

Restoration of Democracy and Deviated Role of Political Parties in Pakistan

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Abstract

Political parties are organized groups of people who having certain ideologies. They educate the people politically and field the candidates to elect them as parliamentarians. After achieving power or in opposition, they attempt to implement their agenda and perform important tasks in the government. But the political parties in Pakistan have been involved in accommodating unelected elites for political maneuver and to extend their rule. They have internal deficits including unfair structure and lack of intra party elections. They are involved in undemocratic practices and are managed as family enterprises and personal property by their founders. They also could not deliver to establish stable and developed political system due to political and ideological contradictions. Moreover, feudalism continued since the existence of the country could not be checked after its emergence which seriously affected performance of these parties and functions of democracy. Civil military relationships have always been contradicted regarding security and maintenance of the borders as well as upheaval internal social, economic and political issues. As a result, the people remained away from power corridors. The disenchantment with political parties is increased and the political leaders have lost their trust in the public. This paper explains the deviated role of political parties and the prospectus of the civilian rule in the country. The political parties should develop democratic norms and improve their functions.

Key Words: Democracy, Political Parties, Military, Political Institutions, Pakistan

Introduction:

Human societies differ from one another, and the people of these societies possess different opinions and views. Difference of preference and opinion establishes political parties. Disarray of people of varied and different political aspirations, ideas, views, and ambitious beautifies democracy. May a brother have different opinion from another brother living in the same home. "A party is any political group that presents at elections, and is capable of placing through elections, candidates for public

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office” (Clark, 2012, p. 19; Maisel & Brewer, 2011). The political parties perform as pillars of political systems (Blondel, 2012). They concern process of public representation, structure and distribution of power, and electoral system. Internal and external affairs of the state require a platform to tackle them, and political parties evaluate political activities of the state and its citizens. They help the government in decision making and motivate it to perform and educate the people and cause to establish and improve public opinion. Political parties in Pakistan performed as the tool to mobilize the people for certain interests and instrument of patronage (Mahmood, 2001). So, they have endured in the previous years and still require to perform properly to promote the political system of the country. But they play into the hands of the politicians and cause politics of agitation and street demonstration. Consequently, political parties have become like a sharp tool to achieve certain interests instead of promotion of political activities. They hardly perform to promote healthy norms of democratic system and law making. Political leadership in the country should perform to change role of political party to make it public representative for legislation and advocate of public interest instead of an instrument of mass mobilization.

Political Parties and Mass Mobilization

Political system defines how we animate collectively in society. In democratic society every citizen can participate in this system. Political parties help in organizing the citizens for better performance of democratic system. They aggregate and articulate interests of society and recruit citizens to collect their interests. They also organize political programs and invite the masses to fulfil these programs by political socialization. Political parties attend the elections, run government or perform as opposition and also establish the laws of the country (Hofmeister & Grabow, 2011; Johnston, 2005). These are proper functions of political parties. The diversion of their objectives also deviates their functions and spoils democratic system. Role of political parties has never been sophisticated in Pakistan. They have been evolved in extracurricular activities and preferred regional issues for certain interests instead of strengthening democratic norms (Mahmood A. , 2014). This paper explores the deviated role of these parties in the country through descriptive approach during the last three decades.

Tool of Military Dictators

Military dictatorship usually dispenses with political parties and uses them for certain objectives in the mostly countries. So, not only despotic governments but democratic and quasi

democratic societies also have no exceptions. Federal Castro did so in Cuba and General Pervez Musharraf interfered into political matters in Pakistan via Pakistan Muslim League Quaid-e-Azam (PML Q). This party was managed by civilian leadership under military umbrella for eight years (1999-2008). However, it lost its popularity after Musharraf's exile and defeated the Elections 2008 and onwards. Similarly General Ayub and Zia-ul-Haq used political parties as tool to achieve certain aims. Ultimately failure of bureaucratic regimes provided opportunity for military intervention. Military intervention was started from imposing of martial law in Lahore in 1953 to control the riots between the Sunnis and Ahmadis. Later, the military directly ruled over the country in 1958 in the name of failure of the democratic system. General Ayub Khan continued his government till 1969. General Yahya Khan continued this practice after end of Ayub regime in 1969. Zia ul Haq ruled over the country as military dictator during 1977-1988 and Pervez Musharraf continued military rule during 1999-2008 (Aziz, 2007). The entire Pakistani military dictators suspended or abrogated the constitution, dissolved the parliament, banned political parties and choked the freedom of press.

Instable Political Parties: Worse Effects on Democratic Norms

The political parties perform a vital role for the welfare of the people. They help them to avail opportunities to achieve their needs and convey their demands to the government. Their importance can be recognized by their political struggle because individuals are not given proper importance by the governments. People consider themselves as real source of power to strength the parties. But democratic norms were affected due to their instability in Pakistan. Unlike other democratic states as U.S.A. U.K. and India political parties in this country don't possess proper programs, ideologies and manifestos to attract the people. So, they work as tools in the hands of the dictators who use them to legitimize their illegal acts and prolong their rule. That is why the political leaders lose trust in the public and the public fades trust in political parties. Dictatorship and hegemonic culture prevail within them. Apparently, they perform to strengthen democratic system in the country. It is because the common man considers their performance proper and justified. Their manifestoes are considered a damp squid and a cry in the wilderness. Lack of proper democratic parties and competent political leadership caused political instability (Rizvi, 2001, pp. 85-86). So, parochial and regional powers developed, and the country landed into uncertainty, flagrant travesty and quagmire of confusion. Reactionary forces gained momentum and the writ of government weakened.

Treacherous must choke and shrink, and before falling into the abysmal trench of misery national cohesion is necessary. The Pakistani people are strongly required to revive shibboleth and vision of Mr. Jinnah who emphasized faithful adherence to achieve collective targets and objectives concerning education, politics, society, and economy. He advised political parties of the country to bring up a concise program, rule of law, and social justice by joining hands in hands with one another. He forbade populism concerning communal, regional, sectarian and religious issues. Unity, faith and discipline must be practiced improving and revamping their lives. Political parties can achieve such tasks through motivation of political workers. So, it is concluded that political parties in the country are scantily and barely democratic. Pakistan has been deprived of efficient party system indispensable element of democracy. Because democracy can neither consolidate nor can exist structure itself without vigilant and vibrant political parties. Only a few parties conduct intra party elections regularly. The most of them perform nominal democratic practices. But they make continuous demand for democracy in the country. Pakistan is rich in abundant autocratic, authoritative and family dominated parties. Democracy is negated and eclipsed through feudalism and military interference also (Jan 2005). So, the political phenomena of the country don't possess popular norms of democracy.

Absence of National Integrity: Failure of Political Parties

Pakistan has been miserably deprived of the vision and capacity to deprive of awkward status due to incompetent political leadership soaked in personal interests. The founder party of the country, Muslim league never achieved the status of national party, and it could not unify the scattered nation. The rest of political parties also couldn't perform properly. They divided into various small parties and attempted to achieve power by hooks or crooks. The leaders always indulged in struggle to achieve power. Gradually, the gulf raised between politically immature public and the political leaders (Kamran, 2016, p. 102). So, harmony was not achieved at national level. The country couldn't be stable politically even after a decade of its establishment. The failure of democratic powers enhanced military efficiency to involve in political and social fabric of history of Pakistan definitely bears the witness of the reality that country's consolidation has been always with confusion in politics. So, the politicians themselves were responsible for military coups (Khan, 2012). The country suffered proper stability, original constitution, development of economy and political sustainability. On the other hand, the Congress successfully performed to develop India (Afzal, 1976, p. 9). Alternately Pakistan deprived off stability, welfare, prosperity, consensus and national integrity. Small units and provinces are deprived of domination of the

largest province Punjab which creates the sense of exploitation in them as Sindh, KPK, Baluchistan and peripheral units of federation as Federal Administered Areas (FATA), Gilgit Baltistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir. So, the country has no capacity for national integrity and equitable distribution of national resources between the country units (Chitkara, 1997). The national reconciliation commission is required to resolve the contradictions among these units on the pattern of National Finance Commission (NFC). Moreover, political inequality and the victims of this improper system are also required to be addressed. The Muslim League, one of the major political parties and the founder party of the country which was capsized only after a few years of establishing of the country is required to reform once again as an effective social force to address political challenges.

The political scientists assume that cast and family based political culture of Pakistan is the cause of political instability leading to failure of democracy and caused confrontation (Kapur, 2006). The country can be developed through promoting multicultural values. But the political parties in the country, possessing certain identities, have failed to fulfill such requirements as well public demands and expectations. Moreover, democracy has not taken roots properly because of continual military invasions which spoiled governmental institutions and slowdown political development. The parties have no tradition of intra party elections which affected their performance and they failed to fulfill the loss caused by military invasions (Spiess, Enskat, & Mitra, 2004, p. 175). In fact, there have been very thin differences between the military regimes and civil regimes of prominent political parties concerning their arbitrary behavior, dictatorial approach and economy disorders. They both exhibited personalized rules of hybridism. Leaders of political parties used to act like military rulers who took decisions whimsically. So, both regimes can hardly be differentiated.

Political parties and democracy are deeply interlinked like flesh and blood. The success and continuation of proper democracy without political parties is not possible. The parties are considered as another name of collective form of the public. The collective power of the public and integrity check military invasion and vice versa (Finer, 2002, p. 21). They provide the field to grow, maintain and protect plants of democracy. The young plants take root and become huge trees with public help who water and cure the saplings of democracy. Whenever the public fail to take care of these plants they degenerate and wilt consistently and persistently. So, they must be nourished to make democracy more regular. But the parties couldn't be maintained in Pakistan generally and during the first decade after its birth specially.

The politicians in the country have been deeply interested in collecting heavy amount of taxes to squeeze hardly earned sources of the unprosperous taxpayers. They have neither interest in the country nor in democracy at large. They are nearsighted or myopic instead of broad mindedness. They can't see beyond their self-interest (Lambsdorff, 2015). They differentiate themselves from the public and consider themselves unaccountable. Whenever they feel light at the end of the tunnel, they surprisingly proclaim for ending the plan to start another one. They want to establish the bridge where there is no need. The politicians who run and enlighten the country with modern visions have an anomaly in Pakistan and possess dynastic style unlike the politicians in the modern countries.

Major Political Parties Working as Family Enterprises

Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz, PML (N) was established and is being managed by Nawaz Sharif since decades like a personal property. No democratic norms are considered within the party and no intra party elections are conducted properly to keep power in one hand. Apparently, Shehbaz Sharif and Maryam Nawaz, respectively the brother and daughter of Nawaz Sharif have become party heads after conviction of Nawaz. Many prominent leaders of the party were ignored and were deprived of central leadership. One of the major political parties in Pakistan, Pakistan People's Party (PPP) was founded by Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto who led it till his death. Though, he was a popular political leader of distinctive views yet contradicted to his democratic fame and vision he didn't bear criticism against his political acts. After his death the party was led by his wife Nusrat Bhutto and later by his daughter Benazir Bhutto who was assassinated in 2007 in Rawalpindi. After Benazir's death her son Bilawal Bhutto Zardari is managing the party under supervision of his father Asif Ali Zardari, the former President. The most senior politicians of the party have no opportunity to become the central leader. The largest political party in urban Sindh, Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) has had been led by its founder Altaf Hussein even after his self-exile since 1992. He conducted corner meetings, established party policies, monitored the elections at entire levels and declared party opinion via telephone calls. The prominent political party in the center, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) and Sindh, Awami National Party (ANP) was founded in 1986 by Abdul Wali Khan and it is being run by Asfandyar Wali Khan the grandson of Bacha Khan. It may be led by the fourth generation Aimal Wali in future. Jamiat Ulam Islam (JUIF) running by Fazal-ur-Rehman after the death of his father is another instance of nepotism. The entire political parties in Pakistan possess the dynastic character. However, there are some exceptions as Jamat-e-Islami (JI) and Pakistan

Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). It founded on religious ground has good record regarding intra party elections contradicted to the rest of religious parties. There had been no leader in it who achieved family-based party headship. The contemporary governing party, PTI headed by Imran Khan who claims reforms, justice and socio-politically change. Its leader is popular in the youth and the educated class committed to transform Pakistan into the country of enlightenment. It would be difficult to develop democratic culture without proper discipline in the parties. However, to what extent the political parties in the country have political propensity, ideologies and leaning, their existence is indispensable to check civil and military dictatorship.

The entire main stream political parties as PTI, PML (N), PPP, MQM, JUI, JI and ANP must decrease political contradictions among them which cause military intervention. They either governing or in opposition necessarily consider importance and respect of democratic norms to develop democracy. The political reforms should be assured and the document, Charter of Democracy (CoD) agreed by Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif in London should be acted upon (Hasanie, 2013). It is possible only through the intention and dedication of these parties. The Elections 2018 provided strong base to maintain democracy in Pakistan, but the government is severely criticized due to bad governance and ill performance. The entire political parties either governing, in coalition or in opposition have serious challenge of continuation of democratic system. They must attempt to save political system to become derailed by military coup in the future. However, the apex Judiciary has seriously tried to check use of 'state necessity' which was used to legitimize dictatorship. It has become a great hindrance in the way of imposing martial law.

Perverted Role of Political Elites and the Institutions

Profound feudalism is another factor which affected political stability and viable democratic norms of the country. The landlords are reactionary hypocrites, egocentric, unscrupulous, and ostentatious continuously increasing hurdles for democratic development and constituting obstacles to social agonist. Jones views that Pakistani people consider feudalism the reason of failure of democracy (Jones, 2002, p. 242). Malik says that they achieved lands from the British Indian Government, indulged in using brutality and cunning tactics, and became a new aristocratic generation. They played tactics to get heavy loans from the banks and finally succeeded to right off them. They became ministers and used their offices for nepotism, personal interests

and political influence. It is rightly claim that they have been the power behind the throne of both civilian and military regimes (Malik, 2001).

The politicians have no faith in political institutions and the political parties have no profound roots in the public. So, low social and political culture, poor economy and improper civil representation paved the way for military intervention (Lodhi, 2011). The entire military invaders in Pakistan expressed their wish for restoration of democratic system soon (Cohen, 2011). Same was the case of General Musharraf who proclaimed after the military coup in 1999 that the military had no interest in politics except for the period necessary to flourish the democracy. But after one year of his military coup, he stated in 2000 on television that he had no intention to leave the government (Khan R. , 2012). He continued his rule for eight years.

Lack of national parties and their weak structure affected consensus-based political culture in Pakistan. It also caused severe political contradictions. Most of the politicians played loose games to enhance political power (Callard, 1957). Status of Islam as national religion, issues of languages, amendments in electoral system and Afghan refugees have been some important national issues but political parties did nothing to address them. They made political alliances to achieve power. For instance, a coalition of political parties against the current government in the name of restoration of pure democracy is intended to save corruption money. Pakistani politicians have never been ideal to face the challenges of sensitive national issues. They usually acted as coconspirators for military due to fear of defraud and to achieve the power (Callard, 1957). Apex judiciary fares no better. It provided cover to military intervention and legitimized their consequent attempts to prolong military rule. The President and the military leadership acted in concert to dislodge democratically elected Benazir Government in 1990 and later Nawaz Government in 1993 (Kalia, 2012). The people considered that the judiciary and the President played unfair role by dismissal of Benazir Government again in 1996. Dismissal of Nawaz Government again in 1999 by the military coup was also a critical juncture. Instead of military support to the civilian governments, different political parties supported different military dictators. They proved a powerful source for the entire military coups in the country. They preferred certain interests rather than national integrity.

The governing party attempts to prolong its rule and grants important posts to its prominent politicians. Moreover, intraparty deficits as lack of pure democratic practice within the party, undemocratic structure of the party and intraparty elections are inherited into the entire political system. Untrusted and unpopular political leaders and political parties affect proper

democratic functions. Policy framework and prodemocracy environment which help to address political contradictions and political issues inside the parliament are not maintained. The pressure groups and the opposition make violence to fulfill their demands. Certain events reveal that the parties believe in party dictatorship and authoritarianism in the name of democratic system. Establishment of 'Open Kacheries', 'Ehtasab Cell', and 'Khidmat Committees' weaken the position of the elected institutions and promote authoritarianism. Rather than establishment of profound democratic structure of the party the party leadership attempt to promote itself through media houses. The Nawaz Government (2013-18) passed an anti-defection clause to bind its parliamentarians not to utter against party policy. This government was also indulged into haste legislation to curtail the powers of the President. The authoritative laws and arbitrary policies of the government hinder promoting democratic norms, political tolerance and respect of the law. Improper performance of the political parties always caused political intervention by the nondemocratic forces (Haynes, 2013).

Undemocratic orientation of the political parties also caused a lack of competitive political culture. So, incompetency and nepotism were developed in obstruction of democratic culture and within political parties. Military intervention was also due to absence of integration and loose structure of political parties. The political performance of these parties did not meet the requirements of democratic political system. The parties always indulged in prejudiced, factional and regional political dealings. The political leadership remained flunkies in the hands of military and civil bureaucracy which always succeeded by the less established and less developed political parties. The functions of political system of Pakistan reveal that there is lack of proper political representation in the parliament. The politicians prefer to address the provincial or regional issues instead of promoting national integrity. Mostly the improper and unqualified candidates are elected in the elections which results in further appeals, writs, and references in the competent institutions by the looser candidates. The peoples of the country are divided into various social, religious, lingual and ethnic entities serious threat to national integrity and national ideology (Jahan, 1972). The people are uninterested in the politics on a large scale as they are dissatisfied to the representation system. They feel that they are not represented in the parliament properly by continuously elected improper representatives (Lars & Vicky, 2001).

Conclusion:

The above description reveals that political parties in Pakistan are not democratically organized as most of them reflect family politics. PML (N) is managed by Sharif family since its establishment and PPP belongs to Bhutto family (Coakley, 2003). With some exceptions, the same is the situation of other major parties. These parties are lack of coherent concepts and follow personalities who run them like family enterprises which results in upheld of status quo and diversity of opinion is marginalized. So, the improper representatives are elected in the elections. The people are dissatisfied to the improper political development of the country because most of the political parties have had been involved in undemocratic activities instead of national integrity necessary for democratic development. Moreover, the people consider that they are not represented in the parliament properly (Mohiuddin, 2007). The constitution of the country is changed by the “conniving” party membership and democratic norms as rule of law and political participation which are ignored in the political system of the country.

The democratic norms crooked by deviated role of political parties should be improved and developed. Most of the people of the country are not politically educated accidentally or by design. Both of the political parties, in power or in opposition, are liable for their democratic training properly. They must be aware of political importance also. The candidates in the elections must be aware of their rights and liabilities. The politicians have to address social, sectarian, ethnic and regional issues for well-functioning of the democracy. Status quo and marginalization of opinion can be redressed by political education. The political participation should be assured at local level as conduct of local elections and establishment of local governments which has not been regular except during the military regimes. The process of accountability of the governmental institutions should be assured to restore the public confidence at the political parties. The culture of family rule in the parties should also be condemned. The elections must be regular, fair, free and transparent to establish proper democratic governments. The political parties must be accountable to maintain social contract because only by this way the representatives can become liable to the public. The opposition must be allowed to criticize acts and policies of the government contradicted to the previous routine when it was used to restricted and banned during authoritative regimes. The monopoly between the opposition and the governing parties for certain interests must be abolished for satisfaction of the public to the government performance and to check military interference into the politics. Because usually military interfered in the name of political reforms, check on corruption and absence of accountability.

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