

DEMOCRACY IN PAKISTAN :

HOPES AND HURDLES

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The Economist has ranked Pakistan 167 out of 178 countries in the Democracy Index. This position highlights that Pakistan has hybrid regime but very close to Authoritarian country. Government and military forces work ~~entirely~~ closely to run the country that is hybrid regime. The idea of democracy goes back to the French

revolution in 1780s when "Sovereignty of the people" was promoted in France. This idea further fortified when the size of middle class extended. Similarly, ~~the~~ at the time of Pakistan independence, leaders of that time agreed to administrate Pakistan through democracy way. Even after almost seven(7) decades the democracy is not implemented in the true spirit because of lots of conundrum. Internal political turbulence, economic fragility, external aggression and rise of insurgent and terrorist activities are some of the major problems that have created stumbling blocks for democracy in Pakistan. The core cause of democracy was, government for the people not people for government. Owing to this, today Pakistan has positioned lowest in the Democracy Index.

This essay would highlight the hopes for democracy in Pakistan at

first. Afterwards, it could shed some light on the hurdles for democracy in Pakistan. Lastly, it would underscore some pragmatic approaches and way out for Democracy in Pakistan to be implemented in the true spirit.

To start with, with the revolutions and raising middle class size in early 18th century, people started to safeguard the rights by pressurizing their kings to shield them from every threat. Thus, democracy was inaugurated. People were given liberty and equality, government exists to create peace and also guaranteed individuals for representation in the process and decision of ~~governance~~ states. State demanded supported from the ordinary citizens in return government institutions would provide fundamental rights, rule of law, accountability, equality, universal franchise

and free press for the citizens. However, these are also the basic essentials for democracy in any country.

Firstly, Pakistan contains significant number of educated young population which provides hope for democracy in Pakistan. To avail the democratic rights, one needs to have basic education so that he can demand those rights accordingly. Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) notes Pakistan possesses around thirty six point one percent (36.1%) of youths and young generation is not only economic asset but also a future of any country. ~~When~~ Having gigantic number of young educated individuals provide hope for democracy to prevail in Pakistan. Thus, educated population is truly a hope for a country like Pakistan.

Disseminating awareness through social

media is the second most convincing reason hope for democracy in Pakistan. Every individual from adolescence to old ~~per~~ person have access to social media platforms like and outlets. A data released by The ~~Ex~~ Tribune Express depicts that more than 157.2 million people are active users on social media applications in Pakistan only. When such a large number of individuals use platforms and then they also get to know about their basic democratic rights; like right to education, access to ~~free~~ ^{safe} water, freedom of speech and other rights that provides positive signs to democracy in Pakistan to flourish. Therefore, spreading information through media accounts give hope for democracy in Pakistan.

Establishing an independent court for protection of constitutional rights is ~~the~~ also give hope for democracy in

Pakistan and it is the third hope for democracy. Recently, Pakistan state has announced a new Federal Constitutional Court (FCC) for the prevalence of democracy and rights. As earlier, there were around 40,000 thousand cases were pending the Supreme court of Pakistan due to which there was slow decision making and verdict rate was meagre. For that purpose, FCC would ensure and protect the rights of individuals constitutional rights that eyes for the democracy. Ergo, independent constitutional court would provide hope for democracy in Pakistan.

Fourthly, democracy helps in making ^{leaders} accountable that also indicates hope for democracy in Pakistan. Democracy one of unique features is that it makes accountable to leaders who are corrupt, misusing his power or mismanaging the nation's resources.

It is the democracy that had disqualified former Prime Minister (PM) Nawaz Sharif. Through same ~~same~~ democracy, Asif Ali Zardari ~~was~~ and Mariyam ~~the~~ Nawaz Sharif were incarcerated in the prison for years. Henceforth, democracy ^{gives} the hope for ~~indi~~ Pakistan because it make leaders accountable in front of citizens.

Lastly, providing democracy in Pakistan provides equal democratic rights to men and women that lies the foundation of hope. Pakistan's constitution ^{treats} ~~gives~~ equality between ~~women~~ and men through constitutional articles. Moreover, ~~gone~~ with democracy, merit system exist in the Pakistan that gives equal chance to everyone. Besides this, Security Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) give mandatory compliance of equal rule to female ratio in the private sector. As per SECP reports the ratio between men and women in 2023 was 3:1.5.

Possessing such equality between men and women, it does give a glimpse of democracy. All in all, democracy equal democratic rights and opportunities gives hope for democracy in Pakistan.

Previous paragraph shed light on the hope ^{for} of democracy in Pakistan.

However, forthcoming paragraph would underscore hurdles for democracy in Pakistan.

Existence of corrupt politicians and their influence in Pakistan is the first and most cogent ground that illustrates hurdle for democracy in Pakistan. These politicians go against the rule of law to suppress and oppress their own rivals. James A. Robinson highlighted in his book "Why Nations Fail" that politicians misuse their power and authority to maintain their dominance and influence in the political

area. Jaffer also understated that nation's faith because of rivalry among the politicians; self interest that surpass public interest and benefit. Hence, presence of corrupt politicians gives stumbling block for democracy in Pakistan.

The second reason for hurdle for democracy in Pakistan that half of population is unaware about the democratic rights. Human Development Index ranked Pakistan at the lowest, due to which people are struggling to meet their ends. The size of middle class is shrinking because of rising salary tax and other indirect taxes. In addition to this, forty five point seven percent (45.7%) of population live in poverty line or below. When citizen struggle to fulfil their needs then basic essential and needs then the question of quality democracy

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arises. ~~Result~~ Truly, unawareness of basic democratic rights to the citizens gives hindrance for democracy in Pakistan to prevail.

The third major hurdle for democracy in Pakistan is that it becomes weak and fragile in times of crisis.

In the democratic form of government, Approvals, from authorities take ~~times~~ times and some ~~one~~ of individuals do not approve because of their personal benefits. In financial crisis 2008, Pakistan's economy was harshly hit, inflation was at time high and that created an uproar in the peripheries of Pakistan. Moreover, in the 2010 floods, ~~Pakistan~~ democratic form of government poorly perform due to which hundreds and thousands of lives were lost, and millions of loss were recorded.

According to ~~The~~ Dawn, around ~~a~~ thirty five hundred (3500) lives were lost. Therefore, ~~democracy~~ ineffective response in times of crisis is also the responsible ~~to~~ bottlenecks for democracy in Pakistan.

Polarized politics erode

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Institutional trust that give obstacles for democracy in Pakistan and it is fourth for reason. When politics is polarized and one party is benefited it erode not only institutional trust but it also provide ~~it~~ ~~imp~~ ~~erode~~ to the democracy. Zohid Hussain, in his article published in the Dawn & news paper with the title "Polarized Politics", mentioned that democracy would not be implemented in Pakistan in true spirit ~~with~~ the politics is polarized. Therefore, polarized politics also create ~~barriers~~ ~~obstacles~~ for democracy in Pakistan.

Lastly, One man, one vote makes educated and illiterate equal is the last ~~two~~ barriers for democracy in Pakistan. Educated person can vote rightly with all awareness without any influence, that is good sign for democracy. But, unfortunately, Pakistan is a country where 40 forty percent (40%) of population is illiterate. It is because of this for democracy is not ~~not~~ ~~not~~ realized in the true spirit. Uneducated population and people votes the ~~poor~~ ~~poor~~ representative under the influence. ~~and~~ True and genuine candidate suffers from

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it. Thus, the concept of one vote make educated and illiterate equal cause a roadblock for democracy in Pakistan.

Preceding paragraphs underscored the hurdles for democracy in Pakistan, while, upcoming paragraphs would null over the ~~far~~ way forwards for democracy in Pakistan.

~~The~~ firstly ensuring rule of law and accountability is the prominent way out for democracy in Pakistan. When rule of law and accountability is followed ~~to~~ religiously it ~~will~~ would inculcate fear and threat in the politicians and leaders. That will so by this way leader performs and acts correctly instead of deviance. Pakistan can learn ~~experiences~~ from Burmai country where law are supreme especially for those who possess higher authority. In case, ~~if~~ a ~~part~~ politician is found guilty, punishment is given openly in the market. Both are the reasons why a small country is successful. Thus, rule of law and accountability would provide pragmatic approach

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for democracy in Pakistan.

Secondly, enhancing institutional credibility and trust would flourish the democracy in Pakistan. Transparency in the governmental institutions would help ~~and~~ democracy to prevail in the country. People will be able to get basic rights. Everyone would feel equal. Muleeha Lodhi, in her book Pakistan: search for stability, also highlighted that when Pakistani get state institutions are transparent, the citizen trust and respect towards institutions ~~gradually~~ increases. She also mentioned that for any democratic country, transparency in the institutions is prerequisite. Ergo, ~~augmenting~~ augmenting institutional credibility and increase public trust would ~~also~~ allow democracy to work effectively in Pakistan.

Lastly, adopting electronic democratic process and procedures is the last and third way out for effective democracy in Pakistan. ~~It~~ It becomes complicate for individuals to exploit voters,

and election result manipulation. For that Pakistan Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) needs to adopt electronic process for voting and result for that true and genuine leader is selected without any bias institution. Estonia and Denmark are the first country where voting is done electronically at the home without going to the polling station. Henceforth such process like electronic democratic process will help democracy to prevail in Pakistan.

To cap it all, democracy is the one of the best forms to manage and govern the country. Pakistan is the developing country which is struggling to ~~survive~~ survive for past seven decades. Democracy can flourish in Pakistan because Pakistan possess highly educated ^{young} population, a mass media is spreading with in seconds through social media platform, leaders are continuously being held accountable and it provide equal opportunity in both private and public sector. Whereas, there are also hurdles Pakistan is facing

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like, corrupt leaders, the illiterate population, unable to combat ~~weak~~ at the times of ~~crisis~~ crisis. and politics is also ~~very~~ polarized. However, it can provide democracy can be achieved via rule of law, transparency, enhanced institutional credibility and adopting electronic democratic processes. ~~we~~ ~~are~~ ~~one~~ need to realize that Rome was not built in one day. Democracy to realize fully need some time for the ~~de~~ ~~emerging~~ developing countries like Pakistan.