**Constitutional Chronicles**

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June 1, 2024

Coursing through Pakistan’s intricate political tapestry is a tale of resilience and upheaval, where the aspirations for political power often clash with the fragile foundations of governance.

Over the years, the nation’s narrative has been shaped by formidable personalities whose ambitions have, at times, led to the subversion of democratic institutions, leaving scars on the constitutional framework and democratic ethos. In the aftermath of the British transfer of power in 1947, as delineated by the Indian Independence Act of 1947, Pakistan grappled with the onset of political decay and encountered steadfast resistance from anti-democratic forces, casting shadows over its nascent democracy.

Pakistan faced governance and survival issues during its early years, leading to a lack of responsibility towards constitutional governance. The country’s weak political culture and fragmentation created a political void that could not be filled by new leaders or a stable party system. The first constitution was adopted in 1956, but the search for a suitable constitution has become an end in itself. Pakistan has been ruled by a coterie of rich and influential power seekers, who have monopolized power and prestige. The country has struggled with constitutional democracy and authoritarianism, with the dissolution of the assembly in 1954 and the rise of a bureaucratic clique.

Pakistan’s political history is marked by despots and their follies, with the first election causing civil war and the second resulting in the Prime Minister’s trial and hanging to death.

Quaid-i-Azam established the Governor-General’s powers through the Government of India Act, 1935, but political ambitions were hijacked by the aristocracy, and provincial leadership, resulting in a succession of administrations and constitutional ad-hocism. Pakistan’s constitution-making has been unique, with interim constitutions adopted until a new one is framed by the constituent assembly. This complex issue has led to conflicts between Hindu-Muslim populations and highlights the country’s struggle for independence.

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The Muslims aimed to establish Pakistan in the name of Islam for their cultural and socio-political rights. However, Islamisation was challenging due to colonial rule and the inheritance of two different political traditions. The Objectives Resolution passed in 1949, aimed to satisfy the Ulema and guide the government’s activities. The Resolution incorporated Islam as the foundation of the new state, leading to debates about incorporating Shariah into the non-theocratic political framework. The Ulema’s lack of understanding of government structure and decision-making further strained the political climate.

Legal, political, constitutional, and administrative crises have arisen often as a result of Pakistan’s political growth. To create a federal government structure based on East and West Pakistan, a new constitution was approved in 1956. However political unrest and bureaucratic manipulation caused it to fail. Following the 1958 Constitutional abrogation by General Iskander Mirza, General Ayub Khan assumed the presidency. Due to the previous Constitution’s shortcomings, local political groupings and a powerful national party broke up.

The crisis in East Pakistan resulted from Ayub and Yahya’s failure to resolve Bengali nationalism. India’s intervention in 1970 resulted in the independence of Bangladesh from East Pakistan. The Bhutto era started in 1971, but the administration was blind to the necessity of democracy and a solid federal structure. Following the imposition of martial law in 1977, the National Assembly was dissolved by General Zial-ul-Haq.

Pakistan’s constitutional democracy has been a topic of debate due to its attempts to establish a federal system. The constitutions introduced were not federal in spirit but based on the principle of parity to create a balance of power and sharing arrangements at the central level. However, these experiments failed due to the contradictions of the plural society and legal notions of federalism. The system, although conceptually federal, was deliberately allowed to become a highly centralized and non-federal system.

Pakistan’s political system is characterized by a dependent judiciary and political parties that manipulate the laws for their benefit. The country has experienced numerous coups. This has led to political collapses and a constitutional vacuum, as the judiciary has been unable to provide a stable draft for citizens and the state.

As Pakistan today faces a myriad of challenges, ranging from economic instability to regional conflicts and internal security threats, the need for a robust and accountable political system has never been more urgent. In navigating this complex terrain, political and military leadership must prioritize the interests of the people, uphold democratic principles, and address the root causes of socio-economic inequality and political disenchantment.

The current situation demands bold and decisive action to confront exploitation, strengthen democratic institutions, and ensure justice and equality for all citizens. Only through genuine reforms and a commitment to transparency and accountability can Pakistan overcome its challenges and fulfil its promise as a democratic and prosperous nation.

The road ahead may have several impediments, but with determination and a steadfast commitment to the ideals of democracy and justice, Pakistan can overcome its political challenges and build a brighter future for generations to come. The time for action is now, and Pakistan’s destiny lies in the hands of its people and their collective resolve to navigate the complexities of its political terrain.

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