

# DYNASTIC POLITICS AND FEUDALISM: MAJOR HINDRANCES TO DEMOCRACY IN PAKISTAN (CSS-2024)

## INTRODUCTION:

"Democracy is not about election alone, but about the institutionalization of accountability, transparency, and equality in governance" — Ishaat Hussain

Pakistan's democratic system remains fragile due to immature political dynamics and institutional underdevelopment. Despite the 1973 constitution supporting parliamentary democracy, political parties have failed to ensure effective governance. Dominance of political families and feudal ethos undermine democratic progress, destabilize the system. Ishaat Hussain emphasizes the lack of institutional maturity as a key issue. Strengthening democracy requires constitutional and electoral reforms to address intra-party conflicts and factionalism. A pragmatic approach is essential to curb feudal and dynastic dominance, promoting sustainable democratic development and ensuring true representation of the people.

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF MAJOR

## HINDRANCE ON THE WAY OF ESTABLISHING A

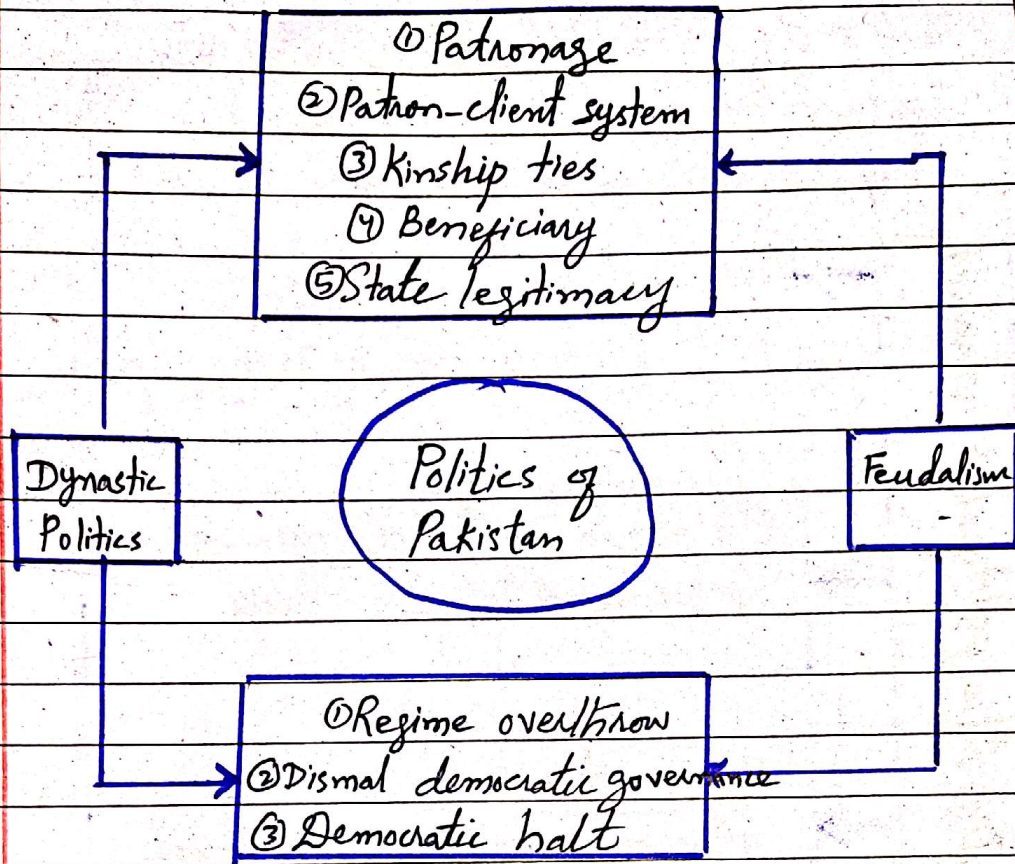
## TRUE DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM IN PAKISTAN

Since independence, Pakistan has adhered to a democratic system with president as a head of state and prime minister as a head of government. Power is decentralized across federal, provincial and local levels. However, democracy has faced instability. Early civilian governments (1947-1958) failed to form coalitions, and none of the 23 prime ministers completed their tenure. Four Martial laws (1958-2006) further disrupted democratic progress. The result has been political instability, economic fragility, and weak institutions, leaving Pakistan's democratic process underdeveloped and ambiguous.

## HOW DYNASTIC POLITICS AND FEUDALISM

## HINDRANCE TO DEMOCRACY IN PAKISTAN

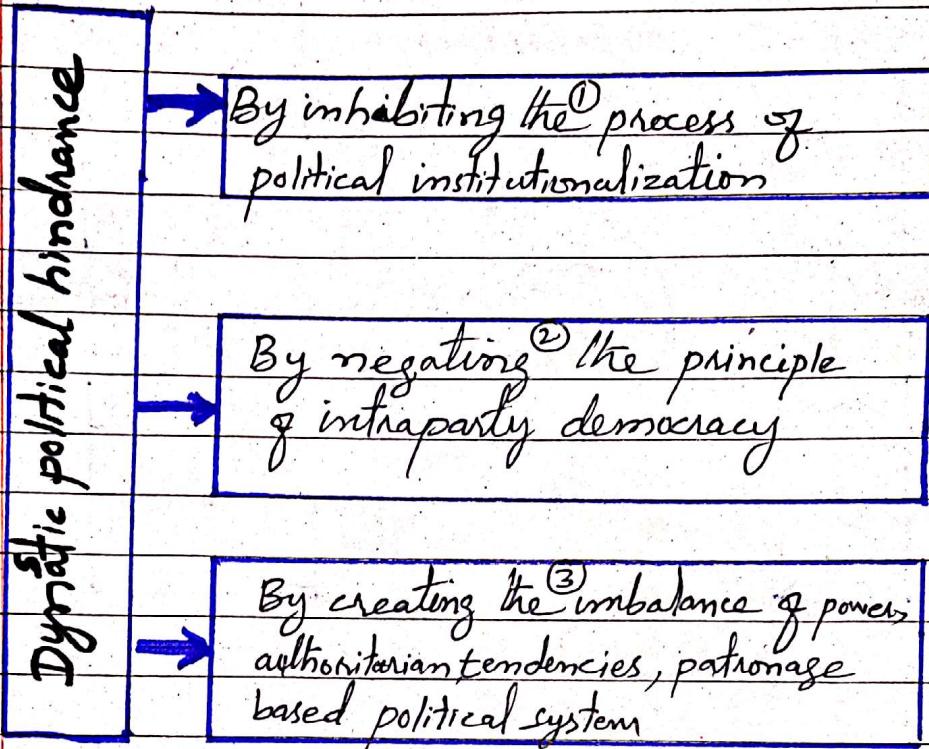
Dynastic politics and feudalism undermine Pakistan's democracy by restricting merit, political freedom, and equality.



## DYNASTIC POLITICS AND INSTABILITY IN PAKISTAN

Dynastic politics and feudalism undermine Pakistan's democracy by fostering patronage systems. As noted by Hassan Askari in "The Military and Politics in Pakistan 1947-97": PML-N created a patrimonial order, controlling bureaucracy and police loyal to the 'House of Sharif'. This results in nepotism, weak institutions, and legal subversion. Democracy requires strong institutions, rule of law, and accountability. Dynastic politics hinders democracy by blocking institutionalization.

intra-party democracy, and fostering authoritarianism and patronage.



①  
By inhibiting the process of political institutionalization

Dynastic politics hampers political institutionalization, crucial for democratic governance. Research by Ali Cheema, Hassan Jawed, and Feroz Naseer, highlights that since 1985, two-thirds of Punjab electoral races have been won by dynastic candidates. Political parties relying on alliances

with dynastic families to secure electable candidates, neglected building strong party structures, enabling dynasties to maintain dominance.

(2)

## By negating the principle of Intra-party democracy

In a dynastic political system, true intra-party democracy is elusive. As "Ishaat Hussain" in "Governing the ungovernable" stated, elites have dominated politics since 1985 through dynastic links, blocking non-dynastic aspirants and undermining merit, competition and transparency.

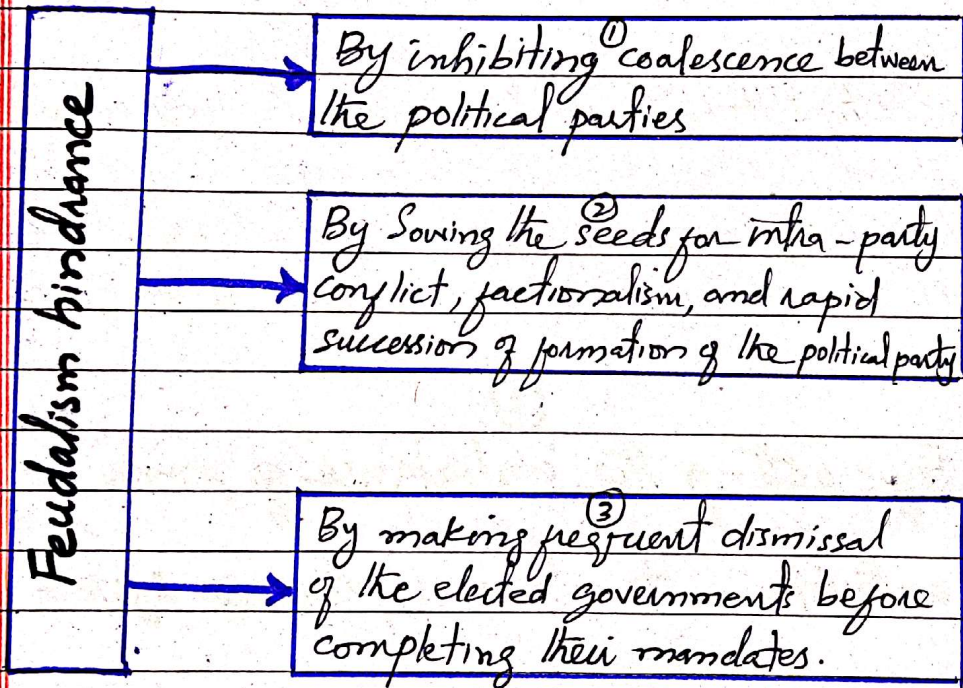
(3)

## By creating the imbalance of power authoritarian tendencies, patronage system

Power concentration destabilize politics, favouring Punjab and fostering autocracy. According to Seema Mustafa, dynasties suppress independence, institutionalize authoritarianism, and thrive on factionalism, hindering democracy's decentralization and freedom.

# FEUDALISM IN POLITICS AND INSTABILITY IN PAKISTAN

Feudalism obstructs democracy by preventing unity among political parties, fostering intra-party conflict and factionalism, and causing frequent dismissals of elected governments before completing their terms.



①  
By inhibiting coalescence between  
the political parties

Feudalism in Pakistan hampers

democratic progress and endangers internal security, crucial for stability in a diverse society. Democracy's decentralization risks misuse in unstable nations. Anwar Syed notes, feudalistic traits in politicians, including intolerance, violence, lawlessness, disregard for public welfare, corruption and submission to central authority, hindering democracy.

## ② Sowing seeds of intra-party conflict and factionalism

Feudalism has led to intolerance and factionalism in political parties, hindering democratic governance in Pakistan. The absence of unity and shared goals has sparked intra-party conflicts and frequent party formations. Factional politics and feudal networks have prevented the rise of a true national party, turning democracy into a tool for political rivalry.

## ③ Frequent dismissal of elected governments before completing their mandates

Feudalistic tendencies -

prevent political parties from engaging in constructive dialogue. Hasan Askari Rizvi noted, many leaders treat democracy as a weapon against rivals, not as a frame for compromise and solutions. This mindset has led to the frequent dismissal of elected governments under the guise of restoring democracy.

## CRITICAL ANALYSIS

Pakistan's democratic process has struggled due to political instability, largely driven by dynastic politics and feudalism. These factors have hindered democratic evolution, leading to a weak and ambiguous system. The country faces constitutional crises, judicial overreach, economic instability, weak governance, and social unrest.

## CONCLUSION:

"A democracy is not a state in which people act like sheep; it is a state in which they think and act like human beings". - H.G. Wells

In a nutshell,



DATE: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

political instability in Pakistan undermines democratic governance, with dynastic politics and feudalism as key drivers. Political parties follow democratic norms superficially, while power consolidation by chiefs stifles reform. Patronage networks foster corruption, and military interventions strengthen authoritarian rule, making these networks crucial for regime stability.