

Polarized Politics: Issues and Challenges of Pakistan's Democracy

1- Introduction

As George Orwell said, "Politics affects everything today. Unfortunately, it often is 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%.

Avoid bombardment of information

One reference is sufficient to

substantiate the argument

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:

Rates
and traditions) **Rises** misogynist customs
vis-à-vis women's participation;

Case in point:
In Pakistan's
parliamentary system, 60 seats are
reserved for women.

I) Emergence of poor quality leadership;

Case in point:

Bhutto and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman created a leadership crisis in 1971. Struggle between

Case in point:

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

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

Case in point:

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

(IV) 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, Tarique 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.

Vague argument
No such tangible evidence exists

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 downside 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

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."