

Topic : Has Democracy Failed to Deliver in Pakistan?

A. Introduction

1. Evolution of different forms of governance
2. Democracy and its key objectives
3. Thesis statement

B. Characteristics of Real Democracy

C. Failure of Democracy to Deliver in Pakistan

1. Extreme poverty confirms the failure of democracy;

- i. 38.9% of total population is considered multidimensionally poor
- ii. 16.5% of total population is extremely poor.

2. Absence of transparency and accountability manifests the true picture of democracy in Pakistan

3. Paralyzed freedom of speech contradicts with true democratic features;

- i. World Press Freedom Index 2024 ranks Pakistan 152 out of 180
- ii. Kidnapping and arresting of civil

society activists

4. Absolute power held by federal executives lead to two more defects;
 - i. Power is not diffused horizontally
 - ii. Power is also not devolved vertically
5. Deep-rooted political brands that do not win votes via merit
6. Lack of investment in people;
 - i. Sparse investment in health and education sector
7. Prevalence of gender inequality shows unjust democratic system
8. Polarization and fear resulted from terrorism undermine credibility and value of democratic institutions

D. Areas Where Democracy Remain Successful

1. Emergence of social media and private channels present real picture of democracy
2. NFC award : a resource distribution formula entailed provincial integrity
3. Awareness and rise of urban middle class resulted better governance demand

E. Conclusion

Essay

Emergence of societies became complex and dispersed with the passage of time. In order to bring a defined shape and order to the dispersed and unorganized society, the idea of governance originated. Governance refers to the system of rules, practices and structural framework of institutions to deliver public services and protect sovereignty of states. Governance is practiced through various methodologies and democracy is one of those methodologies. Democracy is, quoted by Abraham Lincoln, form of government in which people are elected through the common will of people to serve the people. Transparent, free and fair elections, power of separation of institutions, provision of basic human rights; education, food, shelter, clothing, devolution and centralization of power, and the rule of law are the key features of democracy. Regrettably, the democracy in Pakistan

is on the deathbed, felled by natural
ills and inflicted wounds - Extreme
poverty, absence of transparency and
accountability and paralyzed freedom
of speech show the bleak picture
of democracy in Pakistan. Furthermore,
deep-rooted political brands and concentrated
power have added misery to the democratic
illness - Besides, dearth of investment in
human development, rising tower of
gender inequality, and terrorism uprise
question the credibility of democracy
in Pakistan. All these parameters
overshadow those areas where democracy
in Pakistan is successful. It includes
emergence of social media, awareness
and rise of urban middle class - who
posses the ability to question the
malpractices in governance - and the
provisions in 18th Amendment in the
Constitution of Pakistan reveal that
democracy, with inflicted wounds, has
the ability to flourish - This piece of

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Writing will delve primarily into the demonstration of failures in democracy, and inspect the areas where democracy is flourishing in Pakistan-

To begin with, transparent and free and fair elections demonstrate the core foundation of real democracy. It enables masses to elect those people who they believe serve them at their best. Furthermore, separation of powers; non-interference of institutions, is one of the key features of true democracy. It enables institutions to practice their authority without any external influence. Moreover, rule of law and provisions of basic human rights are also among inescapable features of real democracy. Elimination of any of the above mentioned characteristics will erode the true essence of real democracy.

The question, however, arises: Pakistan being a democratic state, has failed

to deliver democracy in Pakistan, whose answer lies in the adoption of multidimensional approach. The following paragraphs will discuss how democracy has failed to deliver in Pakistan.

Starting from the extreme poverty, World Bank Report on Human Development Index 2024, revealed that 38.9% of the total population is considered multidimensionally poor; unable to afford the basic necessities to live. Whereas, 16.5% of the total population lives below the poverty line. It illustrates that democracy in Pakistan is failed to ameliorate the sufferings of people of Pakistan.

Then, absence of transparency and accountability is another reason that deteriorates the real democracy.

Transparency and accountability are interconnected and promote good governance.

People are kept unaware of the relevant information of government policies and practices. It hinders the masses to question

those who are responsible and must be held accountable - Blockade of openness to information is the wake of unaccountability which demonstrates how democracy has failed to deliver in Pakistan.

Likewise, suppression of free speech contradicts with real democratic features - World Press Freedom Index 2024 ranks Pakistan 152 out of 180 countries which highlights that the global right to free speech, to rise the voices against the authorities, and to question the credibility of institutions is the subject of oppression - Kidnapping of civil rights activists and journalists is supplementing more to the bleak picture of democracy - Abduction of Journalist Imran Riaz Khan and social activist Sami Deen Baloch is the epitome of fragile freedom of speech in Pakistan.

Furthermore, absolute power held by executives leads to more democratic defects.

First, power is not diffused horizontally through Subservient judiciary to executive after 26th Amendment. Second, power is not devolved vertically through resource control in provinces deterring the provincial autonomy. Real democratic states do not possess these defects, but the surge in absolute power in Pakistan illustrates that Pakistan fall short of real democracy.

In addition, deep-rooted political brands who do not win votes via merit contain power. Furthermore, party heads monopoly causes ills too. About 35% seats of Senate are filled by party heads without elections leading to nepotism and cronyism. Political monopoly is not the feature of real democracy but of the fragile one.

Besides, prevalence of gender inequality reveals unjust democratic system. World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index 2025 ranked Pakistan 148 out of 148 countries. It reflects that

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women in Pakistan live in Kali Yuga - an age of darkness, moral decline and social degradation, particularly resulting from discrimination and negligence. In the context of Pakistan, the Kali Yuga strengthens due to government negligence. The ominous diving of Pakistan in ranking due to flawed governance system elaborates that Pakistan has lost the spirit of real democracy.

Finally, the surge of terrorism waves undermines the credibility and value of institutions whose primary function is the safeguard of citizens and peace. Extortive measures by terrorists has elevated the sense of fear and polarization among the masses. Elusive rule of law has brought the breeding ground to terrorists. The land where citizens live under the shadow of fear and risk life and property to breath in peaceful air, can not be associated with real democratic state.

The above discussion reveal how

democracy has failed to deliver in Pakistan. Besides this, efforts can be observed to restore the true essence of real democracy in Pakistan. Democracy is the continuous process, not an event, which blooms with emergence of education, media and accountability. The following discussion will illustrate despite highs and lows, how democracy is thriving success in Pakistan.

Firstly, emergence of social media and private media channels in Pakistan present the real picture of democracy. Social media platforms are used as a source of information from any corner of Pakistan. Similarly, talkshows and interviews conducted by private channels with government officials are the source to uncover the hidden loopholes in the governance system. Due to social media and private media, leaders are observed more cautious to perform their duties, which illustrates the successful side of democracy in Pakistan.

Secondly, devolution of power from

centrise to provinces through 18th Amendment in constitution paved a way toward real democracy. Distribution of resources through NFC (National Finance Commission) Award in 18th Amendment illustrates an effort to bring provincial integrity. 18th Amendment revealed that Pakistan possess true potential of real democracy.

Lastly, rise of urban middle class embodded the credibility of democracy in Pakistan. The urban middle class is educated and aware of the governance practices. Through social media, the urban middle class demand accountability and transparency in governance processes. Masses with awareness and sense of accountability shrinks the gaps in democracy in Pakistan.

Making the entire discussion concise, it can be stated that complex societies need highly effective democratic system for their preservance and survival. Pakistan's democratic system is eroded due to the persistance of poverty, absence of transparency

and accountability, oppressed freedom of speech, deep-rooted political monopoly, neglected investment in human capital, prevailed gender inequality and terrorism. All these ominous factors have contributed to vulnerable democratic situation in Pakistan. As the dust settles, the dawn appears. Emergence of social media, provisions in 18th Amendments and education among the masses unfold the brighter side of democracy in Pakistan. Despite the challenges, Pakistan is entering into a period where real democracy exists. It can be witnessed through the public participation in democratic processes and evolution of digital societies where ^{the} governed can question the governors.