

Topic: Democracy In Pakistan: Hopes And Hurdles Outline

1) Introduction:

Thesis: Democracy in Pakistan is facing hurdles, but there are hopes that democracy will prevail in Pakistan.

2) Hurdles for the democracy In Pakistan.

- (i) Illiteracy and poverty are the hurdles for democracy in Pakistan.
- (ii) Weak law enforcement, judiciary and lack of accountability are obstacle for democracy to prevail
- (iii) Lack ofocracy, weak parliament are challenges for democracy
- (iv) Suppressed media and press are challenging democracy in Pakistan

3 Hopes for The Democracy In Pakistan

- (i) Youth activism in politics is the hope for democracy to prevail.
- (ii) Increasing role of social media in exposing inefficiencies and creating awareness is hope for the democracy in Pakistan.
- (iii) Increasing participation by the marginalized groups in elections and politics are the hopes.
- (iv) Global encouragement by international organization and allies are signs that democracy will prevail in the country.

4 Way forward

- (i) Improving literacy rate/providing education to citizen
- ii Independent media & process for promoting democracy
- (iii) Transparency and accountability in institution

Conclusion

Winston Churchill once said
"Democracy is the worst form of
government - except for all others
that have been tried." This paradox
aptly reflects the hurdles and hopes
in the democratic pathway, especially
for the states that struggle to
balance expectation and realities.
At its core, democracy is a form
of governance in which sovereignty
lies with the people, exercise
directly or through elected represent-
ative. It ensures justice, freedom,
accountability and welfare of the
people. In Pakistan, democracy is
demonstrated through the beacon
of hopes which inspire people
by democratic values, including,
equality before law, accountability
of the leaders, justice and
policy making on citizen's voice,

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deserving public trust in democratic values. However, the journey of democracy in Pakistan ^{has been} marked by fragile governance, corruption, political instability, which systematically erodes democratic values and weakens the democratic institutions. Democracy in Pakistan is facing multiple hurdles. These hurdles are evident in higher illiteracy rate, weaker law enforcement, lack of meritocracy, and dynastic leadership and suppressed media. Despite these hurdles, optimism lies that democracy will prevail in the country as youth activism in politics, increasing role of social media to aware people about goods and bads of politicians, increasing participation by marginalized groups in political activities, and global

encouragement for political values, are raising hopes for the democracy in Pakistan. These hopes would be turned into reality by taking practical measures for democratic values to be practiced in the country.

To begin with, illiteracy and poverty cripple the very foundation of democracy in Pakistan. Due to illiteracy people of Pakistan do not have much awareness to use their voting right responsibly, creating an invisible obstacle for democracy in Pakistan. According to economic survey of Pakistan 2024-2025, the literacy rate in Pakistan is 58% which means a large proportion of population is uneducated that directly

impact their decision to choose the representative for themselves. poverty also plays a role to hinder democracy in Pakistan. Political elites in Pakistan after short term measure to the people to gain their trust and vote, and people happily accept that for their survival. Therefore illiteracy and poverty are the major hurdle for the democracy in Pakistan.

Along with illiteracy and poverty, weak enforcement of law, judiciary fragility, and lack of accountability are making democracy as an illusion rather than a reality. The failure of law enforcement agencies allow the impunity of powerful, eroding public trust from democratic institutions. Pakistan Global Rule of

law index put Pakistan 130th
rank out of 140, highlighting
glimpse of failing democratic institution
and democracy as well. The slowed,
~~impartial~~ justice decisions by weak
judiciary are also factors that hinder
democracy in Pakistan. As Anatol
Levan mentioned in his book
"Pakistan A Hard Country" that justice
system of Pakistan is slowed
corrupt and ineffective which left
the vacuum for extreme groups to
exploit it and provide alternatives to
it. These alternatives challenge the
essence of democracy in Pakistan.
Lack of accountability in the
democratic institution is a reason
for democracy failure in Pakistan.
This evil gave birth to corruption
by which feudals and political elites
illegally enrich their wealths and

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propensities, undermining the spirit of democracy. IMF in its governance and corruption assessment ranked Pakistan with "weak organizational accountability" as critical governance flaw. All these factors highlight that in Pakistan democracy is facing multiple hurdles.

Additionally, Lack of meritocracy, weak parliament, and inefficient bureaucracy are also the factors that undermine democracy in Pakistan. Pakistan has the history of dynastic politics in which few chosen parties ruled the country for decades, undermining meritocracy in democracy. The parliament of Pakistan is also a hostage of political polarization instead of serving as a platform for consensus and dialogue it became a room for political hostility and obstruction. The repeated

parliamentary deadlock is a proof of this bitter reality, making fundamental unit of democracy ineffective and inefficient. The ^{inefficiency of} bureaucracy of Pakistan is also a major obstacle for democracy in Pakistan. The politicization of bureaucracy make it ineffective to do its work or provide reforms, pushing public of Pakistan in the traps of corruption and bribery. Hence, lack of modernity, weak parliament and ineffective bureaucracy are the significant hurdles for the democracy in Pakistan.

Along with this, the suppressed media and press also hindered the democracy in Pakistan. The threat to journalists of media hinders the right info

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from the public which impedes their right to information and affect their decision to choose leaders for themselves. media is also censored to expose the inefficiencies of the institution and politicians, eroding essence of democracy while deceiving the public to know the reality. The world press freedom index Pakistan 180 out of 180 highlighting the censorship of media in Pakistan. Therefore suppressed media and press is a significant hurdle for the democracy in Pakistan.

There are multiple hurdles for democracy which are discussed above. The below discussion examines what are the hopes for democracy in Pakistan and those hopes

promote democracy.

The growing youth bulge of Pakistan and their active participation in democratic process is a vital hope for democracy in Pakistan. As youth active participation in the election is capable of changing democratic culture in Pakistan, it shows that the youth of Pakistan is not only involve in participation but also shaping the democracy in Pakistan. For instance, in General Election 2018, participation by youth significantly impact the results of the election. Moreover, initiative taken by youth like "Vote First" campaign and universities debates on political right highlight that youth of Pakistan are not just the recipient, but they are shapers of democracy.

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So, the active participation of youths playing a vital role for enshrining the democracy in Pakistan, marking a major hope for it.

Not only youth activism, the role of social media is also significant for providing huge hope for democracy in Pakistan.

Social media enable people to know about the institution failure, governance inefficiencies and corruption, which condemned by processing ~~social~~ traditional media. For example, Panama paper revelation initiate public debate and start judicial action against political elite is due to circulation of this matter on social media. This

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role of social media ensure transparency by exposing the inefficiencies, promoting democracy in the country. Social media also help in creating transparent election system by exposing procedural inefficiencies to election commission of Pakistan. For example, journalist and ordinary citizen can highlight important issue during the process like reach to million in few minutes, ensuring transparency and generating hopes for the democracy in Pakistan. Therefore involving citizen, exposing inefficiencies, social media is a vital hope for the democracy in Pakistan.

Along with this...

participation by marginalized groups is a hope for democracy in Pakistan that ensure inclusivity and participation. Women and minorities are getting involved in the democratic process, and institution through reserved seats, campaigns, and advocacy groups highlight introduction of marginalized group in the democratic system. Active participation of minorities in Senate and National Assembly is a proof that the hopes for the democracy to prevail are still alive. For example, Shireen Rehman, Maryam Nawaz, are active women member of National Assembly providing strength to democracy. The increasing participation of women

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hopes for democracy in Pakistan. All in all the increasing participation by marginalized group play a pivotal role for providing new opportunities for the democracy to prevail in the country.

Finally, Global encouragement is also a hope for democracy in Pakistan. International institution like United Nation appreciate the democratic values and provide technical and financial support to the countries for encouraging democracy in the countries, providing hope for the democracy in Pakistan. Along with this, relation with allies like US and European countries which also provide Most favored GSP+ status to Pakistan, and

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tie it with condition for the fulfilling of human right and promoting democratic reform, motivate state to have democratic norms

There fore, global encouragement by international institution and allies are the hopes for the democracy in Pakistan.

Besides these hopes, there are practical measures available to give prosperity to the democracy in Pakistan and make democratic values to be practiced in the country. The below given discussions explain the way forward for the democracy in Pakistan.

Improving literacy rate and providing formal education to the citizen is crucial way forward for democracy in Pakistan. Education

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give the citizen consciousness to engage in democratic system and use their vote wisely to choose their leaders, without influencing from patronage politics and not to sell their vote for shorter term benefits.

According to a study by PILDAT districts, where literacy rate is higher shows significant participation in the election and results in greater votes turnout, highlighting that education enables citizens to raise their voice in the democratic system. Furthermore, Pakistan's youth bulged demography is an opportunity which can only be beneficial when they are educated.

According to UNDP, 60% population of Pakistan is under the age of 30, signifies the importance of education for better democratic system in Pakistan. Hence illiteracy and formal education promotion is a practical

Step to ensure democracy in Pakistan.

With education, independent media and free press are essential for democracy in Pakistan. Media and press are the watch dogs which expose corruption, political inefficiencies that erode public trust. According to Reporters Without Borders, World Press Freedom Index Pakistan ranked 150 out of 180 countries, emphasizing the urgent need of free media in Pakistan. Media also play significant role in informing citizen about the performance of politician and provide diverse political views, creating informed citizenries crucial for shaping democracy in Pakistan. Therefore, free press and media are the solution for the democracy in Pakistan.

Along with free media, ensuring accountability and transparency in institutions is important way forward to promote democracy in Pakistan. Corruption poor governance has eroded the public trust from in the democratic institutions. According to World Governance Indicators, Pakistan ranked 133 out of 180 countries in the Corruption Index, highlighting grim of poor governance of democratic institutions. Secondly, when democratic institutions become more transparent through budgeting, auditing and public monitoring it not only improve democratic values, but also improves public services. According to World Bank, governance accountability directly enhance governance effectiveness. So, for democracy to grow in Pakistan, it is necessary to ensure transparency and accountability of the democratic institutions.

Conclusively, the debate on democracy in Pakistan make it clear that country is standing between the hopes and the hurdles. While many obstacle at individual and institutional level represents the hurdles that democracy is facing in Pakistan, there are hopes the democracy will endure in Pakistan. On one hand there are hurdles like illiteracy and weak democratic institutions and their vulnerability that prevent democratic values to prevail in Pakistan, suppressed media and poor governance and corruption that erode the public trust. On other hand, increasing activism of youth in politics, participation by marginalized groups and increasing role of social media in creating awareness are

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hopes that democracy is
the future of Pakistan.

Some practical way forward.

including providing education to citizens,
free media, and accountability
of democratic institutions are

solutions for promoting democracy
in Pakistan. Therefore democracy
in Pakistan is not complete,

but it is not jailed. By
effort of citizens and ~~that~~ struggle
of getting their rights and leader
effort to continue to push democratic
reforms, the democracy will prevail
in near future in Pakistan.