

Democracy in Pakistan: Hopes and Hurdles

Outline

Thesis statement

The democracy in Pakistan is very hopeful for the success of the country. But, it has some hurdles are also present in the democracy of Pakistan.

Introduction

"Democracy is in the blood of the Muslims, who look upon complete equality of manhood and believe in fraternity, equality and liberty."

Quaid-e-Azam M. Ali Jinnah

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2-Constitution

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Essay

Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah made Pakistan as a democratic country because he said, "Democracy is in the blood of the Muslims, who look upon ~~eq~~ complete equality of manhood and believe in fraternity, equality and liberty." The democracy in Pakistan is very hopeful for the success of country. But, some hurdles are also present in the democracy of Pakistan. Pakistan runs on democratic system from its inception. The democratic system has very importance for the goodwill of Pakistan because it has some hopes such as political participation, constitution, election system, human rights, etc. to turn Pakistan into a successful country. On the contrary, democracy in Pakistan has also some hurdles such as dynastic politics, selfish interests, illiteracy, martial law, etc. that are not conducive for the betterment of Pakistan. Some remedies can be used to improve democracy in Pakistan so that Pakistan can become a true democratic country. Although democracy in Pakistan has some hurdles, but it is very crucial for the progress of country as it has energetic hopes.

Abraham Lincoln define democracy as, "Government of the people, by the

people for the people." Democracy is a form of government in which different people participate to run a country. It creates an opportunity not only for the selective people, but also for the whole community to rule a country. Democracy allow everyone in a society to deserve different kinds of rights. Democracy encourages the people and governments to do positive works for the development of the country. It is the type of government in which people work to bring unity and harmony in country. When the hurdles of democracy is controlled, it is very hopeful for the progress of country. Democratic countries have many opportunities to emerge in the world. The democracy must be practiced in a good way.

The democracy in Pakistan has many hopes for the development of country. Democracy ease the political participation of people. In the democratic system of Pakistan, every person finds an opportunity to take part in politics. Whether it is a poor or rich, villager or citizen, farmer or businessman, everyone can become a member of the democratic system. Different types of government are practiced in Pakistan such as local government, provincial government

and federal government. For example, local government is strengthened in Pakistan through Articles 32 and 140-A of Constitution; it means each province has its own local-government legislation. In all of these types, people from different regions and areas can participate in politics. The initiative of political participation is a hope of democracy.

Pakistan has a constitution; it is a hope of democracy. Dr. Muhammad Reza Kazimi gives the definition of constitution in his book, "A Concise History of Pakistan", "A constitution is a law which is basis of all other laws." Pakistan implemented Constitution of 1973. According to this constitution, Pakistan is a democratic country. So, the basis of constitution depends upon democracy. The constitution of Pakistan not only gives implications of democracy, but also provides a lot of other laws which are related with worldly matters. The constitution gives a name to Pakistan which is 'Islamic Republic of Pakistan'. This name shows the democracy in Pakistan with full vigour. The constitution provides different articles that identify the importance of democracy. The constitution of Pakistan focus on democracy to realize it.

The election system is a hope of democracy. It is an important part of democracy. In fact, the whole process of democracy depends upon the election system. Pakistan also trusts on election system for the strengthen of democracy. The election system actually identify which one is capable to rule a country. Through election, people of Pakistan give their opinion to elect the rulers for the country. It is done via voting. The survey of Free and Fair Election Network shows 60.8 million voters exercised their right to vote in Pakistan's 12th general elections on February 8, 2024. In the present time, voting turnout is increasing in Pakistan. The politicians can not find a way for fraud, so results of election are true and clean. The elections are a good source to elect politicians and to fulfill the desires of common people via voting. It can produce a good democracy in Pakistan.

Democracy provides human rights in actual sense. It is very hopeful for the people of Pakistan. Nelson Mandela, former president of South Africa, connected democracy with human rights in these words, "Democracy and human rights are inseparable. We cannot have the one without the other." The democracy in Pakistan ensures human

rights by supporting every individual. The suppressed or weak class can raise their demands and desires through democracy. The labour and working class represent their will in the democratic system. The democracy allows everyone to struggle for the betterment of one's life. The people can work in different fields of life. Now every gender, especially woman, get an opportunity to earn for the fulfillment of their dreams. Likewise, woman can participate in politics of the country just like man. The democracy protects the human rights through proper engagement of human beings. Hence, democracy signify the human rights.

Democracy and Islam has very similarities; it is a hope for democracy. The full name of Pakistan is 'Islamic Republic of Pakistan'. It shows that Pakistan is Islamic and democratic country. Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan, said, "Islam and its idealism have taught us democracy. It has taught equality of man, justice and fair play to everybody. Islam allows every person to spend his life according to his will."

Similarly democracy highlights the freedom of every individual. In Islamic culture, one can not become hegemon on another. Likewise, democracy cannot

allow anyone to give order to other people. In such similarities, democracy and Islam shows a suitable combination for the success of Pakistan. Pakistan can become an ideal democratic country in the presence of Islam.

The democracy helps Pakistan to become a member of regional organizations. It create hope for the maintenance of democracy. When democracy is practiced in a good ways, it can provide a signal for other countries to cooperate with such a democratic country. For example, Pakistan, is a member of regional organizations like SCO, SAARC and ECO which is very attractive for the success of democracy. Being a member of regional organizations, Pakistan can solve its domestic and regional issues with other countries. The democracy helps solve the Afghanistan crisis. The toxic relationship with India can be sorted out under the platform of SAARC and SCO. CPEC is an ongoing project between China and Pakistan; it is done with the role of regional organizations like SCO. All this is done through democracy.

Pakistan is also a member of international organizations. It is a sign

of hope for democracy in Pakistan. The democracy of Pakistan provides a way to become a member of international organizations. Ministry of Foreign Affairs states, "As a member of the United Nations, Pakistan is committed to the principles and purposes of the UN Charter." Whether it is United Nations or International Monetary Fund, these organizations always support Pakistan. The leaders and politicians of Pakistan represent Pakistan in international organizations in order to prioritize the success of Pakistan. It is a glory of Pakistan by attaining the membership of international organizations. International organizations help Pakistan to fulfill its dreams and aims through the provision of moral and economic support. Hence, democracy acts as a catalyst to connect Pakistan with international organizations across the globe.

The democracy is a process to improve the economy of Pakistan. In the present times, the economy of Pakistan is not suitable for the success of country. However, democracy is a strong source to revamp the economic condition. The economy of Pakistan can be settled with the ideal use of democracy. The report of International Monetary Fund (IMF) shows that annual

GDP growth in Pakistan is 2.4% in 2024, however, GDP growth in 2023 is -0.2%. This report shows that economy is increasing in the present time. The state institutions of Pakistan can be able to work positively for the economy of Pakistan by knowing the actual sense of democracy. The budget can be represented in a right way by using the democracy. The economy of developed countries like ~~Pakistan~~ America is very good; it is through the positive outcomes of democracy. Pakistan can also enhance its economic condition by utilizing democracy wisely. The economists of Pakistan are hopeful for the betterment of economy in the presence of democracy.

The democracy is a good platform for the decision-making of Pakistan. The different stakeholders and leaders of Pakistan are cooperatively optimistic for the decision-making of Pakistan. Democracy gives directions to different representatives of Pakistan to decide every matter to produce energetic outcomes. When different people gather to decide anything for the country, it is probability that this decision will be hopeful in the future. Jim Rohn, an American author, explains the importance of decision-making, "You cannot make progress without making

decisions." The common people also gain an opportunity to take part in decision-making. The problems and issues of Pakistan can be solved out in an appropriate way because decision-making is done by different people. It is achieved at the behest of democracy.

The democracy give awareness to people. The meaning and structure of democracy is important for its applications. The democracy provides skills and abilities to different people to know the exact meaning of democracy. When people are aware and conscious, they participate in every work related with democracy. With the increasing awareness, the voting turnout is also increased in Pakistan which is a good hope of democracy. Open Society Organization, Foundation, a non-profit organization, indicates that about 86% people of Pakistan say it is important to live in a country that is democratically governed. The awareness of democracy engaged people to work for the development of Pakistan. They do not indulge in illegal activities against the country. The people can be able to elect their representatives wisely which is a goodwill sign for democracy.

The democracy of Pakistan has

also some hurdles and dynastic politics is one of them. The dynastic politics is not conducive for the proper implementation of democracy. Although Pakistan is a democratic country, but it has representation of dynastic politics. Some families are ruling in the country since the inception of Pakistan. Dr. Saeed Ahmad Butt describes in his book, "Exploring Pakistan", "The same powerful families appear to be the leaders of any any government in power because each branch of a family is a member of another political party." Dynastic politics is only suitable for these families, not for the common people. The policies and laws are made that are good for these families. These families over-run the state of Pakistan according to their desires and interests. Dynastic politics highlights the representation of same families in the politics of Pakistan as nepotism. Dynastic politics is harmful for the democracy of Pakistan.

The selfish interest is another hurdle of democracy. The democracy is run by some representatives. They use the democracy to fulfill their selfish interests. They want to achieve their interests and goals without paying attention on the progress of country. Thomas Sowell, an American

economist, said, "Politics is the art of making your selfish desires seem like the national interest." The representatives utilize their power illegally against the policies and terms of democracy. Although these types of people show that they work for the country, but actually they act to achieve their own purposes. The selfish interest is occurred against the rules and regulations of democracy. The selfish interest of people is detrimental for the name of democracy. So, the democracy in Pakistan is often blamed.

Illiteracy in Pakistan is a hurdle for democracy. Literacy rate in Pakistan is very low. 7th Population and Housing Census of Pakistan illustrates, "The literacy rate in Pakistan is 60-7% in 2023." Some students of Pakistan do not go to schools for education. They do not know how to read and write. Many families of Pakistan do not allow children, especially girls, to attain education. These uneducated children do not know the exact meaning and process of democracy. They have no idea to promote democracy for the goodwill of Pakistan. The illiterate people lack the experience to elect representatives who are suitable for democracy. They do not know the method of voting and election

system. The illiterate people can not engage themselves to ensure democracy in a true pattern. The illiterate people further detract the democratic system, instead to settle it. Hence, illiteracy is not helpful to promote democracy.

Martial laws are the hurdle of democracy. Pakistan experienced the martial laws in the previous years. The time period of martial laws is not good for the democracy of Pakistan. The martial laws were applied by army officers, because it is the weakening condition of democratic leaders to hold democracy effectively. In fact, the democratic representatives of Pakistan supported the military at the time of martial laws. Syed Akbar Zaidi writes in his research paper, "The Improbable Future of Pakistan", "Unlike many other countries, in Pakistan, civil society actors and groups have been collaborationists, not confrontation-ists, working with military governments, not against them." The martial law regimes give policies and rules that is not aligned for the democracy. So, democracy is in negligible state for the time being. The democracy and martial law are against each other, therefore, democracy is suppressed at the time period of martial law.

Gender inequality is a hurdle for democracy in Pakistan. Gender inequality is at an intense ratio in Pakistan. Pakistan ranks 145th out of 146 countries on the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Index, and 161st out of 111 countries on the Human Development Report's 2022 Gender Inequality Index. Most people in Pakistan do not observe gender equality and they suffer a lot of problems. The women in Pakistan is not in a position to take part in politics different spheres of life. She is often suppressed and considered a fragile person. The rights of women are not fulfilled in Pakistan. In such conditions, democracy is also treated on the basis of gender. Many women face difficulties to participate in politics. In fact, some areas of Pakistan do not allow women to appear in elections for voting. Hence, women do not represent themselves in the political system of Pakistan. This situation weakens the democracy in Pakistan.

Decreasing rule of law is a hurdle for the democracy in Pakistan. According to World Justice Project's rule of law index 2023, Pakistan ranked 130th across 142 countries. There is no law practiced in Pakistan that is important for the democracy. Many

people avoid laws and rules in Pakistan. The state institutions do not follow rules and regulations; they are working with their own will. The democratic leaders also use this shaming activities to maintain their status in the representation of the democracy. They gather with judiciary to set the law for their ease. The rule of law in Pakistan is in worst position. The decreasing rule of law is not encouraging for the democracy of Pakistan. The lack of rule of law deteriorates the functioning of democracy.

Corruption is a hurdle for democracy in Pakistan. Corruption is an illegal activity to fulfill the selfish interest. The corruption is increasing in Pakistan. Transparency International reported that Pakistan has a score of 29 in corruption in 2023, meaning it ranks 133rd out of 180 countries. This enhancing corruption is not conducive for the democracy of Pakistan. The democratic representatives indulged in corruption to fulfill their means. They do not think for the development of country. They use their power for personal motives. They want to become rich person by shameful activities of corruption. The corruption is observed in public and private offices in Pakistan. It creates a

negative image of democracy and people avoid to trust on such a democracy that is filled with corruption. The corrupt people use this activity to achieve their demands. In this way, corruption is not useful to implement democratic system efficiently.

Cultural norms, sometimes, are a hurdle for democracy in Pakistan. Culture is a common practice followed by a specific society in different areas of the world. Some cultural trends are not good for democracy in Pakistan. The culture of some regions of Pakistan do not trust on democracy. The culture promote its own laws that are harmful for democracy. Culture is also involved in the political system of Pakistan. The culture violate the rights of women to participate in politics and become a member of democratic system.

Similarly, culture also effects on the voting system. For example, in Pakistan, people vote to a person who belongs to their caste, whether he or she is capable for democracy or not. The role of democracy is neglected in view of culture. The culture shows nepotism in the democracy in Pakistan.

Feudal system in Pakistan is a hurdle for democracy. Feudal

system is practiced in some areas of Pakistan with full spirit. The feudal lords do not cooperate with the representatives of democracy. They encourage their own laws which opposed the laws of democracy. The feudals do not want to improve under the auspices of democracy, because they have many possibilities in their feudal system. The landlords and landholders give large amount of money to democratic leaders to side their opinion and laws for the benefits of them. If some true democratic leaders want to change the feudal system, the feudal lords violate these leaders and change their mindset forcefully. Dr. Saeed Ahmed Butt writes in his book "Exploring Pakistan", "The country's feudal system with its sets of obligations and hierarchy provided similarly inhospitable soil for building a democracy." Hence, feudal system is not supportive for the democracy in Pakistan.

The role of opposition parties is a hurdle for democracy in Pakistan. The opposition parties act against the policies of ruling party. They want to change the rule of the present party. In order to achieve its mission, the opposition parties take part in harmful activities to down^{fall} the government of

ruling party. The opposition parties conduct strikes and long marches to attract people towards them. In this scenario, the democracy in Pakistan is not suitable for proper working for the country. The importance of ruling party is affected by the actions of opposition parties, therefore democratic laws and conditions lost its significance. For example, PTI is a opposition party at the present time in Pakistan. It does not cooperate with the government to fulfill the aims of democracy. So, opposition parties are not appropriate for the implementation of democracy.

It is need of the hour to improve democracy in Pakistan. Some remedies can be used to fulfill the purpose. The people of Pakistan should be responsible to follow the democratic system. The people must elect representatives wisely. The democratic leaders should be honest to ensure democracy. They should be cooperative with the common masses to practice democracy in a good way. The accountability must be increased in Pakistan, because it is an initiative to highlight the importance of democracy by accountability of democratic leaders along with demos. The hurdles can be changed into hopes of democracy with the

proper utilization of these remedies.

The democratic system is implemented in Pakistan from its independence. The democracy in Pakistan has some hurdles and hopes such as similarity with Islam, member of regional and international organizations, improving economy, etc. which are beneficial for the progress of country. The democracy encourages Pakistan to revamp its status. However, democracy in Pakistan has also some hurdles such as gender inequality, decreasing rule of law, corruption, cultural norms etc. along with hopes. The hurdles in democracy do not support the positive vibes of democratic system. These hurdles should be removed from the democracy of Pakistan. Some remedies can be utilized to improve the democracy in Pakistan. It can change hurdles into hopes of democracy. The true implementation of democracy is very hopeful for the prosperity of Pakistan.