



**Pakistan's hide-and-seek with governance
and democracy:
The bridge to nowhere or creeping
consolidation?**

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Pakistani Roller-coaster progress since 1947

- British felt it was not economically viable pre-1947; but called a rising global economic star by 1950-60s
- But collapsed as a unitary in 1971 due to eco and pol policies of 1950-60s
- But soon aspiring to be leader of Muslim world in the 1970s, but with a tanking economy
- Took on a superpower with the help of another superpower in the 1980s
- The first superpower collapses in 1990s and the second superpower imposes sanctions on Pakistan;
- but Pakistan becomes a nuclear power by the end of the decade, though again with a tanking economy

- Called a rising star again in the 2000s briefly but also declared a failed state
- Massive problems since 2005 global economic crisis. National stagflation, fiscal and external deficits; earthquake, floods, terrorism, mal-governance
- But has avoided collapse while many others collapsed facing fewer problems
- Became a lower-middle income country in 2011, though with social indicators resembling low-income countries
- Hide and seek with democracy but dictators have not ruled with same longevity and brutality like in Africa, Middle East and elsewhere
- Never a dull moment through 67 years!!

Session Objectives



Review

- The current state of democracy, governance and progress in Pakistan
- The factors which have undermined them in the past
- The prospects for improved democracy, governance and progress in Pakistan in the future.

Democracy and Governance***

- **People crave good governance globally****
- **What is state governance??**

Decision-making and delivery by state institutions

- **What is democracy?**

One form of governance where state institutions are expected to be representative, participatory,, inclusive, accountable.

- **Hope from democracy?**

since state institutions are more participatory, their governance delivery will benefit everyone more than under other regimes like monarchy, dictatorships etc

- **Reality of democracy?**
- **It usually does not provide good governance immediately**

Types of governance regimes****

Given the failure of democracy to deliver immediately, political scientists now talk in terms of not a democracy-authoritarianism binary but a long continuum

- **Authoritarian**: credible elections never held e.g. Middle-east China, etc
- **Hybrid**: elections held but non-elected institutions , e.g., army have formal constitutional powers which undercut civilians, E.g. Iran and Myanmar
- **Transitional democracies**: 2-3 credible elections held; no formal but informal powers often exercised by unelected institutions; governance weak, Tunisia
- **Stable/electoral democracies**: credible elections held regularly, civilian govt fully empowered; governance improves gradually); India, Indonesia, Turkey,
- **Full democracies**: strong governance; regular elections; western countries

Where does Pakistan fall on this continuum? **

Pak regimes--Zig-zags, somersaults, U-turns

- **1947-51** **Transitional democracy (1946 elections)**
- **1951-58** **Bureaucratic autocracy**
- **1958-71** **Military autocracy**
- **1972-77** **Transitional democracy**
- **1977-85** **Military autocracy**
- **1985-88** **Hybrid regime (army President/dismissal power)**
- **1988-99** **Transitional democracy**
- **1999-2002** **Military autocracy**
- **2002-08** **Hybrid regime (army President/dismissal power)**
- **2008-2015** **Transitional democracy presently**

10 different regimes. Never even a stable democracy; In contrast, India and Sri Lanka have been stable democracies from day one

How is Pakistan doing socio-economically?

Economic development?

The ability to produce high-end goods, services, human capital, science, technology, infrastructure etc.

HARD STUFF

Social development?

Poverty, inequality, education, health, gender, minority, environment etc. indicators

SOFT STUFF

- Who to compare with? West or Peers?

Neighborhood (8): Number 2 on ED after India even though SL, Maldives, Bhutan PCIs higher

Non-oil-rich Muslim countries (40+):

Among top 5-6 on ED after Turkey, Malaysia, Indonesia etc. and above high-medium income Jordan and high-income Lebanon

Global PCI peers: 10 states just above /below:

Sudan, Yemen, Laos, Senegal etc.: 1 or 2 on ED

However, poor ED since 2007, slipping behind, low growth, energy shortages, fiscal/external

Soc Dev: often resembles low-income countries
So, mixed performance

Progress, Democracy and Governance- underlying determinants****

- **Voodoo analysis** Views of leading Pakistani political analyst published in The News recently

“something in our **soil** does not allow democracy to flourish”

“our **climate** does not allow the emergence of good leaders”

“Our **genes** are not suitable for good governance”

Relevant independent causal variables? ***

- **Layperson analysis:** “if only Pakistan had been blessed with honest, sincere leaders, it would have been like Singapore and South Korea”

Progress  Honest, sincere leaders

But why do some countries more commonly have bad leaders? Luck?*

Moral lens favored by laypersons focuses on cursing bad leaders

Social science lens must explain why bad leaders more common in developing countries

Evidence-based Social Science Structural Analysis****

Progress and development



Good policies (liberal or conservative)



Effective (not necessarily honest) leaders



Strong people-oriented institutions



Egalitarian societal structures (ethnic relations, education, urbanization, pol.
And eco. inequities etc.)



History, physical environment, external interventions etc.***

so to understand trajectory of governance and democracy seriously through social science methods one must at least look at the causal chain up from societal structures

Western vs. developing countries experience

Solution: laypersons: get good leaders from some other system****

Lessons from Structural Analysis

- **Good leadership cannot be artificially crafted on societies but must emerge from the causal chain: strong institutions-egalitarian structures**
- **If inequitable societal structures produce self-serving political institutions, then they will also most likely produce self-serving bureaucratic and military institutions--the source institutions of alternatives dictatorship or technocracy;**
- **So while our democrats have not performed as well as western ones, our dictators have not performed as well as East Asian ones either.**
- **Secondly, if leadership is drawn from these top-down institutions, it will exacerbate ethnic tensions in ethnically diverse countries like Pakistan;**
- **1951-71: twenty years of bureaucratic –cum army rule and supposedly golden era of Pakistani governance;**
- **but how did it end up? with the break-up of the country due to the economic and political policies of that golden era**

Lessons contd

- **Thus, artificial, top-down regimes like technocracy or dictatorship will make things worst politically even if they produce slightly better economic performance**
- **Change of form of government within democracy like Presidentialism will not help much**
- **Revolutions will not help either—good for overthrowing dictators but not for improving governance; not a single revolution that improved governance immediately- at least decades, if not centuries**
- **Only gradual changes in societal structures will improve governance while recognizing that poor governance slows such change**
- **Still change occurs due to economic change, external exposure, social activism etc however much mal-governance tries to slow it**

Are structures changing in Pakistan?

- **Gradually increasing urbanization, industrialization, education and incomes**
- **Reducing influence of landlords and tribal leaders in many places**
- **Greater exposure due to media and NGO mobilization in rural areas**
- **The superiority of the invisible hand of even flawed democracy over the visible hand (with a stick) of dictatorship**
 - Weeding out non-performing parties: PPP**
 - Introducing new leadership: PTI**
 - Introducing electoral reforms**

So some light at the end of the tunnel

But will Pakistan collapse meanwhile?***

- **Predictions about state failure extremely poorly developed area in political science**
- **The Failed states Failed Index predictions-Middle East VS. Pakistan**
- **Types of collapse: 1) Political collapse: when states lose writ over large areas**
- **li) Economic collapse**
 - **Huge fiscal deficits, hyperinflations and collapsed currencies-Zimbabwe**
 - **Over exposure to foreign private debts and collapsed currencies, East Asia 1997**
 - **Years of shrinking economies-USSR**

No strong evidence of either in Pakistan in short-medium term; in fact stepping back from both at least immediately

- Roll-back of terrorist physical conquests though attacks continue
- Reducing fiscal deficits, inflation and external gaps though means dubious

Chances of collapse low so long as democracy prevails; so the plus of democracy is not immediate progress but that it is more likely to keep the country united

5-7 years likely scenario

- **Continued terrorist attacks but no major territorial gains by terrorists**
- **Stagnant economy gradually improving, continued periodic fiscal and external issues, but on economic collapse**
- **Gradual improvement in governance**
- **In summary, Pakistan will not become a South Korea, but neither a North Korea**