

Unraveling the Threads of Fragility: An In-depth Analysis of the Underpinnings of Weak Democracy in Pakistan and the Path towards Resilience

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Abstract

Despite its long history, democracy in Pakistan has often been characterized by periods of instability and fragility. This paper aims to unravel the threads of fragility by conducting an in-depth analysis of the factors contributing to the weakness of democracy in Pakistan, with a particular focus on the role of the army and judiciary. Through a comprehensive review of historical records, political literature, and recent political events, this study identifies key underpinnings of weak democracy. The findings reveal a complex interplay of socio-economic factors, political instability, institutional weaknesses, and significant influence from the army and judiciary as major contributors to democratic fragility. The study further explores how the army's frequent interventions and the judiciary's controversial decisions have often disrupted democratic processes and contributed to its weakness. The paper concludes with a discussion on potential strategies for strengthening democratic resilience in Pakistan, emphasizing the need for institutional reforms and balanced power dynamics. This study provides a foundation for future research on democratic strengthening in Pakistan and offers insights that could inform policy-making.

Keywords: *Democracy, Role of judiciary in Pakistan, Political Instability, Democratic Resilience, Institutional Reforms.*

1. Introduction and Analysis

Despite being the world's sixth-most populous country and a key player in South Asian politics, Pakistan's journey towards a stable democratic system has been tumultuous since its inception in 1947. This paper delves into the heart of this issue, aiming to unravel the complex web of factors contributing to the fragility of democracy in Pakistan.

Pakistan, a country with a rich and diverse cultural heritage, presents a striking contrast when one

examines its political landscape. This landscape has been frequently marred by military interventions, periods of martial law, political instability, and governance issues. These disruptions have resulted in a democratic system that is fragile and often teeters on the brink of instability. Our research focuses on this delicate democratic system, seeking to understand its complexities and the factors that contribute to its current state. This understanding is crucial for formulating strategies that can strengthen democratic institutions and processes in Pakistan, thereby fostering political stability and good governance. Our aim is to contribute to the discourse on democracy in Pakistan, providing insights that can help shape policies and interventions for a more robust democratic system.

Understanding the causes behind this fragility is not just an academic exercise - it has real-world implications. A stable democracy is often associated with economic development, social progress, and peace. Strengthening democracy could potentially lead to improved living conditions for the people of Pakistan and contribute to regional and global security.

This study aims to dissect the causes of weak democracy in Pakistan, casting a spotlight on two key institutions - the army and judiciary. Their influence on democratic processes forms an important aspect of our research.

The research questions guiding this study are:

1. What are the unique socio-political factors contributing to the fragility of democracy in Pakistan?
2. How have the army and judiciary shaped democratic processes in Pakistan, and what has been their impact?
3. What innovative strategies can be employed to foster democratic resilience in Pakistan?

To answer these questions, this study, employing a mixed-methods approach, aims to answer the research questions through a two-pronged methodology: historical analysis and qualitative data analysis. The historical analysis will conduct an in-depth review of democratic processes in Pakistan from its inception in 1947 to the present day. This review will involve an examination of historical records, political literature, and significant political events that have shaped democracy. The objective of this analysis is to provide context and facilitate an understanding of the evolution of democratic processes in Pakistan.

Complementing historical analysis, the study will also analyze qualitative data derived from political literature and recent political events. This data will provide insights into contemporary issues affecting democracy in Pakistan. The study's focus is on national-level politics and major events that have significantly impacted democracy, but it consciously avoids provincial-level politics or minor political incidents.

Data collection is a critical aspect of this study. It leverages various sources to gather relevant information. Primary sources, such as official documents, offer firsthand information about the topic. Secondary sources, encompassing books, scholarly articles, and reputable news outlets, provide a wealth of information about the historical context and recent developments pertaining to democracy in Pakistan.

Pakistan's inception took place on the 14th of August 1947, following the enactment of the Independence Act of 1947. This significant legislation elevated the existing Constituent Assemblies to the status of dominion legislatures, empowering them with the authority formerly vested in the Central Legislature. Moreover, they were entrusted with the monumental task of crafting a new Constitution. Until that point, the territories were administered under the Government of India Act, 1935 (Ahmad, n.d., p. 188).

In the initial years, Pakistan grappled with a multitude of external and internal challenges. Just a year after gaining independence, the nation suffered a profound loss with the demise of Muhammad Ali Jinnah, founding father and inaugural Governor-General of Pakistan, on September 11, 1948. In the beginning, influential figures such as Quaid-e-Azam and Liaquat Ali Khan, both staunch supporters of democracy, anchored the political scene. However, with their unfortunate passing - Quaid-e-Azam on 11 September 1948 and Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan on 16 October 1951 - the country began to witness a decline in democratic values (Hassan, n.d., pp. 68-69).

The absence of a constitution left a void that allowed individuals without an elected or political background to ascend to prominent government positions. Notable instances include Iskander Mirza, who served as the Home Minister, initially as the Defence Secretary in Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan's administration, and General Ayub Khan as the Defence Minister in Prime Minister Bogra's Cabinet.

The appointment of Malik Ghulam Muhammad as Governor-General in October 1951 ushered in an era of political instability, marked by the presence of six prime ministers between 1951 and 1958. Meanwhile, the Constituent Assembly struggled to provide Pakistan with its 1st Constitution. After seven years, in 1954, the Assembly finally prepared a draft. However, before it could be presented for approval, Governor-General Ghulam Muhammad dissolved the Assembly on the October 24, 1954.

Maulvi Tamizuddin, the Assembly's President, contested the dissolution in the Sindh Chief Court and emerged victorious. However, in the landmark case "Federation of Pakistan v. Maulvi Tamizuddin Khan" (PLD 1955 Federal court 240), Federal Court ruled in favor of the Governor General's dismissal of the 1st Constituent Assembly, citing doctrine of necessity. This verdict weakened Pakistan's parliamentary supremacy and paved the way for future military coups.

Pakistan's 2nd Constituent Assembly, established on May 28, 1955, finally provided Pakistan with its first Constitution, which took effect on the March 23, 1956, transforming Pakistan into a parliamentary democracy. However, Pakistan's democratic aspirations suffered a significant setback when martial law was imposed in 1958, just eleven years after achieving democracy. Notably, between 1947 and 1962, no direct national-level elections were conducted in Pakistan, further contributing to the erosion of democracy.

Major General Iskander Mirza, who became Governor-General in an unlawful manner, dismissed four Prime Ministers during his two-year presidency, plunging the country into political chaos. On October 7, 1958, a year before scheduled general elections, President Sikandar Mirza abrogated the Constitution, dissolved the National and Provincial Assemblies, and declared martial law. He appointed the Army's Commander-in-Chief, General Muhammad Ayub Khan, as the Chief Martial Law Administrator (CMLA). On October 27, 1958, General Muhammad Ayub Khan took over as second President of Pakistan.

During this period, a significant legal case, P.L.D. 1958 S.C. 533, famously known as Dosso v. Federation of Pakistan, reached the apex court for adjudication. Dosso, arrested for murder and tried under the Frontier Crimes Regulation (FCR) of 1901, saw his relatives appeal to the Lahore High Court, arguing that he should be tried under Pakistani laws. While the High Court initially ruled in Dosso's

favor, asserting that the FCR contradicted the 1956 Constitution of Pakistan, Supreme Court later ruled against this decision, legitimizing martial law and asserting that the Laws (Continuance in Force) Order 1958 represented the new legal order. This ruling had far-reaching consequences, sanctioning future martial laws and military rule while also upholding the FCR, which remained in effect in tribal regions until 2018.

After fifteen years, Pakistan finally adopted its second constitution during Ayub Khan's regime on the March 1, 1962, transforming Pakistan into a presidential democracy. Unfortunately, martial law persisted. In the same year, the first national-level indirect elections took place. During Ayub's rule, political parties faced severe restrictions, undermining the democratic process.

The year 1965 was a tumultuous one in Pakistan's history, marked by allegations of widespread rigging in the elections. This was also the year when tensions escalated into open conflict between India and Pakistan, signaling the beginning of President Ayub Khan's decline. Fast forward to 1967, Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, a former member of Ayub's cabinet, established the Pakistan People's Party, marking a significant shift in the country's political landscape. At the same time, Sheikh Mujib-ur-Rehman came out with his Six-Point formula. As the 1960s drew to a close, political disparities between East and West Pakistan began to intensify. The situation reached a critical point on March 25, 1969, when President Ayub Khan resigned and handed over power to General Yahya Khan, ushering in Pakistan's second martial law period. On that very day, General Agha Muhammad Yahya Khan assumed the dual roles of President and CMLA.

Gen. Yahya Khan introduced Legal Framework Order, paving the way for first direct general elections on December 7, 1970. Following severe political differences and the 1971 Indo-Pakistan war, East Pakistan seceded, becoming Bangladesh on the 17th of December 1971. On December 20, 1971, Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto assumed the presidency and became first civilian CMLA (Ahmad, n.d., p. 194).

On August 14, 1973, Pakistan promulgated its third Constitution. On the same day, Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto became the Prime Minister, while Mr. Fazal Illahi Choudhary was sworn in as the President. This constitution introduced a bicameral system at the center, comprising the President, National Assembly, and Senate, thus replacing the earlier unicameral system.

In January 1977, Prime Minister Bhutto announced early elections. However, allegations of election rigging led to the opposition's boycott of provincial assembly elections, triggering a political crisis. On July 5, 1977, Army Chief General Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq imposed Martial law. During the martial law regime, Supreme Court of Pakistan heard the important case PLD 1977 S C 657; Begum Nusrat Bhutto v/s Chief of Army Staff and Federation of Pakistan. While ruling that the military coup and martial law were unconstitutional and illegal, the court invoked the "doctrine of necessity" to justify its acceptance of martial law.

The "doctrine of necessity" is a legal theory that permits the exercise of power under certain conditions in crisis situations, even if technically unconstitutional. In this instance, it argued that the extraordinary circumstances at the time warranted extraordinary measures to restore order and stability, legitimizing martial law. Unfortunately, this ruling inadvertently provided legal justification for future military interventions in politics, setting a dangerous precedent.

Under martial law, Bhutto was declared guilty of murder on the 18th of March 1978 and subsequently sentenced to death. On the 4th of April 1979, Bhutto was hanged at Central Jail Rawalpindi, marking a significant blow to democracy, as a national leader faced execution under military rule, sparking significant debate and controversy over the fairness of the trial.

On December 24, 1981, through Presidential Order (P.O.15 of 1981), the President established the

Federal Council, also known as Majlis-e-Shoora. This council comprised members nominated by the President. Subsequently, on February 25, 1985, National and Provincial Assemblies elections were conducted on a non-party basis. These elections conducted on non-party basis weakened the democratic fabric.

Even under dictatorship of General Zia, the elected National Assembly did not have the opportunity to complete its mandated five-year term. On May 29, 1988, the President dissolved the Assembly using the authority granted under Article 58(2)(b). However, this period of turbulence took a tragic turn with the untimely death of General Zia in a plane crash on August 17, 1988.

General elections held on November 16, 1988, saw the Pakistan People's Party come to power, with Benazir Bhutto taking the helm as the Prime Minister. The nation anticipated the dawn of a new democratic era. Regrettably, this optimism was short-lived, as President Ghulam Ishaq dissolved the Assembly on August 6, 1990, again utilizing Article 58(2)(b). Subsequently, the ninth National Assembly elections were held on October 24, 1990, and Nawaz Sharif assumed office as Prime Minister on November 6, 1990.

The tumultuous cycle continued, and on April 18, 1993, President Ghulam Ishaq dissolved the Assembly once more. This dissolution faced legal challenges and ultimately led to the Assembly's restoration by the apex court on May 26, 1993. However, this restoration was short-lived as the Assembly was dissolved again on the Prime Minister's advice on July 18, 1993. The subsequent elections for the tenth National Assembly took place on October 6, 1993, and Benazir Bhutto reclaimed the role of Prime Minister on October 19, 1993.

Sadly, the cycle of political dissolutions persisted. On November 5, 1996, President Farooq Ahmad Khan Laghari once again dissolved the Assembly. The elections for the eleventh National Assembly took place on February 3, 1997, marking the return of Nawaz Sharif to the office of the Prime Minister. From the time of General Zia's death until the imposition of martial law in 1999, Pakistan was governed by civilian administrations. However, no government managed to complete its full five-year term during this period. This era was characterized by significant political instability.

In April 1997, a significant milestone was achieved when Article 58(2) (b) was removed from the Constitution through the 13th Amendment. This development was hailed as a significant step towards strengthening democracy in Pakistan. However, little did anyone foresee that a severe blow to democracy was on the horizon in the form of Martial Law.

On October 12, 1999, General Pervez Musharraf, the Army Chief at the time, seized control of the government from Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and declared himself as the Chief Executive through a Proclamation of Emergency. Subsequently, he suspended the Senate, National, and Provincial Assemblies on October 14, 1999, by invoking a Provisional Constitutional Order (PCO). This action led to legal challenges from Zafar Ali Shah, an MNA, and Illahi Bukhsh Soomro, the Speaker of the National Assembly. They contested the suspension orders in Pakistan's apex court. On May 12, 2000, the court validated the military takeover and granted a three-year timeframe to the government, effective from October 12, 1999 (*Parliamentary History*, n.d.).

During the ensuing period of Martial Law, Pakistan conducted elections for the twelfth National Assembly on October 10, 2002. However, in the five years that followed (2002-2007), the nation saw a succession of Prime Ministers come and go, with none serving a full five-year term. This era was characterized by political instability and significant transition.

A pivotal moment in Pakistan's political history arrived on May 14, 2006, in London, when Nawaz Sharif and Benazir Bhutto inked the Charter of Democracy (COD) (*Charter of Democracy*, 2009). This historic document symbolized a formidable alliance between two major political forces in Pakistan and laid out a comprehensive strategy to dismantle the military rule that had taken root following the 1999 Pakistani coup d'état, orchestrated by General Musharraf. The overarching objective was to restore civilian democratic governance.

The Charter of Democracy bore fruit in the form of several remarkable achievements, each leaving an indelible mark on Pakistan's democratic landscape: (1) The charter delineated a clear pathway to terminate military rule and reinstate civilian democratic governance. (2) It facilitated the unprecedented third consecutive democratic transfer of power between elected governments. (3) A pivotal success of the post-charter era was the passage of the 18th Constitutional Amendment. (4) The charter catalyzed provincial autonomy and fiscal decentralization, bolstering the regional dynamics within Pakistan. These milestones collectively played a pivotal role in fortifying the democratic institutions and processes of Pakistan.

However, the journey toward democracy was not without its challenges. On November 3, 2007, Musharraf, declared a state of emergency, suspending the constitution and simultaneously holding both the positions of President and Army Chief. This move was highly controversial and largely precipitated by disputes surrounding Musharraf's re-election. In response, Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry challenged this action, but the Pakistan Army intervened, forcibly removing Chaudhry and several other judges from the Supreme Court. Musharraf resigned from his military position on 28 November 2007. This period of upheaval and constitutional suspension persisted until December 15, 2007. A significant blow to Pakistan's democratic process occurred on December 27, 2007, with the assassination of Benazir Bhutto. This tragic event marked the loss of a national leader and further complicated an already complex political landscape defined by constitutional suspension, a state of emergency, a judicial crisis, and numerous changes in election dates.

However, with the completion of the National Assembly's constitutional term on November 15, 2007, Pakistan embarked on a new chapter following the 2008 elections. Despite the fragile state of democracy, the end of dictatorship offered a beacon of hope. On March 24, 2008, Yousaf Raza Gilani was elected as the Prime Minister. His unanimous vote of confidence from the National Assembly on March 29, 2008, signified a collective commitment to the resurgence of democracy.

On August 18, 2008, Pervez Musharraf resigned from his position as the President of Pakistan, marking a significant milestone in the country's democratic evolution. This event signified a crucial turning point in Pakistan's journey towards democracy. Subsequently, on September 6, 2008, Mr. Asif Ali Zardari was inaugurated as the 13th President of Pakistan.

April 19, 2010, marks a significant milestone in Pakistan's democratic history. On this day, the 18th Constitutional Amendment received the President's assent, thereby securing its incorporation into the 1973 Constitution of Pakistan. This amendment had already been passed by the National Assembly on April 8, 2010, and by the Senate on April 15, 2010. The 18th Amendment introduced sweeping changes, including: (1) The removal of the Presidential power to dissolve the Parliament unilaterally, shifting Pakistan's governance from a semi-presidential to a parliamentary republic, (2) The renaming of the "North-West Frontier Province" to "Khyber Pakhtunkhwa", (3) The grant of self-governing, legislative, and financial autonomy to the provinces, (4) The repeal of the 17th Amendment and the Legal Framework Order, introduced during the tenure of former President Musharraf, (5) A dedicated

effort to restore parliamentary supremacy, countering the extensive powers previously held by the presidency, including those amassed under General Musharraf and General Zia, (6) An expansion of fundamental rights and a commitment to promoting good governance, (7) A resolute focus on ensuring the independence of the judiciary.

The 18th Amendment not only held profound legal significance but also carried powerful symbolic weight, reshaping nearly a third of Pakistan's Constitution.

In the subsequent years, Pakistan navigated the complex terrain of democratic governance. On April 26, 2012, Yousaf Raza Gillani faced disqualification by the Supreme Court's order, a development that materialized on June 19, 2012 (Parliamentary history).

On March 16, 2013, the 13th National Assembly of Pakistan marked a significant milestone by completing its five-year term. This was followed by the conduct of general elections on May 11, 2013. The completion of this term was a remarkable achievement, made even more significant by the fact that there was no military dictatorship in the country between 2008 and 2013. This period was also marked by two other notable achievements: the successful completion of a full five-year term by a civilian president and the seamless transition of power from the PPP government to a caretaker setup. This transition subsequently facilitated the transfer of power to PML (N), which secured the majority of seats in the National Assembly.

On June 5, 2013, Nawaz Sharif ascended to the position of Prime Minister for the third time, marking a significant chapter in Pakistan's political history. However, his tenure took a dramatic turn on July 28, 2017, when the Supreme Court disqualified him from holding office (Parliamentary History). The 14th National Assembly concluded its tenure on May 31, 2018, successfully completing a full five-year term. This was followed by general elections on July 25, 2018, which led to the election of Imran Khan as the Prime Minister on August 17, 2018.

The political landscape witnessed a seismic shift on April 9, 2022, when a vote of no confidence resulted in Prime Minister Imran Khan's removal from office. It is widely speculated that the military had a significant influence on this development. Further complicating the political scenario, Khan was arrested on August 5, 2023, on allegations of selling state gifts. This event marked him as the seventh former prime minister of Pakistan to be arrested.

During this period of turbulence, Pakistan has been grappling with political instability, human rights violations, and a constitutional crisis. Since its independence, Pakistan has been on a tumultuous journey towards democracy, a path marked by the fact that not a single prime minister has completed a full five-year term. This volatility is further underscored by the reality that no dictator who imposed martial law has faced punitive measures. Since its creation, Pakistan has experienced military dictatorship for a total of 34 years. Even when not directly in power, the military elite have discreetly influenced civilian governments from behind the scenes. The military's influence extends beyond domestic affairs; it has largely controlled foreign and security policies and has taken the lead in relations with Washington. It was during this era that Pakistan fostered close ties with the People's Republic of China and started re-equipping its forces with China's assistance. The military's influence is also evident in Pakistan's diplomatic corps, with many ambassadors to different nations being retired army personnel. Despite its significant role in defense and foreign policy affairs, the military's encroachment on the civilian sphere has increased under Prime Minister Imran Khan's government.

since 2018, with many generals now heading administrative and executive institutions. This narrative paints a picture of Pakistan's journey towards democracy, marked by the significant role of its military in both domestic and foreign affairs.

The first research question; what are the unique socio-political factors contributing to the fragility of democracy in Pakistan?

The first research question delves into the unique socio-political factors contributing to the fragility of democracy in Pakistan. Democracy, often regarded as the bedrock of a nation's stability, encounters a distinctive set of challenges within Pakistan. A comprehensive exploration of its socio-political landscape uncovers a complex array of factors, often interwoven and mutually reinforcing that contributes to its fragility. The political landscape in Pakistan is characterized by intense polarization, with political parties and leaders frequently adopting extreme positions that obstruct compromise and consensus-building. This polarization can precipitate political instability and recurrent changes in government, thereby undermining the strength and continuity of democratic institutions. The fragility of Pakistani democracy is further intensified by an authoritarian political culture where invisible forces often destabilize civilian governments, primarily because political parties lack the maturity to resist such forces. This culture impedes the development of robust democratic institutions and norms. The army and judiciary have played pivotal roles in shaping Pakistan's democratic processes. The army has been directly involved in governing the country through military coups, while the judiciary has played a complex role in either facilitating or obstructing military rule at different times. These interventions disrupt the democratic process and contribute to its fragility. Pakistan continues to grapple with security challenges from terrorism and insurgent groups. These security concerns often overshadow democratic processes, leading to restrictions on civil liberties and political freedoms. Pakistan's economy is fragile and often reliant on external aid. Economic instability can incite social unrest and dissatisfaction with democratic governance, further undermining its strength. Widespread societal issues such as corruption, non-availability of public services, mass weaponization, and food scarcity have also contributed to the fragility of democracy. These issues can lead to public disillusionment with democratic institutions and processes. The government has been known to repress opposition voices, undermining the pluralistic nature of democracy. Despite the presence of elected governments, the constitutional framework has remained weak and ineffective, and democratic norms have failed to take root. A strong constitution is crucial for the stability of a democracy. Little progress has been made towards accommodating internal pressures and demands for socio-economic equality. This failure can lead to social unrest and dissatisfaction with the democratic process. These factors provide a comprehensive view of the unique socio-political factors contributing to the fragility of democracy in Pakistan. However, it's important to note that these factors are interconnected and often reinforce each other, further complicating the democratic process.

The second research question; how have the army and judiciary shaped democratic processes in Pakistan, and what has been their impact?

In Pakistan, the army and the judiciary have intricately intertwined with democracy, shaping its trajectory and leaving lasting impacts. Their influence permeates beneath the surface, extending to uncharted territories. The Pakistani military has wielded significant influence on the country's democratic processes. Not only has the military been directly involved in governing the country through military coups, but it has also exerted decisive influence in Pakistani politics. This influence

is evident in recent developments and political crises, such as the arrest of former Prime Minister Imran Khan. The military's influence also extends to media and civil society. Instances of crackdowns on media outlets for reporting critically on the relationship between the military and civilian politicians have led to pervasive censorship and self-censorship, particularly on issues that cast the military in a negative light. Moreover, the military's role in civil administration has led to Pakistan being perceived as a "garrison" state. Despite professing no desire to rule, the military's participation in administration has resulted in an armed bureaucracy. The army's influence extends beyond its traditional role, impacting various aspects of decision-making in Pakistan. However, these influences can vary over time and are subject to changes in the country's political landscape.

The judiciary in Pakistan also plays a significant role in shaping the country's democratic processes. However, its record in promoting democracy has been mixed at best. The judiciary has often been unable to direct the state to uphold the rule of law and follow democratic norms due to various reasons, including weak roots of constitutionalism and dependence on other state institutions for resources. The judiciary's independence has changed over time. While it used to defer to the Pakistani military, it has increasingly competed with and confronted the military. However, there have been instances where Pakistan's apex court platforms were used by military rulers to justify their tenure and unconstitutional activities. Despite these challenges, the judiciary has played a crucial role in complicated circumstances. It has ensured the rule of law, protected citizens' fundamental rights, and their rights to form and join political parties.

In conclusion, both the army and judiciary have significantly influenced democratic processes in Pakistan. Their roles have often been marked by a struggle for power and influence, which has impacted the stability of democratic institutions. While they have contributed to maintaining order at times, their interventions have also disrupted democratic processes and contributed to political instability.

However, it's important to note that these are complex issues with deep historical roots. Addressing them requires not only political will but also systemic changes that strengthen democratic institutions and norms.

The third research question; what innovative strategies can be employed to foster democratic resilience in Pakistan?

In Pakistan's complex political landscape, the military has been a pivotal actor, with its historical role manifesting as both a symptom and a cause of governance challenges. However, within this intricate dynamic, there is a robust aspiration for democracy, with many military leaders seeking competent political leadership, signaling a potential transition towards democratic governance.

Simultaneously, the judiciary has been oscillating between acquiescence and excessive activism. The proposition to employ public-interest litigation to expand democratic spaces offers an avenue for the judiciary to positively influence the democratic process, potentially transitioning from a passive bystander to an active participant in democracy strengthening.

The consolidation of democracy is fundamentally intertwined with the electoral process. A steadfast adherence to a five-year election cycle can serve to bolster democracy in Pakistan, acting as a continual

testament to the power vested in its citizens. This process necessitates the implementation of robust laws that fortify the legislative and executive branches of the state. Consequently, election reforms are indispensable in ensuring these branches function effectively and transparently. To augment public participation, it is crucial to infuse fresh perspectives into politics and transition away from dynastic politics. The internal electoral system within political parties is currently weak, resulting in the same individuals leading major political parties for extended periods, often spanning decades. This issue needs rectification. For a thriving democracy, Pakistan requires a robust electoral system within political parties.

Institutional reforms, particularly strengthening the Parliament, are imperative. The Parliament, which elects the Prime Minister, is a critical pillar of democracy that requires reinforcement. Guaranteeing that elected Prime Ministers complete their full five-year term can provide stability and continuity to the democratic process.

Economic factors also play a crucial role in strengthening democracy. Fostering inclusive economic growth can ensure all citizens, especially those marginalized and disadvantaged, benefit from national progress. This involves creating job opportunities and providing essential amenities such as education, healthcare, and clean water.

The 18th amendment encapsulates the promise of deepening administrative, fiscal, and political engagement at the local level. However, this promise remains partially fulfilled; devolution from federation to province has not been matched by decentralization from province to local level.

Improving institutional quality necessitates significant reforms aimed at bolstering the business environment and enhancing accountability. Alongside these institutional reforms, it is essential to support and empower civil society organizations that advocate democratic values and principles.

The judiciary requires reform to effectively uphold the rule of law. Feudalism presents a significant barrier to democracy in Pakistan; its abolition would facilitate more democratic practices. Addressing corruption is another major issue that must be tackled for democracy to flourish.

The constitution may necessitate amendments to make it more conducive for democratic practices. Ensuring fair and free elections is vital for strengthening democracy. An educated populace is fundamental for a robust democracy, necessitating an increase in the education budget.

These strategies could bolster democratic resilience in Pakistan. However, it's crucial to adapt these strategies according to local realities and implement them effectively for them to have the desired impact.

2. Literature Review

The precarious nature of democracy in Pakistan has been the subject of extensive scholarly discourse and rigorous debate. This review endeavors to encapsulate the salient findings from the existing body of literature on this topic, with a particular emphasis on the historical trajectory of democracy in Pakistan and the pivotal roles played by the army and judiciary.

1. History of Democracy in Pakistan

Since its inception in 1947, Pakistan has witnessed four martial law regimes, each leaving an indelible imprint on the nation's democratic fabric. An online article available on the official website of the National Assembly of Pakistan provides a comprehensive chronicle of the evolution of democracy in Pakistan. It traces the tumultuous journey from the early years of independence, marked by political instability and power struggles, through periods of martial law, to the present-day challenges facing democratic institutions. This historical perspective is crucial for understanding the current state of democracy in Pakistan and identifying potential pathways towards strengthening democratic resilience.

2. Role of the Army and Judiciary

The army's profound influence on Pakistan's political landscape is well-documented and widely recognized. In his seminal article "Causes of Military Intervention in Pakistan: A Revisionist Discourse", Muhammad Hassan delves into how the army has frequently intervened in politics, either directly through coups or indirectly through its sway over policy-making. This article also explores the army's role in governance and its consequential impact on democratic processes. The army's interventions have often disrupted democratic processes, leading to periods of martial law and military rule. These interventions have had far-reaching implications for the development and consolidation of democratic institutions in Pakistan.

The judiciary's role in shaping democratic processes is also significant. Several cases such as *Dosso v. Federation of Pakistan* and *Begum Nusrat Bhutto v/s Chief of Army Staff and Federation of Pakistan* provides an insightful analysis of how the judiciary has facilitated military rule at different times.

3. Results

The research identified several unique socio-political factors contributing to the fragility of democracy in Pakistan. These include political polarization, an authoritarian political culture, the role of key institutions (the army and judiciary), terrorism and security concerns, economic instability, societal factors like corruption and non-availability of public services, repression of opposition voices, a weak constitutional framework, failure to accommodate socio-economic equality, and frequent military interventions. The research also highlighted the significant influence of the army and judiciary on democratic processes in Pakistan.

The findings reveal a complex interplay of socio-economic factors, political instability, institutional weaknesses, and significant influence from the army and judiciary as major contributors to democratic fragility in Pakistan. The army's frequent interventions and the judiciary's controversial decisions have often disrupted democratic processes and contributed to its weakness. However, these are complex issues with deep historical roots. Addressing them requires not only political will but also systemic changes that strengthen democratic institutions and norms.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, both the army and judiciary have significantly influenced democratic processes in Pakistan. Their roles have often been marked by a struggle for power and influence, which has

impacted the stability of democratic institutions. While they have contributed to maintaining order at times, their interventions have also disrupted democratic processes and contributed to political instability. However, it's important to note that these are complex issues with deep historical roots. Addressing them requires not only political will but also systemic changes that strengthen democratic institutions and norms. Several strategies could be employed to foster democratic resilience in Pakistan such as promoting inclusive economic growth, deepening devolution, improving institutional quality, strengthening civil society, reforming judiciary, abolishing feudalism, eliminating corruption, amending constitution, ensuring fair and free elections and increasing education budget. These strategies need to be adapted according to local realities and implemented effectively for them to have the desired impact.

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