



Political Elite and Extremism: A Challenge for the Stability of Pakistan

▪ DOI: 10.31703/gsssr.2022(VII-II).10

▪ URL: [http://dx.doi.org/10.31703/gsssr.2022\(VII-II\).10](http://dx.doi.org/10.31703/gsssr.2022(VII-II).10)

▪ Vol. VII, No. II (Spring 2022)

▪ Pages: 83 – 93

▪ p-ISSN: 2708-2121

▪ e-ISSN: 2708-3616

Fozia Bibi *

Qaiser Iqbal †

Abida Yousaf *

Abstract: *The extreme behaviours of Pakistani politicians are another dilemma which is prompting different kinds of extreme norms in Pakistani politics. Moreover, political extremism is another factor which is creating a ground for religious extremism in our country. The focal point of this study lies in many factors which are enhancing extremism in different fields of life: such as lack of trustworthy nationwide political parties, multi-party system, switching parties and affiliation for personal interest, fake promises of politicians before elections, and use of Islam for political purposes. The problem of extremism cannot be eliminated until and unless the Pakistani government will not take proper measure to cope with it.*

Key Words: Political extremism, political parties, fanaticism, Democratic governments, Military

Introduction

Extremism can be defined in terms of the imposition of one's extreme and uncompromising views on others. This kind of inflexible behaviour can be observed in many fields of life like Social, religious and political. For example, Political intolerance and the absence of harmony are common in Pakistan. The lack of patience and tolerance is constantly resulting in unrest in the country. Additionally, this form of behaviour and rigidity in politics is enhancing another kind of extremism which we can call 'political extremism.'

Since independence, Pakistan could not develop a systematic and good multi-party system. The Independence Act of 1947 conferred the powers to the constituent bodies of Pakistan and India to establish and advance an autonomous opinionated society (Mohammad Qadeer, [1997](#)). The fundamental rights regarding freedom of

expression, beliefs, faith, and enforcement of law and order were guaranteed in Objective Resolution (1949) and by the constituent assembly of 1947. Moreover, the constitution of 1956 and 1962 also reassured the existence and role of political parties. In the constitution of 1973, parliamentary and federal form of government was adopted. Fundamental human rights were also granted by the constitution of 1973 (Amjad Mahood Khan,[2003](#)).

The right to make and join political parties is also a part of basic human rights in the 21st century. Conversely, government employees are not allowed to make or join any political party during their service. However, no political party is allowed to promote ethnic, cultural, linguistic, religious or ethnic abhorrence (Fatima Riffat, [2016](#)). Before elections, every political party has to declare and justify its assets and means of earned resources. Besides this, intra-party elections are conducted by political parties to elect the

* Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, Rawalpindi Women University, Rawalpindi, Punjab, Pakistan. Email: fbpol@f.rwu.edu.pk (*Corresponding Author*)

† Visiting Lecturer, Department of IR, Abdul Wali Khan University, Mardan, KP, Pakistan.

* In charge, Department of the Economics and Finance, International Islamic University, Islamabad, Pakistan.

members for different positions within the party.

This study will explore that is the political extremism a great threat to the stability of Pakistan. It further investigates the causes behind political extremism. How the extreme behaviour of Pakistan politicians is affecting Pakistani society.

Social Constructivism and Political Extremism

Social constructivism highlights that states are socially constructed and therefore can be transformed and create new identities. Therefore, the values and environment also affect the policies of the State (Baylis et, at., 2020). In Pakistan, numerous factors have contributed to the rise of political extremism. Most of the politicians belong to feudal families and backgrounds. As a result, their environment also makes them less flexible and their rigidity to particular issues also increases in extremism (Muhammad Zaman, 2011). For Instance, Zulfiqar Ali, Bhutto, Benazir Bhutto, Bilawal Bhutto from the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and politicians of Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PMLN) are two key examples of it. These political elite are mainly concerned about their family politics and interests and they are less bothers to promote peace, unity and harmony among the general public. Consequently, illiterate politicians with a feudal background are unable to address the grievances of common citizens and it further enhances dissatisfaction, and intolerance among the public. In Pakistan, both civil and military governments have ruled but both remained unable to successfully deal with domestic issues, particularly extremism (Ishrat Husain, 2009). The failures of democratic and military governments increased the sense of deprivation and dissatisfaction among the public which also contributed to extremism in society.

Social Constructivism states that important behavioural changes can be produced with the help of changing social interactions, identities and values. To understand the impact of political extremism, we can use the social constructivism approach. The socio-political environment of Pakistan is affecting the behaviour of the general public.

Moreover, most of the politicians do not fulfil their promises after coming into power. As a result, there is a lack of trust between the public and the political elite (Fatima Riffat, 2015). Moreover, Pakistani Politicians not only broke their pre-elections promises but they failed to address the basic issues of the public. All this is further society to adopt radical means to gain their rights.

The world we are living in is defined by politics, history, economics and many other institutions etc and these institutions affect the policies of states (Philip E. Steinberg, 2001). Therefore, it is interesting to analyze that the world is socially constructed and ideas, values, and identities play important roles in this process. The political history of Pakistan also reflects that due to poor economic, political and social policies extremism has increased in society. Therefore, the role of the economic and political environment cannot be ignored in this regard. Despite all this, the political elite is not addressing public grievances and fundamental needs. Therefore, due to bad governance, corrupt political elite, and high inflation, the public is fee deprived and a few of them adopt unfair means to meet their needs. Poor law and order and justice are also contributing to the increase of extremism in Pakistan.

Brief History of Democratic Rules in Pakistan

Democracy is vital for the development and progress of a society. However, since independence military dictators also ruled the country along with a few democratic governments. For the success of democracy, there is also a need for a continuous process of elections and other democratic practices. In Pakistan, the continuous process of democracy could not develop. Therefore, when we analyze the political systems in Pakistan we have to study both civil and military rules. For instance, Muslim League was in power from 1947 to 1956, from October 1957 to 1958 (Fatima Riffat, 2016). After the overthrow of the democratic government, Gen. Ayub Khan imposed Martial-law and ruled the country till 1969. In this regard, Pakistan People's Party (PPP) was the first elected democratic government that ruled from 1971 to 1977. Although, the end of this era was also another

Martial-law which was imposed by Gen.Zia-ul-Haq and he ruled till 1988. After the death of Zia-ul-Haq in 1988 Benazir Bhutto from PPP become the Prime Minister of Pakistan but her elected government lasted till 1990 for a short period of two years only (Samina Yasmeen, [1994](#)).

After the fall of PPP's elected government, PMLN assumed power and ruled from 1990 till 1993. Interestingly, another democratically elected government could not complete its tenure. Furthermore, PPP again came into power in 1993 and once again could not complete the term in office and Benazir Bhutto's government ended in 1996. PPP and PMLN were the two main political parties of Pakistan till the emergence of PTI in the practical scenario of Pakistan in 2013. Therefore, once again PMLN took office and their government hardly lasted for two years (Katharine Adeney, [2017](#)), and another Martial-law in Pakistan on October 12, 1999, was imposed by Gen.Pervaiz Musharaf (Saima Parveen et.al.[2018](#)).

Gen. Musharaf remained the President of Pakistan from June 2001 and due to numerous factors he resigned on August 18, 2008. After the end of military rule, PPP won the elections and successfully completed its term in office. PPP stayed in power from 2008 till 2013 (Aqil Shah, [2019](#)). However, in 2013, Mian Nawaz Sharif's party PMLN won the elections with the majority (Rizwan et al., [2014](#)). Since independence Pakistan has experienced only a few years of democratic rule. Most of the elected Prime Ministers could not stay in power for their complete term in office. For instance, from 1951-1958 seven Primers were removed from office. Later on, Benazir Bhutto and Mian Nawaz Sharif couldn't get a chance to complete their term in office. More recently, in April 2022 another elected Prime Minister was removed from office after the success of the no-confidence motion. The previous consecutive authoritarian governments embraced a plan of de-politicization of political parties. To de-politicize the associational dominions, consecutive military regimes held non-party elections. The structures of governments in advanced countries are categorized by vastly structured political parties and aspire towards unified accomplishment for the betterment of their system and society. In the constitution of

1973, Pakistan adopted a parliamentary form of government. As per the spirit of the parliamentary form of government, the mutual census between the legislature and executive is mandatory on all key issues. In Parliamentary system entails the executive and legislative members agreeing upon issues. (Omar Farooq, 2020).

In the Parliamentary system, the role and influence of the opposition cannot be ignored easily. Moreover, the opposition's role becomes more vital in case of a no-confidence vote against the Prime Minister and they can take the control of power, as happened in April 2020 when a no-confidence motion was passed against sitting Prime Minister Imran Khan. After Imran Khan, PMLN formulated a government in the centre with a coalition of other political parties (Assad Rahim, 2022). However, a census between the government and the opposition is necessary to develop democratic norms and values in society (Saeed Shafqat, [1998](#)). Unfortunately, in the case of Pakistan, such a relationship between the ruling party and opposition parties could not develop yet and it also affects the success of democracy in Pakistan. Therefore, most political parties blame each other for the failure of their policies and unsuccessful rule, PTI and PMLN are two main examples of it.

Military Dictatorships in Pakistan

The constitution of 1956 was suspended by President Iskandar Mirza in on October 7, 1958, and with the support of the military, he imposed Martial-law in the country. However, on October 27, 1958, Gen. Ayub Khan took the power and deposed him sent him. Gen. Ayub Khan ruled over Pakistan from 1958 till 1969. Due to public protests, Ayub Khan resigned and handed over the charge to Gen.Yayha Khan. However, in 1971 Yahya Khan handed over the government to Zulfikar Ali Bhutto who become the first civilian Martial-Law administrator and President of Pakistan (Ghulam Ali, et., a;[2021](#)). Mr Bhutto declared victory in the elections of 1977 but Pakistan National Alliance (PNA) didn't accept the result of the election and demanded new elections. Moreover, the Bhutto government arrested the leadership of the opposition party PNA and it further created lawlessness, Chaos and

instability in the country. The entire situation provides a justification for the next martial law in Pakistan. General Zia-ul-Haq removed the civilian government of Bhutto and became the president and he died on 17th August 1988 in a flight accident (Mir Zohair Hussain, 1994). In 1999, the clashes between Mian Nawaz Sharif and General Musharraf resulted in another martial law in Pakistan and he resigned from the government in 2008. Moreover, PPP got successful in the elections of 2008 and it was the second democratic government since its independence that had completed its tenure from 2008-2013, (Iltaf Khan et., al.2021).

The key accomplishment of PPP's government was the successful completion of its term from 2008-2013. However, despite that PPP could not address the issues of the general public. Consequently, PPP was rejected by the majority of the public in the elections of 2013. The victorious party in the elections was PMLN so they made government. However, the main issue within political parties is most of the politicians are from feudal families or business class. Therefore, their main objective remains to maximize their interest after becoming a part of the government. Most of the political elite are less concerned about public welfare and reforms. PTI remained in power from 2018 till April 2022, but all these political parties remained unable to bring real change in Pakistan. As a result, Pakistan is going through a serious economic, political and social crisis despite having a democratic government.

The current Army leadership is not interested to rule in the country once again. In addition, common Pakistanis have finally realized that nothing can be a substitute for democracy (Schmidt, 2013). Political parties in Pakistan are representing a particular province, ethnicity or culture. For instance, PPP is mainly the political party of Sindh, PMLN is famous in Punjab, MQM represents the Muhajir community of Karachi, and Balochistan National Party (BNP) is only limited to Balochistan. Moreover, these political parties especially PPP and PMLN claim the representation of the whole country but that is not a reality. PTI is the only political party that won seats in all provinces of Pakistan in the elections of 2018 (Hassan Javed et., al. 2019). However, overall there is a lack of

a national party to lead the entire nation. As a result, there is a lack of harmony, and unity among the general public on sensitive issues related to language, culture, ethnicity and culture. Therefore, a lack of tolerance for other groups also enhances extremism in society.

Political Extremism: A Threat to the Peace of Pakistan

Religious and political radicalism is one of the main internal threats to the stability of Pakistan. Most of the political parties are less concerned about the cohesion and peace of society. Except for PTI, no other party could get enough representation in all provinces of Pakistan. PTI government could not complete its term in office and due to a no-confidence motion, the coalition government under the leadership of Mian Shahbaz Sharif has established (Cyril Almeida et., al.2022). Moreover, now PTI is the ruling party in KPK and Punjab, while PPP is in power in the province of Sindh and PMLN is the centre. In such a scenario, it would be predicted that unity and harmony among the people of different provinces would be difficult as not a single party is in a clear majority. In the following, the role of different political parties will be analyzed to understand the phenomena of extremism and the role of the political elite in it.

The Role of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP)

PPP is a popular party in Sindh and has an influence on the common public, especially in rural Sindh. Since the murder of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, PPP is using the Bhutto card to get sympathy and votes in every election. The murder of Benazir Bhutto further helps the party to get more sympathy and gain the power of the legacy of the Bhutto family. Although, PPP remained in power from 2008-2013 but could not deliver and most of the party ministers were involved in corruption including Asif Ali Zardari (Iltaf Khan et., al.2021). However, after the elections of 2013, PPP vanished from Punjab and KPK and since then Asif Ali Zardari is trying to get back in power with the coalition of other parties. In this regard, PTI has emerged as a key challenge for PPP in Sindh as Imran Khan is also famous among the general public of Karachi.

The Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PMLN)

PMLN is currently in power under the leadership of Shahbaz Sharif, who is the brother of Mian Nawaz Sharif. After the removal of Imran Khan from power, PMLN assumed power with the coalition of other political parties such as PPP etc. PMLN leadership has strong connections and associations with the business class and also represents the rich, industrial business class due to their own business interests (Fatima Riffat, [2016](#)). Some key achievements of Mian Nawaz Sharif's government are successful nuclear tests in 1998, the construction of a Motorway in Punjab, the expansion of industries particularly in the province of Punjab and remodelling the of Lahore, which is the capital of Punjab.

PMLN is one of the main parties of Punjab, which is the largest province of Pakistan. It is the main strength of PMLN because Punjab is the largest, most educated and most influential province. In the elections of 2013 PTI emerged as a serious threat to PMLN. PTI has proved itself to be the second-largest political party in the country. Moreover, in the elections of 2018, PTI emerged as the main political party in the political map of Pakistan. However, after the no-confidence motion of April 2022 against Imran Khan, once again PMLN is ruling in the centre. Now the leadership of PMLN has to meet the expectations of the people regarding solving the issues of CNG, energy, inflation (Khurshid Ahmed, [2022](#)), education, and social issues such as extremism and terrorism, otherwise, PMLN will lose again in elections. However, since assuming power, Shahbaz Sharif is unable to control inflation or introduce social, economic or political reforms. As a result, frustration, crimes and depression in society are also increasing.

The Muttahida Quami Movement (MQM)

The Muttahida Quami Movement (MQM) is one of the main political parties in Karachi (Sindh). MQM was established by Altaf Hussain who is settled in London for the last two decades (Mohammad Abid, [2017](#)). There are allegations of involvement of Altaf Hussain in an illegal armed wing, murders, terrorism and money laundering (Noman, 2008). However, since its

inception MQM infrastructure has successfully mobilized the young, working Urdu-speaking population of Karachi. Moreover, MQM remained in coalition with many governments, for instance, in the late 1980s, 1988-1990, 1990-1992, 2002-2007 and from 2008 to 2013. However, since 2013 PTI has emerged as a major challenge for MQM as PTI has divided the votes of PPP and MQM.

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)

The PMLN's main opponent is PTI. The PTI chairman, Imran Khan has been in politics since 1996. Imran Khan established PTI in 1996 but till 2011 his party could not get the attention of a larger audience (Elena Dmitrieva, [2021](#)). Imran Khan has fascinated the urban, educated and young population. However, some old and traditional politicians with feudal backgrounds are also members of PTI but despite that PTI claims to bring change in Pakistani. In the elections of 2013, PTI emerged as the second largest party only in KPK (M. Bilal Akhtar et al., [2013](#)).

PTI won the elections of 2018 with a clear majority and formed a coalition government. However, in April 2022 Imran Khan lost the government because of the success of the no-confidence motion by all opposition parties (Asif Shahzad et al., [2022](#)). It further resulted in political and economic chaos, inflation and instability in the country. Currently, PTI and PMLN have joined hands and formed a government in the province of Punjab. However, in the centre, PMLN is in power, while PTI is the ruling party in KPK and Punjab. The entire scenario has pushed Pakistan towards high inflation, unemployment, economic crisis and political instability. All political parties are responsible for the current situation in Pakistan.

Some key Reasons behind Political Extremism

One of the main reasons behind extremism in Pakistan is the poor performance of the political elite. A brief analysis of the policies of Pakistani politicians is explained below.

Misuse of Islam for Politics Goals

In Pakistan, it is quite common among the political elite to use Islam for their political

objectives and goals. For instance, President Zia-ul-Haq used Islamization policies to get public support and to prolong his term in office. Jamiat-e-Ulema Islam (F) is another example in regard. Molana Fazal-ur-Rehman. Moreover, Fazal-ur-Rehman called PTI chairman Imran Khan a Jewish agent. The main purpose of such allegations against Khan was to defame him. However, When Molana Muhamamd Khan Sherani (Jamiat-e-Ulema-e-Islam Pakistan) asked Fazal-ur-Rehman to prove his fatwa of calling Mr Khan a Jewish agent. In response, Fazal-ur-Rehman said that it was merely a political statement against Khan. Such kind of political leaders is using religion to manipulate the general public and to defame their opponents. These politicians have deep impacts on the minds of their followers as well (News Desk, 2022). Therefore, it should be prohibited that false statements against opponents particularly on the basis of religious beliefs should be discouraged at the state level.

Extremism and Weak Political Institutions

Another major reason behind weak institutions is poor governance and management by the political elite. Both democrats and dictators ruled over Pakistan but no leader could bring real reforms to end lawlessness, extremism and terrorism in the country. Most of the political parties are run by specific families and within political parties, there is a strong feudal system. Therefore, the political elite is not familiar with the problems of the general public. Before and during election campaigns these politicians make lofty claims to bring reforms and change in Pakistan but after assuming power they failed to fulfil their commitments and promises. All this further enhances the gap between government, rules, law and the public. As a result, few people use violent means to show their anger and grievances against the system. Therefore, weak political institutions are the main reason behind extremism in Pakistan.

Many other factors such as poor economic policies, injustice, and weak political institutions also pushed society towards extremism. Balochistan and FATA are two key examples of it, as due to weak management the law and order situation got worsened in these two important parts of Pakistan. However, no government to date seriously address these

issues to make Pakistan a peaceful country where people can get access to basic facilities of life, rights, justice and equal opportunities.

Lack of Sustainable Governance

There is also a lack of good and sincere leadership in Pakistan. Most of the politicians are involved in corruption scandals like Nawaz Sharif, Benazir Bhutto etc (Feisal Khan, 2016). After the murder of Benazir Bhutto, Asif Ali Zardari lead the party and formed the government from 2008-2013. However, there are also serious charges of corruption and other crimes against Mr Zardari(Feisal Khan, 2016). The crisis-ridden political rituals are also damaging the peace and stability of the country. Moreover, there is a lack of trust between the general public and the government due to the corruption of the main political leaders. In such an environment, any call for use of radical means get attracted by few people quite easily and they use it against the system to take revenge. Therefore, such a social-economic and political scenario also provide fertile ground for the growth of extremism.

Unpredictable Politicians and their Affiliation

The political elite in Pakistan switches their loyalties and parties quite often. The trend of changing political affiliations and parties is increasing with the passage of time. For instance, Arbab Khizar Hayat has switched his party loyalty almost 14 times and he is in politics since 1996. Arbab Khizar belongs to a landowning family and he left PTI to join PPP and then moved to PMLN. Many other politicians are also doing the same. Like, Nabeel Gabol was elected to the assembly from Lyari (Karachi) and he switched to MQM before the dissolution of parliament in March 2013.

Many other Ministers switched their loyalty from PPP to PMLN shortly before the elections of 2013. It reveals that the main purpose of these politicians is not the welfare of the public but they are only concerned about political gains. These politicians preferred their personal interests over state interests and as a result, Pakistan is still going through many social, economic and political challenges. Most politicians belong to feudal families and they

join politics on the basis of their family affiliation (Riffat, 2016). Such an approach in politics is also promoting selfishness, lawlessness and corruption in society.

Lack of Mutual Census among Political Parties

Another main issue which is affecting the peace of society is the division of all political parties on main security and national issues. All political parties could not get agreed on a mutual standpoint about different issues such as elections procedure, the role of the judiciary, constitutional amendments, terrorism, extremism and long-run economic and political reforms. Furthermore, the ruling elite never addresses the issues of human rights of the general public. As a result, inflation, poverty, illiteracy, energy crisis, terrorism, extremism, and shortage of food and water are still harming the stability of Pakistan.

Negative Campaigns against the Opponent Parties

The trend of negative campaigns against the opposition parties is also an issue in Pakistan. In spite of doing positive campaigns for themselves, politicians mainly focused on degrading other political parties on social-electronic media and also in advertisement campaigns. In addition, instead of showing what they have done in their earlier periods in office over the country they often criticise the personal lives and characters of their opponents. The spontaneous blackmailing of rivals is also common in the political elite. Besides this, political parties such as PPP leadership keep on using the murders of their ex-leaders as a tool to get sympathetic votes. Such negative campaigns are made on television ads, print ads, social media etc. While a better way for the political parties would be to highlight their own strategies for economic welfare and development instead of exploiting negative campaigns against their opposition parties.

Political Parties Based on Ethicist Grounds

Most of the political parties in Pakistan represent a particular ethnic group or class. These political parties use language, ethnicity, culture or language as a tool to get maximum

votes in elections. For instance, MQM in Karachi, PPP in Sindh, and PMLN in Punjab etc are some key examples of such political parties. Unfortunately, these political parties are in politics since the 1970s but they never bothered to address the issues of national harmony and peace. Furthermore, this political class divided society into different groups and during the election campaign, the lack of tolerance among the supporter of different parties are now common in Pakistan. In this regard, PMLN and PTI are two main parties that can bring harmony among the public by addressing the major national challenges of Pakistan, rather than diving the public on the basis of political affiliation. Imran Khan and Nawaz Sharif, Shabaz Sharif and Maryam Safdar can use polite tones and words while criticising their opponents. As the harsh words of political leaders are also encouraging intolerance among the general public.

The Failure of Political Parties to deal with Domestic and Regional Threats

Political parties in Pakistan usually make high promises before and during elections to bring change and prosperity. However, they all remain to fail to address the basic problems of the general public. After winning the elections, the political elite never bothers to fulfil their promises. Both military and civil governments ruled over Pakistan but none could make Pakistan a peaceful developed country. Moreover, terrorism and extremism have affected the growth and development of Pakistan. This is the failure of all political parties in that they could not make a clear policy to deal with domestic, regional and global threats. Due to the war in Afghanistan, in 1979 and post 9/11 terrorism has increased in Pakistani society (Akhtar, 2012). Due to Afghanistan's war, the Pakistani political elite sacrificed its own peace and development. As a result, now extremism and terrorism have become the key national security challenges in Pakistan.

The Impacts of Political Extremism on Pakistani Society

The majority in Pakistan is still deprived of their socio-economic and political rights. The deprivation is also leading to extremism in

society. Tribal Areas of Pakistan and Balochistan are two main examples of it. Due to the failure of the political elite to address the grievances of the general public extremism has increased in society. Moreover, a few religious groups such as Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUIF) and Tehreek-e-Labaik are also in politics and they use the religious card to pressurize different governments for their own agendas. This is also shaking the trust of citizens in politicians. Only true democracy can bring real reforms in Pakistan but the poor political parties' setup is also a challenge to the success of democracy in Pakistan. For the success of democracy, there is always a need for a vibrant and organized setup within parties. Due to a weak political system, non-democratic forces get a chance to interfere in the politics of Pakistan. Consequently, real democratic values could not be established in the case of Pakistan.

Moreover, Pakistan has a multi-party system and most politicians change their party affiliation for the sake of their own interests. The multi-party system is posing a serious challenge for political parties to get a clear majority in elections as result mostly coalition governments has were established in Pakistan. With the change of affiliation, any ruling government can lose government easily. Furthermore, it is also promoting corruption within politics as rich politicians use the money to buy sitting MNS to get power. Due to a lack of moral values in politics public does not trust these politicians. As a result, the culture of switching party affiliation, corruption and buying sitting MNAs has become common in Pakistan.

Domestic political instability also affected the economic growth and development of Pakistan. Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif's coalition government has to deal with many economic and political challenges. He took the charge of government on April 2022, after the success of the no-confidence motion against Imran Khan. Currently, the Pakistani currency Rupee is among the weakest and worst-performing currencies in the world. Moreover, the foreign exchange reserves of Pakistan are also low. The food and fuel prices are touching the sky and it is not easy for common citizens to afford the basic facilities of life (Juvaria Jafri, 2022). Although Shahbaz Sharif had previously

served as Chief Minister of Punjab as Prime Minister it is his first experience and it is quite challenging for him to deal with ongoing economic and political challenges.

Tackling Political Extremism

In Pakistan, the political elite and their policies are one of the main reasons behind the growing extremism. The following few steps are recommended to deal with the issue of political extremism in the country.

Firstly, the political elite should fulfil their commitments and promises after assuming power. There should be timely, free and fair elections to promote real democratic values in Pakistan. As if a government get a chance to complete its full term in office, automatically it will be able to make long run effective policies. Moreover, in this case of failure to deliver, the ruling party will be accountable before the public for their bad governance.

Secondly, Pakistani politicians should cut their expenses and they should declare their assets, source of assets and income before running the elections.

Thirdly, there should be proper and strict rules and regulations about party membership, eligibility, inter-party elections and changing political affiliation from one to another party.

There should be specific criteria especially qualifications to run the elections in Pakistan. The character, previous history, loyalty and faithfulness of political candidates should be checked by the election commission of Pakistan on merit.

Furthermore, there is a need for serious actions and punishments to eliminate corruption at the individual, societal and state levels. Without taking this issue as an emergency, it would be challenging to make Pakistan a peaceful and developed country. Corruption in any society affects transparency, merit, justice and performance of all institutions. The government of Pakistan can take the help of China's model to eliminate corruption. Today China is one of the biggest economies in the world. Therefore, the elimination of corruption will help to promote merit, justice and rule of law in Pakistan.

Conclusion

Currently, Pakistan is going through a severe economic and political crisis. This research explores that the political elite is mainly responsible for the current situation in Pakistan. Due to the multi-party system, politicians switch their loyalties on regular basis and it negatively affects the performance of the government. The key example of such party switching and its impact is the downfall of Imran Khan's government and the establishment of a coalition government by

PMLN, PPP, MQM etc. Moreover, most politicians are less educated and lack political wisdom and vision. Political intolerance, lack of real democratic norms, and timely, free and fair elections are also some factors which are the main hurdles in the development of Pakistan. Therefore, there is a need for reforms regarding elections procedure, the number of political parties, and rules regarding party loyalty switching and corruption. Without these reforms, it would be a challenge to make Pakistan a prosperous and real democratic country.

References

- Abid, M. (2018). Muttahida Qaumi Movement: Mode of Politics and Political *Pakistan Perspectives*, 22(2), 137-156. <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3130068>
- Adeney, K. (2015). How to understand Pakistan's hybrid regime: the importance of a multidimensional continuum. *Democratization*, 24(1), 119-137. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13510347.2015.1110574>
- Akhtar, S. (2012). Dynamics of USA-Pakistan relations in the post 9/11 period: Hurdles and future prospects. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 2(11), 205-213.
- Ali, G., Ahmad, S., & Khan, B. (2021). Failure of Federalism in Pakistan, Lessons for the Future, an International Perspective. *Pakistan Journal of International Affairs*, 4(2). <https://doi.org/10.52337/pjia.v4i2.183>
- Asif, S. (2022). *Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan ousted in no-confidence vote*. <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/pakistan-parliament-try-again-vote-oust-pm-khan-2022-04-09/>
- Baig, N. (2008). *From mohallah to mainstream: The MQM's transformation from an ethnic to a catch-all party* (Doctoral dissertation).
- Baylis, J. (2020). *The globalization of world politics: An introduction to international relations*. Oxford university press, USA.
- Elena, D. (2021). Imran Khan as the Key to Success of Pakistan Tehreek-E-Insaf. *Russia and the Muslim world*, 2(312), 81-88.
- Haq, F. (1995). Rise of the MQM in Pakistan: Politics of Ethnic Mobilization. *Asian Survey*, 35(11), 990-1004. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2645723>
- Husain, I. (2009). THE ROLE OF POLITICS IN PAKISTAN'S ECONOMY. *Journal of International Affairs*, 63(1), 1-18. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24384169>
- Hussain, M. Z. (1994). *Islam in Pakistan under Bhutto and Zia-ul-Haq*. In *Islam, Muslims and the Modern State*, 47-79. Palgrave Macmillan, London.
- Javid, H., & Mufti, M. (2020). Electoral manipulation or astute electoral strategy? Explaining the results of Pakistan's 2018 Election. *Asian Affairs: An American Review*, 49(2), 65-87. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00927678.2020.1855033>
- Khan, A. M. (2003). Persecution of the Ahmadiyya community in Pakistan: An analysis under international law and international relations. *Harvard Human Rights Journal*, 16, 217-244.
- Khan, Asad R. (2022). *No confidence: How did Prime Minister Imran Khan end up here?* Dawn. <https://www.dawn.com/news/1680285>
- Khan, F. (2016). Combating corruption in Pakistan. *Asian Education and Development Studies*, 5(2), 195-210. <https://doi.org/10.1108/aeds-01-2016-0006>
- Khan, I., Ullah, F., & Khan, B. (2021). Democracy and Federalism in Pakistan: An Analysis of PPP Government (2008-2013). *Global Regional Review*, VI(1), 36-49. [https://doi.org/10.31703/grr.2021\(vi-i\).05](https://doi.org/10.31703/grr.2021(vi-i).05)
- Khurshid, A. (2022). *Pakistan inflation at 13-year high as government raises fuel prices on IMF demand*. Arab News. <https://www.arabnews.pk/node/2114836/pakistan>
- Lashari, M. B. A., & Mirza, J. A. (2013). Pakistan Elections 2013. *Pakistan Horizon*, 66(3), 79-98. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24711505>
- News Desk. (2022). *Sherani berates Fazl for 'misusing religion' for politics against Imran*. Daily Times. <https://dailytimes.com.pk/987500/sherani-berates-fazl-for-misusing-religion-for-politics-against-imran/>
- Parveen, S., & Zahoor, M. A. (2018). Derailed Democracy and Daily Dawn: A Critical Analysis of Editorials and Columns (October 1999 - August 2002). *Journal of History Culture and Art Research*, 7(5), 314. <https://doi.org/10.7596/taksad.v7i5.1409>
- Qadeer, M. (1997). The Evolving Structure of Civil Society and the State in Pakistan. *The Pakistan Development Review*, 36(4), 743-762. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41260067>
- Riffat, F. (2015). Dynamics of Religious Extremism in Pakistan. *Journal of the Punjab University Historical Society*, 28(2), 70-92.
- Riffat, F. (2016). Trends in Political and Social Extremism in Pakistan: A Case Study of

- Musharraf Era 2002-2008. *Journal of the Punjab University Historical Society*, 29(1). 50-67.
- Rizwan, M., Rafiuddin, M. A., & Waqar, M. (2014). Democratic Milestone in Pakistan: A Serener Transition of Command from PPP to PML-N. *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 19(2), 102-108. www.iosrjournals.org
- Shafiqat, S. (1998). Democracy in Pakistan: Value change and challenges of institution building. *The Pakistan Development Review*, 37(4), 281-298.
- Shah, A. (2019). Pakistan: voting under military tutelage. *Journal of Democracy*, 30(1), 128-142.
- Steinberg, P. E. (2001). *The social construction of the ocean* (Vol. 78). Cambridge University Press.
- Wolf, S. O. (2022). *Pakistan's new government challenges*.
- Yasmeen, S. (1994). Democracy in Pakistan: The Third Dismissal. *Asian Survey*, 34(6), 572-588. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2645342>
- Zain, O. F. (2020). Paradox of Our Political Parties. *South Asian Studies*, 25(1). 89-97.
- Zaman, M. (2011). Social Movements, Conflicts and Rise of Extremism in Pakistan. *Prace Instytutu Profilaktyki Społecznej i Resocjalizacji*, (17), 154-173.