

Democratic unrest in Pakistan: Causes and Consequences.

Outline:

1. Introduction:

Thesis statement: Pakistan, in this era of modernization, faces dangerous democratic chaos. There are several factors such as inter-provincial tensions, extremism, terrorism and political polarization behind the democratic unrest. These issues contribute to economic crisis, unemployment and poverty.

2. A bird's eye view of democratic unrest in Pakistan:

3. Causes of democratic unrest in Pakistan:

3.1 Inter-provincial tensions over natural resources cause democratic unrest

3.2 Federal-Provinces disputes lead to chaos

3.3 Extremism harms democratic values

3.4 Political polarization causes democratic unrest nationwide

3.5 Terrorism poses threats to democracy

3.6 Lack of fair elections cause democratic chaos

4. Consequences of democratic unrest:

4.1 violations of human rights nationwide

- 4.2 Create economic crisis by disrupting foreign investment
- 4.3 Enhance unemployment across the country
- 4.4 Harm nation's prestige in international arena
- 4.5 Encourage military coup in a country
- 4.6 Resulting in bad governance in the country

5. Recommendations to overcome the democratic challenges:

- 5.1 Promoting political tolerance between parties
- 5.2 Improving democratic process through fair elections

6. Conclusion

The Essay

An Oxford graduate, feudal lord and a charismatic leader, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was a hawk who flew at the seventh sky. Although he mobilized the masses over Kapra, mohan and Roti (shelter, clothing and food). He was well aware of

the future democratic unrest in society. This was how Zulfur Ali Bhutto tried his best through the establishment of the Constitution of 1973 to promote democratic values. Unfortunately, the efforts of Zulfur Ali short lived. After decades of the constitutional framework, Pakistani society has entered into a new democratic chaos. Factors such as inter-provincial tensions over natural resources contribute to democratic unrest. Besides, federal-provinces disputes and extremism lead to chaos in the Pakistani society. Similarly, political polarization and terrorism also contribute to democratic chaos. However, democratic unrest creates economic crisis and unemployment. It also boosts bad governance nationwide. Moreover, democratic unrest violates basic human rights. Therefore, Pakistan faces horrible democratic chaos due to inter-provinces disputes, extremism, terrorism and political polarization. These issues contribute to economic crisis, military coup, inflation and unemployment nationwide.

Pakistan since its inception has been facing facing democratic unrests. The country has experienced divisions

on the basis on ethnicities. Pakistan has also seen military coups throughout the democratic evolution. According to Anatol Leiven's "Pakistan: A Hard Country" in the South Asia, Pakistan is the only nation that has been through persistent military takeovers due to rotten democracy. Currently, the Pakistan society is experiencing political polarization, extremism, terrorism and inter-provinces that contribute to democratic unrest. Therefore, Pakistan is the victim of horrible democratic unrest in the region.

In this era of globalization, inter-provinces disputes over natural resources cause democratic unrest. Provinces such as Sindh and Punjab resist over the sharing of water. Sindh accuses Punjab over the construction of hydrological projects. For instance, Sindh has been persistently accusing Punjab for canals over the Indus River (2025). This tension contributes to unrest between both the provinces and raises objections over constitutional framework (NFC). Thus, inter-provinces tensions over natural

resources cause democratic unrest in the country.

Similarly, federal-provinces disputes lead to democratic chaos in the country. Although constitutional frameworks such as National Financial Commission (NFC) and Council of Common Interests (CCI) exist between federal and province, The new demands of security, economy and health push federal-provinces into disputes. For instance, during the COVID-19 provinces accused the Federation for lack of assistance. Besides, the federal-provinces disputes continue over reformation of (NFC), causing federal-provinces isolation and promoting democratic unrest in the country. Therefore, federal-provinces disputes create democratic unrest in the country.

In this era of civil war, political extremism harms democratic values in the Pakistani society. Politicians, sectarian scholars and leaders often use extremist ideologies to achieve objectives. Political extremism destroys the functioning of democracy nation. This was how reported by the Pakistan Human Rights Commission (PHRC) 2025 about the Parachinar

Violence inspired by extremist leaders. The violence led to deaths of children, women and adults. Thus, extremism in Pakistan harms the basic values of democracy across the country.

Likewise, political polarization causes democratic unrest nationwide. Pakistan faces horrible divisions among political parties. National and local parties are conflicting rather than working together for a common goals. For instance, some parties push the interests of particular groups and ignore the rights of others. This act creates disputes among political elites and leads to democratic unrest across the country. To sum up, political polarization fuels the fire of democratic unrest in Pakistan.

In this era of modernity, terrorism poses threats to democracy by creating the sense of insecurity. Pakistan faces horrible terror attacks on political, national and local leaders. Terrorists blow up not only military and civilian sites but also they target election centers.

According to Pakistan Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS) 85000 individuals since 9/11 have lost their lives in the terrorist attacks. Consequently, the terror attacks on political leaders led to civil disobedience and anti-state protests across KP and Balochistan. Thus, terrorism destroys the process of democracy nationwide.

Moreover, rigging in elections causes democratic unrest across the country. Pakistan has historical records where rigging in elections led to civil unrests nationwide. Leaders, along with politicians, joined civil disobedience movements against unfair elections in Pakistan. According to the United States Congress report on "Democracy" 2023-24 noted lack of fairness in the recent elections held in Pakistan. Similarly, the U.S State Department call the result of Pakistan's elections undemocratic. In short, rigging in elections create the current democratic chaos in Pakistan.

However, democratic unrest has led to serious consequences. Democratic unrest violates human rights. Democratic unrest results in protests and

civil disobedience against the ruling elites. Protests harm economic activities and encourage clashes between people and governmental authorities. Consequently, the clashes between protesters and authorities lead to deaths, injuries and arrests. This was how 9 May Protest harmed both security personnels and civilians, violating the basic human rights such as security and economic.

In a nutshell, democratic unrest violates human rights across the country.

Furthermore, in this era of economic competition, democratic unrest creates crisis by disrupting foreign investments. Political polarization leads to instability, insecurity and shutdown of economic activities across the country.

Unrest in a country discourages investors and companies and pushes the industries to other countries. This was how rightly said by Beoh-ki-moon "Political Stability and economic stability go hand and hand." Besides, CPEC Phase-II is a case in point which faces hurdles in all its projects due

democratic unrest in Pakistan. To sum up, democratic unrest creates economic crisis by disrupting foreign investment across the country.

Besides, democratic unrest enhances unemployment nationwide by closing industries and pushing investors to diversify their economic activities. Democratic unrest often leads political instability, protests and shutdown of internet. These all above setups impact the functions of industries and e-commerce. For instance, the closure of internet harms online investors, sellers and customers. Similarly, roadblocks and persistent protests stop the supply chain of industries across urban and rural areas, resulting in loss of millions of jobs within hours. Therefore, democratic unrest leads to massive unemployment.

In this era of international diplomacy, democratic unrest harms Pakistan's image across the globe. Pakistan occupies one of the honourable places among democratic countries worldwide. Internal democratic crisis such as political leaders arrests, shutdown of internet and protests may harm the

prestige of Pakistan. This was how Global Human Development Index 2025 ranked Pakistan below the African nations in the context of freedom. Similarly, the United Nations Human Rights Commission (UNHRC) called the detention of political leaders undemocratic and considered such acts as violation of human rights. Thus, democratic unrest destroys the image of a country in the eyes of international community.

Further, democratic unrest encourages military coups. The failure of democratic process always creates chaos such as protests, economic crisis, poverty and inflation. These factors push military leaderships to protect the nation through removing civilian governments. This was how General Zia-ul-Haq imposed dictatorship to remove civilian government because of civil unrests. Currently, democratic unrest push the country towards military influence. Therefore, democratic unrests encourage the military leaderships to remove civilian government.

Additionally, democratic unrest results in bad governance across the country. Protests, roadblocks and persistent shutdown of internet results in government's service delivery. The civil disobedience of masses enhances threats to law and order situation. This was how the UNO/ESCO noted that protests in Pakistan often challenge the law enforcement agencies to maintain peace. In this regard, democratic unrest leads to corruption, crime and lawlessness situations across the country. In short, democratic unrest enhances the features of bad governance.

However, the challenges to democracy in Pakistan can be overcome through promoting political tolerance between parties. Politicians, scholars and leaders should promote political tolerance. They should educate the voters that no doubt opinion matters but at the end of the day, all politicians work for the peace and prosperity of the nation. The promotion of political tolerance can reduce

political polarization, disintegration and protests. Therefore, promoting political tolerance is the need of the hour.

Similarly, improving democratic process through fair elections is essential for peace. Interim governments under **Article - 204** must fulfill their responsibilities fairly. They should encounter all the chances of rigging in election centers. This is how fair election conduction can lead to authentic results. Through fairness in elections, Pakistan can become an example of democracy across the globe. Thus, improve democratic process through fair elections is important for the peace in the society.

To conclude the entire discussion, it can be said "Democracy is not only a system but also it is a direction of peace, prosperity and unity" [Obama Congress speech 2016]. The democratic unrest destroys any nation's peace and prosperity. In Pakistan,

democratic unrest caused by internal faultlines and harms millions of people nationwide. The call of action is loud and clear. Politicians, leaders and scholars should promote political tolerance. Political tolerance may reduce polarization, disintegration and chaos. Similarly, interim governments have to promote fair elections and encounter every plan of rigging in elections. This can promote one of the most effective systems of democracy. Therefore, Pakistan faces one of the most horrible era of democratic unrests. Inter-provincial disputes, terrorism, extremism and rigging in elections contribute to the democratic chaos, resulting in economic crisis, violation of human rights and bad governance.