

How general elections in 2002, 2008, 2013, and 2018 strengthened democracy in Pakistan.

ANSWER

1. INTRODUCTION:

Democracy often necessitates positions of power and prestige to negotiate and form alliances to be elected into office and also to run it. In actual fact, the essence of the democratization process and democracy lies in the right of free speech and in elections. On a broader spectrum it can be said that elections are the manifestation of a democratic system.

"Democracy is in the blood of the Muslims, who look upon complete equality of mankind, and believe in fraternity, equality, and liberty." Muhammad Ali Jinnah.

2. DEMOCRACY IN PAKISTAN:

Democracy has always been intensely flawed in Pakistan due to lack of adhering to a constitutional framework in word and spirit

And not respecting the electoral mandate. Regarding periods when there were ostensibly political governments these continuously faced the use of over-riding powers by the bureaucracy and military. For a country to run efficiently it is important that it establish a suitable political system, acceptable to the people and this system be allowed to run continuously in order that it take root, become strong & give proper direction to the nation and its institutions. According to Aristotle, "In a democracy the poor will have more power than the rich, because there are more of them, and the will of the majority is supreme."

3- ELECTIONS: IN THE CONSTITUTION OF PAKISTAN:

The Constitution is a supreme law of every state. It embodies fundamental principles to govern a country. The Preamble to the Constitution of 1973 begins:

"Whereas Sovereignty over the entire Universe belongs to Almighty Allah alone, and the authority to be exercised by the people of

Pakistan within the limits prescribed by Him is a sacred trust; And whereas it is the will of the people of Pakistan, to establish an order:....."

In the Constitution of Pakistan 1973, Part VIII deals with Elections. It states all aspects of the election Commissioner, election Commission, electoral laws and conduct of elections.

4- ELECTION IN PAKISTAN: THROUGH THE PRISM OF HISTORY:

General elections have been held ten times in Pakistan since the adoption of the third Constitution on August 14, 1973. The general elections in Pakistan in 2002, 2008, 2013, and 2018 each played a role in shaping the country's democratic trajectory, and their impact on strengthening democracy varied.

5- ELECTIONS OF 2002 AND THEIR ROLE IN STRENGTHENING DEMOCRACY:

The general elections in Pakistan in 2002 marked a significant moment in the country's political history as they followed a period of military rule under General Pervez Musharraf,

who took power in a coup in 1999. The 2002 elections were part of Musharraf's plan to transition the country back to civilian rule.

- 5-1 The elections were held after a prolonged period of military rule, and the transition to civilian rule was a step toward democratic governance. This process aimed to establish democratic institutions and practices.
- 5-2 2002 elections were held under the Local Government Ordinance, introducing the system of devolution of power. The system aimed to empower local government bodies, providing citizens with a more direct role in decision-making at the grassroots level.
- 5-3 The elections were intended to strengthen democracy by decentralizing power and giving more authority to local governments. This was seen as a move towards improving governance and responsiveness to local needs.
- 5-4. The elections saw the participation of various political parties, allowing for a more diverse representation.

in the political landscape. This diversity robust the Democratic system.

5.5 The 2002 elections witnessed increased political participation as citizens had the opportunity to vote for their representatives at both the national and local levels.

6- ELECTIONS OF 2008 AND STRENGTHENING OF DEMOCRACY:

The 2008 elections played a crucial role in reinforcing democratic values in Pakistan, its important to ~~note that challenges to demo.~~

6.1. The 2008 elections marked a crucial transition from Military to civilian governance. General Pervez Musharraf, who had seized power in a coup in 1999, resigned in 2008, and the elections played a pivotal role in restoring civilian rule.

6.2 The elections symbolized a return to democratic norms and values after a period of military rule. The democratic process allowed citizens to exercise their right to vote and choose their representatives, contributing to the restoration of democratic institutions.

6.3. The 2008 elections resulted in a peaceful transfer of power. The PPP emerged as the leading party, and Asif Ali Zardari became the President, succeeding Musharraf. This transfer of power through the electoral process demonstrated the stability of democratic institutions.

6.4 The voter turnout in the 2008 elections was notable, reflecting a keen interest and participation of the electorate in shaping the political landscape. Higher voter turnout is often considered a positive indicator of a robust and engaged citizenry.

6.5 This period saw an expansion of media freedom and political expression. The media played a vital role in providing coverage of the electoral process, facilitating public discourse, and holding leaders accountable.

7. ELECTIONS OF 2013 AND THE STRENGTHENING OF DEMOCRACY:

7.1 completion of civilian government term. The 2013 elections marked a historic moment as it was

the first time in Pakistan's history that a civilian government completed its full tenure. This demonstrated a commitment to the democratic process and stability in the political transition.

7.2 During this period, the judiciary played a significant role in upholding democratic principles. The judiciary's independence and its decisions such as disqualification of PM in 2017, contributed to the accountability of political leaders and strengthened the role of law.

7.3 Civil Society organizations actively participated in observing and monitoring the electoral process. Their engagement helped ensure transparency and accountability in the conduct of the elections.

7.4 This election showcased a diverse political landscape, with various parties participating and competing for seats. A multiparty system contributes to political pluralism and representation of diverse interests.

8. ELECTIONS OF 2018 AND THE STRENGTHENING OF DEMOCRACY IN PAKISTAN:

- 8.1 The 2018 elections saw an increased number of independent candidates winning seats, indicating a desire for alternative voices and a departure from traditional party politics.
- 8.2 There was increased political awareness and participation among young voters. The engagement of the youth in the electoral process is vital for the long-term sustainability of democracy, as it represents the inclusion of new perspectives and ideas.
- 8.3 The 2018 elections led to a peaceful transfer of power from one civilian government to another. The (PTI), emerged as the leading party, and Khan became the PM. This peaceful transition underscored the stability and continuity of democratic governance.
- 8.4 The elections contributed to the strengthening of democratic institutions, including the parliament and provincial assemblies. Elected

representatives had the mandate to address national issues, pass legislation, and oversee the executive, enhancing the checks and balances within the system.

9. CONCLUSION:

With these elections marked important milestones of Pakistan's democratic journey. It's essential to note that challenges and criticisms, such as allegations of electoral irregularities, have also been part of the process.

The general elections of 2018, 2013, 2008, and 2002 added a strengthening perspective of democracy in Pakistan by introducing good electoral norms and providing the masses with better political environment.

These elections brought the practice of peaceful transition of power from one government to another in constitutional way thus discarding all the unconstitutional practices of the past years.