

PROCESS OF DEMOCRATIZATION, DYNASTIC POLITICS AND INTRA-PARTY DEMOCRACY IN PAKISTAN

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Abstract : Dynastic politics has remained one of the major themes in politics and governance across the globe. Like other transitional democracies, Pakistan faces multiple challenges. Dynastic politics is one of the major hurdles that directly and indirectly affects the process of democratization in the country. Political parties in Pakistan are greatly influenced and shaped by dynastic politics, with party heads or a few individuals dominating the decision-making processes related to party objectives, candidate selection, and alliances with other political parties. Regardless of their ideological orientation or organizational form, most political parties are heavily shaped by dynastic politics. This research article analyzes the impact of dynastic politics and highly centralized party structures on the process of democratization in Pakistan.

Keywords: dynastic politics, democratization, intra-party election, political culture

Background

Political parties are important institutions and prerequisite for democracy. Pakistan like other developing countries is facing problems of democratization which is greatly influenced by the centralized structure within political parties. There are many factors which are hindering the process of democratization and intra-party democracy in Pakistan such as dynastic politics, political socialization and public awareness regarding political system and processes. The dynastic politics approach is not allowing decentralization of power and remained one of the main obstacles in the process of democratization and intra-party democracy in the country. Similarly, other factors such as political socialization and lack of awareness and interest in the political

processes have long lasting consequences for democracy. There are two main approaches which focus on promoting internal democracy like advocacy and legal or regulatory approaches. Both approaches are relevant in Pakistani context where state has initiated some legal procedure for conduct of intra-party election and advocacy groups which promote the process of internal democracy and overall democratization in the country. With all these approaches and legal mechanism the process of democratization is facing bigger challenges. The objective of this paper is to highlight those factors which are hindering the process of democratization and democratic culture both within political parties and at state level.

Literature Review

In transitional democracies families and influential individuals played a bigger role which had direct and indirect consequences for political socialization and democratic culture. Pakistan like other transitional democracies is facing this acute challenge where dynastic politics and individuals are greatly influencing political socialization and democratic culture. Many scholars and researchers pointed out various reasons and factors for fragile democratic structure in the country such as Rasul Baksh Rais is of the view that dynastic politics is not limited to major political parties, it is also prevalent in almost every constituency around the country. Cross & Katz (2013) discussed various challenges to intra-party democracy such as legal regulation, party finance and party leadership. Shandana Khan Mohmand in her research work mainly focus on role of landlord and feudal in shaping political culture and political power influence in rural Punjab. This issue has been extensively discussed and analyzed by different scholars and researchers around the globe. Benjamin von dem Berge (2013) discussed two main criteria for intra-party democracy- decentralization and inclusiveness which is further divided into different categories such as member's rights, organizational structure and decision making. In Pakistan, political parties are highly centralized where political power and influence evolve around certain families and individuals. This power structure within political parties is considered one of the main hurdles which are hindering the process to democratization and intra-party democracy in the country.

Introduction

Intra-party democracy and smooth process of democratization in Pakistan is depending on each other like any other transitional democracy around the globe. Without a strong intra-party political culture and democracy, the process of democratization may remain fragile and less effective. This research article mainly deals with some fundamental questions such as what are the legal mechanisms for intra-party democracy in Pakistan. What are the main factors which are hindering process of intra-party democracy? And how these hurdles and challenges may be countered? In the first part the main focus will be on legal mechanisms and constitutional arrangement for intra-party democracy as well as on the role and significance of advocacy groups. The second part will mainly deal with major factors and challenges which are influencing intra-party democracy, political socialization and political culture in one way or the other way.

There are various factors which are influencing and hindering the process of intra-party democracy in Pakistan. The available literature focus on various factors such as some scholars and researchers are of the view that political leadership is mainly

responsible for centralized political structure within political parties while other argue that there are lack of proper legislation and regulatory bodies. Ayesha Siddiqi is of the view that hybrid martial law and strong military influence in political system is badly influencing the process of democracy in the country (Siddiqi 2019). Several analysts and experts are mainly focusing on the other aspects of this process, unlike Ayesha Siddiqi. According to them, dynastic politic is not allowing enough room for party members and this trend can be seen within majority political parties both right wing and leftist political parties. Although all these factors are responsible for the lack of intra-party democracy, we must focus and discuss these factors in more systematic and organizational way in order to draw broader picture which will be helpful to address this issue.

Intra- party Election and legal Mechanism

Democratic culture or intra-party democracy is a process where party members have the right to actively participate in the decision making process and have effective role within the party structure. The more effective internal democratic culture will lead to significant involvement in decision making which may further lead to transparency and effective execution of party objectives (STEVE CIMA, 2024)

The process and effectiveness of democracy mainly depends on the quality of democracy within political parties. Lack of Democratic culture or centralization of political power within political parties may have direct and indirect impact on the process of democratization. Intra-party elections are significant for democratization and institutionalization of political parties. Political parties are the main institutions for political socialization and inculcation of democratic values in any society. Such process and development may not be possible without any legal mechanism and regulations, that's why democratic countries around the world adopted some legal mechanism for smooth functioning of political parties. In Pakistan political parties order was introduced in the year 2002 for conduct of intra-party election. The main objective of the political parties' order 2002 was to enhance the process of internal democracy through regulation and legal reforms.

The political parties order 2002 bound political parties to hold intra-party election in order to enhance democratic culture within political parties. According to this order every political party at federal, provincial or local level must elect office bearer including party head through election under the constitution of their political party where every member have equal opportunity (Comission, 2002). A period, not exceeding four years shall intervene between any two elections. After election, the party head should submit a certificate for successful conduct of intra-party election under the party constitution to Election Commission of Pakistan. The certificate must include information such as date of election, names and designations, election result including total votes and copy of party notification of election result. The election commission will publish these details for public information. The above rules and regulations and legal mechanism provide a framework for intra-party elections which may be helpful for conduct of election within political parties. This process of regulation may result in enhancement of democratic culture which may have a positive impact on democracy in the country. Although there is a clear legal mechanism is available for intra-party election which is the most important factors in the process of democratization but in practice with some exception all political parties are not

executing these legal mechanisms. Just for the sake of legal requirement they conducted intra-party election where in majority ceases, the head of the party is elected unopposed. with this political culture the legal mechanism has not been reflected in the system, that's why have all legal mechanism and rule and regulation, these parties are highly dynastic in nature.

Indicator		Percentage Score (%)								
		PML-N	PPP/P	PTI	MQM	JUL-F	JI	NP	ANP	Average
1.	How much democracy does the constitution guarantee within the party? (10 Marks)	53	50	62	45	59	57	50	55	54
2.	How regularly and competitively does the party hold intra-party elections? (10 Marks)	34	35	64	39	49	62	52	55	49
3.	How effective are the various bodies of the party and how frequently do they meet? (10 Marks)	25	35	45	49	48	64	47	48	45
4.	How far were local party organizations involved in deciding the party candidates □ for the past National and Provincial Assembly elections? (10 Marks)	24	25	42	40	44	44	38	44	38
5.	How regularly the parliamentary party meetings take place during the sessions of □ the Senate, National Assembly and Provincial Assemblies? (5 Marks)	37	45	57	63	58	63	48	55	53
6.	How regularly does the party hold its annual convention? (5 Marks)	20	25	34	38	43	52	40	40	37
7.	How far does the party discourage the tradition of dynastic leadership? (5 Marks)	14	14	57	48	35	86	51	42	43
8.	How often has the top-most party leadership changed during the past 10 years without the death of the party chief? (5 Marks)	11	12	20	18	29	80	66	40	35
9.	How wide is the funding base and how credible are the audited accounts of the □ party? (10 Marks)	28	31	48	33	31	48	32	30	35
10.	How far is dissent tolerated within the party? How democratic was the procedure of disciplinary action, if any, against dissenting party officials? (5 Marks)	37	37	26	12	42	48	40	48	36
11.	How democratic is the decision-making process on important questions of policy? How democratic was the decision-making on the three most important decisions taken by the party during the past one year? (5 Marks)	26	32	37	28	45	48	35	46	37
12.	How active is the role and participation of women, youth and minorities in the party? (5 Marks)	48	66	77	69	46	37	29	46	52
13.	How comprehensive and up-to-date is the party website? How frequently is it updated? (5 Marks)	58	32	63	57	23	51	25	45	44
Overall Percentage Score (%)		32	34	49	42	43	56	43	46	43

Source. PILDAT report on internal democracy in political parties in Pakistan

The above table clearly indicate the level of internal democracy within political parties. The PILDAT report shows that main and largest political party has the lowest score among major political parties which indicate the lack of democratic culture within political parties. This trend is obviously reflected in overall democratic culture and process of democratization in the country. Without a strong democratic culture within political, we may not be able to promote democratic culture in the country

Dynastic politics and Democratic Culture

The history of dynastic politics in Pakistan goes back to pre-independence era which continued in post-independence time with less significant changes. In Pakistan the phenomenon of dynastic politics is much rooted in the political system where different types of political parties such as national, regional, ethnic and religious political parties are pre-dominantly of dynastic nature. The two major political parties Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PMLN) and Pakistan People Party (PPP) are deep rooted dynastic parties which have a long lasting impact on the process of democratization and democratic culture in the country. These parties not allowing to develop a political culture which keep a large number of people out of political process, as a result political culture and democratic values has not been promoted in the society. In Pakistan the dynastic legislatures constitute more than fifty percent of politician the country (Faiz Ur Rehman, 2022)

Dynastic politics is deep seated phenomenon which has long lasting impact on electoral politics and the process of democratization in the country. There are a few ruling families which have ruled over the country for decades. The dynastic nature of politics turned the country into oligarchy where people of certain families are playing a dominant rule in legislation and decision-making process (Amanullah, 2023). In July 2023, the two major political dynastic elite Nawaz Sharif and Asif Ali Zardari along with his daughter and Son discuss the future political prospects and upcoming election in Pakistan during their meeting in Dubai, Such discussion and news show the dynastic nature of politics in Pakistan which may influence and shape the future political developments.

There are various political mechanisms and techniques that enable national and sub national dynastic politicians to maintain and prolong their political power. *the rise of political dynasties at the subnational level is caused primarily by the ability of incumbent dynastic politicians to create an "uneven playing field" by exploiting their family networks and material wealth to help their family members to win office* (Kenawas, 2015). In dynastic politics, the family network is playing a very significant role through informal means and manipulation. These informal means may include vote buying, misuse of financial resources and politicization of different institutions. *Analysts believe politics in Pakistan is family-centric, which leaves little space for aspiring politicians from middle-class and professional backgrounds in the top tiers of mainstream political parties* (Alam, 2024). Another common approach among the dynastic politicians is switching political parties on a regular basis depending on popular narratives and ground political realities. Although some members such as technocrats may be able to join the legislative process but still, they are not able to play an active role in decision making process within the party. One recent example is the replacement of finance minister Miftah Ismail by Ishaq Dar. An overview of the

some major political parties will further explain the nature of dynastic politics and hurdles in the process of democratization in Pakistan

Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz, one the largest political parties in Pakistan in term of seats in national and provincial assemblies in different era remained highly dynastic and. This party is often called a dynastic party due to dominant role of a single family. Mr. Nawaz Sharif on whose name the party was founded remained Chief Minister of Punjab in two distinctive terms and the longest prime minister of the country in three non-consecutive terms ending in the year 2017. His younger brother remained Chief Minister of Punjab thrice and currently leading the country as Prime Minister since Feb. 2024.

Dynastic politics is not limited to a particular area or state, there are more than hundreds countries where dynastic politics prevail. Based on this prevailing practice in number of country such as Pakistan, India and Philippine, a number of questions arise such as what are the man drivers of the this process, secondly do we develop some theoretical perspective which can explain these development in different regions and different countries and thirdly, what are the major impact of dynastic politics on society, politics and economy. These questions certainly got the attention of scholars and researcher across the globe and this topic remained one of the main topic of public interest. Although literature has been produced on the topic but it need more attention at regional and country level mean we should focus some case studies which may enable us to analyze how different factors are responsible for dynastic politics. Similarly this approach will also enable us to thoroughly investigate to find out various mechanism, approaches and methods which promoted political culture and democratic values at party and national level. A study conducted by Siddharth Eapen George & Dominic Ponattu in 2018, investigate the impact of dynastic politics on economic development. The main empirical findings of the study are (i) bequest motives can motivate better in-office performance, (ii) dynastic politicians have electoral advantages, and (iii) dynastic descendants perform worse in expectation as they have weaker performance incentives (Ponattu, 2018).

Dynastic Politics and Candidate Selection Process

Candidate's selection is one of the key functions of Political parties. A competitive and impartial selection process may enhance the overall competency of political parties which may have significant impact on the democratic process. Unlike this competitive environment, the dynastic politics select candidates mainly from the family, relatives and close friends. *Members of the elite ruling class, including legacy candidates, may be among the few who possess the education, wealth and other technical skills to be successful as politician and policy maker* (Smith, 2020).

Countries with centralized system and lack to political culture nominate their candidates without or less involvement of local members or branches of the party while in the decentralized system and countries have political culture may the active involvement of local stakeholder and branches of party. There are various factors which determines the process of candidate selection such as electoral system, ideology of the political parties, political socialization and culture and government organization. The key issues in intra-party democracy is parties' nomination processes, in other words who decides and how which citizens are entitled to run for parliament as a

candidate of that specific party. Whether such nomination processes are deemed democratic or not, depends according to Norris on the degree of *centralization*, that is to say, how much power is given to regional, district or local bodies in the process of selection (Norris, 2004).

In Pakistan, the dynastic politics have long lasting impact on the overall political culture in the country including candidate selection process. *Pakistani political system opens a gate of opportunities for local dynasties to consolidate and expend their power base by utilization their political and economic resources in participation of general election at national level. Family networks are useful for the political dynasties to exercise various forms of an informal menu of manipulation of electoral system of Pakistan* (Fani, 2020). In Pakistan, the dynastic politician's holds political offices, exercise political power followed by democratic process which is undemocratic in nature. That's why dynastic politics has been blamed in Pakistan for negatively impacting political culture and process of democratization. The changes of candidate selection increase due to various factors such dynastic background, names and linkages/ network with political parties. In Pakistan the political parties system is less institutionalized which led to the dominant role of party head or few individuals.

Conclusion

Dynastic politics in Pakistan on way or other, directly and indirectly negatively impacted the process of democratization in the country. The strong dynastic politic, family linkages and centralized system within political parties remained major hurdle to promote democratic culture in the society. The phenomena of dynastic politics is remained one of the major themes of public interest across the world. Some states were able to counter this dynastic politics and promote democratic values such as japan and even India up to some extent countered the strong dynastic culture. While other countries such Pakistan and Philippine remained political centralized state under dynastic politics. Such comparison may allow the scholars and researchers to develop different theoretical approaches and theories which explain the dynastic politics across the regions. The dynastic politics have long lasting impact of politics, society, and economic development and equal distribution of resources. Political parties are the main source of communication between public and government which transform public opinions and demands into policy but the dynastic politics and centralized party system are not allowing the smooth functioning of this process.

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