**Pakistani democracy and vote trading**

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March 10, 2021

We claim that we have democracy in our country and people elect their representatives to run a given democratic system. It sounds well to everyone whereas we are nowhere near to real democracy as per its definition. We are only wearing the grand English hat of democracy, giving a cosmetic look of the democratic system. We have never practiced real democracy for which Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Quaid-e-Awam Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto struggled, longed and gave sacrifices. I ask every fellow Pakistani; do they really believe that they are living in a democratic country or are we just slaves to push the rich and powerful to bigger portfolios to rule us as their tenants and personal slaves. Unfortunately, we have different educational systems where we have government and private schools on one hand while on other, we have Madrassas where the educational system is entirely different from government schools which is further different from the syllabus of private schools. In one country, several educational systems exist and that is based on financial differences. The government educational system includes matriculation and intermediate while the other is the western educational system that includes O and A levels. Through differences in educational standards, a sense of inequality is being inculcated in the minds of students at a very young age. At the same time, equal opportunities are not provided for all the factions of society. We are witnessing that in the 21st-century world, in various areas of the country, human beings and animals are forced to drink water from the same dirty pond. And, we have also seen, our many fellow Pakistanis, in despair, and in agony over watching their children suffering long starvation are committing suicide. We have no proper National Health Service to provide equal, appropriate and adequate health services to all citizens and unfortunately, we have a deteriorated social justice system. This big economic gap between rich and poor coupled with an unbearable price hike is pushing us to the point of no return and a bloody revolution can be seen written on the walls. Injustice creates an irreversible pulse to create an uncontrollable emotional storm that will find its ways and means to justice. Let us wake up as a nation and put the system on the proper track to overcome the incoming crises. I still have great hopes from my people and the youth as the great strength of my country to overcome the crises.

[Govt to start vaccination of senior citizens from today](https://nation.com.pk/10-Mar-2021/govt-to-start-vaccination-of-senior-citizens-from-today)

Let us analyse the dark side of the democracy in our country which has been imposed on us as there is no rule of law which is an important regulator of real democracy. It is happening because of the lack of assessment of the public, fear of feudal lords (waderas), the greed for money and lack of interest in casting votes.

Our total current population is 223,784,370 as per the available official census. We have a 58 percent literacy rate in our country which means out of the total population, we have 42 percent of the population that is uneducated. A survey shows that they hardly know what the vote is and its value, what they know only is that there is a paper (PURCHI) and whatever is written on it, he is not supposed to follow it but he only knows that if he is taken to the polling station and puts it in a box as per the direction of his handler, then he has to get money for it. This is what an uneducated person knows about the vote and this has been happening in our country for a long time.

[Russia, China to sign agreement on joint moon base project within one year](https://nation.com.pk/10-Mar-2021/russia-china-to-sign-agreement-on-joint-moon-base-project-within-one-year)

Among 50 percent of our population, some people find no attraction in casting votes as they know that political slogans and this vote will not bring any visible change except that they will see their MPAs or MNAs with big new land cruisers. That is why they never even bother to get their votes registered while the rest always skip being away from elections on polling day This is all because of the lack of education, faith in their votes, and awareness about the value of their vote. The world is progressing by leaps and bounds every passing day while in our country if you look at the voter’s turnout every 5 years, there is hardly any increase of only 1 or 2 percent. In fact, according to the numbers, there has been a drop from 2013 when turnout was the highest it’s ever been at 55.02 percent as overall voter turnout across the nation was 51.7 percent in the 2018 general elections. In the 2008 elections, the voter turnout remained 44.11 percent which means that in the last 3 elections the turnout stayed only between 45–55 percent, which is a huge setback for our educational and political systems.

[Iran set to unveil domestically manufactured military hovercraft](https://nation.com.pk/09-Mar-2021/iran-set-to-unveil-domestically-manufactured-military-hovercraft)

It is unfortunate to note that even the literate population does not bother to cast votes as they find it to be a waste of time to stand in a queue and wait for their turn to cast a vote. The uneducated and poor lot proves to be a great asset for the candidates and parties as they can bribe them easily over a plate of the dish of Biryani or Rs.1000 for each person. Then there is feudalism that aggravates the situation. Most of our political leaders and party heads are feudal lords/elite class. They treat these masses like their slaves who can’t vote for anyone other than them. Feudalism has led our country to another main problem i.e. politics as their right. These feudal lords whenever see that things are slipping out of their hands, they rig the election process, bring their own candidate either their children or relatives and don’t let a deserving person come into power and our present political system is very near to monarchy where the right of voice or vote is not made for a common man. The illiterate and poor people do not even know about their rights as there is a lack of really good leadership in our country. All the feudal lords and political leaders use them as per their own convenience. Unfortunately, most of our leaders are utterly incompetent and corrupt. The country has no clear direction, from the very day of our independence, we don’t know what we want. People with different languages, religions, and cultures constitute this country, the only common thing is Islam. Some people want strict Islamic laws while some have a different interpretation of Islam, and some want it free and secular. We are a victim of a serious identity crisis. When the followers (mostly illiterate) of religious-political leaders confront their secular or leftist opposition, they call them “kafir” and enemies of Islam which leads to violence and chaos, and as a result, the democratic government either shuts the country down or the protestors themselves create a state of siege across the capital making the lives of people miserable and this sectarian divide produced Taliban by the foreign masters.

[Panic as over 150 crocodiles on loose in South Africa](https://nation.com.pk/09-Mar-2021/panic-as-over-150-crocodiles-on-loose-in-south-africa)

The value of the vote is embarrassed every time whenever there is a general election in our country. The political sale has become so open that no remorse is seen on the faces of politicians involved. All laws and administrative efforts against floor-crossing failed and the political greed won. Let me be franker in saying that even most of our political leadership is involved in it. It is because our system is faultily enabling us to encourage this horse-trading. The politicians in the past and even now could not hold their grounds against the temptation of power hence they kept on presenting themselves for the sale in the political auction and the rest of the development are well known to the nation as to how the loyalties were negotiated and changed. This act of politicians is highly detrimental to democracy. This is what converts democracy into “noto-cracy”, one guided by ‘notes’. Our democracy looks to have gone into the hands of bookies and money is fixed on each vote and then traded from abroad with pride. Funds are paid through offshore companies. We are destroying this parliamentary system which apparently takes birth for five years but shortly gets scrapped before its constitutional spin of life.

[Saudi-led coalition downs rebel drone from Yemen](https://nation.com.pk/09-Mar-2021/saudi-led-coalition-downs-rebel-drone-from-yemen)

We need to find ways and means to bring stable and corruption-free democracy.

I would like to suggest that immediate electoral reforms are required to create required checks and balances in the electoral processes. A commission is needed to be constituted to identify the real issues and black holes in the present way of Pakistan’s democracy and the parliamentary system. We need to seek a referendum under the law on the required changes for the improvement of electoral procedures. Also, it is needed to seek suggestions to improve the life of a common man along with their participation in the democratic system. In the end, I hope that as a nation we will be able to block the fast-track journey of “vote to note” as it is painful to see when we hear about the price that has gone up to the tune of Rs70 crores. The sale and purchase of votes are among the politicians at the cost of a common man who gets nothing out of it except for delusional hopes and promises.

Note: Opinions expressed are solely my own and do not necessarily reflect the views or opinions of my party.