



RESEARCH PAPER

Democratization in Pakistan: An Analysis of Politics (2002-2013)

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ABSTRACT

The aim of study is to analyze the democratization in political system of Pakistan. Since inception, Pakistan is emerged as democratic welfare state, but the situation of democracy is not promising yet. Pakistan has experienced a diversified history of democracy from pre to post partition era. The democratization process was interrupted due to no true democracy till 2008 after that there is a phase of transition to consolidation of democracy when first democratic era completed in real sense. There is relative political change in governance process of Pakistan. This change created challenges for democratic consolidation. This study is done by using qualitative method through historical comparative approach. The findings of issues like democratic transition and consolidation will pays way to the historical study of facts. The unstable political environment has to resolve in order to move a country for the better future by taking certain steps.

KEYWORDS Democracy, Democratic Consolidation, Democratic Transition, Politics

Introduction

The creation of Pakistan in 1947 by Quaid e Azam shows that it will become a democratic welfare state. While in reality, the situation of democracy is not promising in Pakistan because it had a diversified history. The democratization process was interrupted from time and again and the nation had to face a crisis of transition to democracy until 2008. There was a circular rotation of regimes from military to civilian governments. All that situation was created because there was no peaceful changing of power from one regime to another. Ultimately, there is no democratic consolidation. (Yusuf, 2009). Democratization can be defined as the phenomenon of transition in which a regime is converted from less democratic to a more democratic regime, it may be the major political change leads to democracy. As said by Huntington (1991), the democratization process is consisted of two parts; the transition of power as well as democratic consolidation. He had further given the significance to the agents in the change to democracy: "democracies are created by causers and not by causes". (Huntington, 1991). It may be essential political change running in a democratic manner. The changing of power by authoritarian regime to the democratic regime (Baqai, 2014).

The political change can happen in process of democratization by means of which power transfers from society to a setup of government that ensures public participation and freedom (Sharma, 2014). The change of system from democratic transition to democratic consolidation can be more difficult. In the consolidation phase, it requires a society that is willing to participate in government process and are less authoritative in nature. The society includes proper performing democratic institution, an efficient civil

society, as well as better social and economic condition. Therefore, the major essentials of democratic consolidation are free and fair elections (Yaseen, et. al., 2021) There are different factors that created an impact on democratization these are economic development, history, and civil society. On the other hand, there are also some ideal factors of democratization that are public opinion and a right to vote in political system. A very good example of democratic consolidation found in the words of Andrea Scheduler when she said it is a condition in which there are less numbers of chances to democratic breakup and everyone is more confident that one's rights must be fulfilled in time to come under democracy. (Scheduler, 1998). These words are more relevant as the case in Pakistan.

Pakistan is experiencing an unstable situation of democracy and the issues are still there due to which country is unable to fulfill political-economic development since independence. The political history of Pakistan states that the political environment working in country is still not satisfying the needs (Kamran, 2017). Pakistan is in dire need to find out the stable political environment since post-independence. Unfortunately, the situation of democracy in Pakistan is slow and inactive with fragile nature. However, Pakistan became a prey to non-democratic forces. There were non-civilian interventions in the political system of Pakistan from time to time either directly or indirectly. Since the inception of Pakistan in 1947, the nation has been experiencing a slow and unstable democratic process. The activities of using constitution in power tussles was experienced in history. The first constitution of 1956 is abrogated in 1958 and second constitution of 1962 again abrogated in 1969. And the constitution of 1973 was suspended three times in 1977, 1999, and 2007. Therefore, the history has cleared that all the governments from 1947 to 2008 have been dismissed by army directly or indirectly. Pakistan is lacking behind the other in order to fulfill the promises of democracy.

There are different factors that are responsible for instability of democratic environment in Pakistan. These are unstable civilian government, inability of political parties, and a weak political culture. The reasons of weak governance are different in three levels like state, government, and society. Furthermore, the major resistance in democratic political development of Pakistan are institutional imbalances, colonial inheritances, intervention of non-democratic forces into political system, weak political parties and non-democratic culture as well as manipulation of election system (Muzaffar & Choudhary, 2017; Naqvi, et. al., 2021)

Democratization in Pakistan

Democratization is a phenomenon where people must have equal right, freedom of speech and freedom of expression. Unfortunately, the case of democracy in Pakistan is different from the rest. The nation is still struggling to find the democratic consolidation after the transition phase. The nature of consolidation of democracy and political system in Pakistan is understood with respect to civilian versus military dichotomy. This research paper described different inter-connected questions to point out the character of decentralization-centralization in defining Pakistan democratic cycles: (i) what are the reasons due to which military and civilian ruler remained unsuccessful to grant autonomy in economic planning and decentralize political power? (ii) how did military and civilian leaders deal to periodic bloodless change of democracy and reversion respectively? (iii) why Pakistan did not move towards any system which ensures democratic consolidation completely? The process of democratic consolidation will achieve success in Pakistan only when the state provides free and fair election, civil rights, political rights, as well as institutional accountability in the governance system.

The process of democracy is time taking in order to function properly (Muzaffar, et. al., 2023; Malone, 2011).

After the death of Zia-al-Haq, Pakistan experienced a small period of democracy. But this democratic transition ended again in 1999 when army step in the governance process. By way of Marshal law, general Musharraf came to rule between 1999-2008. In this time, there were various kinds of changes like positive and negative. Musharraf too had introduced a package to governance like every military ruler. After achieving the power, Musharraf introduce some reforms and process in way to democracy. Unfortunately, the nature of democracy backed by military establishment. This transition to democracy was started in 2002 when democracy was restored after the coup and parliament was established (Malik, et. al., 2023; Zaidi, 2011).

Another milestone in the way to democratization is the charter of democracy that was signed in 2006, this is related to the building of consensus between all political parties in Pakistan (Talbot, 2012). This charter plays an important role for a country like Pakistan who is in dire need of democracy for running its political system. For the development of charter of democracy, the credit goes to all political parties that shows determination for democracy. Ultimately, there will be political consciousness in the public of Pakistan for future development. After the coup of Musharraf, the major political party was returning in the government in 2008 general election due to the result of election which pays the way to democratic transition. Pakistan peoples party (PPP) was formed the government in the center. In the absence of Benazir Bhutto, Asif Ali Zardari led the governmental affairs as the head of the government. This formation of government pays way to fragile democracy due to the longest serving military eras in Pakistan. This gap is created by political parties itself because no political party was in majority in assembly. The coalition government was formed between Pakistan peoples party (PPP) and Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) by sharing power in center and provinces (Khan, 2009, p.530). This new government in 2008 was formed on charter of democracy signed in 2006 between the major political parties (Jaffrelot, 2015).

The restored democratic government in 2008 was working to provide institutional strength. But the governance structure in PPP era was weak due to which the process of democracy may not flourish in full spirit. The greatest achievement of PPP government was the Eighteenth Amendment. This amendment represented the issue of constitutional and political nature that undermine the process of federation. It further restored the judiciary that resulted an independent judiciary and lead the way to non-partisan electoral system. Another major development in the amendment is the transfer of power from president to prime minister. The supervision of military by civilian government is created. The set of civil liberties was too restored. Moreover, the major development in way to democratization was the Federally Administrated Tribal Areas came into major politics. The liberation of media and judiciary were seemed in PPP five years tenure. This development of 18th amendment to the constitution of 1973 proved to be a significant work of PPP government that further paved the way to the process of democratization (Talbot, 2012).

After the process of transition of democracy, there is another thing in way to democratization that is its consolidation. From the duration of 2008-2013, the elected government was there in the system to run the governmental affairs with crisis of survival. The experience of Pakistan with democracy is that of praetorianism can be called praetorian democracy (Zaidi, 2011). Additionally, there was a lot of issues in Pakistan which created challenges for democracy. These issues are security challenges, economic crisis, and war against terrorism. The debate on democracy has become more

complex in a country such as Pakistan in which democratic deficit remained all time high because of pre-post partition issues. Fortunately, when the third wave of democratization came in the world, the international political and economic system put pressure on the process of democratization and this created democratic form of governance a compulsion for every country in contemporary era (Baqai, 2013).

After the era of Zardari from 2008-2013, another democratic form of government came in the system. So, the era of Asif Ali Zardari was the greatest milestone in the historic development of democracy in Pakistan. There seemed that first civilian democratic government changed its tenure to another civilian government. Thus, the strengthening of democratic institution like judiciary and media as well as the realignment of civil military nexus in Pakistan (Talbot, 2012).

Literature Review

To study the political system of Pakistan and the democratization in the country, the writer analyzes the issues of democracy and focuses on the institutionalization of political system (Kanwal, 2017). In the words of Keith Callard, the history of Pakistan is described as the era of uncertainty and change which lead the way to civil-military conflicts (Callard, 1957). Rizvi (2003) and Ziring (1981) understand that unorganized political parties and dearth of strong political leadership as the major reason of instability of political system in Pakistan. The less democratic ways of political patrons highlight the weak democratic values and no commitment of civilian leadership to the institutionalization in the country (Aziz, 2001). With the passage of 76 years, Jaffrelot still view the unusual political patterns in Pakistan and these patterns are not on the criteria to the transition of democracy (Jaffrelot, 2015). Furthermore, democratic disequilibrium in state and society has resulted in failure of government due to which no structure of governance existed in Pakistan (Muzaffar, et. al. 2024; Malik, 1997, p.04). Therefore, no institutionalization in political process in Pakistan is due to the military interferences which created a question mark in way to democracy (Shafqat, 2011). Similarly, Shah (2014) analyzed that to run democracy effectively, there is the strong need of determined military with the country's democratic norms.

After defining the situation of democracy and political system in Pakistan, there are some factors of democratic transition and consolidation. These are:

Factors of Democracy: transition to consolidation

The Era of reconciliation

The era of reconciliation from 2006-2017 discussed by Chawala (2017) as the greatest political developments. This was the era of uniqueness in the democratic history of Pakistan. In this time, all the major political parties come in direct connection for the democratic transition to consolidation. All that entertain the process of democratization. One of the main activities is the signing of the charter of democracy that leads the era of reconciliation. This philosophy of reconciliation is introduced by Benazir Bhutto and counter part leader of PML-N Nawaz sharif also supports this. The major political parties attempt to build the greater culture of democracy.

The Era of Zardari

In the Era of Zardari from 2008-2013, Kanwal (2017) describes the dilemmas of Pakistan's political history. In this era, there is the lack of institutionalization and instability of governance in Pakistan. There are multiples factors which contributed to unstable democracy like centralized state structure, authoritarianism, power tussles

between political parties as well as civil-military imbalances. There is the privilege to a democratic government of Zardari after the government of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in 1971. This time the government too is completed its five years tenure which is considered the greatest milestone in the history. The process of transition from one democratic government to another requires a need to revise the process of politics and to analyze the political development in relation to crisis and its cure.

The Election of 2002

After the 2002 election, the process of democratization is defined by Waseem (2006) in term of transition from the rule of military to the rule of civilian government. The political leadership draws the Pakistan politics across the non-representative lines. The process of election is very important for democracy in any country. But, unfortunately, in case of Pakistan there is a lot of issues in the development of democratization and the changing of democracy from autocracy to democratic regime.

Bonsai Democracy

The system of democracy in Pakistan is disclosed as said by Baqai (2014). This system is known as Bonsai Democracy by Aitzaz Ahsan. This means that democracy transition to consolidation is not deep rooted in society as the democracy of western societies. In case of Pakistan, the transfer of power politics from one civilian regime to another civilian regime is positively emerging trend. Despite the challenges of security faced by Pakistan during elections, the process of democratization is considered as milestone in history. Pakistan is going toward consolidation of democracy from transition phase. There are many important drivers of consolidation phase that are media and judiciary.

Material and Methods

In this research paper, the qualitative method of research is used by applying descriptive approach. This research is conducted by using historical comparative method. It is analytical in its ways. The data is collected by doing content analysis. There is the description of matters related to democracy and its transition as well as consolidation. The process of democracy is defined by using historical study of empirical facts. This research paper is based on generalizations about realities in Pakistan. The data is collected by articles, books and newspapers.

Politics of Democratization

After discussion of factors of democracy, there seems different sort of politicization in Pakistan society. As said by Zaidi, the role of institution in state and society has created the politicization of democracy. Pakistan experience with democracy is fragile since the independence in 1947. There are different kinds of factors that contributed in undermining the democratic institution, and how the role of democratic consolidation plays by institution? The analysis of the role of politics in democratization process is the theme of this research paper.

Qazi (2013) analyzed the situation of democracy in Pakistan. He said, the crisis of politics is deeply rooted in the dilemma of Pakistan history. The main reason due to which politicization of society started is the absence of democracy. The Absence of democracy has created great impacts on ideological basis, state formation, and society of Pakistan. Talbot (2012) described the lack of democracy since 1947-2013 in Pakistan. He gives the overview of crisis and failure of democracy in Pakistan. He said that the structural problems of governance, and the economic, political development in Pakistan

during the last six decades were the reasons due to which democracy is not flourishing in Pakistan. Talbot (2012) again stressed on the question for the survival of Pakistan. Is Pakistan a failed democracy / a failed state?

Qureshi observed the question mention above. Either Pakistan is a failed democracy or a failed state? The criteria due to which Pakistan is considered as failed democracy is the inability of leadership compromising pre-partition leadership in dealing with the issues either Pakistan is a secular state or a theocratic state. He further said that Pakistan is not falling in the list of failed state because of its core institution. Pakistan might be a failed state if the core institution was disintegrated and country may go into anarchy, civil war, and a state of chaos. Therefore, none of these things happened in Pakistan and it is not called a failed state. On the contrary, the fragile nature of democracy is existed in Pakistan if one can go to analyze the democratization process contributed to democratic consolidation.

Waseem (2007) explained the causes of decline of democracy. He said the instability of democratic institution is the reason due to which politicization of society in Pakistan. There are some major factors that lack of legal framework for the violation of democratic norms. Some others factors are deficiency of Parliament, weakness of federalism principles and political parties. Huntington (2006) explained the military intervention in politics. He said this intervention is due to the politicization of society and its core institution. The risk of instability and disorder is created by the intervention of military that causes the failure of political institution to tackle with social changes. The author said the role of army is the middle-class guard playing like an institution. This institution facilitates social and economic reforms as well as national cohesion. The main cause of military intervention is due to the weakness of civilian institution and political parties to deal with the politicization of military in society. He further explained a phenomenon called Praetorianism in which a state's active military plays its part in process of governance. The major component of a praetorian state is the strong military and weak civil society. In case of Pakistan, the phenomenon of praetorianism has created hurdles in the way to democratization.

Conclusion

The democratization process as well as the overview of politics in it context is important for Pakistan. The analysis of democratization is most significant for Pakistan in order to move on the way to progress. Unfortunately, the situation of democratization is hampering the growth due to the factors of social, economic, political development, and weak civil society as well as judiciary, media. Since independence in 1947, it was the vision of Jinnah that Pakistan will become a democratic federation. But the experience of Pakistan with democracy is unstable due to weak political environment. The lack of capacity on the part of civil society and political leadership had created a vacuum for military intervention in the governance process that ultimately results in slow and passive democratization process. Due to these factors, Pakistan is still in search of stable democratic system that must be devoid of legitimacy of system by Military intervention directly or indirectly. Pakistan being the 5th largest democratic country in the world having the potential to improve the situation of weak democracy by aligning the proper roles of civilian as well military leadership in their domains can bear the fruits of democracy in future.

Recommendations

It is cleared from the history that Pakistan has a need to eradicate the institutional imbalances from its political environment. So, the institutions of state like civil

bureaucracy, Military as well as Judiciary have to perform duties within their constitutional boundaries. They have to diminish the chances of interferences in the matters of one another. For the efficient working of Democracy in system, the need of honest and efficient leadership so that country will lead on national as well as international levels. The government of Islamic republic of Pakistan has to take necessary steps in order for sustainable social and economic development of Pakistan. In order to sustain the democratic consolidation, the role of judiciary and media has to increase for the facilitation of democracy at the door step of every individual.

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