



RESEARCH PAPER

**Reluctant Policies for implementing Democracy Culture in Pakistan:
A Way Forward**

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ABSTRACT

The article discusses at the restrictive regulations and institutional obstacles which are compromised the progress of a democratic atmosphere in Pakistan. While legislative promises of a democratic leadership, the political landscape of Pakistan remains frequently damaged by armed interference, ineffective democratic organizations, including governing structures that encourage financial gain on citizen involvement. This investigation approach to research that draws secondary sources such as scholarly articles, legal documents, and research on policy. According to the results, insufficient democracy performance has been fuelled from lack of systems of transparency, deeply rooted dynastic as well as aristocratic systems, ballot rigging, money laundering, along with increased military's hold in decisions about politics, regardless of legal restrictions in this type of engagement. Such features, taken together, limit fair voting privileges that erode the ideals of democracy. It suggests a path ahead focused prioritizes increasing polling honesty, maintaining civic primacy, modernizing justice systems, reducing powerful control, but fostering integration into politics. Article contends which with no sign of true policies determination as well as administrative improvements, Pakistan's tradition of democracy is going to be unstable as organizational as opposed to substantive.

Keywords: Democracy, Pakistan, Policy, Politics, Government.

Introduction

Since the inception of the country, democracy in Pakistan has been a bitter and weak undertaking. Even though the constitutional promises of representative government have been made many times, democratic culture still did not manage to establish itself in the state institutions and the society in general. One of the core causes of this weakness is the unwillingness of different political and governance regimes to fully enforce the policies that foster the development of democratic norms, values and practices. Instead of being centralized and integrating via uniform policy structures, democracy in Pakistan has been mostly taken as a procedural structure, disrupted by authoritarian meddling, ineffective civilian regimes, and selective compliance with constitutional principles. True democracy are widely characterized as a form of leadership that adheres to the values of democratic legitimacy, involvement in politics, openness, and the supremacy of justice. In republican nations, the authority belongs to individuals that is carried out via elected bodies to everyone's benefit or humanity. Nevertheless, after gaining autonomy from 47 years, Pakistan's government has been unable to build and keep up a truly free society. Instead of an ineffective implementation of rule of law, the nation of Pakistan possesses mostly suffered from a lack of continuous or genuine attempts toward establishing constitutional principles along with processes.

One of the factors that have weakened the establishment of sustainable democratic culture is reluctance policies, which are marked by half-hearted reforms, uneven application and decision-making that is characterized by elite interests. These policies come in the form of low levels of decentralization of power, poor local government, and low levels of political participation, low civil liberties, and poor education system serving to spread democratic values. In addition, the fact that non-democratic institutions are the dominant in policymaking in association with political instability and crises of governance have also led to further degradation of public confidence in democratic processes. Consequently, the democracy in Pakistan is still susceptible, procedural and not participatory and has no relation to the daily political awareness of the citizens.

This study is a critical analysis of what reluctant policies are and their influence on the development of the democratic culture in Pakistan. Through institutional behavior, the study aims to find structural and political restrictions that prevent democratic consolidation through analysing the past patterns, institutions and policy gaps. It also offers a solution by highlighting a participatory policy-making process, institutional responsibility, civic education and enhancement of democratic norms at the state and society levels. The article suggests that it is imperative to go beyond reluctant policy to outlined and committed democratic changes, to develop a robust and participatory democratic culture in Pakistan.

Literature Review

Operating for the context of qualitative study mainly Pakistan's transition to democracy focuses on organizational as well as administrative impediments that are major factors contributing to openness social norms slow institutionalization. As shown by studying history, Pakistan gained freedom with frail democratic structures, allowing legal and armed forces leaders to dominate representational administration (Jalal, 1995). That disparity made it harder for people to actively take part in democracy as well as rendered dictatorial behaviours more common, which slowed the establishment of freely elected rules and regulations (Alavi, 1972). Systematic armed intervention into political affairs having often undermined democratic stability, resulting to sustained problems with inadequate establishment of democracy.

In the Islamic Republic of Pakistan democratic development is regarded to be a realistic demand versus an institutional promise. Democracies frequently make constitutional changes in light of outside challenges or economic problems while exhibiting a strategic integrity (Haqqani, 2005; Linz & Stepan, 1996). That responsive move suggests an incapacity to build up organisations the fact might question powerful authority.

The word "demos promotes administrations that are aware about the inhabitants 'concerns and, as a result, to support their safety, academic success, as happiness as a whole, increasing society and fostering cooperation, across republics as well as inside those states (Dahl, 1971; Diamond, 1999). Furthermore, which enables individuals from emerging nations for learning others by open dialogue, improving an establishment on desires, aims, among tasks, as well as strengthening citizens' lives. The idea of the importance of a democratic system appears to be appealing to both the general public along with the academic community. A free society is an institutional framework that allows citizens to take their rulers responsible for all their actions while avoiding the improper use of authority. A republic may advance prosperity and equitable treatment while also guarding individuals against the atrocities of a dictatorial system as well as the aftermath of societal and fiscal calamities. Acknowledging our worth as fundamentally flawed people. The same kind to constitutional government is often utilized by a number of advanced modern cultures. Progressive democratic republics, such as Pakistan's, have experienced hardship greatly as a result to unauthorized groups' ongoing meddling into democratic processes. The legal entities as well as armed forces institutions, along with different parties of government, had regularly interfered with voting in elections to take benefits. However,

Pakistan tragically lost being established leader Quaid-i-Azam, Jinnah, who was an individual who founded a nation, within days of statehood. The coming generation the representatives hadn't been fully trained for assuming in the challenging job of sustaining this nation on its peaceful track. This was unqualified for the work of developing an operating laws to stay the newly formed nation over a period of nine years. The Constitution's drafting failed to ensure Obedience to legislation, and the structure was continuously vulnerable to changes, irrespective of whether they went adverse for the rule of law. (Faruqui, 2014).

The political and problems in Pakistan are still getting worse. The nation is currently experiencing crises that have a detrimental impact on both the world and itself. The lack of democracy in Pakistan is a major contributing factor to these problems. The lack of democracy in Pakistan can be blamed for a number of issues, including the removal of Prime Ministers and the state's numerous political twists since state's its creation. The nature and ideological underpinnings of Pakistan, the establishment of the state, and the relationships between the state and its society all influence this (Qazi, 2013).

The subject matter addresses Pakistan's open to democracy conditions, highlighting deficiencies and proposing treatment (Huntington, 1991; Linz & Stepan, 1996). Pakistan has made significant progress toward democratic government since its creation, but still faces hurdles such as political unrest, inefficient governance, dishonesty, and armed forces involvement. These challenges have hindered the advancement of constitutional principles and the successful functioning of electoral systems. In order to solve all these challenges, it's essential to put an emphasis on strengthening governance, promoting honesty and equality, fostering a mind-set rooted in political solidarity, and boosting rights awareness. Addressing these serious issues allow Pakistan establish a stronger and more stable rule of law (Ashfaq et al., 2023).

Quaid aimed for Pakistan to be a country governed by democracy. Subsequently when he left, the legacy of Pakistan admitted numerous extremely unpleasant facts in a variety regarding institutional and professional failures among authorities as well as lawmakers, triggering Pakistan to compromise its morality along with financial stability. Pakistan's policymakers and decision-makers, especially those in the military, courts, bureaucracy, and politics, were all unable to act in the country's best interests. We still don't appear to be ready to accept our mistakes and make plans to prevent them in the future, rather than taking lessons from the past. Poor performance by both individuals and institutions made the problems facing the newly independent Pakistan worse rather than better. As a result, pressing matters like drafting a constitution and establishing rules based on Pakistani culture and society were unaddressed. All of these shortcomings may be seen in Pakistan's internal growth history. Given the current circumstances, the intelligentsia must logically create a work plan for various policy and decision-making organizations to ensure rigorous adherence to their respective responsibilities. There is no better moment than know to raise these issues and investigate opportunities and requirements for a safer and better future for Pakistan (Shah et al., 2023).

The political problems that Pakistan has faced since 1947 serve as the basis for this study. Pakistan's political development has been severely hampered by institutional weak governance, which is made worse by the nation's weak institutions and corruption problems. Political instability, civil-military mismatch, lack of accountability, poor governance, ethnic regional imbalances, and external security imperatives are some of the topics that have been brought up in the report. The unity of democracy and government has been threatened by these interrelated problems. According to the research, democratic institutions must be strengthened, system transparency must be increased, and tolerance for political party fairness and constitutionalism must be fostered in order to ensure stability of sustainable democratic politicians. Only long-term political maturity and national growth will result from responsible leadership and civic engagement in Pakistan.

It states that the creation of democratic institutions, respect for the constitution, and the development of a tolerant political culture are all important steps in the process of developing democracy. Tantalizing went on to say that effective leadership that is both visionary and accountable is also required to guarantee that the country's transparency, inclusivity, and long-term progress are improved. The study concludes that institutional changes, constitutional sovereignty, and political maturity are the only prerequisites for achieving enduring democratic stability in Pakistan (Shah & Wazir, 2025). The purpose of this article is to illustrate Pakistan's democratic position across time, starting with its independence. It discusses about how religion influenced its development and the years that followed. This important role opened the possibility for Pakistani politicians to continue using religion as a manipulative weapon to win elections. Additionally, the study discusses Pakistan's democratic difficulties and how the Pakistani military has contributed to them (Siddiq, 2007; Haqqani, 2005). This article has demonstrated that Pakistan still has difficulties in upholding its democratic character since it has had so few opportunity to have a democratic administration. These difficulties are exemplified by the 2024 general elections and the circumstances surrounding them. Pakistan's democratic nature became even more doubtful after the election results were delayed and the victory seemed somewhat contrived (Arshad, 2024). These factors explains why policies are reluctant:

Interference from the military: The powerful military institution frequently disrupts political processes by conducting coups, influencing elections, and undermining civilian governments, so contributing to a cycle of instability.

Corruption and lack of Accountability: Extensive corruption, nepotism, and criminal behaviour misuse money, destroy public trust, and damage transparent governance. Institutions are frequently influenced by those who are in positions of authority.

Feudalism and unequal power structures: By controlling votes, manipulating elections, and concentrating power, powerful feudal lords restrict true representation and hinder equitable growth, as noted by Feudalism and unequal power structures are also a problem.

Civil Military power struggles: Struggles for Power Between the Civilian and Military Governments Constant conflict and manipulation between the civilian leaders and the military establishment undermine administration, with the military frequently influencing the outcomes.

Ineffective political parties: The absence of political parties that are strong, well-disciplined, and democratic is a barrier to efficient governance and policymaking

Weak institutions: The democratic checks and balances are severely compromised when the court, election commission, and free press do not have the ability to operate independently.

Constitutional manipulation: Manipulation of the Constitution According to the Review Journal of Social Psychology and Social Works, the misuse of constitutional provisions (such as the Eighth Amendment) has allowed for administrative overreach and instability.

Illiteracy: High rates of lack of education make it difficult for citizens to effectively participate in government and make voters especially vulnerable to being manipulated.

Lack of Democratic culture: The absence of democratic culture is a barrier to the development of genuine democracy because it prevents the establishment of traditions that promote equality, freedom, and accountability.

Inequality and discrimination: There are deep socioeconomic inequalities that impede equality, which is a fundamental democratic principle. These inequalities include discrimination based on caste or rank, as well as discrimination based on gender.

Foreign interference: Foreign interference is when outside forces have an impact on domestic politics.

Constitutional design flaws: Fundamental structural problems which make the constitution more unstable.

Unfair justice system: Public confidence in democratic institutions is further weakened by perceptions of an unlawful justice system.

External interference: Judicial neutrality is frequently compromised by pressure from the executive and military branches, making it impossible to apply the law fairly

Material and Methods

This study analyses the historical trends, political instability, and major factors that contribute to the implementing democracy culture in Pakistan. This research is mainly based on qualitative research and data are collected from secondary resources such as previous publications of different authors, journals, newspapers etc.

Results and Discussion

The results of the current research show that the constitutional democracy of Pakistan still encounters structural, institutional and political problems that have overarching negative effects of transformation of a stable democratic culture. The study shows that a combination of several interconnected dimensions all add up to instability of democracy in the nation, such as poor legislative systems, institutional illegitimately, military power, dynastic politics, and civic ignorance.

Poor Legislative and Institutional Framework

Most sources of historical and current evidence indicate that constitutional institutions are structurally weak and institutionally fragile, which have been subverted by political instabilities as well as military interventions. Major democratic organs such as the judiciary, civil administration and election directories have no adequate capacity or independence to conduct constitutional demands. This is a structural weakness that leads to poor implementation of constitutional values and the application of reforms that are geared towards enhancing representative governance.

Absence of Institutional Legitimacy and Accountability:

One of the greatest discoveries of the study is the lack of transparency and accountability in political and constitutional institutions that remains. The study emphasized that institutional legitimacy is undermined by poor structures of governance, selective application of the law, and political malpractices. Despite the fact that the democratic systems cannot work without transparency and accountability, the principles are not well exercised in reality and this enables the political elites to evade accountability and scrutiny. This trend has traditionally weakened the performance of democratic institutions in Pakistan.

Civil-Military Imbalance

The research concludes that the military still has an impact on the political and electoral processes, although the constitution suggests the supremacy of civilians. This is an indirect yet powerful influence that is directed towards governance, policy choices and election. This intervention weakens institutional independence and destroys faith among the citizens in democratic procedures, and it has created a perennial conflict between the military and civilian governments. The two roles of military and civilian are hard to delineate, and this undermines democratic legitimacy and consolidation of power by civilian institutions is a challenge.

Elite Dominance and Dynastic Politics

The other major discovery is the ubiquitous role of dynastic and elite dominated politics. Power is held by a few powerful families and social groups and this inhibits the political competition and citizen participation. This kind of elite domination influences the policy outcomes in such a manner that it promotes the interests of the individual and classes over the state interest and thus it fosters the social inequality and hinders the process of democracy. The political party of the dynastic politics also influences the electoral contest which cuts short the effectiveness of representative rule.

Poor Democratic norms and Civic awareness

Lastly, the study points to the deficiency of democratic culture and civic awareness of people. Inadequate civic education and lack of proper engagements platforms have led to many people being unaware of their democratic rights and duties. This shortcoming undermines participatory governance, makes authoritarian inclinations easy to tolerate, and makes democracy unable to take root in social and political action.

In general, the research concludes that the democratic failures in Pakistan are interconnected. Poor institutions, weak transparency and accountability, civil military disproportion, dynastic politics and poor civic consciousness are all the factors that do not allow the proper implementation of democratic norms. Unless there are significant structural, institutional, and societal changes, then democracy in Pakistan will continue to be procedural and not participatory and accountable.

Discussion

The results of the current research point to the fact that the little development expressed in the terms of democratic consolidation in Pakistan could be explained by the unwavering institutional weaknesses, structural imbalances, and aversion to the policy implementation. Pakistan has continued to practice democratic governance that is procedural in nature and has not been keen in instilling democratic practices in politics and administration. These irregularities in the application of democracy though formally supported in the constitution have undermined institutional legitimacy and trust among people.

One of the challenges that have been witnessed in this study is lack of transparency and proper accountability mechanisms in the state institutions. The political and administrative institutions often do not carry out the legal and constitutional mandate, and political elite do not enjoy accountability. This loophole in governance has also led to the mass perception of corruption and inefficiency that further drives the citizens away in interest of democracy. According to Jalal (1995), institutions of democracy in Pakistan have traditionally been destroyed by instability and institutional superiority to conceive a sound civilian framework of governance.

The study has also highlighted the importance of civil-military imbalance in limiting democratic development. Military still has an influence in political decision making,

electoral procedures as well as important policy domains, even with the provisions in the constitution which channel governance powers to the institutions of the civilians. Such a persistent position undermines the supremacy of the civilian and the culture of political dependence on non-democratic forces. This kind of interference not only undermines the institutional autonomy, but also undermines the belief of the people in the democratic processes and as such, it becomes even harder to build democratic consolidation.

The second dimension is the survival of dynastic and elite based politics which stifle political competitions and representative governance. The political system has never been decentralized to allow any meritocratic leadership or serious involvement of the citizens; instead, the political power is held by few families and elite groups. The resulting policy consequences of this elite seizure of political institutions is policy outcomes that protect the interests of the elite at the expense of the welfare of the masses and strengthen the socio-political disparities undermining the effectiveness of democratic accountability.

In addition, the discourse brings out that poor democratic culture and lack of civic consciousness is a major factor that has led to the problems of democracy in Pakistan. The lack of awareness of citizens about their democratic rights and roles limits the active participation in political activity and the presence of authoritarian inclinations in the political culture. Without proper civic education and platforms of participation, democracy would yet again be in touch with politics of daily life thus compromising on its legitimacy.

In general, the discussion indicates that the political, institutional, and societal factors have interrelated to cause democratic deficits in Pakistan rather than being caused by one factor. Democratic initiatives do not stand a chance of being transformational unless their implementation is significantly enhanced with meaningful reforms that will enhance transparency, accountability, civilian supremacy and inclusiveness in the political arena.

Enhancement of democratic culture in Pakistan demands a long term and concerted effort on the part of political leadership, state institutions, judiciary, and bureaucracy. Democratic consolidation is not possible with inactive institutions lacking in vigour in supporting constitutional values and use of power to achieve personal interest and gain.

Major reforms should involve enactment of good anti-corruption policies, emphasis on creation of employment and long term economic growth, and ensuring free and fair elections through independent judiciary. The eradication of feudal and dynastic forms of political practice is a key to increasing all political competition and political inclusiveness. Besides this, the citizens can be empowered to be active in the running of government by encouraging civic education and creating awareness of the citizens on the rights and duties of democracy.

In order to overcome the lack of democracy, the institutions of the population should be empowered by means of the effective monitoring systems, constitutional pre-eminence and clear accountability systems. Public trust in the working of democracy can be rejuvenated by expansion of local government structures, promotion of grassroots involvement and emphasis on institutional and economic change. Such reforms may help in improving the democratic legitimacy as well as leading to political stability and social economic development.

All these steps assist to build a sensitive, inclusive and resilient democratic system in Pakistan which will represent the will of the people; and promote a sustainable democratic governance.

Conclusion

This research study has discussed the continuing unwillingness to make and effect policies that have slowed the establishment of a democratic culture in Pakistan. Although there are constitutional guarantees and intermittent rule changes to civilian administration, Pakistan still does not have democracy because of failed political will, poor institutions and the domination of elite-structures of government. These findings indicate that democratic practices have mostly been procedural and not substantive with minimal level of participation by the population, ineffective accountable mechanisms and weak rule of law. The analysis reveals that the prevention of institutionalization of democratic norms has been caused by reluctant policies through selective reforms, lack of continuity in democratic efforts, and exclusion of the realization of political activities at the grassroots. Also, the disequilibrium between the civil and military relations, inefficient local government structures and deficient civic education have played a role in civil disenfranchisement with the democratic processes. Consequently, structural and political factors have remained to be a problem of democratic consolidation in Pakistan. The paper concludes that no concerted change in the disillusioned into committed democratic policymaking would make any difference in enhancing the state of democracy in Pakistan. Sustainable democratic culture does not just need structural provisions in the form of constitutions but also regular enforcement, accountability of the institutions and active citizen involvement.

Recommendations

Through the findings of this research, the recommendations are the following to recommend towards enhancing the democratic culture in Pakistan.

Enhancement of Democratic Institutions: The parliament, judiciary, and election bodies should be given power by reforming the laws, financial independence, and independence of the institutions so that they can govern effectively through democracy.

Stable Policy Implementation: The democratic reforms should be undisturbed by political interference by laying down the long-term policy frames that continue even after the regime changes of the day and continuity in the democratic practices.

Reorganisation of Local Government Systems: Strong and independent local governments are to be institutionalized that encourages the involvement of the grassroots, the decentralization of authority, and democratic accountability at the community level.

Enhancing Civil-Military Relations: There should be clear constitutional boundaries that are strengthened to have civilian dominance and curb non-democratic interference with the political and policy making processes.

Civic Education Promotion: Democratic values, constitutional rights and civic responsibilities should be taught and enlighten the masses through education programs and awareness programs to raise a culture of participation in democracy.

Promoting Democratic Political engagement: Policies ought to be used to ensure women, the youth, minority and marginalized groups are meaningfully involved in political processes in order to expand the democratic representation.

Increasing Accountability and Rule of Law: In order to rebuild democracy within the country, anti-corruption systems, transparency programs, and judicial reforms need to be enhanced to gain confidence of the citizens in the democratic institutions.

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