

# ROLE OF Political Leadership In Undermining Democracy In THIRD WORLD Countries

## OUTLINE

### Introduction

**Thesis:** Political leadership has played a detrimental role in undermining democracy especially in third world countries.

### 1. Understanding the concept of democracy

According to Abraham Lincoln

### 2. Political leadership and democracy - chips of same block

### 3. How political leadership is undermining democracy

(i) Bureaucrats - agents of political leaders -

ii) Policies are made keeping in view the personal interests of political parties - privatization - 1990

iii) Through the unequal distribution of resources

i.e Balochistan in Pakistan & Jammu & Kashmir in India

iv) By creating social divisions in society - lack of tolerance - 9 May incident

v) Social injustice paves way towards terrorism and extremism

vi) Religious disunity - CAA 2019  
India's pro-Hindutva policies

vii) Undermining human rights and rights of minorities - Muslims of India and Myanmar

viii) hereditary politics - is undermining democracy - Nepotism

Bilawal Bhutto, Maryam Nawaz etc



ix) elections in third world countries are just an eye wash

2024 election of Pakistan, on-going elections in india

x) Corruption - A bone of contention - democracy index

**How to make the role of political leadership effective for democracy**

i) By ensuring rule of law

ii) Making governance transparent

iii) Ensuring accountability mechanism

iv) Promotion of free media

**Conclusion**

# ESSAY

Political leadership whether it is from first world country, second or third, it has a direct connection with the establishment of democracy at large. The developed countries also have implications for democracy due to the negative role of political leadership, but the main sufferers of this are the third-world countries. The developing countries are at the top of list due to lack of education and awareness in people. Political leadership has played a deleterious role in undermining democracy by using bureaucrats as agents of political parties and by making policies primary for their parties interests. Moreover, due to the unequal distribution of resources between provinces, it has created a state of social disunity ultimately leading to global problems like terrorism and extremism. Not only this, the



negative role of political leadership " also resulted in the form of religious disunity, hereditary politics, corruption and controlled and unfair elections thus undermined the concept of democracy.

Democracy in terms of Abraham Lincoln is, "Government of the people, for the people and by the people." It means the election of government on the basis of majorities decision, making efforts for the people so that they can experience freedom and equality. The core principles of democracy are freedom, equality, representation, accountability, participation, protection of rights and separation of powers. If any of the principles of democracy are not fulfilled, it will undermine the whole concept of democracy.

Democracy and political leadership goes hand in hand, with each

reinforcing and sustaining the other. Democracy is the framework within which political leaders operate and serve the interests of people. While freedom is the principle of democracy, political leaders have to ensure it. In the same way, accountability is the core of democracy, political leaders are accountable for their doing. Democracy is all about representation and political leaders are the representators of state ensuring all the basis of democracy. Thus, it is clear that democracy is the theory on which political leaders perform their tasks.

As role of political leadership and democracy is interconnected, So if role of political leadership is negative it will have serious repercussions on democracy. This is the very thing that is faced by the third-world countries today. Political leadership



is undermining democracy by using bureaucrats as an agent of political parties. In a politically polarized state, bureaucrats usually lose their neutral position and instead of faithfully safeguarding the interests of their country, they try to serve the political parties. The interference of government in the process of postings and transfers of officers is deeply undermining the concept of transparent governance and thus undermining democracy.

In addition to the divisions in the tiers of bureaucracy, policies that are made by these bureaucrats are primarily based on the vested interests of political parties. Bureaucrats in the effort of staying at good position, draft such rules and policies that can bring short-term political advantage to incumbent government. For instance, in Pakistan the nationalization of 1970s and



privatization of 1990, the ring-road scam and Sasti Roti scheme are some of scam or so called policies of bureaucrats that clearly state the negative role of political leadership in undermining democracy. The electoral bond scheme (scam) in india is also one of the policies that shed light on the influenced bureaucrats. Hence, undermining democracy.

Furthermore, the unequal distribution of resources also play a detrimental role in undermining democracy. In terms of Pakistan (a third world country) the issue of Baloch Separatists is only emerging due to the incompatible and unjust policies of political leaders. This unequal distribution creates a sense of inferiority that is the initial steps of social disconnectedness. When people of Balochistan thought that they are not treated equally



as the people of Punjab and KP in terms of resources or budget allocation. They started feeling socially depressed and backward which ultimately poses a serious threat for the sovereignty of country. All this is due to the vested policies that are made by bureaucrats and politicians which result in democracy being undermined.

Similarly, the negative role of political leaders undermined democracy by creating social divisions in the society. People are supporting their political parties only on the basis of emotions and do anything for their associated political parties even though the parties have done nothing for them.

It has a detrimental impacts on the relationships of people with one another. Due to lack of tolerance, people do not bear anything against their leader and started demonstrations and

strikes that resulted in mob violence. The incident of 9<sup>th</sup> May 2023, is a living example that showcased the negative role of political leadership in undermining democracy.

Political leadership's role also paves way towards terrorism and extremism thus undermining democracy. Due to social injustice, people moves towards the path they are not desired to choose. In terms of achievement of their rights and to quit further living in pressure, they choose the way of violence. All this is due to the lack of political leadership that ensure their rights, give them equal privileges and facilities. Social injustice not only gives rise to global issue that make the image of country bad but also it undermine democracy.

Likewise, Social injustice also paves way to religious disunity that



is only initiated due to the vested policies of political leaders. One such example is Citizenship Amendment Act 2019 of India whose rules are recently published by BJP and according to them, all other communities except Muslims who came to India from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh before December 2014, are eligible to apply for citizenship. This new rule started an out-rage and all this is due to the pro-Hindu regime of BJP. Religious disunity is a serious issue of third-world countries because of the harmful role of political leaderships in undermining democracy.

In the same way, Rights of minorities and overall human rights are completely deteriorated in third-world countries. Political leadership of the developing countries have vested interests and they do nothing for the promotion and well-being of mankind. One more



time the example is India, where Muslims are the second majority community but are deprived of their rights. Another example is the Muslims of Myanmar, they are not only treated like animals but are also expelled from their own countries. These kinds of incidents can only emerge if the democracy is undermined, and it is true as all these are implications of worse role of political leadership.

The hereditary politics is also one of the big hurdles that undermine democracy. The culture of nepotism and favouritism is not new. Deep diving into history can showcase that politics is seemed as a family business. Even the person is not worthy of becoming political leader, just because his/her father was a politician and has a lot of influence, his/her predecessor also became a politician



and this is a never ending chain. Examples are PLM-N is an inheritance of Nawaz Family, PPP is of Bhutto Family, INC Indian National Congress is Ghandhi's family inheritances and so on. In this way, democracy is undermined because of the negative role of political leadership.

In addition to the hereditary politics, elections that are considered the most important part of democracy are just an eye wash in third world countries. The election commission that is considered to be independent is not only completely influenced but its members are the supporters of particular parties also. This is because they want to stay at their position and enjoy the privileges, they do as asked by the incumbent government. The elections of 2024 in Pakistan and India and also the history of elections portrays



influenced image of election commission and are alleged for rigging. This shows the role of political parties in undermining democracy.

Last but not the least is Corruption that undermine democracy.

Corruption is the bone of contention of all the social, economic and political hurdles that is faced by third-world countries. The only Asian country to be downgraded in the Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index 2023 report is Pakistan.

This is due to corruption and lose of proper check and balance (audit) of officers and political leader. If corruption was combatted and a corruption free environment is created - The third-world countries will automatically achieved their ideal political leaderships to pave the country towards prosperity.



There are some scrupulous measures that if a developing country adopt will surely make its role of political leadership effective for democracy. The first and foremost in ensuring rule of law, maintaining accountable. Secondly, the promotion of transparent government if this thought is instilled in bureaucrats and politicians that they have to respond to masses in terms of right to information - their attitudes will surely change. Thirdly, ensuring accountability mechanism and last but not least is the promotion of media freedom. If these measures are adopted effectively, the third world countries will surely prosper in their respective objectives.

In a nutshell, it is clear that the role of political leadership in undermining the democracy in the third world countries is not only worse but it is worsening

day by day in the form of influenced Bureaucracy, and policies of government, the unequal distribution of resources, social divisions and social injustice, heredity politics, influenced and unfair electorates and corruption. This issue demands an active contribution by all the members of society and sectors of third-world country by ensuring rule of law, making governance transparent and accountable and by promoting free media. Unless, every single individual does not perform his or her responsibilities in the best possible way, the goal can never be achieved. The earlier it is realized, the better it is.