

# Democracy Unrest in Pakistan: Causes and Consequences

## Outline

A- Introduction

B- Manifestation of democratic unrest in Pakistan

C- Causes of democratic unrest in Pakistan

1- Intervention of undemocratic forces

• Deep state powers operate behind the scene.

2- Heritage of party positions

• Example: Bhutto family and Sharif family

3- Absence of astute leadership

• None of Pakistani prime minister has been able to complete full tenure.

4- Political parties are more inclined towards slogans rather than ideology

• Manifestos are having tall claims but no strategy of resource mobilization — PIDE

5- Lack of intraparty elections.

• PILDAT — major political parties have weak internal democratic structures

6- Undermining independence of Judiciary

• 26<sup>th</sup> Amendment

7- Violation of fundamental rights

• Defamation bill and Peca

8- Ban on student union.

• Example: 1974 ban, 1984 ban and it continues.

9- Lack of open governance

• Pakistan ranks 106<sup>th</sup> in open governance which limits the public involvement — "World justice project"

## D- Consequences of democratic unrest in pakistan

- 1- Hampereed the economic growth.
  - Economic growth has been slow, with GDP around 0.4%.
- 2- Discourage investors from investing in pakistan
  - Example: Nishat, Shell oil, Telenor announced exit.
- 3- External influence
  - Example: United states influence in pakistan's politics
- 4- Rising corruption.
  - Pakistan ranks 120<sup>th</sup> in corruption - "World justice Project"
- 5- Failure in law enforcement
  - Pakistan ranks 140 / 142 in rule of law - WJP 2024
- 6- Decline public faith in democratic institutions
  - Example: protests and marches
- 7- Loses dignity and reputation before the world
  - International criticism and concerns
- 8- Displacements and migrations
  - Pakistan had over 1.1 million IDPs in 2020, mainly due to conflicts and instability - "IDMC"
- 9- Loss of tourism revenue.
  - Pakistan's tourism revenue has declined due to democratic unrest and security concerns - PTDC

## E- Way forward to address democratic unrest

- By promoting multilateralism
- by educating and promoting awareness
- By engaging youth
- Promoting peace, justice, and human rights
- fostering culture of respect, tolerance and open communication
- Strengthening democratic institutions

## F- Conclusion

“Democracy is based on the principle that all citizens have the right to participate in the decision making process” (Nelson Mandela). Democracy is important because it gives us a way that how our community is run. It ensures that everyone's voice is heard and that we work together to make decisions that benefit everyone. It holds our leaders accountable and prevent any <sup>one</sup> person or group from having too much power. On the other hand democratic unrest leads to the instability in the country. Countries facing democratic unrest are still struggling for prosperity and pakistan is one of those countries which are facing democratic unrest. Democratic unrest is one of the major obstacle for pakistan in a way to prosperity. This unrest derailed the country from development. Although democratic unrest is not a new issue but a growing issue one over the past few decades. History of this issue dates back to the development of pakistan but the intensity is increasing in the present time. There are many causes of democratic unrest in pakistan which include intervention of undemocratic forces, absence of astute leadership, heritage of party positions, undermining independence of judiciary, violation of fundamental rights, and ban on student union. These causes have drastic consequences such as hampered economic growth, external influence, discourage investors, lose of public faith, and losing dignity before the world. Unless this issue is addressed properly, pakistan can neither become prosperous nor respectable.

for decades, pakistan has been facing democratic unrest. Since gaining independence in 1947, the country has struggled to establish a stable and effective democratic system of governance. Different factors have contributed to the instability which hindered the economic development of pakistan. Not only it hindered the economic prosperity but also the social progress and protection of human right which ultimately decrease the dignity and prestige reputation of pakistan in front of the world for instance, pakistan's constitutional history has been criticized since its inception. pakistan was unable to form its constitution for approximately 9 years after the independence in 1947. On the other hand the current democratic unrest in pakistan is a complex issue. It began in 2022 when a non-confidence motion was tabled against Ex-Prime minister Imran Khan, ultimately leading to his ouster which leads to the protest and marches all over the country. The country has witnessed numerous protests and rallies. These kind of situations bring fear in public and led to the breakdown in the democratic process and have sparked widespread unrest.

To begin with the causes of democratic unrest in pakistan, first comes the intervention of undemocratic forces. Especially pakistan's military has been accused of exerting significant influence over the country's politics, foreign policy

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and economy. Pakistan's military acts as a deep state power in the country which can undermine democratic institutions and processes, leading to decline in democratic governance. Additionally, the military has historically played a significant role in politics of Pakistan, which has further eroded the country's democratic institutions and undermined the rule of law. Although, Pakistan was founded as a democratic state, ~~its~~ ~~was~~ but democracy has been facing challenges since the creation of Pakistan. Four martial laws have been implemented in Pakistan which manifests the military intervention in politics of Pakistan. Other than martial laws, military has also been influencing the foreign policy and economy of Pakistan. Since it can be stated that Pakistan's democracy has grappled with an overbearing military interventions.

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