



Feasibility of democracy in Pakistan

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Abstract

The emergence of Pakistan in 1947 was accompanied with horrific mass migration of twentieth century. With these miseries there was a hope that in the new country life of subcontinent Muslims would change for better socially, economically and democratically. Unfortunately very first decay after independence proved otherwise for Pakistanis as its failure with democracy and the unsettled socio-economic issues. Families supported by tribe, Bradrism and shrine elites as non political elements have used the electoral process to maintain their dominance in the state governess. Dynasty and democracy are entirely opposite terms but still they have coexisted around the globe raising concerns about unfairness of power distribution in political process. Usually these families are carrying the legacy of one of their charismatic personality and rest of family member using his name to remain in political power. They are professional politician and certainly will have economic pursuits ignoring very basic of democracy that is self less service to a nation. Pakistan is one of those countries where election has played a vital role even before its inception in August 1947 to its disintegration in 1971. Indian subcontinent has experienced the long spell of kingship and then colonial rule of British Empire which is resulted in lack of institutional building. Kind of political maturity we are looking forward in Pakistan will need some time as the political history of Pakistan is a continuous struggle against military coups, conspiracies for power and influence of non political charters in power politics. Irrespective of all the social, economical and technological changes that might have occurred in 21st century Pakistan but still the electoral politics has remained largely a family business. Limited number of political families have changed Pakistani parliament into oligarchy.

Keywords: Politics, Elections, Electoral process, Non political elements, Pakistan.

Introduction

Historically almost every country have experienced kinship as vary basic choice for sharing of power but with the development of representative democratic system around the world in due course resulted as a substitute of kingship rule and election became popular tool for formation of popular governments. It is often assumed that the Glorious Revolution settled these crucial questions in favor of a sovereign and effectively ‘modern’ Parliament. Dynasticism, if it figures into the picture at all, is supposed to have disappeared as a meaningful political principle then or shortly thereafter(Adams, 2005). It is not unexpected that elite class wants to achieve and continue their dominance over the less organized masses through the elections by having connection other elites and using their wealth.

Emergence of Pakistan was accompanied with dreadful mass migration of twentieth century as two mighty provinces Punjab and Bengal were divided. But along side with grief and sorrow there was a silver ling to night mare that now Muslims of new homeland would enjoy better life with more income opportunities, religious freedom and democratic system primarily based on Islamic system of social life. But within first decade, skepticism had replaced that expectation. “A passive population looked to a military ruler to offer the prospect of a renewal of state and society”(TALBOT, 2012)

It is very unfortunate that every election held from 1970 to 2013 could not change the fate of ordinary Pakistani. Every new government formed as the result of these elections had increased

miseries and suffering as foreign debt increases many times during this period above and beyond corruption. Pakistan after getting independence from British occupation in 1947 was on cross road of state governers. Either to adopt presidential or parliamentary forms of government, Islamic or Secular, If Islamic; to what extent it should be so that every religious group and sect present in the country agrees to a one constitution all that continue till the countries third constitution was adopted in 1973.

In Pakistan democracy has many dimensions of social, cultural and economic nature. There for its never easy to govern the state where so much of linguistic, social, cultural and regional diversity and disparities with some serious issues of human development and human rights. There for it is still unable to relish the dividends of democracy which is being enjoyed by the west in abundant. Growth of democratic culture and tradition in slow or even declining because of many elements as we were not able to build institutions over certain period of time due to lacking of effective judicial system, weakening of political parties with the hold of dynasties and families in electoral process, malfunctioning of parliament and the crises of federalism, the result that today we have controlled institutional democratic system.

Democracy is a present-day belief of governers which is considered as a best tool of communication between people and their government. Democracy functions in lines of will and wishes of its masses are sopped to work for the welfare of people. Present day conversation of democracy in Muslim countries with the exemption of few, is somehow follows a cultural approach. Different views on Islamic system of democracy by the Islamic scholars making it even more difficult to understand by an ordinary Muslim.

The implementations of dynastic politics and how it is weakening the democratic system in Pakistan is clear to us. Dynasticism also suggests that candidates are powerful enough of their own in constituencies and without having the party tag can win the elections as presently there are more than three hundred political parties registered with election commission and only six have more than ten seats in national assembly. There power of winning elections is drive from different segments of socio economic nature.

Political dynasties mean that current politicians who are holding the public office have some sort of relation with one who had formerly held the office. Relation could be politician's children, grand children, siblings, cousins, son-in-law, spouses, and daughter-in-law and so on. In Pakistan what the general believe about the politics is "it's a dirty business" and it is the best possible explanation we get is about the old stories of political lies, killings and even outbreak of wars. Obviously this narrow context has developed because the politicians had not delivered to general people acceptations and kind of progress, prosperity and development we come across in other nations is still far beyond to reach. Dynasticism of politics is the result that instead of developing civic infrastructure, health and education it is helping and benefiting the patronage. Pace of other developmental activates remains slow.

Independent institutions with education and awareness are the pre requisite for the democratic culture to be fully developed in any country. A country where 50% of its population living below the poverty line, 60% of population does not have access to safe drinking water, where society is facing thousands of other issues of social and economic nature all the noble ideas of good governers and value of voting in elections is less important to lay man who is busy in arranging two times meal for his family. Pakistan has unusual history of political events. Started with legitimacy of election results of 1946-7 in new born Pakistan, early death of Quaid-e-Azam and assignation of its first Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan in 1951, followed by four times military coup. It is just last two parliaments that have completed their tenure since the seventy years of Pakistan independence which makes new political beginning and democratic culture is developing by smooth power transitions.

Reason why Pakistan is hoping for democratic hopefulness is because those political elites and all the major political parties have agreed to continuity of democratic process. They have learned that becoming part of any effort which weakened the democratic system is not in the interest of any political party "After aligning with the military or playing games in pulling down a rival party government, major sections of political elites, if not everyone, believe that democracy with all its flaws is a better option than military"(RAIS)

Now what does it mean for Pakistan for having a democratic future? Countries like Pakistan which has a polarized societies and also struggling with weak economic conditions and with their current painful experience of political stability is a huge cost for developing democratic culture. Not to forget that Pakistan political history is full of progress, setbacks, challenges and legacies of long years of military rule.

What is the way out of this mess? Lack of democracy within the political parties is termed as one of the very basic obstacle in establishing rule of law and merit based leadership within the democratic system. Political parties act of 1962 still demands every party to hold its internal election and report to election commission of Pakistan. One cannot expect endorsement of democratic values if their political parties are not willing to practice them within their own Political parties in Pakistan remained weak and unstable due to prevalence of undemocratic culture in state politics (Usman, Munawar, & Amjad, 2013). Whereas Husnain (Hasnain, 2008) in his argument about the weaknesses of Pakistan People's Party during 1980s, indicate the absence of intraparty elections as one of the basic reasons that gave rise to the politics of personalities and dynasties and resulted in weakened the party internally. He further discussed that the intraparty elections are directly related to strengthen the political parties both internally and externally. To counter the dynastic politics every party had to hold intra party elections for their various positions.

There is no doubt that consistence military rules has helped in creating the political legacy in Pakistan. Without discussing whether those military cops were defensible or not though some of them were justified by the courts under the doctrine of necessity, but it had not allowed the democratic system to gain firm ground in society and take its own way of discouraging bad politicians in next elections to be held. People in our country for their love of Army have forgotten that civil and democratic rule have always been better choice whenever it comes to state governess.

Role of election commission is vital in implementing the rule of law and regulating political parties' affairs especially in intermediary democracies like Pakistan. Likewise judiciary has also curial role in order to checking the nepotism and violation of formal rules that have been laid down for political parties under the umbrella of Election commission of Pakistan. In context it is very important for political parties as well to seek ground outside their popular ethnic, linguistic, religious and tribal pockets. This is also necessary for what most of political parties have been claiming as national parties.

The failing of democratic traditions in Pakistan can be explained through different angles. Some researchers and authors point out flaws in constitutional and electoral politics of provincial level other experts point to the political leadership responsible for the mess. They argue that professional politicians are responsible for declining of democratic norms from society. What was the attitude and response of society in general to the political turmoil in country? Why not the societal force remain feeble in curtail circumstances?

Present-day politics often flourish if associated with feasible and reactive civil society. Appearance of practical civil society is seen as a safeguard between state and its people and knowing very well sometimes the limitations of government and expectation of its people. In recent example of Turkey civil society reacted positively and provide shield to democratic system in country.

Without any doubt there are certain factors in case of Pakistan which have resulted in depletion of democratic norms and values in our society. This on one hand have promoted extremism in neglected and relatively less developed areas and provinces and on other hand have broken the fabric of pluralism of our society. This has flamed slightest difference of intra provincial, social, religious and ethnic nature. No single civilian democratic government could maintain the pace of civic development equally through the four provinces. Rather one can experience the lack of civic amenities even in the different areas of same city. This only promotes class difference in society and mistrust on political system. As it has failed to provide very basic needs have prosper society that include education, health, jobs and law and order.

When we see the current political legacies of Pakistan we find out that its roots lies well before the partition of India during the colonial period when in order to strengthen the state right after the war of independence in 1857, the British introduced the representative form of government rather than democratic form. Governor General Council was created and prominent person was asked to join that advisory body. As Paula R Newberg states in his book *Judging the state; courts and constitutional*

politics in Pakistan “with times British reconceived their concepts of control, less to accommodate Indian protests against its exercise than to create flexible state structure that might respond to local challenges to colonial power.”(Newberg, 2002)

At the heart of the problem is our letdown to solve the core issue of identity in the guts of open-mindedness. Socio-political conflict in Pakistan revolve around caste, sect and within the religion it self. Politics of Bradrism can be curtailed only when we learn to live as Pakistani only. As long as there are Bradrism and grouping in our society on the bases of language, clan, caste and tribe, modern concept of democratic values is hard to achieve. These links could remain for recognition purpose but not for voting pattern.

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