

Syeda Taseed Fatima
Pak Affair
Test # 3

QNo: 1

Evolution of democracy
in Pakistan, defined by
democratic norms or political
culture.

1. Introduction:

بول کے لب آزاد ہیں تیرے
بول کے زبان اب بھی تیری ہے
Speak for your lips are free
Speak for your tongue is still yours

The above couplet by Faiz Ahmad Faiz portrays a picture of democratic state where freedom of speech is not censored and masked by lies. Unfortunately, democracy in Pakistan depicts a contrasting picture. Ever since the independence, democracy in Pakistan has been marginalized by political and military interferences thus undermining the states potential and capability.

2. Historical snapshot of democracy in Pakistan;

Post-1947 ⇒

- At the time of independence Pakistan was a democratic country.
- Till 1956 state remained unstable due to absence of constitution, undermining democracy.

Military coups in Pakistan ⇒

Recurrent military coups in Pakistan and regime changes in late 90s eroded the democratic fabric of the state.

Current status of democracy in Pakistan ⇒

In 21st century, democracy has become a question for state's legitimacy, defined by political culture and establishment interferences.

3. True face of democracy in Pakistan;

Though Pakistan was developed on Quaid's vision of democratic state but it fell into the trap of dynastic politics. Now, military in Pakistan drives the democracy in the state, truly deciding the government and opposition. The democracy of Pakistan is oscillating between short-term governments and military interferences deciding the future of the state.

↳ Example;

The regime change and vote of no-confidence against former prime minister Imran Khan shows democracy shaped by political and military culture in Pakistan.

4. Factors shaping democratic norms in Pakistan;

Democracy in Pakistan is shaped by political culture, influencing the state's global position and its future. The following

political factors are contributing to democratic culture in Pakistan;

- Dynastic politics
- short-term governments
- Rule by law
- Judicial refrain
- Media censorship
- Weak implementation of constitution

5. Democracy shaped by dynastic politics in Pakistan;

After the demise of Quaid-e-Azam and Liaqat Ali Khan democracy in Pakistan fell a prey to dynastic politics. The two ruling elites of Pakistan The Bhutto family and the Sharif family has been ruling Pakistan for over decades now. This vicious loop of dynastic politics in the state has questioned the legitimacy of democracy in state.

6. Short-term governments portray weak democracy in Pakistan;

Ever since the independence, none of the government in Pakistan has been able to fulfill their tenure. The recurrent change of governments in the state has disrupted the democratic culture in Pakistan.

7. Democracy framed by rule by law instead of rule of law;

For years, Pakistan has been under the rule by law instead of rule of law. The misuse of power by political elites has thrown the democracy in grey waters. The discrimination between elite and poor class in Pakistan has imposed a situation of rule by law in the state where power decides the implementation of law. Thus political culture has shaped the democratic norms in Pakistan.

8. Judicial refrain: Political culture limiting the powers of judiciary;

A democratic state maintains the supremacy of judiciary. But in Pakistan where democratic norms are influenced by political culture, the powers of judiciary is undermined and limited by executives and legislatures in the state, unbalancing the trichotomy of power.

• **Example:** 26th and 27th amendment in the constitution has marginalized the supremacy of judiciary in the state.

9. Media censorship and fear imposed by political culture;

A democratic state respects the freedom of media and journalist in state i.e Scandinavian countries. But unfortunately in Pakistan media is censored by ruling elites and political culture undermining the democracy in the state. The narratives shaped by paid media and imposed fear of political leaders questions the democratic culture of the state.

10. Political culture influencing the constitution of the state;

A constitution is the preamble of any democratic state. Unfortunately, constitution in Pakistan is the driving tool of power that erodes the legitimacy of institutions. The constitution of Pakistan fails to deliver its prospects because the political culture has misused it in their favour amending it 27 times so far.

11. Critical analysis;

Thus, democracy in Pakistan remained a stagnant process due to corrupt and dirty political culture being normalised in the state. The political culture has normalised the rule by law in the state, making true democracy a question for state's legitimacy. Today, Pakistan is thriving under dictatorship and authoritarianism of ruling elites who has usurped the freedom of common civilians in Pakistan.

12. Conclusion;

In a retrospect, the democracy in Pakistan has never been evolved to its peak potential, rather it is influenced by political culture and flawed dictatorships. But to prevail true democracy in Pakistan is not elusive dream to achieve.

With few institutional and structural reforms, Pakistan can cope its flawed democracy as Faiz Ahmad Faiz used to say,

دل نا افسید نہیں نا کام ہی تو ہے
عجبی ہے غم کی شام فگرشام ہی تو ہے

The heart is not defeated but failed momentarily.
The night of sorrow is long but it is just a
night.