

# Democracy in pakistan-a dilemma

[Politics](#), [Democracy](#)



Against the backdrop of recent surge in political temperature, speakers at a roundtable discussion forum stressed the need for continuation of democratic process despite of all the current challenges faced by it. In a roundtable discussion forum “ Political Expediency and the Future of Democracy in Pakistan” organized by the Center for Research and Security Studies (CRSS), at its office premises in Islamabad, issues and challenges related to current democratic governance and prospects of a democratic Pakistan were discussed in detail. Mr.

Ahmed Bilal Mahoob, executive director, Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency (PILDAT) opened the discussion with an overly optimistic note and observed: “ Democracy in Pakistan has never been as good as it is today. ” He noted that it is the first time in history of Pakistan that three state pillars, those are Executive, Judiciary and the Legislature are carving out their respective ways out of this challenging political environment and it is a good omen for young democracy. In the past, judiciary was under the influence of executives, but now it is independent and assertive.

Parliament in a democracy is always considered a vital state pillar, but again it tried to overpower the other state organs. Against this backdrop, during the era of current democratic government, the growth of all state organs is continuous and stable. Likewise, during current democratic rule, for the first time, Senate was chaired by an opposition representative. Then if we look towards media, we have a robust and independent media, which explicitly does not seem under the influence of government.

Coming to the democratic governance, Mr. Mahboob asserted the notion that there is widespread political discontentment and disillusionment among the masses. And ironically, the people have directed all their criticism and scathing towards federal government and spared the provincial governments altogether, whereas under the 18th amendment, most of the ministries have been devolved to the provinces. Therefore when we disparage the federal government, we should also vent some anger on provincial governments as well.

Discussing the recent upsurge in political temperature, Mr. Mahboob stated “ As we are nearing to the close up of this government, therefore, all political parties want to gear up the political momentum in order to gain mileage out of it in coming elections. He further continued by saying that “ Almost all opinion surveys and polls in recent months suggest that the people are fed up by the present government— and want a change, so this upsurge is not abnormal and nothing is worrisome in it”. He narrated that when we talk about the freedom of expression, we generally take a pride after looking at the countries, which enjoyed sustained periods of democracy.

And this is something that we should cherish, despite of all short comings. He termed the “ Imran Khan phenomenon” as a harbinger of positive change in the political arena of Pakistan. PPP leader and former federal minister, Syeda Abida Hussain said that since inception Pakistanis wished for democratic rule in the country, and it is because, “ Pakistan born out of vote”. But, she lamented that we have been scathing under long dictatorial rules for better part of our political history and there are reasons for it.

She observed that though we as a nation may have developed liking for democratic rule, but ironically we lack political temperament. Mrs. Hussain said that the voices for change are getting louder and louder with the passage of time. She acknowledged that there is rampant corruption in the country and no state department is free of it. "State institutions should be established on the basis of equality, charter of democracy should be written by all the parties struggling for rule of law in the country", she suggested. Every one of us talks about poor governance but nobody did anything" she lamented. She reiterated that we have to make the system more responsive through sustained efforts for efficient democratic governance. Meanwhile, if we resorted for premature political solutions at this stage, then the future of democracy in Pakistan will be dark once again. She warned that the covert apparatus is once again out with its ulterior motives and the political parties will have understand its maneuvering for the benefit of democratic et up in the country. Former lawmaker from Swat, Mr. Adnan Aurangzeb said that in Pakistan "—the gap between political representatives and the represented is widening relentlessly" and this is not healthy sign for the future of democracy in the country. He underlined that there are structural problems, which are not letting the democratic culture take hold in Pakistan. He said that unfortunately, the legislators in Pakistan are not well connected with their constituencies, and therefore the people feel marginalized.

According to him, there lies huge social, cultural, economic and political void between the rulers and the ruled. And this pertinent factor will continue to haunt the dream of a peaceful and prosperous democratic Pakistan. Participants in the roundtable discussion forum were of the view that there is

need for a responsive democratic governance structure and without accountability the dividends of democracy will not trickle down the masses. And in consequence, the ubiquitous discontent will eventually lead towards the folding of the political system.