**What Kind of Democracy?**

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March 14, 2023

Democracy is the rule of the majority where all the people take an active part in the affairs of politics. It is a form of government, which is based on the consent of the masses, as per Professor Seeley’s Ideals. Abraham Lincoln defined democracy as the rule of the people, by the people and for the people. Contrarily, Plato and Aristotle condemned the concept of democracy and argued that the way democracy is discussed can only be implemented in the “real” world. Further quoted, democracy is the rule of the pool as seen by Plato while Aristotle regarded it as the rule of the Mob.

Seeing the state of affairs in Pakistan and the democratic practices, not much optimism can be found. Leading political parties are reflective of dynastic politics. Due to a lack of education and awareness, the masses are not able to use vote effectively and make the right choice. Pakistan is a victim of bad governance and incompetent “Hang Parliament” where more than eleven parties are ruling the country. The process of accountability has stopped, and the power of the National Accountability Bureau (NAB), reduced. Meanwhile, the slogan “Corruption-free Pakistan” has been buried. The poor status of democracy in Pakistan has led to political instability. The political parties are busy in a blame game, and the economy is heading towards default; poverty and inflation are increasing with each passing day. The deteriorating conditions of the agriculture and industrial sectors have led to unemployment in the country. Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah called corruption “poison” (speech to Constituent Assembly, August 1947). Unfortunately, in Pakistan, the tradition of nepotism and political recruitment has spawned a culture of “uncontrolled corruption.” When there is corruption and a lack of merit, the institutional infrastructure deteriorates.

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Strong opposition is the backbone of well-established democratic culture, but unfortunately, political tensions between the leaders of political parties in Pakistan have silenced the opposition. In a true democracy, the opposition and government work hand-in-hand. The opposition’s critique of government performance is for the betterment of policies at the country level.

Education is the gem of human civilization and is pivotal to a society’s progress. Education brings awareness, tolerance, self-esteem and confidence; empowering people to defend their rights. The literacy rate in Pakistan is very low, which is a hindrance to establishing a democratic culture. Montesquieu remarked that the ministers are the masters when the public is passive, but they are their servants when the public is active. Sadly, the ministers are the masters in Pakistan, not the people’s representatives. Lack of tolerance is another major factor for political unrest in Pakistan. In political circles, political victimization and blame games are the tactics employed to target each other.

Greek philosophers have given importance to politics and people’s participation in political affairs. Interestingly, the word “idiot” comes from the Greek republic, which means common citizen. It was used to insult someone who was not interested in politics. Therefore, politics is an art associating with people.

Conditions for the success of democracy are education, merit-oriented political culture, economic equality and the rule of law. However, democracy in Pakistan cuts a sorry figure and all these prerequisites. For Pakistan to have a strong democracy and a brighter future, politics need to be understood by the people. Political activities should spread awareness, and every citizen of Pakistan needs to take an active part in political affairs. The culture of debate needs to be encouraged. With these credentials, people will have a wider perspective and a much more balanced outlook. Thereby, in a democratic society, empowerment at the grass-root level is a must. People need to be educated and economically empowered so they can speak up for their rights and vote for honest and upright individuals.

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