

# Polarized Politics: Issues and Challenges of Pakistan's Democracy

## 1- Introduction

As George Orwell said, "Politics affects everything today. Unfortunately, it often's plagued by dishonesty, confusion, and hatred."

## 2- Polarized Politics: Issues of Pakistan's Democracy: Political Issues:

I) Frequent polarization leads to a decrease in voter turnout rate;

Case in point:

USA Presidential election of 2014 voter turnout rate was 44.9%.

Case in point:

India, Muslim and Hindu divide resulted in low voter turnout rate in the 2019 Lok Sabha election (64%).

Case in point:

Declining voter turnout rate in Pakistan's 2018 general elections (55.8%).

II) Shrinks the political participation of citizens;

**Case in point:**

Lack of youth bulge in the political arena of Pakistan.

**III)** creates a vacuum for dictatorship and military takeovers;

**Case in point:**

Detainment of democracy in Pakistan during different years: 1958, 1977, 1999.

**(IV)** Encourages the intervention of outsiders in the democratic process;

**Case in point:**

Chile's frequent polarization welcomed the intervention of the USA in its democratic process.

**Case in point:**

Pakistan's example: Interventions from international actors during times of political instability, such as in 1977 and 1999.

**(V)** promotes the trend of populism.

**Case in point:**

Imran Khan's populist rhetoric during the 2018 elections fueled political division in the country.

**Social Issues:**

**1)** Rise in misogynist customs and traditions vis-à-vis women's participation;

**Case in point:**

In Pakistan's parliamentary system, 60 seats are reserved for women.

**(I)** Emerges poor quality leadership;

**Case in point:**

Bhutto and Sheikh Mujibur Rehman  
struggle between  
created a leadership crisis in 1971.

**Case in point:**

Power struggle  
between opposition and ruling government  
created a leadership crisis in Bangladesh,  
in 2018 general elections.

**(II)** Gives birth to inequality and  
injustice, leading to bad governance;

**Case in point:**

Governance crisis  
in Balochistan and FATA due to neglect  
and political polarization

**(III)** Media's Role in fueling polarization;

**Case in point:**

Biased news  
channels and social media platforms  
aggravating political divisions, spreading  
misinformation and heightening tensions  
in Pakistan.

### 3- Polarized Politics: Challenges of Pakistan's Democracy.

**(I)** Intervention of the establishment in  
the democratic process;

**Case in point:**

Supreme court  
justice, Tariq Mehmood's degree case,  
inspected by unelected forces.

II) Political engineering by the Election Commission of Pakistan;

**Case in point:**

2024 general elections are considered the most corrupt elections in Pakistan's history.

III) Trust gap between the general public and political parties;

**Case in point:**

political polarization led to the failure of security missions in Balochistan and FATA due to a trust gap between the general public and the government.

IV) Oppression of marginalized groups;

**Case in point:**

Escalation in Parachinar and Taranwala incidents highlighted the downsides of Pakistan's politics.

V) Weakening of civil liberties and media freedom;

**Case in point:**

Pakistan's example: crackdowns on media outlets and opposition parties during periods of heightened polarization (e.g. censorship of media during political unrest).

4-

Some Steps Already Taken for

the Provision of Democratic

Norms in Pakistan :

Consolidating Democracy in Pakistan  
(CDIP) program and Charter  
Democracy (COD);

II) 18 Amendment and Strengthening  
Electoral and Legislative Process  
(SELP);

## 5- Concrete Steps For the Introduction of Democratic Norms in True Spirit and Letter

I) Ensuring judiciary independence to  
curb institutional involvement.

II) Allocation of a proper budget for  
the provision of education.

III) Electoral reforms to ensure free  
and fair elections, and minimize  
political engineering;

IV) Regulating media and combating  
fake news to reduce polarization;

V) Improving political literacy to make  
citizens more aware of democratic  
norms and their rights.

## 6- Conclusion:

As Aristotle said, "Democracy  
is about fairness, equity, and everyone  
having a say."