must ensure that the elections are fair and free and implement the existing laws. For example, the implementation of the Elections Act 2017 must be ensured.

According to the act, the candidates must declare their assets and income source, ensuring the credibility of the candidates. Furthermore, to make democratic process more inclusive, allocation of the 5% per-cent of the seats to women must be ensured.

In this way, the democratic process would be flourish. Hence, to strengthen the democracy in the country, electoral reforms and their implementation must be ensured.

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Secondly, there should be complete check and balance on the political institutions. This can only be possible, if there is complete separation of the powers. In the democratic country, independent institutions keep an eye on one another, ensuring the rights of the people of the country. The executive branch of the state makes policies, the legislative branch ensures that the rights of the people are not compromised through different questioning and answering session, and the Judiciary makes sure that no law is passed against the constitution. This system ensures that people of the country rule through their selective representative. Therefore, it is necessary to have complete separation of the powers.

In conclusion, the history of democracy in Pakistan is marked by a series of experiments and challenges since its inception. The nation's history has witnessed military interventions and then civilian regimes. To strengthen democracy in the country various steps were taken. For

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example, insertion of the Article 6 in the constitution, ensuring that country never comes under authoritarian regime again. Furthermore, democratic governments have found a way to transfer powers peacefully and have shown improved performance. Moreover, the growing middle class in the urban centers of the country, which is aware of its right to rule, is the biggest hope for democracy in the country. Despite the hurdles that democracy is facing, such as allegations of rigging in the elections, corruption cases on the civilian leaders, and absence of complete separation of powers, people must not end hope for democracy in the country. They have every reason to be hopeful about the future of this country.