

**Journal of Politics and International Studies**  
*Vol. 10, No. 1, January–June 2024, pp.197–211*

## **The future of Democracy in Pakistan: Opportunities and Challenges**

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### **Abstract**

This article aims to explore the future of democracy in Pakistan by examining the opportunities for democratic growth and the challenges that hinder its development. Democracy in Pakistan has had a turbulent history, marked by alternating periods of civilian rule, military intervention, and political instability. Despite these challenges, Pakistan continues to strive to establish a strong democratic framework. Understanding current trends and obstacles is essential to envisioning a sustainable democratic future. The study uses a qualitative approach, analyzing historical trends, political developments, and socio-economic factors. The study also examines secondary data, including academic publications, policy reports, and expert opinions, to gain a complete picture. The findings show that while there are promising opportunities, such as increased political awareness, a vibrant media, and youth engagement, significant challenges remain, such as corruption, weak institutions, and external pressures. The balance between these factors will determine the trajectory of democracy in Pakistan. To strengthen democracy, the country must prioritize institutional reforms, ensure accountability, and promote civic education. Encouraging inclusion and protecting democratic processes from interference will be essential for a sustainable and prosperous democratic future.

**Key Words:** Democracy in Pakistan, Political stability, Military intervention, Civilian rule, Vibrant Media, Youth engagement.

## **Introduction**

Democracy plays a vital role in building the political, economic and social fabric of a nation and its importance in Pakistan is no different. In a country with a history of coups, political instability and governance problems, democracy offers the promise of representation, accountability and public participation in decision-making. It is essential to ensure that the diverse voices of Pakistan's provinces, ethnic groups and socio-economic classes are heard and respected. The future of democracy in Pakistan is crucial not only for the country's internal stability but also for its relations with neighboring countries and the international community at large.

However, the democratic governance in Pakistan has been mixed. On the one hand, democratic processes have strengthened civil institutions, provided platforms for political expression, and promoted economic reforms. On the other hand, the country faced significant challenges related to corruption, political dynasties, weak rule of law and military interventions. These factors have hindered the ability of democracy to provide effective government and led to disillusionment among some sectors of society. However, democratic resilience is evident, with strong civil society movements, media freedom and increased youth participation indicating a move towards a more vibrant democratic system.

The need for democracy in Pakistan is based, among others, on the recognition that, despite the challenges it presents, democratic governance remains the most sustainable path to inclusive development and lasting peace. The alternative authoritarianism or military rule has proven harmful in the past, leading to political oppression and economic mismanagement. While democracy in Pakistan faces obstacles, opportunities such as digital activism, governance reforms and greater public awareness offer hope for a stronger and more participatory future. Democracy allows for self-correction and adaptation, giving Pakistan the opportunity to resolve its problems within a legitimate and representative framework.

## **Literature Review**

Zaidi (2005) describes in this article the groups and social classes that benefit most from the creation of democratic institutions in Pakistan already have access to the state and the web of power they have little need for “messy” participation and accountability. Pakistan may be increasingly dominated by factions and groups of the urban middle class and has a “modern urban spirit”. Unlike other countries where emerging urban middle classes fought for social emancipation and collective democracy, the Pakistani middle class, as this article shows, preferred to associate with authoritarian and military governments. Moreover, Pakistan’s democratic experiment in the 1990s was controlled and dominated by the military; Thus, the very idea of democracy was met with little enthusiasm in Pakistan.

Kumar (2001) says in this article. When General Musharraf was overthrown by the military in October 1999, the question of Pakistan's democracy was raised again. Although the military pursued shadow governments, General Zia-ul-Haq's death in 1988 and the election-based rise of successive governments raised hopes that Pakistan had moved to establish a democratic government. It seems that this hope

has been confirmed by Nawaz Sharif's rise to power with a two-thirds majority. The military coup in October 1999, however, exposed the fragility of Pakistan's democratic experiment. Pakistan has been unable to establish democracy due to its deeply feudal structure and inadequate political institutions.

Inayatullah, Inayatullah (1997) opined in this article in its fifty years of existence, Pakistan has not seen a consistent consolidation of democracy since state institutions have dominated political institutions. This is demonstrated by the lack of constitutional underpinnings, a completely independent judiciary, a sophisticated party system, and frequent and equitable elections. The odds of survival have increased due to recent political developments, including the progressive removal of state institutions particularly the military from the political arena, the expansion of judicial authority, the parliamentary restraint of presidential powers, and the population's growing political consciousness. of the nation's democracy. These events, which ended in Khan's incarceration and prohibition from holding public office, raised concerns about the future of Pakistani democracy. Political unrest is not new in the country, but the mix of economic downturn, political tensions, and natural calamities such as drought has compounded long-standing fears about the country's stability. The odds of a real democracy arising in the near future are unlikely, but if the primary institutional actors commit to working with politicians rather than manipulating, abusing, and defaming them, Pakistan may be able to reclaim lost ground and recover. Returning to some sense of normality.

Jalal (2024) explores in this article. On May 9, 2023, Pakistan saw a watershed moment in its history when former Prime Minister Imran Khan was arrested, resulting in widespread riots and attacks on governmental institutions. These events, which ended in Khan's incarceration and prohibition from holding public office, raised concerns about the future of Pakistani democracy. Political unrest is not new in the country, but the mix of economic downturn, political tensions, and natural calamities such as drought has compounded long-standing fears about the country's stability. The prospects of a real democracy arising in the foreseeable future may seem inconceivable. However, Pakistan may be able to the likelihood of a real democracy arising in the near future is remote, but if the primary institutional actors commit to working with politicians rather than manipulating, abusing, and defaming them, Pakistan may be able to reclaim its lost territory and recover. To a semblance of normality.

Bibi and Jameel (2018) describes that Democracy is a popular type of administration in modern global politics, according to Bibi and Jameel (2018). Free and fair elections, the function of the media, education, justice, political parties, religious tolerance, and so on are just a few of the many essential elements of a real democracy. Since gaining its independence, Pakistan has had both authoritarian and democratic regimes. Despite the country's several democratic regimes, Pakistani politicians have not been able to provide the people with basic necessities. Among the primary barriers to democracy's success are the absence of timely, free, and fair elections, the gap between the populace and the political elite, military regulations,

civil-military interactions, and the general lack of public awareness and education. Thus, in order for Pakistani democracy to flourish, one of the biggest challenges to democracy's success is the populace's lack of knowledge and awareness. Therefore, improving these tools is equally essential for Pakistani democracy to flourish.

Sheikh (2009) opined that Pakistan is a country that receives relatively negative international headlines, be it the suicide attack on the Marriott hotel in Islamabad or the recent terrorist attacks in Mumbai. In both tragic incidents, foreigners were targeted and dozens of innocent people lost their lives. Pakistan thus escaped being declared a terrorist country after accepting UN Security Council Resolution 1267, passed on December 10, 2008. This resolution banned a number of militant organizations and added several leaders to the list of terrorist organizations of the UN. Pakistan has since taken tough action against Jamaat-ud-Daawa<sup>3</sup>, shutting down the organization's camps across the country and arresting a number of its members. In accordance with the UN Security Council resolution, Pakistan seeks to appease the international community, especially the United States and India, probably at the cost of increasing resistance and discontent from within. The Pakistani people are divided between those who understand the government's response and those who feel betrayed. This situation of perpetual fear and insecurity is exacerbated by a faltering economy and energy and food crises. Pakistan is struggling to maintain political stability. Since the February 18 elections, the Pakistan People's Party-led government has advanced the democratization process, seeking to meet a host of domestic and international expectations. Some Western observers fear that without direct military control, Pakistan could collapse or be overrun by extremist religious groups. The question is therefore whether the new Pakistani government will be able to continue both the democratization process and the improvement of the human rights situation, as it claims.

Memon and Awan (2017) describes in this article The potential of cyberspace to convert conventional or daily work systems into cyber services makes it an essential part of today's reality. Several services have been used globally, such as e-commerce, virtual learning, and e-health, to enable the provision of efficient education and health services to people and to simplify the monitoring and engagement of investors and consumers at any time. With a population of 182.1 million, 63% of Pakistan's population is under 25. The majority of the members of this new society are "Netizens," and over 80% of them utilize the Internet and smart technology regularly. If adequately engaged, the youth section has the potential to propel the country forward to the next stage of political and economic independence. Many of them serve as young leaders and are active in politics, human rights, labor rights, journalism, science, and technology. All of these sectors are critical to strengthening the country's democratic governance norms, and interactions amongst these new leaders will result in the formation of a core of democracy and its standards. Elections are critical in a democratic society for ensuring stability and growth. However, the true issues are ensuring that election systems are free, fair, trustworthy, and transparent. Transparent elections lessen the danger of violence while promoting democracy, stability, peace, and prosperity. The experiences of

past elections in Pakistan make it evident that such vital transparency and fairness in the voting system can only be achieved via the proper use of cyberspace.

Akhtar (2009) says in this article in Pakistan, State elites have partnered with diverse ethnic groups to further their political objectives. This has a negative impact on the state's perception of equality and legitimacy. Creating a nation state is a long-term historical process. This does not imply that Pakistan or other third-world countries should go through the same phases of state formation as Europeans. We must stress the difficult issues and limits that Pakistan has experienced since its inception in 1947. While the internal barriers to national integration are widely understood, geopolitical influences from the regional and international environments must also be recognized. This article's major premise is that countries and identities are evolutionary processes that cannot be forcibly imposed. This article's main argument is that nations and identities are evolutionary processes that can only be sustained by policies that address the needs of component groups rather than being imposed artificially and externally.

Khan (2000) explores that that Pakistan has the potential to rank among the most developed emerging nations. It was a model emerging nation in the 1960s due to its remarkable development rate and the greatest per capita GDP in South Asia. Even yet, its democratic credentials were undermined, and the conclusion drawn from the last three decades is that its issues were brought about by the shortcomings of its governing class and political leaders. The author, who examines the first 100 days of General Pervaiz Musharraf's military rule, warns against making snap decisions and says there is reason for hope if the administration accepts the task of good governance, follows a sensible economic strategy, and stays away from a risky one.

Rizvi (2011) explores that Pakistan's democratic past is not entirely clear. The general elections in February 2008 and the installation of the federal and provincial administrations chosen in March marked the beginning of the current attempts to revitalize democratic governance and political management. Between 2008 and 2010, this democratic government system encountered several social, economic, religious, and security issues. It cannot yet be said, however, that democratic processes and institutions are irreversible. In Pakistan, this is the fourth effort to create a stable, civic, and democratic system. The military's takeover of political authority ended the first three attempts. Shortly after independence, in August 1947, the first attempt to create a democratic political system started, and it continued until General Ayub Khan, the army leader, assumed control in October 1958. The army and bureaucracy assumed control throughout these years while political institutions and procedures deteriorated.

Cohen (2011) opinioned that According to Cohen (2011), Pakistan is becoming a more significant actor in world politics every day. With the second-largest Muslim population in the world, the heart of global jihad, the world's most dangerous border nations, and nuclear weapons, this South Asian nation will have a significant impact on how the world is shaped in 10 years. A number of possibilities for the country's near-term growth, evolution, and operation are presented and evaluated in The

Future of Pakistan, along with the geopolitical ramifications of each. A group of knowledgeable experts, led by Stephen P. Cohen, a well-known authority on South Asia, looks at various aspects of the Pakistani problem.

Akhter (2012) describes in this article Today's liberals in Pakistan feel encircled by conservative political groups, many of whom are Islamist. Liberal concerns about a globally accepted theocracy in Pakistan were heightened by incidents like religious parties' ongoing celebration of the 2011 murder of Punjab Governor Salman Taseer, who had suggested changes to Pakistan's blasphemy laws. Pakistani liberals have lost trust in democratic politics as a result of this anxiety, and many now back military interventions and authoritarian governments. One However, Pakistan's Islamic political parties have never performed well in elections and frequently gain from military governments. The issue of how Islam should be incorporated into a democracy is becoming more and more relevant as a civilian administration enters Pakistan's first elections with a genuine democratic president and Washington's "global war on terror" lends more credibility to the anti-American stances of Islamist groups. There is an urgent situation in Pakistan.

Gregory (2016) says in this article for the first time in Pakistan's 66-year history, an elected government in May 2013 stepped down and was replaced by a civilian administration chosen by popular vote. Twelve eminent academics and writers are brought together in this book at this significant juncture in Pakistan's history to offer a thorough examination of the country's current state and developing tendencies. Three thematic sections namely, the democratic transition (including Islam and democracy, civil-military relations, and the economy), contested borders, and disputed areas (the Pashtun belt, Kashmir, and intra-Islamic conflict) are based on historical data, a variety of theoretical viewpoints, and empirical data. and regionalism (the dynamics of nuclear weapons, US-Pakistan ties, and bilateral interactions as seen from Pakistani and Indian viewpoints). In order to provide a thorough analysis of the current domestic and regional challenges and their effects on the region, as well as evidence of some encouraging trends for Pakistan's future, the contributors collectively examine the state of Pakistan's democratic transition, contemporary security dynamics, and broader regional security and political dynamics, as well as the intricate interactions between these three areas.

Nasr (1992) describes in this article It has been four years since Pakistan regained its democracy. The struggles of the last four years have not been comforting to Pakistanis who had thought that democracy would usher in a period of development and prosperity for their nation. Democracy's promise is not without risks and difficulties. Huntington referred to this as "authoritarian nostalgia" as a result of the escalation of political issues and the disappointment that followed the restoration of democracy. The emergence of democracy has not been a panacea for Pakistan's sociopolitical issues; rather, it has been accompanied by a progressive deterioration of political institutions, social unrest, and economic stagnation. Three prime ministers, each from a different party, have led Pakistan since 1988, when there were two general elections. Economic growth has halted, institutional capacities have been exhausted, ethnic conflict has escalated, and national and local decision-

making has become muddled. To put it succinctly, "the combination and interaction of low legitimacy and low effectiveness"<sup>2</sup> has accelerated instability, making democratic Pakistan the focal point of a "crisis of governance" that has arisen as a result of the democratization process and the most obvious barrier to its full success.

Hashmi (2022) explores in this article Pakistan has had numerous issues since its founding, but they are all primarily related to governance. The current issues have created a socio-political environment that is hostile to the strengthening of democratization, from the first migration crisis in the hostile neighborhood to the lack of infrastructure, the conflict between the central provinces, the clientelistic political system, etc. The process. Unusual and unconstitutional transfers of power from civilian to military regimes have resulted in an unstable, dysfunctional and undemocratic institutional arrangement. Pakistan's history underwent a sea change during the 2008–2013 civilian government, which attempted to take advantage of the opportunity to incorporate democratic norms into the system by enacting the 18th constitutional amendment. The study's goal is to showcase Pakistan's governance model by analyzing how the institutional structure functions to strengthen democracy in the country.

### **Methodology**

This study uses a qualitative methodology. Researcher used secondary source of data for this article. Secondary data is obtained from texts, books and other sources obtained from libraries and internet. The secondary qualitative data collected informed the development of the technical and analytical methods used to conduct this study and draw conclusions. The purpose of this study is to examine the identify opportunities to strengthen its democratic processes and institutions. And challenges of democracy in Pakistan.

To explore the future of democracy in Pakistan, focusing on its opportunities and challenges, this study will use a qualitative approach that will include an in-depth analysis of the existing literature on democratic institutions, electoral systems and the relationship between civilians and military of Pakistan. Primary data will be collected from academic articles, texts and internet.

### **Challenges**

#### **Absence of democratic norms**

The lack of true democratic norms in Pakistan is due to conflicts between political parties and their leaders, who prioritize their own interests over those of the people. Despite claiming to fight for democracy, parties like PPP and PMLN have failed to address the rights of minorities and basic needs of the population. Leaders like Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif have made promises but have not fulfilled them, perpetuating anti-democratic norms in the country (Shafqat,19098).

### **Parties in power and the constitution**

Pakistan has had three constitutions since gaining its independence: 1956, 1962, and 1973. This also includes two significant attempts at constitutional engineering (in 1985 and 2002) and two temporary constitutional accords (in 1947 and 1972). The primary goal of all these initiatives was to shift the balance of power in government favor.

### **The role of political parties and democracy**

Political parties play a crucial role in the advancement and growth of democracy. In Pakistan, political parties serve as a vehicle for patronage and public mobilization. But changing the function of political parties to represent and protect their interests in parliament is the biggest obstacle facing political leaders. Regrettably, rather than supporting and advancing democratic principles, policies, and behaviors, the rule of law, and tolerance of opposition parties, politicians instead embrace authoritarian policies and attitudes. The Supreme Court of Pakistan was assaulted by PMLN supporters in November 1997, but the leaders chose not to detain them.

### **Lack of credibility of elections**

True democracy is characterized by frequent, free, and fair elections. Pakistani elections, however, have a dismal record in this area. As a result, all of the losing parties accuse the victor of election tampering and declare it to be unjust after the election. When parties gain power, they also tamper with election results. Pakistan's multi-party system makes it challenging for any party to secure a certain majority. Because of this, a coalition government was typically required, and some parties managed to hold onto power even though they received fewer seats in the elections. For instance, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) emerged as the nation's second-largest party after the PMLN secured the majority of the vote in the May 2013 elections. There are significant concerns over the openness of this crucial political activity after PTI chairman Imran Khan claimed that the 2013 elections were rigged.

### **The communication gap between political leaders and the general public**

Both military and civilian authorities held power in Pakistan. Despite the fact that practically all political leaders support democracy, they are not really interested in creating and advancing true democratic norms and practices in this nation that lacks democracy. Once in power, political leaders attempt to disassociate themselves from common people, notwithstanding their public appearances to get votes.

### **State of Democracy in Pakistan**

To understand the future of democracy in Pakistan, seven criteria are used in this analysis. These are:

- The steady transformation of political systems and institutions toward a democratic model predicated on the rule of law, the equality of all individuals, and the protection of fundamental human liberties. Shifts in the institutional power dynamics between political and governmental entities.



- The rise of a pluralist nation or political community where the significant material and ideological divides are reduced through a process of tolerance, acceptance, and compromise; additionally, the ongoing integration and strengthening of sexes, groups, and underprivileged social classes; and finally, the inclusion of cultural, ethnic, and religious minorities in the political community on an equal footing.
- The ongoing development of democratic norms and ideals in society, which leads to improved and mutually beneficial relationships between a democratic society and democratic political regime.
- The expansion of democracy beyond the political and civic realms to the economic one, where democracy is characterized by access for the underprivileged to engage in their economic, scientific, and technical destinies, in addition to voting and pluralism.
- Native democracy, which allows Pakistanis to be creative in creating their own political structures that are in line with their epistemic, cultural, religious, and historical commitments. Extending the democratic discourse to local ways of knowing is one aspect of it.
- The release of a nation-state or society from the limitations of the global order that impede the realization of its democratic potential. The first four elements and the final one are our primary emphasis (Inayatullah & Inayatullah, 1997).

### **Democratization of Political Institutions**

Pakistan's democratic record is mixed, with political institutions such as the legislature, political parties, the judiciary, and the press making only limited contributions to its survival. The country has struggled to develop a stable constitutional framework, with several constitutions written and amended over the years. The 1973 Constitution has survived and enjoyed relatively greater support from political parties and interest groups after the 13th Amendment. However, some undemocratic features persist, leading to frequent breakdowns of the constitutional order and disrespect for the Constitution among powerful groups. Legislative institutions have not yet matured, with the National Assembly having been dissolved several times in its history, sometimes due to coups or coups d'état. Since 1988, Pakistan's president has repeatedly abused his power, leading to political instability and declining voter turnout. The political parties have not been able to remove these powers because they are not trusted and do not have the majority in the National Assembly. The Federal Sharia Court also limited the powers of the National Assembly. Leaders often use legislative institutions to stay in power instead of allowing them to exercise their democratic functions. President Leghari tried to

further consolidate his powers during his tenure, but faced challenges from the Supreme Court.

The establishment of the National Defense and Security Council (NSDC) In Pakistan has been questioned because it would have formalized the role of the military in politics and given the president more power than the prime minister. However, it was defended as a means of guaranteeing democracy and stability in the country by preventing political instability and military rule. The CDNS was suspended after the Thirteenth Amendment reduced the president to a figurehead, which could improve the future of democracy in Pakistan. The country's history shows a lack of tolerance for political opposition, with leaders often questioning its legitimacy and using repressive measures against it. Although Pakistan has been democratic for ten years, the culture of tolerance towards the opposition is still missing. The government victimized the opposition, leading to riots and attempts to overthrow the government. However, some signs of public fatigue with this behavior are reflected in the drop-in voter turnout. The changes are limited, with some choices considered fair. Democratic institutions in Pakistan remain weak and fragile, without a strong political culture or tradition to function autonomously (Inayatullah & Inayatullah ,1997).

### **Deep Structural Inequalities and the Future of Democracy**

The emergence of an imbalance in development and, consequently, in the power of state institutions vis-à-vis political institutions is closely linked to Pakistan's failure to establish a middle class that is pro-democracy, to remove feudal lords from political power, and to change the country's political system through political movements. The dominance of a strong military and civilian bureaucracy in Pakistani politics, as well as the frailty of political institutions derived from their historical evolution, are examples of this mismatch. The development of the two institutions military and civil bureaucracy was given top priority by the British government because it sought to create an efficient system of internal defense and security as well as an administrative structure that could manage the Indian population and guarantee the stability of its rule. The two influential institutions were raised in a colonial setting and, for structural and historical reasons, are not dedicated to democracy. They were not created to benefit society as a whole, but rather to safeguard colonial interests. The military and bureaucracy have created an ideology and a set of perceptions to support their direct and indirect engagement in the democratic process.

Pakistan's political life has always been heavily influenced by the military and bureaucracy, which frequently impede the democratic process. Although the military no longer directly participates in politics as much as it once did, it nonetheless has a significant impact on important political choices. Despite its strength, the civil bureaucracy is becoming less politically influential. Although military commanders have influenced political institutions, their impact on the judiciary's independence has been greater. Although it hasn't always succeeded, the court had to stand up for its independence and the defense of basic rights. Pakistan's judicial system has improved and rendered rulings that it would not have under

martial law since the country's democratic ten years. Nonetheless, there is no guarantee that the legal system will turn into a stronghold of democracy. Particularly when it comes to the reestablishment of the assembly, their judgments are uneven. Benazir Bhutto's tenure saw a decline in the relationship between the prime minister and the judiciary. A 1996 Supreme Court ruling that curtailed the executive branch's ability to unilaterally select judges stymied judicial politics. This enhanced the judiciary's independence. It might be a sign of Pakistan's democracy's progress if the judiciary keeps up its judicial activism on behalf of the people (Inayatullah & Inayatullah, 1997).

## **Opportunities**

### **Youth Engagement**

Pakistan has a young population, more than 60% of which are under 30 years of age. Engaging young people in political and civic processes can bring new perspectives and innovative solutions, leading to positive democratic change and long-term growth.

### **Strengthen civil society**

Pakistan has an active civil society that supports rights, justice and accountability. Civil society organizations (CSOs) and advocacy groups play a key role in raising awareness, monitoring government actions and promoting citizen engagement. The support of these groups can improve transparency and build public trust in democratic institutions.

### **Digital media development and access to information**

The proliferation of social media and digital platforms offers opportunities for citizen journalism, information sharing and public debate. Digital platforms allow more people to participate in the political debate, which can lead to a more informed electorate and encourage transparency.

### **Strengthen local communities**

Decentralization through local government reforms allows for better representation at the local level. Empowering local governments can improve service delivery, encourage citizen participation and address community issues more effectively, thereby strengthening democracy at all levels.

### **Increase the political participation of women**

With its focus on gender equality, Pakistan has seen increased mobilization for women's political participation. Supporting women leaders and creating inclusive policies can foster a more representative democracy that addresses various issues, including those related to gender and the family.

### **Economic reforms and stability**

Economic growth and stability can reduce public discontent, helping people focus on long-term democratic goals rather than short-term solutions. Economic reforms that promote job creation, reduce poverty and improve living standards can strengthen public support for democratic governance.

### **Contributions of the diaspora**

The Pakistani diaspora can contribute financially and intellectually to the democratic development of the country. Many members of the diaspora are committed to promoting democracy, human rights and economic development in Pakistan, providing resources and international connections.

### **Electoral and judicial reform**

Electoral reforms aimed at ensuring fair, transparent and accessible elections can strengthen trust in democratic processes. Judicial reforms aimed at ensuring fair and efficient legal systems can also strengthen the rule of law, which is essential for democratic stability.

### **The public demand for responsibility**

Public demand for accountability and transparency in governance is growing. This demand can motivate leaders and institutions to focus on anti-corruption measures, transparency and ethical governance, thus strengthening public trust in democratic institutions.

### **Improve civic education and awareness**

Civic education initiatives aimed at increasing public understanding of democratic rights and responsibilities can lead to greater voter participation, informed decision-making, and a stronger sense of civic duty among citizens.

## **Conclusion**

The future of democracy in Pakistan rests on a complex mix of opportunities and challenges. Pakistan has a young population, growing political awareness, an active civil society and better access to digital platforms, all of which can foster democratic engagement. In addition, international support and regional partnerships offer ways to strengthen democratic norms and practices.

However, Pakistan also faces significant challenges, including political instability, weak democratic institutions, economic disparities, and the continued influence of anti-democratic forces, particularly in civil-military relations. Corruption, weak rule of law and problems such as extremism also complicate democratic development.

To ensure a sustainable democratic future, Pakistan must focus on strengthening its institutions, implementing electoral reforms, promoting the rule of law and engaging its citizens through education and media freedom. Economic growth and social well-being are equally essential to bring tangible benefits to the population, which helps build trust in democratic governance. Through the dedicated efforts of its leaders

and citizens, Pakistan has the potential to overcome these challenges and work towards a more resilient and inclusive democratic system.

### **Results and Discussion**

In its fifty years of existence, Pakistan has not seen a consistent consolidation of democracy since state institutions have dominated political institutions. This is demonstrated by the lack of constitutional underpinnings, a completely independent judiciary, a sophisticated party system, and frequent and equitable elections. The odds of survival have increased due to recent political developments, including the progressive removal of state institutions—particularly the military—from the political arena, the expansion of judicial authority, the parliamentary restraint of presidential powers, and the population's growing political consciousness.

The capacity of the elected authorities to address the significant issues of financial fragility, excessive debt, galloping inflation, economic inequality, and ethnic and religious tensions will determine its future cohesion the future of democracy in Pakistan cannot be accurately predicted by democracy alone. Pakistan's democracy is unstable, as seen by its lengthy and recurring military rule and periodic failures. Nevertheless, the nation is not destined to adopt an authoritarian system to stop its slide into anarchy, and the democratic choice is not inevitably doomed due to the democratic system's historical shortcomings and present shortcomings.

Both authoritarian and democratic potentials abound in Pakistani society. The internal dynamics of Pakistan's political and social growth, as well as its link to the global order, will determine whether one of these two options comes to pass. An earlier piece about Pakistan's future concentrated on the vision of the future that will propel the nation ahead.

These include the Islamic socialist notion of "roti, makan" (food, clothes, and shelter); the belief that Pakistan was once a place of morality and purity, a place where Muslims could live in safety. According to the East Asian model of an authoritarian and disciplined capitalist society, Pakistan is a developing country that is rapidly approaching middle-income status. The mythical image of the ideal Muslim regime, guided by the words and deeds of the Prophet of Islam, stems from the loss of its sovereignty and the fear of the country collapsing, either internally from a military invasion of India or culturally from the infiltration of Western media.

### **Recommendations**

- Strengthening the independence of the judiciary, improving judicial processes, increasing the transparency of legislation, promoting civil-military separation, ensuring electoral transparency and reducing manipulation through technology and training programs.
- Strengthening the independence of the Electoral Commission, implementing anti-corruption measures, training an impartial police and bureaucracy,

promoting transparency, integrating the ‘civic education in schools, the education of citizens on critical consumption.

- Inform and encourage the political participation of young people and women for a more inclusive democracy.
- Enact laws to protect journalists and media freedom, fight disinformation, support online freedom of expression, fight economic inequality, create job opportunities, invest in health and education, respond to complaints ethnic and regional and against extremism through economic opportunity and education.
- Focus on national democratic development, work with international organizations for advice and assistance, improve diplomatic relations with democratic countries, and participate in global democratic networks for knowledge sharing and sup.

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