

Democracy in Pakistan: Hopes and Hurdles

Outline

1. Introduction:

Thesis Statement: Democracy of Pakistan has been facing various hurdles such as: political and social challenges. However, its future seems to be bright.

2. Hurdles that democracy of Pakistan has been facing:

a) Anti-democratic structure within the political parties is a major challenge to the democracy of Pakistan.

b) Sceptic role of Election Commission of Pakistan weakens the democratic process in the country.

c) Strained Civil-Military relation produces the imbalance between

the military institution and civilian government which lets the democracy.

d) Foreign interventions divert the public opinion which is a challenge to the democracy of Pakistan.

e) Lack of good governance is a hurdle in the democratic process within the country.

f) Political crisis polarization leads the country towards the ~~democratic~~ democratic crisis.

g) Lack of rule of law is a barrier in the path of democracy.

h) Social ills: illiterate masses and poverty are the causes behind the weak democracy in the country.

3. Hopes for the bright future of democracy in Pakistan.

a) 18th Amendment strengthens the democracy of Pakistan.

b) Prevalence of free media is a major hope for the democracy of Pakistan.

c) Increasing efforts for minorities rights strengthening the democracy of Pakistan.

d) Unification of diversity is major hope beyond the democracy of Pakistan.

e) Strong accountability is a blessing for the democracy of Pakistan.

f) Increasing the participation of women in politics and institutions enhances the democracy of Pakistan.

g) Emergence of new political parties energizes the democratic procedure of Pakistan.

h) protection of human rights. the blessing for the democracy of the country.

4- Conclusion:

Essay

The emergence of concept of democracy was found in 5th c. in the cities of Greece, but the French Revolution (1789), was first incident in which democracy got fame properly. The political map of Europe was changed by this revolution in democratic point of view. slowly gradually, whole Europe adopted the democracy now the days whole Europe is enjoying the concept of ~~Europe~~ democracy. Similarly, the inception of Pakistan (1947), the country also adopted the democracy which is still evolving and facing multiple challenges such as: social and political challenges. Anti-democratic structure within the political parties and sceptic role of Election Commission of Pakistan are the major challenges in the path of democracy in the country. Strained Civil-Military relations and foreign interventions produce the imbalance between military and government which is harm the democracy of Pakistan.

Lack of good governance and political polarization led the country towards democratic crisis. Social illness: illiterate masses and poverty is also a major cause behind the weak democracy of Pakistan. However, there is also hopes for the democracy of Pakistan such as: 18th amendment in the constitution of 1973 and prevalence of free media are the major hopes for the democracy of Pakistan. Increasing efforts for minorities' rights and unification of diversity strengthens the democracy of the country. Increasing the participation of women in government structure and emergence of new political parties are the blessing for democracy of Pakistan. This is how the democracy of Pakistan has been facing various challenges such as: political and social. However, its future seems to be bright.

Anti-democratic structure within the political parties is a major challenge to democracy

of Pakistan. which leads Pakistan towards democratic crisis. Since, the inception, of Pakistan this challenge has been faced by the country. Among all democratic parties which are registered in the Election Commission of Pakistan, three parties are major: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) (PML-N) and Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) which are facing the dynastic and singularity rule such as: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) and Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) are under the influence of Bhutto family, Nawaz family and Gen Zia Khan respectively. The same concept also mentioned in the book "Pakistan a hard country" if the water is H₂O then politics of Pakistan is Pak (Patrimony and Kingship). It is therefore anti-democratic structure within the political parties is a major challenge for the democracy of Pakistan.

The second most important challenges to the democracy of

Pakistan is the sceptic role of Election Commission of Pakistan. The Election Commission of Pakistan plays a significant role in ensuring the integrity and fairness of election in the country. Unfortunately, the election commission of Pakistan is unable to conduct the election within the country. In 2023, Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa assemblies were dissolved, but the Election Commission did not conduct election within the ninety days irrespective of supreme court verdict. Election Commission of Pakistan failed to conduct elections.

According to the Article 224 of Constitution of Pakistan 1973 election must be held within the ninety days of dissolution of assembly (Federal or Provincial). Hence, the sceptic role of Election Commission of Pakistan weakens the democratic process in the country.

The third significant challenge to the democracy of Pakistan is

is strained civil-military relations. Pakistan experienced several military coups and persistent struggles between civilian government and military institutions. It is therefore the evolving dynamics of civil-military relations in Pakistan is against the backdrop of domestic and external pressure. Military occupied the major power political power since civilian government has been facing a lot of difficulties by flourishing the democracy in the Pakistan. According to the book Pakistan a hard country: He examines the military influence in various aspects of Pakistan society and politics. Hence, strained civil-military relations could not allow democracy of Pakistan to flourish. It is therefore it is most important hurdle in the growing path of democracy in the country.

Another important hurdle in the democracy of Pakistan are the foreign interventions which

significant challenge to the democracy of Pakistan. It influences the political and governance system of Pakistan by various forms, including economic aid, military assistance and diplomatic pressure ^{which} can impact the democratic procedure of Pakistan. This issue also highlighted by the Dr. Ayesh Siddiqi in her paper "The political economy of Pakistan" foreign aid: effects on governance and democracy in different ways such as: political influence, economic dependency, military and security ties, public perception and policy constraints. Hence, foreign interventions work on the public opinion in the which create challenge to the democracy of Pakistan.

Additionally, the lack of good governance also create a challenge to the democracy of any country. The government of Singapore is 99% therefore their democratic norms exist in top

Ten democratic countries at the other hand the countries which are facing the poor governance issue exist in the bottom like pakistan ranked second at the bottom according to the world bank institute report. Pakistan has been facing several issues of governance such as, voice and accountability, political instability, effectiveness of government, quality of regulatory authorities, control the corruption and rule of law which weakens the governance of the country. These are the factors examined by the world bank institute since due to the absence of good governance the democracy of Pakistan is facing ~~that~~ hurdle in the democratic process.

Furthermore, political polarization in Pakistan badly affected the democracy of Pakistan. It plays a crucial role for the democracy of any country like Pakistan. Unfortunately, due to the lack of Media fragmentation,

Economic inequality, identity politics, political strategy and social and cultural changes the political cohesion is facing challenge and create a political polarization in the country. According to Pakistan a hard country highlighted the same factors according to the book Pakistan a hard country: emphasized the same issues which create a political polarization which leads Pakistan towards the democratic crisis. Hence, political polarization in Pakistan ^{is a hurdle in} badly affected the democratic procedure of Pakistan.

Moreover, the absence of rule of law is also a factor which weakens the democratic system of any country as ^{also} Pakistan also. It creates imbalance within the society and marked by instability, injustices. It undermines social cohesion, economic development, and human rights, leading to a deterioration of life and widespread despair. It is therefore, the lack

of rule of law significantly affected the political and social landscape of Pakistan. Some factors also examined by the B.K Singh in 'The rule of law in Pakistan: A comparative study'. Lack of legal awareness negatively affected the governance and public policies. Hence, the ~~law~~ rule of law is a barrier in the path of democracy in the Pakistan.

In the last, social illnesses like illiterate masses and poverty are the major hurdle in the democracy of Pakistan. ^{These are the factors in which} ~~which~~ is a factor in which people do not fulfilled the basic needs, do not aware about their fundamental rights. This is how due to ~~the~~ that ~~people~~ Pakistan facing the crucial challenge of electoral process crisis. Recently, on 8th of February 2024, general elections were held in Pakistan the turnout ratio was not more than 50% this is due to the consequences of illiterate masses and poverty. Accordingly

to UNESCO institute for status (UIS) Pakistan ranked 164th out of 180 countries and according to the world bank the poverty ratio is around 40.1% in Pakistan, which do not allow democracy to flourish in Pakistan. Hence, social ills such as: illiterate masses and poverty are the causes beyond the weakened democracy of Pakistan.

In the preceding section, hurdles beyond the democracy of Pakistan were discussed. Now in the subsequent paragraphs its hopes will be explained.

The 18th Amendment of Constitution of Pakistan enacted in 2010, is often seen as a significant step to strengthen the democracy of Pakistan. 18th Amendment provided was allowed to the dissolve the National Assembly if president believe that the government could not function according to the Constitution (article 58.2(b)). This article

of Pakistan was used many
times by president hence, it is causing the
challenge to the democracy of the
country. However, 18th Amendment
repealed this article this repeal
was aimed to reducing
the concentration of power of the
president and enhancing the role
of prime minister and parliament.
This change was a part of broader
effort to promote parliamentary
democracy and ensure that the
executive branch remained account-
able to the legislature. Hence,
18th Amendment strengthened the
democracy of Pakistan.

The second most important
hope for the democracy of Pakis-
tan is free media. It plays a
crucial role for the democracy of
Pakistan, as it is for any
democratic system. Free media is
a significant hope for the democratic
system of Pakistan due to responsible
for the transparency and accountability

public ~~awareness~~ discourse, check on power, encouraging civil engagement and protection of rights. According to constitution and legal frame work, it ensures the right to freedom of speech and expression (article 19). This is how media is trying to become free from any barrier and promote the transparency and accountability that is better for healthy democracy. Hence, free media is a major hope for the democracy of Pakistan.

Increasing efforts for supporting minorities rights in Pakistan significantly strengthen the democracy of the country by fostering inclusivity and equality. When minorities are afforded equal rights and protections, it enhances social cohesion and ensure that all voices are heard in the democratic process. It is therefore article 20 of constitution of 1973 guarantees the freedom to profess and practice religion, while article 22 prohibit the

discrimination in educational institutions based on religion. These legal frame works are intended to ensure that minorities have equal opportunities and protection of under law. The government of Pakistan also takes significant steps for minorities rights such as construction of Sri Krishna Mombait which is under construction in the capital territory of Islamabad. Hence, the increasing efforts for minorities rights strengthening the democracy of Pakistan.

Another blessing for the the democracy of Pakistan is a unification of diversity. Pakistan is a diverse nation with multiple ethnicities such as punjabs, sindhis, pashtons and Bloch each with distinct languages, traditions, and histories. It is therefore government take efforts to promote inclusivity, cultural celebration, Education, and economic development and dialogue and communication. This is how according to 18th Annual

a fundamental rights of education, A.F.C. award, for economic development, right to freedom of speech and expression, right to movement and provinces are empowered in sovereignty. Hence steps taken by the ~~state~~ state including the are supporting to uniformity of diversity which is the blessing for the democracy of Pakistan.

Furthermore, strong accountability is indeed crucial for the health of ~~any~~ democracy of Pakistan. It ensures that public officials are held responsible for their actions, promote transparency, and help combatting corruption by strengthening accountability mechanisms. Pakistan can enhance its democratic process and improve governance, fostering trust among citizens and creating a more equitable society. For instance recently the court martial of DG (ISI) Lt Col General Faiz Hameed and high ranked military officials is a major example of accountability.

within the country. It is therefore
strongly accountable in significant
ways for the democracy of Pakistan.
Additionally, increasing partici-
pation of women in politics and
different institutions ^{strengthening} ~~enhances~~ the democra-
tic procedure of Pakistan. The country
promoting inclusivity and ensuring diverse
perspectives in decision making process.
For instance several women have held
high ranking position in politics
and different institutions like Ex: PM
Benazir Bhutto, Sherry Rehman, Hina
Rabani Khat, Asma Jahangir, Justice
Ajesh Malik, and lieutenant
General Nigar Johar. ~~at secured high~~
~~ranking position in politics and~~
~~institutions of Pakistan.~~ These women
have significant contributions to
Pakistan political and institutional
landscape, demonstrating the impact
of female leadership in the country.
Hence, increasing the participation of
women enhances the democratic
norms of Pakistan.

Furthermore, the emergence

The democracy of Pakistan. The protection of human rights have crucial for the functioning of healthy democracy in Pakistan or any democratic society. It ensure that individuals have their rights respected can lead to greater stability, equality and justice. It strengthens democratic institutions, fosters trust in governance, and support the rule of law for democracy to thrive, human rights must be upheld and protected for every citizen. It is therefore Pakistan National Human Rights Commission (PNHR): publishes annual reports and update the human rights issues.

This is how the protection of human rights in Pakistan strengthening the democracy of Pakistan.

To conclude it is stated the ~~the~~ democracy of Pakistan has been facing various challenges such as social and political. However, its future seems to be bright. The hurdles behind the poor educational democratic system include: anti-democratic structure within the political

parties and sceptic role of Election Commission of Pakistan are the major challenges, to the democracy of Pakistan. Strained civil-military relations and foreign interventions, are the major hurdles in the path of democracy. Further more, issues like illiterate masses and poverty. These reasons are leading to various consequences such as corruption, political instability and undemocratic attitudes. However there is a hope which can lead the democracy of Pakistan such as 18th Amendment, prevalence of free media, increasing efforts for minorities rights, unification of diversity, strong accountability, increasing participation of women in politics and civil institutions and protection of human rights. As there is always light at the end of tunnel, it is hoped that one day Pakistan will have world class democracy which will put it on the path of to

Progress and prosperity.