



The Parliamentary Democracy in Pakistan: 2002-2018

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ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received: April 30, 2024

Revised: May 22, 2024

Accepted: May 23, 2024

Available Online: May 24, 2024

Keywords:

Democracy

Legislative Body

Constitution

Political Liberty

Democratization

Funding:

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

ABSTRACT

Democracy is widely acknowledged as the preeminent political system in contemporary society. Countries that have successfully implemented a robust democratic system and demonstrate a high regard for their parliamentary institutions are thriving globally. The fundamental components of a democratic system encompass a legislative body, a judiciary that operates autonomously, and an effective executive branch. It is imperative that these three institutions operate within their designated spheres of authority and adhere to the principles outlined in the constitution. In addition, elections that are free from manipulation serve as the fundamental mechanism for guaranteeing the adequate representation of the populace. The democratic system ensures the protection of the well-being of individuals during the legislative process. Pakistan adopted a democratic system of governance within its borders. The Pakistani populace and its political representatives have significantly contributed to the process of democratization. The constitutional history of Pakistan has been marked by the interference of both military and civilian dictators, which has hindered the development of the country's democratic and parliamentary culture. Indeed, it is evident that the prevailing consensus has consistently exhibited a favorable disposition towards military governance, while concurrently acknowledging the recurrent interference of the military in impeding the advancement of civilian-led administrations. This research aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the performance of the Pakistan parliament between 2002 and 2018, with the objective of enhancing democratic processes. This thesis examines the role of democracy and assesses the various factors that have undermined the essence of democracy in Pakistan. Additionally, it provides several recommendations to enhance parliamentary democracy in the country.

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1. Introduction

Politicians and other influential people must frequently negotiate and forge alliances to ensure electoral victory and effective governance in a democratic system. Professor Dahl, a prominent academic at Yale, dissected the idea of democracy in all its complexity. It is more accurate to categorize such systems as oligarchies, he claimed because his perspective acknowledges the lack of complete democratization in any substantial real-world organization. The liberalization and openness of these oligarchies are striking features. Oldenburg's (2011) follow-up studies corroborate this position, showing that no country has ever achieved a more sophisticated version of democracy than oligarchy. Core aspects of democratization and democracy include the right to free speech and the use of elections to settle political disputes. It's generally agreed that elections are critical to a functioning democracy. From this vantage

point, elections can be seen as the materialization of a democratic framework (Haynes, 2012). The democratic system in Pakistan has repeatedly shown significant flaws, most of which result from a failure to adhere to the constitutional framework in theory and practice and a disregard for the electoral mandate.

Even throughout the aforementioned times of what appear to be democratically elected administrations, the bureaucracy and military often held sway. Between the years 1951 and 1955, a governor general ruled with absolute power. This was followed by a period of instability and contested occurrences of executive power abuse within the democratic system, which lasted from 1972 until 1977. The military authority secretly ruled the country from 1988 to 1999. A civilian administration took over from an autocratic one in 2008 and stayed in power for the whole five years. After free and fair elections were held in Pakistan in 1970, a new window of opportunity opened up for the development of democratic norms and institutions. However, provincial alienation hampered any chance of advancement and led directly to the onset of civil strife. This led to the eastern part of Pakistan breaking away to form its own nation, which is now known as Bangladesh. An intense and counterproductive intervention in the election process ruined a golden opportunity. It was hoped that the 1977 elections would further solidify democratic norms and practices. Unfortunately, widespread social unrest caused by vote fraud made it easier for the military to reclaim power. Since 1977, the Pakistani military has been steadily expanding its sphere of influence. During the twelve years of elected governments, this impact went much beyond its function as a power broker inside government and occasional assumption of direct authority. It seeped through the social and national fabric of the country as a whole. However, political regime changes in 1988 and 1999, followed by another transition in 2008, have contributed to Pakistan's rising volatility (Baqal, 2010).

Civil society and political parties are not able to pose a significant challenge to the military because of the country's power structure. However, a democratically fit system that is broadly supported by the populace is essential for a nation to run at peak performance. More importantly, this system must be allowed to function, as this will allow for its formation, strengthening, and efficient administration of the nation and its institutions. According to Khan (2009), political instability in a country slows its development. It is crucial to provide the system the freedom to fix its own problems, as flaws are a constant feature of any system. Parliamentary democracy is largely regarded as the best method for expressing the will of the people in today's society, and it is the system that this country has constantly embraced and promoted. After years of autocratic control, the country finally had reason to celebrate when free elections were held in 2008. This marked the beginning of a new era of civilian leadership. Furthermore, the government in question completed its full five-year term, adding weight to its accomplishments. The Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N) won the most seats in parliamentary elections held in February 1997, allowing Nawaz Sharif to become prime minister with a strong mandate. Nawaz Sharif was deposed from office on October 12, 1999, after General Pervez Musharraf staged a military coup in the wee hours of the morning. General (R) Pervez Musharraf presided over the military rule during the general elections of 2002, which, like the elections of 1985, took place amid a crisis of legitimacy. Therefore, it was critical for the administration to present a more civilian front. The leader engineered the preparation of elections in an effort to legitimize his authority and pave the way for the eventual handover of power to a civilian administration. This tendency was supported by the behavior of the electorate and the low rate of voter participation. However, we must recognize that the aforementioned elections were a driving force in improving the electoral process in Pakistan (Waseem, 2006). The primary problem with these elections was that they were managed by a military ruler. But it set off a chain reaction that is still going strong in the modern period. Pakistan's electoral history shows a chronic dearth of backing for the growth and maturation of democratic procedures. According to Rizvi (2014) the nation's progress has been stunted since certain electoral practices have prevented the growth of a sturdy democratic spirit.

The decade between 2008 and 2018 is pivotal in Pakistan's political and democratic history. Three consecutive general elections occurred during this time period, marking a turning point in history. It was also the culmination of the 13th and 14th national assembly's constitutional mandates, which lasted for a total of ten years. Former cricketer turned politician Imran Khan and his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party took over after the country's elections in July 2018 (Afzal, 2019). By ousting General Pervez Musharraf's autocratic military

regime and installing the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) as the governing party at the national level, the general elections of 2008 marked a significant step forward in the development of democratic elections (Goodson, 2008). A major political group with the second-highest parliamentary representation in Pakistan, the Pakistan Muslim League (N), has decided to join the opposition. The elections are historic because they usher in the first democratic change in Pakistan's political history. After serving its constitutionally required five-year term, the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) did much to foster a more democratic culture in the country (Nazeer, 2018).

Elections in 2013 were a watershed moment for democracy in Pakistan. As the peaceful handover of power from the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) to the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) following the PPP's constitutional term ended, the aforementioned event marked a significant milestone in the political history of Pakistan. This election cycle was different from others in a number of ways, the most obvious being the involvement of three major political parties. Problems like terrorism, extremism, and worsening law and order were just some of the issues Pakistan had to face. So, it was a huge challenge to have elections in the midst of all that chaos but Pakistan's democratic culture and the political awareness of its population have been bolstered by the country's election process and the peaceful transition of power that followed. As a result, voters now choose political parties depending on how well those parties have performed. This trend shows promise for the future. The general elections held in Pakistan in July 2018 marked a significant milestone in the country's 71-year electoral history: the third uninterrupted transfer of power from one elected civilian administration to another (Krity & Sareen, 2018).

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf (PTI) has come to dominate Pakistani politics thanks to widespread backing from the country's middle class and young people in metropolitan areas. The increased availability of electronic and digital media in Pakistan has contributed to this backing. This allowed the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf (PTI) to build a national coalition government as well as provincial governments in Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Balochistan. The PTI's revolutionary programme and its cordial engagement with the military and establishment are largely responsible for the country's recent achievements. Voter participation increased dramatically in successive elections compared to the first general election in 1970. Pakistan's political system has undergone major shifts thanks to the steady spread of parliamentary democracy and rising levels of voter engagement. Changes in the nation's social, political, and economic landscapes have resulted from these changes (Afzal, 2019).

1.1. Parliamentary Democracies and the Difficulties

It's common knowledge that when countries are confronted with authoritarian regimes, members of opposing political parties band together to push for democratic reforms. However, the implementation of democratic principles in Pakistan has met with several challenges, such as frequent governmental conflicts, which have considerably slowed the development of democratic norms within the political landscape of the country. Thus, the non-democratic and inconsistent behaviour of political elites in their pursuit of genuine democracy raises serious concern (Zaka M. R., 2018).

1.2. Elections and the Problem of Trust

To be sure, regular organization of elections that are fair and independent from arbitrary limits is a crucial part of a genuine parliamentary democracy. However, concerns regarding the lack of accountability and openness in the political process are warranted by claims like those of election manipulation (Gauhar, 2008). In academic circles, there is a lot of talk about the disconnect between the public and their elected officials. Given that the military has historically held power in Pakistan, it is fair to say that the vast majority of the country's political leaders support genuine democracy. It's also been pointed out that election campaigns are a prime time for political leaders to reach out to the public in an effort to sway public opinion and win votes. However, once people reach positions of responsibility, they often seem to distance themselves from the rest of society (Shah, 2014).

1.3. Ineffective Political Leadership

Because of corrupt and incompetent leaders, Pakistan has been unable to make progress in the political sphere. It has been observed with regret that political leaders in

Pakistan have a propensity for damaging national institutions through the adoption of reckless policies. Because of this, it is crucial to examine the political leadership's policies and actions in depth to determine whether or not they are aware of the potential implications (Hashmi, 2018). Consistency in behaviour and attitude among political leaders and elites has been cited as a major impediment to democratic progress in Pakistan (Ahmed, 2014). While it is encouraging that democracy has been restored and that efforts are being made to reinforce its foundations, it is disappointing that our political leadership has not done a better job of creating an environment that supports democratic ideals. The use of negotiation, consensus building, and bargaining methods in the creation of policy frameworks has the ability to effectively address conflicts. But it's crucial to recognize that political parties often aid in maintaining rivalries and enacting policies that further polarize society (Kokhar, 2017). Forty years after the commencement of a countrywide legislative democracy as envisaged in the 1973 constitution, the elections of 2013 and their consequent outcome marked a significant turning point in the transfer of authority from one elected administration to another. The last parliament missed numerous opportunities to make changes, but it did recognize the significance of passing major laws to restructure elected power. In addition, it represented a time of mutual assistance. During its five-year term in office, the 14th National Assembly of Pakistan successfully implemented a number of noteworthy projects and adopted significant laws, as described in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Parliamentary Session During 2002-2008

Indicator	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004	2002-2003
Regular Sessions	09	08	09	09	10
Joint Sessions	02	03	09	10	11
Assembly Sittings	41	32	32	40	56
Total Working Days	136	122	132	101	112
Resolution Presented	35	61	44	45	71
Questions asked	1,234	840	515	602	1,345
Lack of Quorum	47 times	12 times	43 times	21 times	11 times
Point of Order raised	410	232	230	132	148
Calling Attention Notices	302	420	100	32	122
Adjournment Motion	104	101	133	104	176
Privilege Motions	40	33	22	13	41
Government Bills	11	03	03	08	02
Private Member Bills	10	10	23	12	21

Source: (<https://fafen.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/08/Compendium-National-Assembly-Elections-1970-2008-Pakistan.pdf>; <https://newslab.tribune.com.pk/legislative-output-over-the-years/>)

1.4. Background

The researcher has combined the scholarly studies conducted by eminent Pakistani and foreign academics to acquire a thorough familiarity with the voting process and its significance inside a democratic society. Focusing on the general elections held between 2008 and 2018, these studies go deeply into the field of electoral politics. Several important books, articles, and studies are discussed here. Voting in free and fair elections is commonly recognized as the bedrock upon which modern democracies rest. Electoral studies emerged as its own subfield within the social sciences as a result of multiple studies done in the United States and Great Britain during the 1940s and 1950s. Psephology is the name given to the academic discipline concerned with the study of electoral processes. Professor R.B. McCallum coined the term during the first-ever Nuffield Election studies of the 1952 British general election. In his classic work "Transition to Democracy" (1970), Walt Rostow lays forth a theoretical framework that specifies the four stages of changing over to a democratic government. Democracy has been practiced in the majority of developing nations since their start, and Pakistan is no exception. But these nations still face challenges in their pursuit of a more democratic future. Problems stem from a wide variety of factors, including a lack of social and economic development, the poor execution of land reforms, the current state of security, the search for individual identity, the weakness of political institutions, and a lack of political education among the general populace. There is a democratic gap since these conditions are not met in many emerging nations. According a research article "Democracy and Elections," free, fair, and transparent elections are crucial to maintaining the integrity of democratic institutions. Elections that are

free, fair, and transparent were cited as being important in the individual's view for both preserving political stability and raising political awareness. It helped to stabilize a country's political institutions, according to the author. The person argued that a country's political system should be structured in a way that ensures free and fair voting for all citizens.

The author argues that a free and fair election process requires a free and fair court, an independent electoral commission, civil society organizations, democratic political institutions, and a robust media. Finally, the author provides a thorough breakdown of the several types of electoral fraud that have been documented in Pakistani elections, including system or institutional fraud, pre-poll fraud, election day fraud, and post-election fraud. Taylor's "Parties, Elections, and Democracy in Pakistan," published in 1992, argues that elections are important for doing two things: expressing the public's political preferences and creating a link between the people and the government through policymaking. A Study of 2002 Elections offers a comprehensive examination of the elections of that year in the context of Pakistan's democratization process. The book claims that it took forty years to make the change from military to civilian administration. This book provides a theoretical framework for analyzing the many different accounts of democratic procedures in Pakistan. Topics covered in the book that were key issues in the 2002 elections include political parties, voters, legislators, campaigns, and partisan divides. The author provides a comprehensive evaluation of the political changes made under General Pervez Musharraf's rule. Included in these changes were the 2000 Devolution of Power Plan, the 2002 Presidential Referendum, the 17th Amendment to the Constitution, changes to the voting process, and the creation of a national accountability system. The author concludes by stating his belief that the general elections of 2002, despite being engineered by military dictator General Pervez Musharraf, are largely recognized as an important component of a greater trajectory towards democratic administration. In her article "Pakistan in Transition towards a Substantive Democracy," Baqai (2014) argues that the country's democracy was stunted and akin to a bonsai before the democratic transition of 2008.

This democracy, despite its deliberate cultivation, lacked both a solid basis and widespread influence. According to this a new pattern of democratic governance emerged after the elections of 2008, one in which the legislature, the press, and the courts all play important roles in fostering democracy. Pakistan's connections with the United States and India are changing, and the author has recognized three tendencies in this development: the strengthening of the judiciary, the involvement of the media, and the realignment of civil-military relations. Analyses the democratic transition in Pakistan in his paper "Elections and Democracy," where he points out two major roles played by the government after its constitutional term ends. The first stage is to strengthen democratic values, and the second is to raise people's political literacy so that they can judge the effectiveness of different political parties. The author argues that with each new election cycle, democracy in Pakistan would improve. In 2018 a research essay "An Analysis of the 2018 General Elections in Pakistan," looked into several new developments that occurred both before and after the election. In the 2018 election, the author argues, emergent trends superseded the importance of election manifestos, encouraging voters to unite around these slogans and cast their ballots accordingly rather than based on the party's compelling future program provided in their manifesto. The author analyses the meaning of election-related slogans like "Naya Pakistan," "Tabdeli," and "Vote ko Izzat do" (give Sanctity to Vote) in the context of the 2018 vote. In light of the upcoming elections in Pakistan in July 2018, the author analyses the failure of the MMA (Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal) and the consequent development of the Tehreek-i-Labaik Pakistan (TLP) as a major political force. The author has also researched the significance of electability in Pakistani politics. According to "State of Civil-Military Relations in Pakistan: A Study of 5 Years from 2013 to 2018 published by the Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency (PILDAT), it was claimed that the relationship between the civilian and military sectors worsened rather than reached a state of equilibrium during the five years of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) government. Despite this, democracy was reinforced in the country, resulting in a smooth handover of power between two democratically elected governments. However, the prime minister was removed from office by a judicial intervention engineered within the General Headquarters (GHQ), thus shortening his tenure in office in violation of the constitution once again. The paper examined civil-military relations within the given time frame and identified the numerous factors that contributed to the escalation of tensions and conflicts.

1.5. Statement of the Problem

The quality of the 2018 elections was evaluated by various authors and political critics who took into account the views of both domestic and international observers. In-depth data on Pakistan's upcoming elections in 2018 are presented in this article. The evaluation is quite thorough, with three levels (introduction, analysis, and conclusion) covering every angle of the report. There were problems and anomalies found during the pre-poll phase, and there were problems with the electoral process on election day, such as the failure of the Result Transmission System (RTS), which has caused some to question the reliability of the results. Military forces present at voting places and restrictions placed on media representatives contributed to the contentious nature of the elections.

2. Theoretical Framework

The phrase "theoretical framework" refers to the overarching conceptual arrangement that guides the development and implementation of a study. Having a starting point to work from makes it easier to understand the research problem. There were a number of approaches that can be used to measure the success of Pakistan's democratic experiment. The models proposed by Steffan I. Lindberg (July, 2014) and Rummel (1995) stand out as particularly applicable and appropriate among the many that have been considered. The authors of this study employ a variety of theoretical frameworks to investigate and evaluate the state of democracy in Pakistan. The study questions are answered by using specific key indicators. Steffan I. Lindberg (July, 2014) suggested a technique based on a set of key metrics and five guiding principles. Aspects of electoralism, liberalism, participation, deliberation, and egalitarianism are all included in the aforementioned principles. According to this view, holding free and fair elections is the bedrock of a democratic system, and labeling any other system as democratic is untenable.

3. Methodology

In order to describe the parliamentary democratic, with a focus on parliamentary democracy in Pakistan between 2002 and 2018, this study employs a qualitative methodology. Therefore, information from a wide range of primary and secondary resources has been compiled. It's generally agreed that interviews are the best way to gather qualitative data. Fifty interviews were conducted using a hybrid of structured and semi-structured techniques to achieve the goals of this study.

4. Discussion

A cursory review of parliamentary records from 2002–2018 reveals a tendency for the 13th and 14th assemblies to consolidate administrative authority, along with some form of democratic governance. Parliamentary Democracy, as a political theory, acknowledges the right of the majority to rule and stresses the importance of maintaining fair treatment for all citizens. Political parties in a democracy engage in a contest for power to enact and pursue their distinctive policy agendas, which aim to improve the lives of the people as a whole. Fairness, healthy competition, and individual appreciation all play crucial roles in propelling democratic institutions forward. In developing countries, where the population is diverse, the process of nation-building is especially crucial. Establishing a genuine parliamentary democracy calls for unwavering commitment to fundamental values including the rule of law, equality, respect for procedures, and fairness. It is essential to follow these principles regardless of a person's religious beliefs, social standing, or religion. Despite these lofty discussions, the 'spoils system' is an essential part of the democratization process, and it necessitates giving benefits to the winning political party. The "spoils system" refers to the common method by which political parties reward their most loyal supporters with positions of power, perks, and financial rewards. The presence of several military and civilian autocrats has hampered Pakistan's democratic progress, making it more difficult to establish a democratic parliamentary culture. In four separate instances, political ambitions among certain military generals and a lack of institutional development led to the downfall of the country's parliamentary democracy. Like many other developing countries, Pakistan has had lengthy periods of military rule.

There appears to be a growing alliance in the country between pro-democracy groups, important military officials, and the weak political parties. However, it may be argued that the

effectiveness of parliament during the years 2008–2013 was greater than that of parliament during the years 2002–2007. From 2008–2013, the Pakistani Parliament made significant strides in passing laws that promote equality and democracy. A number of landmark pieces of legislation, including the Violence Against Women Act, the Transplantation of Human Organs and Tissues Act, the Anti-Money Laundering Act, the Protection for Women from Harassment Act, the Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act, the Anti-Terrorism Act, and the Eighteenth, Nineteenth, and Twenty-First Amendments to the Constitution, have been passed thanks to these successes. The 18th Amendment's role in nullifying the Eighth Amendment's effects gives it great significance. Zia-ul-Haq's non-party assembly initially proposed the Eighth Amendment, which included article 51 (2) b. The amendment, which took effect in 1985, gave the president unrestricted power to dissolve the assembly, changing the constitution's essential structure from a parliamentary system to a quasi-presidential system influenced by the ruling establishment. It is also worth noting that the authoritarian governance facilitating clauses enacted by Musharraf in 2007's 17th Amendment were repealed with the implementation of the 18th Amendment. The 18th Amendment was crucial in reestablishing legislative authority. As an added bonus, it helped advance the concept of local autonomy. Parliament members, as described by Fruman worked together in a cooperative manner to carry out legislative initiatives. There was a notable 78% increase in the introduction and enactment of government and private member bills in the Pakistani legislative assembly between 2008 and 2013, as compared to the previous assembly term. Women were also actively involved in many different areas of society throughout this time period, and their efforts were widely acknowledged. Dr. Fahmida Mirza's election as Speaker of the National Assembly was historic because she was the first woman to hold this position in Pakistan.

As a result, Parliament's supremacy was reliably protected throughout the years 2013–2018. In addition, the 14th National Assembly of Pakistan has been more effective in their duties and has worked to foster an atmosphere of mutual comprehension with opposition parties. The 14th National Assembly of Pakistan was in session for five years, during which time it managed to get 205 measures signed into law. The majority, 182, of the legislation up for vote were introduced by the government, while only 23 were introduced by individual lawmakers. The 14th National Assembly's committees have had numerous regularly scheduled meetings and worked diligently to carry out their mandates. The 14th National Assembly's Standing Committees hold an average of 8.32 meetings per year. There are a total of 19 reports that have come out of the work of these committees, 10 of which were written by members of the 14th National Assembly. Accordingly, the principles of parliamentary democracy rest on the upholding of law and the active participation of civil society. There is a moment of truth for Pakistan's democratic system right now. A constructive outlook, like that of the 13th and 14th legislative sessions, and the promotion of a consensus among the populace are, nonetheless, essential for the future. The many preconditions for this are as follows: Keeping elections running smoothly and impartially. A proposal with the goal of reaching an agreement on social and economic policies among political parties. When it comes to extrajudicial killings and the torture of detainees, limiting the state's discretionary power is essential for protecting the rights of political opponents. The establishment of a separate judicial branch serves as a check on and limitation on executive power. The overarching objective is to provide for the safety and well-being of people, making sure they don't starve to death and creating conditions that raise everyone's level of living. The defense of individual rights and the protection of those from underrepresented communities but it is clear that there isn't a good way to speedily strengthen the democratic process and set up democratic administration in a country right now. It is critical to hasten progress in the right direction if a genuine parliamentary democracy is to emerge. Citizens must exercise their voting rights in favour of the candidates of their choosing, as this is a fundamental part of being a responsible citizen.

5. Conclusion

Democracy is widely acknowledged as the preeminent political system in contemporary society. Countries that have successfully implemented a robust democratic system and demonstrate a high regard for their parliamentary institutions are thriving globally. The fundamental components of a democratic system encompass a legislative body, a judiciary that operates autonomously, and an effective executive branch. It is imperative that these three institutions operate within their designated spheres of authority and adhere to the principles outlined in the constitution. In addition, elections that are free from manipulation serve as the

fundamental mechanism for guaranteeing the adequate representation of the populace. The democratic system ensures the protection of the well-being of individuals during the legislative process. Pakistan adopted a democratic system of governance within its borders. The Pakistani populace and its political representatives have significantly contributed to the process of democratization. The constitutional history of Pakistan has been marked by the interference of both military and civilian dictators, which has hindered the development of the country's democratic and parliamentary culture.

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