

## **FAILURE OF DEMOCRACY IN PAKISTAN**

### **Introduction : -**

Democracy is a form of government in which supremacy of power is vested in the people of the voters collectively, and it is administered by them or the officers appointed by them. according to Chambers Dictionary it also means a state of society characterized by recognition of equality of right and privileges political, social and legal equality. The most accepted definition of democracy is Government of the people, for the people, and by the people (Abraham Lincoln).

### **Present scenario of conflicts and distrust.**

- Media hype about political activities.
- Failure of the democratic government.
- Debate on military role in politics.
- Escalating terrorism--a threat to the democratic system.
- Recent natural calamity.

### **Challenges faced by the democratic setup.**

- Delayed constitution.
- Overdeveloped state structure.
- Frequent military coup.
- Incompetent and corrupt politicians.
- Illiterate masses.
- Fragile Institutions.
- Weak and poverty stricken civil society.
- Political disharmony.

### **Logical consequences of the frail democratic setup.**

- Debacle of East Pakistan.
- Controlled media.
- Economic instability.

- Mismanagement of the available resources.
- Dispiriting inclination of the Foreign Direct investment
- Recurring foreign intervention into our national issues.
- Towering extremism.
- Tarnished image of Pakistan across the globe.

**Pragmatic solutions to fortify the flimsy democratic culture in the country.**

- Rule of law and order.
- Supremacy of the parliament.
- Proper and effective system of checks and balances.
- Unbiased media.
- Educational reforms.
- Investment on human development indicators.
- Worthy foreign policy.
- Political synchronization.
- Well defined role of military.
- Upholding an intact constitution.

**Conclusion.**

Pakistan, since its day of inception, has faced several challenges to establish a true democratic system, which could guarantee its survival, stability and development. Unfortunately, the plant of democracy has not taken its roots deep enough to make the country, "a durable democratic state". Pakistan was conceived on the Islamic ideology which is truly democratic both in letter and spirit, but we remained incapable of sticking to the guiding principles of Islam.

Keeping in view the recent constitutional developments, the future of democracy in Pakistan is bright; despite various challenges are obscuring its future.

The essence of democracy is in its assurance that every human being is so respected that he should have opportunities equal to that of every other human being. As revealed by Abraham Lincoln, democracy is,

**“Government of the people, for the people and by the people.”**

Liberty, fraternity and equality are the helpmates of modern democratic political creed. Without implementing a fair system of impartiality and justice, the dream of a truly democratic state, perceived by the Quaid-e-Azam, cannot be materialized.

The current pathetic situation of conflicts and distrust are solely the outcomes of a weak democratic setup. Media plays a pivotal role in molding and reshaping the beliefs of a lay man. Unfortunately, the recent media hype in relation to the political activities has aggravated the situation. Media's biasness has ignited a flame of political imbalance and disharmony, which in turn, has weakened the roots of democratic culture in Pakistan.

Similarly, the government has failed to address the problems of a common man effectively. After having a dictatorial nightmare comprising of nine years, the ballet's strength has revived the political norms of the country. Parliamentary supremacy has been reinstated but unfortunately, rampant load-shedding, heightening inflation, momentous downfall in the Foreign Direct Investment and escalating extremism are the few challenges, to which, the government has failed to embark upon. Resultantly the sense of depravation among the masses may lead towards the debacle of this democratic setup.

Likewise, recent statement by a renowned politician, about the role of military in the democratic setup, has started a new debate about the military role in the politics. Due to lack of political insight, our politicians have frequently invited the military, to topple the democratic government by opting un-constitutional means. Thus our incompetent leaders have endangered the survival of political and democratic values of the country.

In addition to, the towering terrorism and religious fanaticism is also an ultimate threat to the democracy. They consider democracy as a non-Islamic form of government. The prevailing situation in the country and the demand for the implementation of 'Sharia', is a testimony to this ideological belief. For them, the concept of democracy is western and in contradiction with Islam. As they are already a challenge for the law enforcement agencies, they are also proving a threat for this democratic government.

Furthermore, the recent natural calamity, in the shape of floods, which has paralyzed our economy, is a real test for the government. All the sectors of the economy,

especially agriculture and industry, have been severely hampered by this devastation. Under the above said pitiful conditions, the failure of the government to tackle this challenge would be a failure of democracy itself.

**Following are the causes of this gruesome tragedy:**

It is imperative to have a proper constitution when a country starts fresh. The delay in the formation of constitution thwarted the process shaping the opinion in favor of democracy as a modern political necessity. The constitution, which was drafted after nine years of the independence in 1956, was strangled after military coup by Ayub Khan in 1958. A proper constitution was formulated in 1973, but every dictator trimmed this constitution in accordance to his own personal interests. Moreover, our political forces also played a horrible role in deteriorating the original draft and resultantly, we remained unable to establish the strong democratic traditions.

Similarly, the failure to sustain democracy is due to the overdeveloped state structure. The monopolization and centralization of power, decision making structure and hegemonic designs not only weakened the democracy but also have hampered the economy of the country. These feudal-cum-politicians have hijacked the political system of the country and thus, today's Pakistan, is portraying a true picture of aristocracy instead of a strong democracy.

Furthermore, the frequent military coup, never allowed the country to adopt positive political principles. Since the day of inception, the people of Pakistan have faced more military rule than that of civilians. These military dictators have tarnished the democratic norms to prevail in the country. They have trimmed and amended the constitution for their personal convenience. Resultantly, the seed of a great democratic culture, sowed by the great Quaid, never appeared to turn into a strong tree.

Moreover, the incompetent and corrupt leaders have never allowed the democracy to flourish in the country. Since the tragic demise of the great Quaid, absence of mature leadership has been the biggest dilemma for the country. As there is no proper system of checks and balances in the country, these leaders carried on gaining power and kept the nation divested from the basic amenities of life. The malignant intentions of our political spearheads, have not only smudged the image of Pakistan before the globe, but have also proved fatal for the democratic survival.

Furthermore, illiterate masses, have also contributed in deteriorating the political system of the country. A nation with such a low literacy rate can only breed a frail political and

democratic culture. An educated person is aware of his rights and can fight for the principles, and resultantly, his voice cannot remain unheard. Contrary to this philosophy, an ignorant society weakens the democratic values.

Additionally, the fragile institution, especially the judiciary, has never given democracy, a fair chance to flourish. For a sturdy political environment, the conformity between all the institutions of the government is pivotal. Democracy never exists without rule of law, justice, civil liberties and equality of opportunities. Moreover, clash between the main organs of the state has lead to the catastrophe of the democratic state.

Likewise, weak and poverty stricken society, gives birth to resentment. A society, lacking food security, is least concerned with their rights. Fraternity and impartiality could not be the hall mark of such a culture, where more than half of the total population of the country is living below the poverty line. Consequently democratic trends cannot prevail in such an environment where the people are paying tax even on the purchase of a match-box and the grain is getting beyond their reach.

In addition to, political disharmony is proving to be venomous for the democratic mores. All the major political powers are busy in point scoring and blame game. They are least concerned with addressing the problems of the nation, and hence, a sense of deprivation among the people is replicating immensely. Without cooperation between the political supreme, the dream for a durable democratic state would remain a fantasy.

**Following are the lethal effects of frail democratic setup:**

The first and the foremost price paid by the nation due to weak democratic setup, was in the form of debacle of East Pakistan. It is a universally accepted democratic principle that power should be vested to the party who has emerged as a leading political spearhead through the power of the ballot. Contrary to this principle, some political tycoons in the West Pakistan attempted to convert the majority of Sheikh Mujeeb ur Rehman into minority. Moreover, the people of the East Pakistan were kept deprived of the basic needs of life. Resultantly, this political menace turned into a hazardous chaos which wounded our nationalism. This wound left such an unhealed scar on our national integrity that has tarnished our democratic outlook before the world.

Similarly, a controlled media is also a pitiful result of the tumbling democracy. Media can act as a lethal weapon against the corrupt leaders and impedes the possibility of any non constitutional act in the state. It also plays a vital role in educating the people and keeping them aware of their fundamental rights. Unfortunately, the non democratic forces have kept media controlled and used it in accordance with their personal reassurance. Consequently, a weak and controlled media is a breed of fragile democracy.

Likewise, economic instability is another bi-product of the flimsy democratic culture. Strong political and democratic environment is inevitable for the economic prosperity and well being. Moreover, economic stability of a country is heavily dependent upon the political stability in that country. Political tangle and shakiness has lowered down Pakistan's credit rating and has leaded the country towards the brink of economic disaster and insolvency.

Additionally, mismanagement of the country's depleting resources is also a pearl in the ring of weak democratic culture. Pakistan is not a poor but poorly managed country. We are rich in natural resources but have failed to manage them effectively and efficiently. Shaky political and democratic environment is becoming a core reason for the depletion of our hefty natural resources.

Furthermore, dispiriting inclination in the Foreign Direct Investment, is also a meager result of poor democratic values of the country. According to a recent report by the World Bank, there has been a decline of 39 percent in the country's foreign direct investment, since 2006. Heightening terrorism, towering political instability and growing menace has resulted in discouraging downfall in the "FDI". Investors fear to invest their money and time in such a crisis stricken country.

Moreover, recurring foreign intervention into our national and domestic issues is only because of our passive democratic networking. A country, with sturdy democratic norms, does not allow any foreign power to intervene into its matters of domestic and national interests. Countries, especially America, are more interested in framing Pakistan's policies than that of its own. Our national integrity is at the stake due to our political disharmony and democratic redundancy.

In addition to, the towering terrorism and extremism is also due to the molested democratic ideologies. A strong democratic state; where there is a rule of law and fairness of opportunities for every citizen, breeds active and patriot minds and souls. A desperate mind; which has been preoccupied with fear of hunger can easily become a pray of the non state actors. Resultantly, a fragile democratic culture is prone to extremism.

Finally, Pakistan's image across the world has tarnished due to weak and shaky democratic norms prevalent in the society. Above all the military and quasi-military rule strangled the democratic rule in the country. World Bank and other financial institutions have persistently laid sanctions upon the Pakistan. These financial penalties and restrains upon trade is the outcome of weedy democratic governments in the past and frequent military coups.

**Following are the pragmatic solutions to fortify the flimsy democratic culture in the country:**

Firstly and fore mostly, there should be a proper rule of law and order in the country to fortify the flimsy democratic culture. No one should consider himself above the law. Every citizen, no matter how powerful he is, must be answerable before the law for his ill deeds. There must be parity and equality of opportunities for every individual of the state. Merit should strictly be based upon competence and not upon the political and financial approach as King Luther revealed:

“An injustice anywhere is a threat to the justice everywhere”.

Likewise, parliament must be the supreme institution of the state for the application of effectual democratic rule. Every national and domestic issue of the country should be dealt in accordance with the consensus of parliamentarians. There must be a limited international influence in drafting our national policies. Other organs of the state must respect the supremacy and primacy of the parliament in order to avoid the inter institutional collapse. Every other institution must keep itself within its boundaries of authority ad jurisdictional area.

In addition to, an effective and efficient system of checks and balances is the dire need of the hour to strengthen the democratic forces. The incompetent and corrupt leaders and bureaucrats shall be held to account to set examples of true and effective rule of law. Those who are found guilty of misconduct and corruption shall be unseated and the judiciary shall play its part in fortification of democratic norms; where no one is beyond the access of law.

Similarly, an unbiased media can play a key role in developing positive perceptions of the nation. It can also amplify the public awareness regarding to their fundamental rights and can present a true picture of what is being happening beyond the curtains. Media’s biasness, to favor a specific political force and deteriorating the image of others, must come to an end. Affirmative media debate can prove a key tool for reinstating the tumbling democratic ideologies as democracy flourishes on the food of debate and discussion.

Furthermore, a literate society is the hallmark of strong democracy. A vacant mind can be easily preoccupied with the wrong beliefs. Educational reforms are the dire need of the hour. Government should revise its educational policy and make it much more effective both in letters and spirit. An educated society resists against any unconstitutional and extra constitutional act, thus plays a pivotal role in strengthening the democracy.

Likewise, government should investment on human development indicators. The frustrated people of Pakistan have always welcomed the military takeovers in the country. It is solely due to the reason that the civilian governments have failed badly, in

delivering the people, the basic amenities of life. So, to establish a strong democratic culture, the need to invest on providing basic facilities to the people, is crucial.

Additionally, the government should furnish a worthy foreign policy and shall clearly define its level of interaction and cooperation with the world. This may also have an effect upon inclination of foreign interference by the other countries in our national issues. Moreover, an honorable foreign policy guarantees the prevalence of high democratic values in the country.

Moreover, political synchronization is an indispensable ingredient for the establishment of a durable democratic culture. Treasury benches and opposition are the essential constituents of democracy. Government should have enough moral courage to bear the criticism and the opposition should have the required competence and ability to rectify the government in its day to day routine matters. Constructive criticism and the freedom of speech are the necessary variables of a strong democracy.

What's required more is to uphold an intact constitution of the country in its original shape. The constitution of 1973, in its original shape, guarantees the supremacy of the parliament and lay down all the relevant and necessary rules to keep democracy intact. Amending and trimming the constitution means our politicians are tending to invite the non democratic actors to step ahead and annihilate the democratic culture of the country.

Besides all the above mentioned rational elucidations, the role of military shall be well defined. Military is meant to protect the borders of a country not to govern the destiny of the natives of their country. The constitution of 1973 clearly reveals a death sentence for those who unlawfully topple the civilian government. Not only implementation, but conformity to the law shall be assured to avoid any further military rule on the country.

To conclude, I would say that the current gloomy situation of fragile democratic culture needs sincere and dedicated efforts by the government, media and undoubtedly by the people of Pakistan. Pakistan is undergoing a terrible phase of mismanagement supplemented by the escalating extremism and weak and fragile institutions. Democratic fiasco, which was originated due to delay in constitution making, has weakened the roots of our territorial integrity and resultantly laid down the foundation stone of our political, social and economic debacle. Democracy is not only a form of government but a philosophy which encompasses all aspects of rights and freedom. If we are to survive as a nation, we must allow it to grow and flourish otherwise it would be hard to escape another catastrophe either external or internal.