

Q The evolution of democratic system has always remained a dilemma in Pakistan, even after passing more than seven decades of its existence democracy ~~do~~ could not get its roots. Discuss in detail.

### Introduction

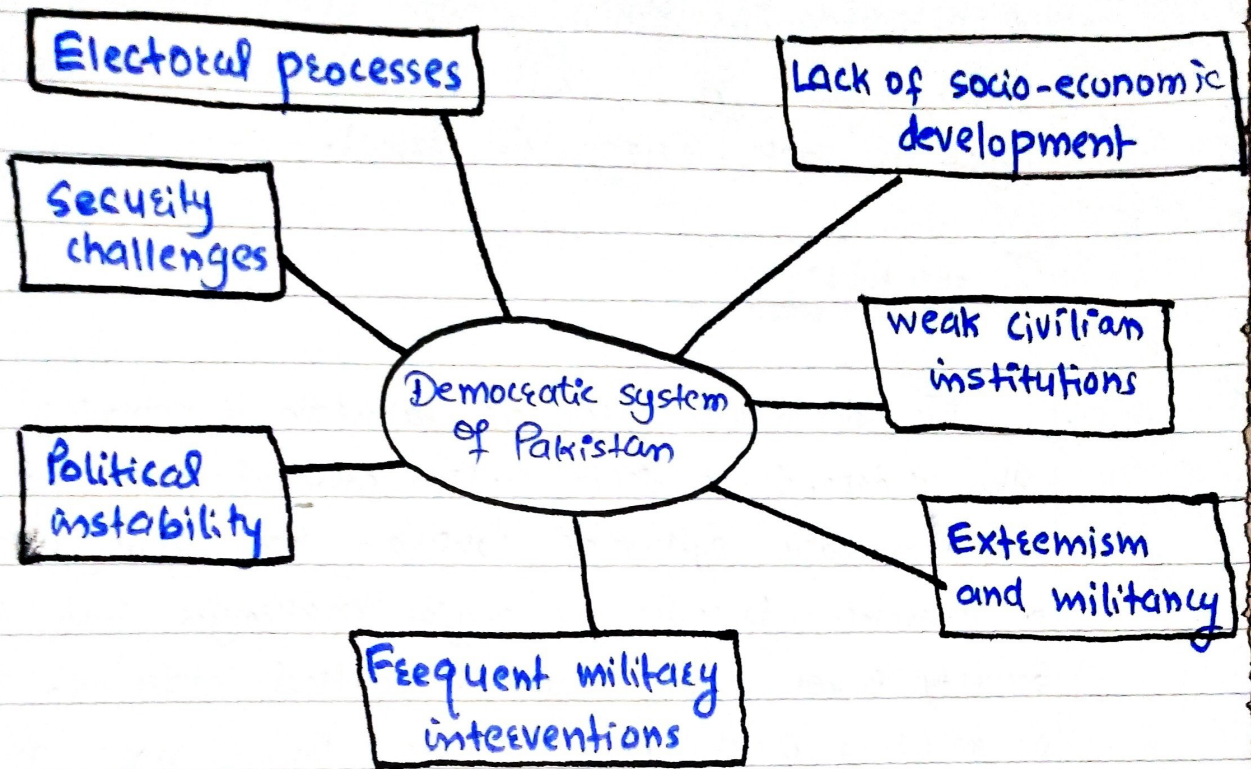
The democratic system of Pakistan is evolving since its ~~the~~ independence from British colonial rule. The evolution of democratic system of Pakistan has always remained a dilemma because of major challenges such as security issues that compelled political leaders to spend more in military institutions making them more organized, disciplined and strong as compared to civilian institutions. This has resulted in frequent military interventions in the democratic system of Pakistan. Other challenges include weak governance, political instability, electoral processes, fragile economy and poor socioeconomic factors that have reduced chances of participatory democracy, leaving the state with dominance of some political elites, that are working for their personal interests rather than interest of the public. These ~~are~~ some factors that have major implications to prevent democracy gaining its roots in the state.

### Factors responsible for weak democratic system in Pakistan

Some of the factors responsible for weak democratic system of Pakistan are enlisted



below.



## ① Electoral Processes

Pakistan's democratic system faces major challenges after every election due to its electoral processes. The political party that gains majority votes faces severe criticism from the opposition for rigged elections.

In 2013, Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) won majority votes and it faced criticism from its opposition party Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) that not only criticized but also resorted on streets to voice its demands of justice against rigged elections. They protested for over a month, that deeply hampered democratic system of Pakistan. Similarly, general elections of 2018 and then that of 2024 faced backlash and accusations of rigging. These challenges affect the newly appointed



government from functioning effectively. They only struggle for their survival instead of accomplishing the promises that they make during elections. Hence, democracy remains a dilemma that exist without stable and participatory form of government.

## ② Security Challenges

Security has always remained a primary national interest of Pakistan because of its neighbourhood and Pakistan has faced major security issues since partition of India. Our mutual rival country, India ~~has~~ ensures to continue instability in Pakistan by attacks of terrorism in tribal areas and by using coercive policies on Kashmir dispute. The war of 1948, over Kashmir dispute persuaded Pakistan to spend in its military and prioritized security over other sectors. These problems resulted in weak democratic system in Pakistan due to poor growth of country that struggled for its survival and reduced economic growth of whole country.

## ③ Military Interventions

Pakistan's democratic system has remained in tribulations due to frequent military interventions and indirect influence of military on democratic institutions. The military interventions of 1958 to 1961, 1969 to



1973 and 1977 to 1985, were periods of direct military rule in Pakistan that affected democratic institutions from empowering. After direct military rule from Ayub Khan, Yahya Khan and general Zia-ul-Haq, military has continued its influence over democratic institutions whether it be judiciary, economy or any social institution. Frequent disruptions and suspensions of democratic institutions have weakened them and lowered their credibility. On the other hand, military institutions have maintained their credibility, organization, discipline and they do not allow other institutions to interfere in their sector. Hence, military intervention is one of the primary reason for dilemmas of democracy in Pakistan.

## ④ Political instability

The chaotic and perplexing political institutions of Pakistan, with political elites prioritizing their personal interest have never allowed democracy to grow and ensure public participation. The power and influence have concentrated in hands of few elites that hinders emergence of new political leaders and limit the opportunities for merit based leaders, hindering the development of vibrant and inclusive democratic system.



## ⑤ Weak Civilian Institutions

The civilian institutions in Pakistan like judiciary, bureaucracy, political parties, and executive itself have become plagued with corruption, inefficiency, lack of effectiveness, weak rule of law and injustices that has lowered credibility of democratic system of Pakistan. Feudal system exists in Pakistan that was inherited from British colonial rule, still dominates. Lack of accountability along with inefficiency have eroded public trust in the government and left the democratic system in a dilemma in Pakistan.

## ⑥ Lack of Socio-economic Development

The persistent challenges of illiteracy, poverty, inflation, unemployment, health ~~etc~~ issues, child labour, water and food insecurity, population explosion and unequal access to resources have hindered growth of democratic institutions. Corruption, failure of policy implementation, and lack of accountability have been major factors for poor socio-economic growth of Pakistan. Due to illiteracy and lack of awareness people of Pakistan are unaware of their rights and duties and majority of population don't understand significance of their participation in decision-making and policy formulation. The



above challenges have created a mistrust among public regarding their government and democratic institution. The failure to address these challenges have created disillusionment among masses and contributed to lack of faith in democratic institutions.

## ⑦ Extremism and Militancy

Currently, polarization, religious and political extremism, terrorism and militancy have become major challenges for Pakistan's democratic system. Frequent incidents of militancy such as terrorist attacks in Quetta, Karachi, Khuzaim, targeting ~~etc~~ on the basis of ethnicity have embroiled the state into dilemma. On other hand, religious extremism such as Blasphemy of Dr. Kumbhar and Mashal Khan without their fair investigation have reduced credibility of democratic institutions on global level. It has reduced faith and trust of public into the government, and undermining the effectiveness of democratic governance.

The above enlisted are some of the major factors that have resulted in evolution of democratic institutions into the dilemma and prevented the democracy to get into roots even after passing more than seven decades.



## Way Forward to Strengthen Democracy

Pakistan's democratic system needs electoral reforms to ensure fair and transparent elections to prevent accusations of rigging post-elections so that ~~newly~~ newly elected government effectively functions for economic growth. Along with electoral reforms, it should strengthen civilian institutions preventing military influence on economy, politics, social issues, education, and health sectors. Government should ensure every sector to be held accountable to increase the effectiveness, efficiency and transparency. It will improve socio-economic development that ~~will~~ would enhance human resource development and improve lifestyle of public with access to better health, education and other facilities. This socio-economic growth will increase trust of public in the government and help democracy to gain roots in the system with better vision and inclusivity.