**The future of democracy**

[Abdul Moiz Dar](https://www.nation.com.pk/columnist/abdul-moiz-dar)

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Democracy is generally defined as the government of the people, for the people and by the people. In the context of Pakistan, it does not fit into any of the aspects noted above. At the root of inconsistency between Pakistan’s politics and democratic norms lies history.
Ever since it came into being, the continuous derailment of democratic process in view of interventions together with realpolitik of political parties has been a commonplace occurrence. Be it PPPP or PTI or PDM, no instance as regards to true observation of democratic values has come forth until today. Whilst Bhutto rebuffed the majority of Majib-ur-Rehman trampling democratic norms, PDM has resorted to tweaking NAB laws, silencing its political adversaries in furtherance of securing their objectives.
Unfortunately, the PTI government’s approach has not been much different from what preceded it. As a result, democracy in Pakistan finds itself at its lowest ebb, primarily due to its gangrenous political system. The present scenario best depicts the nature of Pakistan’s political system. With elections around the corner, there is a huge political furor in the country, as each political party vying to outdo the other in shaping an eye-catching election manifesto. However eye-catching their party manifesto is, the election results are bound to be shocking.
Despite the fact that a major political party has found itself wiped out from the scene, a question arises as to whether its vote bank has too been affected. Ahead of the country’s battered economic and political situation, there does not appear any reason for it to be hurt. Although the politics of Pakistan has seen drastic changes following political mayhem in May, the feelings of resistance among people against the status quo remain intact.
However much resistance there is among the people, nothing amounted to much has come on the scene yet; this offers reasons for the absence of true democratic culture in Pakistani polarised society. A glance on the political strategy of PDM parties shows their being inclined toward suppressing their opponents. Now, political opposition has transformed into personal vendetta from all sides and stakeholders, which is repugnant to democratic values. Where the PTI government was inclined to crush its opponents, the present-day situation also reeks of the same.
Faced with these challenges, another one is the reservations that political parties weave against judicial activism. The judiciary cannot be solely blamed for getting entangled in the political thicket, as politicians themselves often drag it into such situations. While the PTI currently grapples with the rigidity of the system, it won’t be long before parties from the PDM alliance might face similar challenges. Given the present situation, compromising democratic norms seems inevitable.
Amidst this tumultuous scenario, the people of Pakistan appear condemned to a life of neglect. On one hand, the serpent of terrorism is rearing its ugly head at an appalling pace, while on the other hand, political politicking continues. The economic side also presents pathetic heralds, with 37.8% people living below the level of subsistence and political temperature soaring to the extreme generates the question as to whether the people need this political rigmarole. The answer will, indubitably, be in negation.
As important as the economic sector, in democracy, so is education. Literacy in Pakistan stands at about 59%, with males at 71% and females at 48%. Most heartbreaking is the fact that only 67% of Pakistani children complete elementary education. Is it reasonable to expect a nation to develop democratic culture with such heartbreaking statistics? It surely casts doubt on the development of democratic system in such a country, however, it is still not impracticable.
Among the major reasons hampering people from fully adopting this democratic system are these two above mentioned reasons. And, so are the essentials of a democratic system. However, the need of the hour is to be rational amid this crisis of sensibility. All the parties should behave sensibly and require to crystallise their actions into the crucible of true principles of democracy; otherwise, the ticking time bomb political and economic maelstrom will persist. So long as the economic situation remains under strain, public belief in democracy will be little to none.