

# Can democracy succeed in pakistan politics essay



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Democracy is a form of government in which people elect their representatives themselves and the representatives of the people form government and opposition. Counseling is the base of a democratic state. The state ensures equality and equity for all citizens irrespective of their caste, color, language and race. The government performs all duties, for the welfare of all the people and is accountable to people in the performance of its obligations. The opinion of each citizen is respected and given due importance. Every citizen has a right to vote to his favorite candidate, to contest election, to join any party and form his own party. That is why it is defined as “ Rule of the people, rule by the people, and rule for the people”.

Democracy was the form of government which was thought to be implemented when Pakistan came into being. Pakistan came into being as a result of a strong democratic movement under the leadership of Quaid-e-Azam. The people of Pakistan, who faced all the problems and difficult circumstances, showed their determination to defend the freedom. They boldly faced the situation and gradually solved the problems. The Pakistani movement was based on Muslims` absolute rights of independence and the real implementation of democracy was one of the objectives of establishment of Pakistan. It was thought to adopt the democratic structure and enforce democratic values. Quaid-e-Azam described the objective of establishment of Pakistan in Sibi as “ Let us promote “ Democracy” according to the Islamic principles.” Unfortunately, it is a disheartening spectacle that within a period of 65 years, Pakistan has not proved itself to be a democratic state in its true sense. Instead of becoming a model of democracy as visualized by Quaid-e-Azam, Pakistan has become what may

be best described as “ lame democracy” (Shaikh, 1) Pakistan was governed by civil and military bureaucrats during the early 20 years of it. The first democratic elections were held in December, 1970. In constitution of 1973, this was for the first time in the history of Pakistan, democratic parliamentary government was formed. This first phase of democratic government continued till 1979. Second and third democratic phases were between 1988 to 1999 and 2007 to the present date respectively. In this way, Pakistan remained as a democratic state for only 24 years. Democratic traditions are not yet developed in Pakistan and during these 24 years, democracy proved itself nothing but a failure. Although implementation of democracy was one of the objectives of Pakistan however, democracy cannot succeed in Pakistan because its political leaders, bureaucrats and feudal landlords will never let democracy to be flourished. Moreover, basic democratic traditions of equality and freedom are not followed in Pakistan

The main responsibility for the failure of democracy lies with politicians. Firstly, they are not sincere with their jobs and are unfaithful to the state. Secondly, Pakistani political leaders are so incompetent that their policies keep failing. People vote a set of politicians with a hope that their elected representatives will act as their faithful leaders and will devote themselves wholeheartedly to the services of the people. But to people`s dismay, Pakistani politicians do not act as honest leaders but as corrupt and disloyal politicians whom ambitions lie in filling their own pockets with public money. Political leaders are responsible for playing games with people for their own benefits. They have destroyed the purpose of creating an independent homeland of Pakistan by giving rise to favoritism and corruption. In Pakistani

democratic system, the elected leaders do not regularly visit their constituencies as they are least bothered of public issues. In addition, most politicians contest elections on the basis of fake degrees. According to an official report, 106 politicians have been counted for contesting elections on the basis of fake degrees. (qtd. in culprits, 1) This clearly depicts dishonesty of political leaders. Confidence cannot be restored in the masses. Moreover, political leaders are incompetent and are unable to find out the solutions to the nations` problems. Political process keeps collapsing in Pakistan and policies of political parties keep changing and it is very hard for the politicians to reach unanimous stance for a particular political policy. The policy of nationalization and posting of incompetent management halted democracy further. Ever since the creation of Pakistan, the same political parties have stayed in power. For example, Pakistan People`s Party came into power many times. People keep supporting the same party under the slogan of “ Roti, Kapra or Makaan” because of their affection for the founder of the party without even realizing the consequences of their support. Under these circumstances, democracy can never be flourished in its true sense.

Bureaucracy also imposes a serious threat to democracy. Practically the constitution of Pakistan is based upon the democratic principles. However, the proposals in the constitution could not be implemented because of the attitude of some people, who are not ready to leave the laws introduced by the British government. These are staunch bureaucrats. Bureaucracy has always remained powerful since the creation of Pakistan. It comprises the Central Superior Services and the Provincial Civil Services. (Piracha, 1) and the main cause which stimulated the culture of bureaucracy in Pakistan is

institutional imbalance. Bureaucracy is neither in favor of giving power to anyone nor is ready to become responsible to anyone. This attitude is the main obstacle in the way to democracy. Most of the bureaucrats become partial and exploit resources of the country for a favorite political party. Bureaucrats of Pakistan are notorious for their corruption, inefficiency, and incompetency and thus responsible for destroying democracy in the country.

Another main cause for failure of democracy in Pakistan is feudal system. Pakistan has inherited feudal system from “ British India” and this feudal system will never let democracy flourish in Pakistan. Feudal land lords have a major role in forming policies and they would never like to formulate those policies which are against their interest or are beneficial for the people. The feudal lords acted as traitors and supported British leaders for creating a moth-eaten Pakistan and now, at the present day, Pakistan is nothing but a feudal state. Most of the political leaders of Pakistan are feudal lords who have established their identities as political leaders. For example, Jamal Leghari has come from a family of feudal land lords. He is the son of former president of Pakistan Farooq Leghari. The feudal lords keep people at arm`s length and treat them as their slaves. The rigid nature of this class system has prohibited Pakistan from educational and economic development and has laden Pakistan with a class structure that hinders democracy. The farmers` community is under the control of their feudal masters. Such underprivileged and economically demoted peasants` can have no other option but to vote for their masters. The famers live beyond the poverty line and cannot even express their will freely. Here, the spirit of democracy is violated. Peasants are forced to support their lords due to their fear or may

be due to lack of knowledge. In this way, the elections are of no use since the peasants will only vote for their feudal lords under their pressure and democracy will be worse than “ oligarchy”. Supremacy of feudal class is destroying democracy as well as national integration which itself essential for democracy. Democracy has been proved beneficial for the feudal land lords since it provides a cover to them and allows them to rule as long as they want. As far as common people are concerned, they feel themselves in no advantage in such a democracy. In such a situation of distorted democracy, even a thousand elections will not change Pakistan’s future.

Democracy is based on basic traditions of equality and freedom of speech among citizens. As far as Pakistani democratic system is concerned, it has failed to achieve either equality or freedom among people and thus democracy in Pakistan is unsuccessful. This is a clear evidence of inequality when people have to pay bribes in order to get themselves a job. There exists no merit policy, while making appointments and discrimination on the basis of caste, social status and even gender has eliminated the concepts of democracy. Rich can easily exploit the poor. For example, the wealthy people are always encouraged instead of educated people. Very few educated people join politics and assemblies. In this way, the uneducated people sitting in parliaments cannot build democratic society on proper lines. In a democratic state, the opinion of each citizen is respected and given due respect. The citizens have full liberty to criticize the working of the government. Although freedom of speech exists to some extent in Pakistan, but due to no constitutional safeguard, it is not fully implemented. A common Pakistani citizen lacks constitutional protection and thus when any

civil servant tries for the good governance; he has to face many obstacles. Whenever someone tries to raise his voice against government, he is pushed back instead of going forward. For example, many journalists of Pakistan who try to raise their voice against politicians are threatened by them. For example, Najam Sethi, a senior journalist of Pakistan, disclosed that he had received serious threats from both non-state and state actors. (Khan, 1) Similarly, many journalists have been murdered in Pakistan namely Abdul Haq Baluch, Abdul Qadir Hajazi, Abdul Razzaq Gul, Tariq Kamal, Aurengzeb Tunio, Murtaaza Razvi, Syed Saleem Shahzad, and Mukarram Khan Aatif. (Admin, 1) Moreover, police had beaten journalists in Pakistan on Press Freedom day and while they were covering the arrival of Asif Ali Zardari. (Admin, 1) Under these circumstances, no one will dare to stand against government. When true meanings of democracy have not been fulfilled by Pakistani government, it cannot declare it a democratic state.

Illiteracy is also one of the reasons for not letting democracy succeed in Pakistan. In Pakistan, the education sector remained neglected for a long time. In the census of 1951 the literacy rate of Pakistan was 16% that rose to 26. 2% in 1981. According to census of 1998, literacy rate of Pakistan is 43. 92% and literacy rate in 2009 is calculated to be 58% which is very low as compared to the developed countries. (Admin, 1) Such underprivileged and uneducated people cannot make right choices. So maximum part of our population is still suffering in illiteracy and backwardness and is unable to contribute anything towards the development of Pakistan. High rate of literacy is important for democracy. Illiteracy also leads to poverty. An

illiterate and economically impoverished community cannot comprehend and follow the true spirit of democracy.

In Pakistan, most of the political leaders and parties support democracy. It is argued by its advocates that in a democratic state, rulers can easily be changed without violence. This belief is false as it is evident that whenever any democratic government fails, it is overtaken by military government and the solution is never peaceful. Various examples of military rulers in the country include Ayub Khan, Zia-ul-Haq and Pervez Musharraf. Martial law is not itself enforced, but these are the bad tactics and failing democracy of the government which are responsible for giving rise to Martial Law. Moreover, the government can come back again after re-elections, for example Pakistan People Party came into power many times. The arguments in favor of democracy in Pakistan are fine theoretically but these are inappropriate in the current political scenario. It is believed that in Pakistan a democracy could never survive for long due to the incompetent people in the so called democratic system.

People support democracy in Pakistan because they believe that it is the only form of government which gives people an opportunity to make choices and what so ever their choices are, members elected are majority people`s chosen representatives. General elections are held in true democracy from time to time. The people can easily change their rulers by electing new ones. In Pakistan, the situation is worse because members elected are not people`s representatives. The main reason to it is that only very few people in Pakistan vote and unfortunately, there is very little evidence which can prove that elections in Pakistan are fair and free. Firstly, people of Pakistan

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are not prosperous and well-off and thus their votes can easily be purchased. It has been noticed that votes are purchased as cheaply as 10 rupees. Secondly, there is much rigging in the election process. Kidnapping voters or candidates on elections is a common spectacle. Moreover, Pakistani political parties do not announce their “ Party-manifesto” during the election campaign. First of all, the parties do not believe in any kind of manifesto and secondly, if they do believe in having a manifesto, it is so unclearly mentioned that it practically means nothing to the readers. In addition to this, voter turnout and system of election have further destroyed democracy. In the National elections of 2008, the total voter turnout as recorded by the Election Commission was 41. 11 percent of the total registered voters. In Punjab and Sindh, 48. 18 percent and 44. 16 percent of the registered voters voted at the elections. (petitioner, 71) Such type of election which is suffering such a low turnout is destroying the true spirit of a democratic state. Furthermore, the system of election “ First Past the Post” which is followed in Pakistan is not democratic. According to this system, the candidate securing the highest number of votes is the winner. The winning candidate, however, does not necessarily receive an absolute majority of all votes cast. Thus, according to this system, the members of the parliament who claim to be representatives of people may not command the majority of the votes registered and polled. Therefore, they may not genuinely represent their electorate. In such a situation, true democratic spirit is violated and members elected are not actually the majority chosen representatives.

The accountability process is very important in a democratic state which results in clean and fair working of the executive. However, there is no

system of accountability in Pakistan. Every incoming government makes big claims about accountability, but no effective step has been taken in this regard. If any government establishes the framework which is mostly opposition oriented or very complex, due to which the corrupt bureaucrats always escape from punishment. The government affairs are not dealt transparently and the gap between people and the government is not bridged. There is much evidence which can prove that Pakistan has no system of accountability. For example, Khursheed Mehmood Ksuri and Sheikh Rasheed Ahmad have been known to be allegedly involved in activities like corruption but no step have been taken against them and they both are enjoying the high official posts. Another example has been set by “Mullahs” who have confirmed complete support to Pervez Musharraf and they have also been involved in the genocide and master minding human rights abuses during the Bangladesh war of 1971. (Sadruddin, 1) Under these circumstances where there is no accountability process, democracy cannot be flourished.

Democracy has been proved the worst form of government for Pakistan. The existing democracy reign of Pakistan People Party has been proved the worst ever in the history of Pakistan. It is because it has given rise to unemployment, inflation, poverty and economic crisis. Democracy is not suitable for a country like Pakistan where most of the population is underprivileged. It has also been badly failed in many other countries like Turkey, Thailand, Israel and Africa. Hence it is proved that democracy is not the successful form of government. If it is successful in United States and India, it is because of their political and social atmospheres. The atmosphere

over Pakistan does not support democracy at all. Pakistani government should take the example of China which is not a democratic state but still the world`s second largest economy. Similarly, Singapore was also not a democratic state when it gained independence and Mr. Lee was its first president and he put Singapore on the map of the world. As one writer once put it, “ Singapore has achieved the American dream, but not in the American way”. This has been done through what they call a “ Benevolent Dictator”. (Trip, 1)

Pakistan is a welfare state which has been struggling for democracy since its creation. Democracy has been badly failed in Pakistan due to incompetent leadership and declining political policies. Moreover, bureaucracy and feudal system has abolished democracy forever. In Pakistan, democracy is nothing but a misapprehension which cause people to vote for someone they know and they will only know the person who can promote himself. That means it does not depend what form of government Pakistan adopts, what matters is the good administration, accountability process and merit policy. Instead of continuing system of the state as a fragile democracy, Pakistan should either become a theocracy or a communist.