

# Democracy in Pakistan: hopes and hurdles

## A) Introduction

## B) Hopes for democracy in Pakistan

- (i) The successful completion of tenure by last three assemblies.
- ii) Increased political awareness among youth
- iii) The devolution of power to local governments
- iv) The women participation has increased as compared to past
- v) Pro-democratic constitutional amendments have promulgated by assembly
- vi) The independence of judiciary

## C) Hurdles facing by democracy in Pakistan

- (i) The country is facing extreme political polarization
- ii) The lack of political stability

- iii) Dynastic politics curbs the democratic practices
- iv) Lack of democratic culture inside the political parties
- v) Lack of accountability in the country
- vi) The Alarming illiteracy rate
- vii) The interference of military in politics.

## D) Pragmatic steps for the betterment of democracy in Pakistan

- i) strengthen the role of accountability institutions to end corruption
- ii) political parties should hold intra-party election regularly
- iii) The government should enhance the literacy rate

## E) Conclusion

In a crowded polling station on a hot summer day, an elder Pakistani man stands in line. He is holding his ID card and waiting to cast his vote. He has faith that his vote can contribute to a brighter, democratic future. He believes in the power of his vote that can strengthen the democratic culture of this country. This single act represents the resilient hope that democracy will thrive in Pakistan. Beyond this, there are many factors signs that are rays hope for the best future of democracy in Pakistan that include the completion of tenure by the last three assemblies, Increased political awareness and the devolution of power to the local government. Moreover, Participation of women in politics has increased, pro-democratic constitutional amendments has promulgated by assembly and judiciary has become independent. However, democracy in Pakistan

is facing some hurdles that include the political polarization, lack of political stability, dynastic politics and lack of political culture inside the parties. Furthermore, the lack of accountability, the illiteracy rate and the intervention of military in politics curbs the growth of democracy. These hurdles can be countered by some pragmatic measures to strengthen the role of accountability institutions, political <sup>leaders</sup> parties should inculcate democracy in their parties and the government should work to enhance the literacy rate. In a nutshell there are many hopes for nourishment of democracy in Pakistan. These hopes are facing same ~~problems~~ hurdles in their ways. These hurdles can be overcome by some pragmatic measures.

There are many factors that indicate a promising future for democracy in Pakistan, and of them is the successful completion of terms by the last three assemblies. Unlike previous assemblies that were often marked by dissolution and military interventions these assemblies managed to serve their full terms. The election of these assemblies were held on time, and power was peacefully transferred from one government to the next. This stability in the tenure of assemblies demonstrates a more mature and democratic political landscape in the country. Therefore, it can be said that the completion of these assemblies tenure is a hopeful sign for democracy in Pakistan.

Moreover, political awareness among youth has grown immensely. Today, young Pakistanis are more active and aware of their rights, and they also participate more in the political

Process, which is a positive sign for democracy. For instance in 2024 election, the country witnessed a record youth voter turnout of 48% compared to 36% in 2018 election (PILDAT).

The surge in political awareness among youth is not only a good sign of informed electorate but also a testament to the ~~political~~ potential for the positive change in the democratic process. In a conclusion, it can be said that the political informed youth is the positive sign for nourishment of democracy.

Another hope for democracy in Pakistan is the devolution of power to the local government. By decentralization of power the local governments are able to directly address the concern of their people, which help in improving the governance that maintain people's trust in the democracy. The introduction of 18th amendment, which transferred more power

to the local government, was a major step in flourishing democracy in the country. This step not only empowers the local government but also promotes greater transparency and responsiveness to the public demands, which are the basic indicators of a sound democracy. Thus the decentralization of power is a promising development for strengthening ~~democratic~~ democracy in Pakistan.

Another encouraging development for Pakistan's democracy is the increasing participation of women in politics. Over the recent years, more women have entered into the political roles, breaking traditional barriers and contributing to a more inclusive political landscape. For instance, during the first phase of local body election in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 4214 female candidates ran for 2,383 seats. This increase in women's representation not only broadens the scope of discussing critical issues like women's

rights, healthcare and education but also reflects a growing commitment to equality and inclusiveness. In conclusion, the rising involvement of women in politics strengthens the hope for a thriving democracy in Pakistan, where diverse voices contribute to a fair and balanced governance.

~~Another~~

Moreover, a key hope for democracy in Pakistan lies in <sup>democratic</sup> Pro-Constitutional amendments that reinforce Parliamentary sovereignty and curb the overreach of other institutions in Parliamentary affairs. By ~~addition~~ ~~or~~ removal of some powers ~~that~~ that were aimed to control the Parliament, making the democratic process stabilize. For example, the annulment of Article 58(2)(b) eliminated the president's authority to dissolve the National Assembly unilaterally, a power that had been misused to disrupt multiple elected governments.

in 1990s. This reform has reduced the likelihood of abrupt government dismissals, and allow elect representatives to serve their full terms. In conclusion, pro-democratic constitutional amendments foster a strong democracy and reinforcing democratic process in Pakistan.

An independent judiciary is a cornerstone of democracy, providing hope for a just and accountable system in Pakistan. By upholding rule of law and maintaining checks on other branches of government, Judiciary helps to protect citizen's social, political and democratic rights. For example, the Supreme court in 2022, the Supreme court restore the elected assembly, that was dissolved in unconstitutional manner.

This independent role of the judiciary prevents misuse of power and ensure that no one is above the law, reinforcing public trust in democratic institutions.

In a conclusion, impartial judiciary is essential for sustaining democracy in Pakistan by fostering transparency and accountability within the government.

~~One major hurdle for democracy in Pakistan is the~~

The democracy in Pakistan is also facing some hurdles. One of them is high level of political polarization, which hinders co-operation among leaders and political parties. Political divide in Pakistan often lead to a lack of consensus on national issues making it difficult to implement stable, long-term policies. For example rival parties frequently oppose each other's initiative, regardless of potential benefits to the country and the democratic process. This constant opposition and inability to collaborate weaken democratic institution by prioritizing partisan interests over national unity. In

Conclusion, political polarization is a serious challenge that threatens the effectiveness of democracy in Pakistan, as it obstructs meaningful progress and cooperation.

Another significant hurdle for democracy in Pakistan is the persistent lack of political stability, which disrupts the continuity of governance and weakens democratic institutions. Frequent changes in government make it difficult for leaders to implement consistent policies. For example, Pakistan has experienced several shifts in power due to political instability and crisis. This instability prevents democratic institutions from maturing, as constant transitions create uncertainty and limit effective governance. In conclusion, the lack of political stability undermines the trust of public in ~~political~~ democratic process and hampers sustainable progress.

Moreover, dynastic politics presents a significant hurdle by limiting fair representation and perpetuating power within a few families. The key positions in political parties passed down within families, sidelining capable leaders from less prominent background. A study on 'Hereditary Democracy' by an Australian scholar Dr. James, emphasised the harmful impacts of dynastic politics on democratic process. The, dynastic politics do not allow to emerge new leadership and not allow to flourish the democracy in the country. Therefore, it can be said that dynastic politics obstruct the progress of democracy.

Furthermore, the lack of democratic culture within political parties is also a key hurdle facing by democracy in Pakistan. Political parties that ~~practice~~ maintain democracy in their party, foster transparency and

and allow members to participate in decision making, are working for the strengthening democracy in the country. In Pakistan, for instance, many political parties operate under a single leader for decades, without holding a transparent and free and fair intraparty election. This lack of internal democracy in the parties discourages talented individuals from taking on leadership roles, thereby limiting the development of new and progressive policies within the parties. In conclusion, the absence of democratic practices in political parties is a barrier to true democratic progress.

Another hurdle facing by democracy in Pakistan is the lack of accountability. Accountability is essential for uplifting the democracy in a country as it holds the public office holder accountable for their action. Accountability helps in maintaining

the trust of the people in the democratic process. In Pakistan, however, the misuse of power or widespread and officials often evade accountability due to weak enforcement of laws and political influence. For instance, numerous ~~cases~~ cases of high level corruption of influential people have gone unresolved. This course weakens the public trust in democratic institutions and processes. Therefore it can be said that <sup>lack of</sup> accountability poses a serious threat to democracy in Pakistan.

Moreover, the alarming illiteracy rate is also a serious hurdle to democracy by limiting informed civic participation and awareness of democratic rights. In a democratic society, literacy empowers citizens to understand political issues and make informed decisions in the democratic process. However, the literacy rate remains low in the ~~area~~ Pakistan, consequently lacking a full understanding of their rights.

and responsibilities of voters. This lack of ~~democratic~~ education prevents a large portion of the population from actively engaging in democratic processes, which weakens the foundation of democracy."

In conclusion, Pakistan's high illiteracy rate undermines the development of a well-informed electorate, which is posing a significant challenge to a truly democratic society.

Lastly, the interference of military in ~~politic~~ politics poses a significant challenge to the democracy

in Pakistan. When the military involve in politics, it disrupts the democratic practices and prevent civilian institutions from exercising their de-jure

authority. Pakistan's history includes multiple military interventions and coups

that repeatedly shifted power away from elected government. Such actions

weaken democratic institutions, ~~and~~ <sup>diminishing</sup> public trust in democratic

institutions and create of instability in the

country. In a conclusion, the interference

of military in politics undermines the growth of democracy in Pakistan.

The pragmatic steps for the betterment of democracy in Pakistan ~~includes~~ is to strengthen a accountability institution to effectively combat corruption. By empowering these institutions, Pakistan can ensure that public officials are held responsible for their actions, which will increase the transparency and will help in maintaining the trust of the people in democratic institutions. For instance, enhancing the capabilities and independence of organization like the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) would allow them to investigate and address corruption cases without political interference. This would reduce the misuse of power and public trust leading to a government that is more aligned with the principles of democracy. Therefore, reinforcing accountability institutions is

essential for fostering democracy in Pakistan.

Another step for strengthening democracy in Pakistan is that political parties should hold intra-party elections regularly. Intra-party elections promote democratic culture within parties, allowing members <sup>of party</sup> to choose their leader and make policies in a transparent manner. For instance, countries with established democratic norms such as United Kingdom, regularly holds intra-party election to ensure that party leadership truly reflects the will of its members.

~~This practice~~ By adopting similar practices, political parties in Pakistan cultivate leadership that is representative and accountable to the party, which ultimately strengthens the democratic engagement across the country. In conclusion, conducting intra-party elections is vital for democracy. ~~is vital~~

Another pragmatic step in improving democracy in Pakistan is that the government should enhance the literacy rate. Education is the foundation of an informed electorate and allows citizens to better understand their ~~political issues~~ rights and duties, which is helpful in upholding democratic values. For example, countries with high literacy rates, such as Sweden and Canada, have well informed electorates that actively participate in the democratic process and hold their leaders accountable. By investing more in the education, Pakistan would foster a more educated and engaged population, ultimately strengthening democracy.

In a conclusion, increasing the literacy rate would play a significant role in the growth of democracy. In a nutshell, there are many hopeful signs for the

Future of democracy in Pakistan.  
It includes the successful completion of last three assemblies' tenure, the increased political awareness among the young population and inclusion of women in politics. These developments indicate that Pakistan is on a path toward more mature and stable democratic system. Moreover, challenges like political polarization, military interference and lack of accountability continue to hinder the growth of democracy. To overcome these hurdles it is essential for government to strengthen accountability institutions and improve the literacy rate. These pragmatic steps would help in thriving <sup>democracy</sup>, leading to a more stable and transparent system of governance. The road to a fully democratic Pakistan is long, but with continue efforts and reforms, the democracy would ultimately prevail.