

Hybrid Governance and Democratic Fragility in Pakistan: A Post-2024 Election Analysis

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Abstract: *The 2024 general elections in Pakistan were not just a battle between political parties; they marked a pivotal moment in Pakistan's history of constitutional democracy versus hybrid governance. Despite the formal structure of the election, the nature of the political context generated a range of concerns regarding the fairness of the electoral system, political inclusion, institutional neutrality, media freedom, judicial independence, and the role of non-elected power centers. This paper explores the influence of hybrid governance on the Fragility of democracy in Pakistan after the 2024 elections. The study is conducted using a qualitative document-analysis approach, which is based on election reports, human rights assessments, documentation on the freedom of the media, rule-of-law indicators, and scholarly literature published until 2024. The paper contends that Pakistan's democratic dysfunction has created a phenomenon that needs to be analysed beyond election day irregularities and post-poll conflicts. Instead, it identifies a more fundamental structural issue whereby elected institutions are embedded in a political system that is dominated by unelected institutions, especially the military, security institutions, courts, the bureaucracy, and electoral institutions. The study reveals that for the 2024 election, democracy was even further endangered by a decrease in democratic legitimacy, a growth of political polarization, a shrinking of civic space, a rise in public distrust, and a reaffirmation of the perception of an electoral system that is managed. The paper concludes that merely holding elections every so often is not enough to consolidate the democratic process in Pakistan. It demands civilian supremacy, credible electoral reform, judicial independence, freedom for the media, autonomy for parliament, maturity of the party system, and constitutional rights protection.*

Keywords: Hybrid Governance, Democratic Fragility, Pakistan, 2024 Election, Civil-Military Tangle, Electoral Integrity, Judicial Independence, Democratic Backsliding

Introduction

The journey towards democracy in Pakistan has not been a straight line. The country has experienced several cycles of elected governments, military rule, caretaker governments, judicial interventions, and, most recently, a form of power sharing between civilian and unelected institutions since independence. Despite the formal reintroduction of electoral democracy in 2008, Pakistan has yet to progress from electoral continuity to democratic consolidation. There have been elections, parliaments have met, courts have made significant constitutional rulings, and political parties have competed for power. However, democracy has been fragile because of the formalism of power structures and institutions that are not elected.

This is a historically complex situation in which the 2024 general election was held. The election was scheduled for February 8, 2024, and would be seen as a way to bring some peace and stability back to the nation after months of polarization, economic hardship, legal battles, and tensions between the government and the opposition. On the contrary, it revealed the extent of Pakistan's democratic crisis. Political participation issues, allegations of pre-poll manipulation, the arrest of former Prime Minister Imran Khan, restrictions on Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), the removal of PTI's symbol, communication problems, delayed result transmission, and post-election complaints of irregularities were all issues that arose during the election (Amnesty International, 2024; Election Commission of Pakistan [ECP], 2024; Human Rights Commission of Pakistan [HRCP], 2024; Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency [PILDAT], 2024).

The election resulted in a divided parliament. PTI candidates did well even though they did not use the party's symbol in the contest, and the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) became important players in the government formation game. A civilian government eventually took place, but the validity of the electoral process was questioned. The overall fairness score of the 2024 election was 49%, which is less than the scores of previous general elections, according to PILDAT (2024). While recognizing the high level of turnout from voters, FAFEN (2024) highlighted the need for transparency in the management of election results and grievance resolution. HRCP (2024) requested an independent audit because of major concerns about the credibility of the elections.

This paper examines the 2024 elections as an example of democratic Fragility in a hybrid governance system. It believes that the crisis in Pakistan after the elections is not a phenomenon of faulty election management. A more fundamental problem is structural; Pakistan has democratic institutions, but they do not necessarily enjoy autonomy, neutrality, and public trust. There are elected governments, but where they do exist, their powers are often limited by non-elected actors. Competition is held between parties, but sometimes the competition is unequal. Courts are in operation, but judicial politics are strongly enmeshed in the struggle for power. Media outlets report, but free discussion is limited by censorship and pressure. Citizens vote, but some wonder if their vote equals political authority.

This paper's central research question is how the 2024 general election contributed to the hybrid governance and the Fragility of democracy in Pakistan. The paper contends that the 2024 general elections did not usher in Pakistan's democratic crisis; they only brought the crisis to the surface. It showed the boundaries of electoral democracy in an institutionally fragile system.

Problem Statement

Pakistan still has elections, but electoral continuity has not resulted in stable democratic consolidation. The constitutional process was followed for the 2024 general election. However, there were significant concerns about fairness, the level of competition, the neutrality of institutions, and civil liberties in the overall political context. Public trust in the democratic process was undermined by political interference, legal action, communication curbs, lack of results, and suspicions of manipulation.

So the problem of this study is that despite the establishment of electoral institutions, Pakistan's democracy is still struggling. The country's political system has a mixed form of governance where formal positions are elected, but informal powers remain influential in political decision-

making. This leaves a significant difference between constitutional democracy and actual power sharing. Studies are undertaken to explore how this gap influenced the 2024 elections and how the election itself exacerbated problems with democratic Fragility.

Research Objectives

The objectives of this study are to:

1. To examine how hybrid governance has shaped democratic institutions and political competition in Pakistan.
2. To analyse how the 2024 general election reflected democratic fragility through electoral legitimacy, institutional independence, and civil liberties.

Research Questions

The following research questions guide the study:

1. How did hybrid governance influence democratic processes and institutional autonomy in Pakistan during and after the 2024 general election?
2. In what ways did the 2024 general election reveal challenges to democratic legitimacy, political competition, and civil liberties in Pakistan?

Significance of Study

The importance of this study lies in the fact that the upcoming 2024 Pakistan elections are a key juncture in the nation's democratic transformation. The election was not just about the government, but about public confidence in institutions, the trustworthiness of political competition, and the future of civilian power. This paper provides a prism for examining the election in terms of hybrid governance, which feeds into the discussions of democratic backsliding, electoral authoritarianism, and civil-military relations in Pakistan.

The study also has significance as democratic fragilities in Pakistan have consequences beyond domestic politics. It impacts economic stability, credibility of foreign policy, regional security, investor confidence, human rights, and Pakistan's relationship with international financial institutions. A weak democracy will not be able to provide for long-term policy continuity, social cohesion, and inclusive governance. Hence, it is essential to understand the post-2024 political landscape to gauge Pakistan's future democratic possibilities.

Theoretical Framework

The three theories that are used in this paper are closely interconnected, and are the hybrid regime theory, the competitive authoritarianism, and the democratic backsliding.

Hybrid regime theory refers to political systems that have both democratic and authoritarian elements. In these systems, elections are conducted, and democratic institutions are present, but the game is not played fairly (due to institutional bias, limitations of civil liberties, and informal power structures). Diamond (2002) contends that hybrid regimes can be "almost democratic" (almost, but not quite) by holding elections. However, the liberty of the citizen, the rule of law, and accountability are still not fully realized.

The lens of competitive authoritarianism is more specific. Competitive authoritarian regimes, according to Levitsky and Way (2010), are political systems in which opposition parties are allowed to run in elections. However, the process is thoroughly rigged in the dominant power-holders' favor. Democratic institutions are in place, but they are undermined by the violation of democratic principles by incumbents and influential actors through media control and legal

pressure, selective accountability, and manipulation of state institutions. The 2024 election in Pakistan illustrated a number of characteristics of competitive authoritarianism, such as the marginalisation of one large opposition party, unequal access to the media, legal hurdles, and result management disputes.

The democratic backsliding theory illuminates how democratic systems can slip down a slope instead of collapsing all at once. In Bermeo's (2016) words, the degradation of democracy in the modern era is not usually carried out by means of open coup d'état, but rather by legal and institutional means. Weakening democratic competition while retaining the formal appearance of democracy is possible through the use of courts, electoral rules, media regulations, and constitutional amendments by the government. This is a good lens for examining Pakistan since democratic decay has been experienced in various combinations of legal, institutional, and informal means.

These theories are helpful in understanding the context of Pakistan in the post-2024 scenario. Elections have not been eliminated from the country, but their quality has been compromised. The issue is not the lack of democracy per se but rather the misrepresentation of democracy through unequal power dynamics.

Literature Review

The issue of civilian control versus military dominance has always been a central concern of scholarly literature on the politics of Pakistan. According to Rizvi (2000), strong military institutions and frequent political crises, combined with the absence of strong civilian institutions, have helped shape Pakistan's military as a significant political player. Later on, the military's functions extended beyond defence and entered into a wide range of political decisions, governance, foreign policy, and internal security matters, becoming a very active player in the political arena. Shah (2014) also suggests that the military has consistently been able to influence civilian politics from behind the scenes and has impeded democratic progress in Pakistan.

A further theme in the literature is institutional weakness. According to Jalal (2014), the state system in Pakistan has been centralized, and security concerns and democratic federalism have been weak in the country. This has limited the growth of strong parliamentary traditions and civilian supremacy. Political parties have also played a role in the Fragility of their institutions by using dynastic leadership, weak democracy within them, and personalized politics, and obtaining support from non-democratic sources in political conflicts.

The book of Hybrid Regimes is particularly relevant to Pakistan. Diamond (2002) points out that a number of countries conduct elections without turning into full-fledged democracies. Under authoritarian pressures, as long as opposition parties are permitted to run against their authoritarians and are not given a fair chance to do so, Levitsky and Way (2010) suggest that electoral competition can persist. Pakistan is a typical case in point, as the elections here are competitive; however, the political effects are frequently determined by the influence of the establishment, judicial interference, media limitations, and administrative pressure.

Recent election-related reports confirm such insights. PILDAT (2024) noted that the quality and fairness of the 2024 general election were reduced. FAFEN (2024) emphasised result transparency and dispute settlement. HRCP (2024) expressed worry over the integrity of the electoral process and requested an audit by an independent body. Amnesty International (2024) has criticized internet shutdown during election, and the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ,

2024) has condemned internet communication disruptions and restrictions on journalists. The sources show that the issue of the fragility of democracy is not just confined to the elite institutional crisis, but the Fragility is suffered by the voters, journalists, political workers, and civil society organizations of Pakistan.

Judicial politics is also cited as an area of concern in the literature. Throughout Pakistan's history, courts have been instrumental in political crisis points, where they have upheld constitutional rights, and also where they have facilitated and/or validated extra-democratic practices. The controversy and debate over PTI's electoral symbol and the subsequent discussion on the 26th Constitutional Amendment illustrated how judicial decisions and judicial reforms can become a focus of political conflict (International Commission of Jurists [ICJ], 2024; Supreme Court of Pakistan, 2024).

In general, the literature indicates that Pakistan's Fragility as a democracy has a structural imbalance. The 2024 election was not the catalyst for hybrid governance; it was a testament to its embeddedness.

Methodology

The type of research conducted in this study is qualitative research with document analysis techniques. The upcoming general election in 2024 is seen as an example of hybrid governance and the Fragility of democracy in Pakistan. This approach is appropriate, as the study is not confined to only one measurement of democracy, but encompasses institutions, processes, and the quality of democracy.

The study was based on secondary sources, which were published until 2024. These comprise election documents, election-observation reports, human rights reports, media-freedom evaluations, rule-of-law indicators, and academic works. The key sources are the Election Commission of Pakistan election material, PILDAT's assessment on the election 2024, preliminary election observation report by FAFEN, CPJ's documentation on the election-related concerns, Rule of Law Index 2024 by World Justice Project, Bertelsmann Transformation Index 2024 Pakistan report, and International Commission of Jurists' assessment on judicial independence.

Thematic analysis is used in the paper. According to the collected material, the themes were electoral legitimacy, civil-military relations, judicial independence, political-party competition, media and digital freedoms, and post-election governance. The themes were chosen because they are directly related to how the hybrid governance works and to the quality of democracy.

There are some limitations to the study. It does not rely on primary interviews, field surveys, or voter-level statistical data. As such, it is not a direct measure of public opinion. Rather, it offers a conceptual and policy-oriented analysis which draws on documentary evidence and current scholarship.

The Hybrid Governance Structure in Pakistan

Hybrid governance in Pakistan is a political system where democratic institutions are formally in place but are constrained by non-elected, powerful entities. This is not necessarily military rule. In most cases, it is a form of indirect control of political coalitions, accountability mechanisms, security policy, media representations, judicial politics, and government formation.

The military still enjoys the greatest unchecked influence in Pakistan's political process. It has its source in the sense of national security, control of strategic areas, institutional discipline, and historical political involvement. The military has usually exercised influence on the civilian government's foreign policy, internal security, relations with India and Afghanistan, and major national security decision-making (Rizvi, 2000; Shah, 2014).

Weak civilian institutions also sustain hybrid governance. Parliament is frequently not autonomous, parties are highly centralized, local governments are often prone to instability, and accountability institutions are often seen as selective. Political conflicts frequently involve courts, election officials, and bureaucratic bodies. This undermines the public's confidence since it seems that institutions are more the means to political games than neutral guardians of the constitution.

Hybrid governance has also been a result of political parties' own efforts. Many parties resent establishing when they are not included in the power, but they welcome establishment when it is in their interests. The absence of such uniformity means the lack of a single democratic opposition to un-elected intervention. Thus, in a way, hybrid governance still exists because the civilian elites do not defend democratic norms in a collective fashion repeatedly.

The election and electoral legitimacy in 2024. Election and electoral legitimacy in 2024.

The 2024 general election revealed the gap between calling an election and being able to have a proper democratic election. Citizens did vote, candidates ran, results were reported, and governments were elected formally. In practice, however, this was a period fraught with controversy from start to finish.

There was a very uneven pre-election climate. There was a lot of political and legal pressure against PTI. The founder, Imran Khan, continued to be jailed. Party leaders and party workers were arrested and restricted. The party lost its electoral symbol following the Election Commission's decision on intra-party elections of PTI (Supreme Court of Pakistan, 2024). Symbols are not just insignificant technical details in Pakistan's electoral culture. They assist voters, particularly less-literate voters, in recognizing parties on the ballot. The loss of a symbol thus made it difficult for PTI to function as a single group.

The election day restrictions further eroded confidence. Amnesty International (2024) condemned the internet shutdown during the voting, calling it an infringement on the rights of people to go to the polling stations. CPJ (2024) also condemned disruptions and restrictions on phone and internet use that impact journalists. While these actions are typically framed as security, in a politically polarized climate, communication blackouts can foster suspicion, silence information, reduce transparency, and hinder citizens' access to information.

The post-election result management process turned out to be the most problematic. According to PILDAT (2024), the overall fairness of the election in 2024 decreased to 49%. HRCP (2024) questioned the authenticity of the election and urged an independent audit. FAFEN (2024) pointed out the importance of transparent consolidation of results and a robust mechanism for dispute resolution to build trust. The apprehensions indicate that pre-poll restrictions and post-poll uncertainty undermined the electoral legitimacy.

In democratic theory, elections are to be a peaceful settlement of political conflict. The election in Pakistan 2024, on the contrary, is reported to have further complicated the situation as many voters and parties did not find the election to be fully credible. This is a clear indicator of the Fragility of democracy.

Civil-Military Relations and Managed Democracy

Civil-military imbalance is one of the major reasons behind the failure of democracy in Pakistan. The military's involvement in politics has changed over the years. Internationally and domestically, direct coups are no longer welcome, although informal influence has persisted. This type of influence is more devious than martial law, but it can still affect the democratic outcomes.

The 2024 election was in line with the logic of managed democracy. There was no formal military government, but the political climate was generally seen to be propped up by the establishment. Public perception of the lack of autonomy in electoral politics was reinforced by restrictions on PTI, selective accountability, pressure on candidates, and post-election coalition dynamics.

A managed democracy does not need to do away with elections. It does this by altering the context in which elections take place. A major party can be depressed prior to polling day. Media coverage might be skewed. Political consequences are possible with court decisions. Candidates are likely to be pressured. There may be differences in results. Coalitions can be created in a fashion that might seem constitutional, but is not widely accepted by the public.

The challenge of hybrid governance is that accountability is muddled. One can vote against civilian politicians, but people who do not hold any elected office but affect results cannot be held directly accountable by those who vote. This undermines citizens' accountability and engenders citizen frustration.

The Politics of Democratic Consensus: A Study of the United States and the Soviet Union

Parliamentary democracy is the backbone of the political parties. However, in Pakistan, parties have not always established a common willingness to adhere to democratic norms. Parties have a poor record of upholding democratic values, often using democracy for political ends.

This issue was exacerbated in the 2024 election. PTI said the elections were manipulated and were not valid. Despite many doubts about the election process, PML-N and PPP continued with the process of forming the government. Smaller groups and regional actors voiced grievances as well. This led to a Parliament established constitutionally, but with legitimacy issues.

This polarization impaired potential democratic change. To achieve electoral reform, it is necessary to have trust between the parties, but this has been almost nonexistent following the election. Both sides interpreted the other not just as a political opponent but as a component of a broader effort to dominate or render "unacceptable" democratic competition. This polarization is good for those who are not elected because when the parties are split, they cannot really defend the supremacy of the civilian side.

Lack of party democracy is another factor of Fragility. Major parties tend to be primarily person-based, familial, or leader-dependent rather than internally strong. This restricts the debate on policies, reduces accountability, and depoliticises conflict.

The legal system, constitutional politics, and rule of law

Judicial autonomy is vital to the stability of democracy. The courts have to defend constitutional rights, to adjudicate electoral conflicts, and to restrain executive overreaching. However, this is rarely seen in Pakistan, where the judiciary has been embroiled in political conflicts. It has had a strong and controversial impact.

The 2024 election marked a turning point, bringing political polarisation to the judiciary. The importance of the Supreme Court's ruling on PTI's electoral symbol for electoral competition

cannot be overstated (Supreme Court of Pakistan, 2024). Subsequent disagreements on reserved seats, election petitions, and constitutional changes contributed to these tensions between the judiciary and politics.

The 26th Constitutional Amendment was one of the most contentious institutional changes of 2024. The International Commission of Jurists (2024) expressed criticism of the amendment for its negative impact on judicial independence, protection of the rule of law, and human rights. Those who opposed the changes to judicial appointments and the selection of the chief justice claimed that it would give more power to politicians in judicial selection. The supporters said that the amendment strengthened the role of parliament and got rid of judicial overreach. What the controversy exposes are institutional problems, namely the lack of institutional trust in Pakistan. Reforms that can be defended in principle are suspect when being proposed in a polarized political climate. Judicial reform is essential in any democracy, but should be done openly, with consultation, and with respect for the interests of the present constituency.

According to the World Justice Project (2024), Pakistan has been placed at 129th position in the Rule of Law Index in the list of 142 countries. This is because poor rule of law results in a lack of faith on the part of political actors and citizens in a fair resolution of disputes, which undermines democracy.

That includes Media Freedom, Digital Control, and Civic Space.

Citizens need information to be able to participate in democracy. Elections have no meaning if voters are not free to hear, discuss, criticize, and compare political options. Censorship, pressure on journalists, economic coercion, legal threats, and self-censorship have long plagued media freedom in Pakistan.

The 2024 election demonstrated the extent to which digital control has become an issue in democracy. Digital mobilization was used extensively by PTI as a means of communication due to the lack of access to traditional media. Thus, there was a political dimension to Internet disruptions and communication shut-offs. Amnesty International and CPJ (2024) condemned restrictions on communications and reporting during the election period.

Public debate was also influenced by media pressure. If the media is afraid of the controversial issues, then citizens are given an incomplete picture of the political reality. This helps to dilute electoral accountability. While formally everyone is entitled to vote, their capacity for informed voting is diminished where information flows are limited.

Civic space also contracted during and following the election. Peaceful avenues of political expression were curtailed by restrictions on protest, arrests of political workers, and pressure on the exercise of dissenting opinions. Dissension suppression in fragile democracies can provide short-term control, but lower confidence in constitutional politics in the long run, leading to greater long-run instability.

Post-Election Governance and Coalition Fragility

The post-2024 government was elected in an extremely polarized field. In a parliamentary system, coalition governments are more prevalent; however, the election was the subject of a legitimacy crisis, creating challenges for governance. Elected but disputed governments have to deal with the economy and administration, and they have to defend their right to rule at every turn.

The legitimacy issue was an issue with the parliament. Rather than being a means of reconciliation, parliament became a venue for confrontation. Political life and institutional

power were the lenses through which major constitutional and legislative changes were seen. The battle over the 26th Constitutional Amendment highlighted the fact that it is hard to create a consensus in a polarized political system.

Another factor that hampers policy continuity is coalition fragility. In 2024, Pakistan was grappling with significant economic pressures, such as inflation, budget constraints, debt burdens, and public discontent. A government with weak legitimacy may lack the will to make tough decisions in a political conflict—this linkage between the fragility of democracy and economic governance matters. A weak democracy can also impact the ability of the state to govern effectively, apart from rights.

Democratic Fragility following the 2024 election

The 2024 election further contributed to the Fragility of democracy in a number of ways.

First, it undermined the legitimacy of elections. Losers in a democracy need to accept the loss since they know the process. In 2024, many political actors and voters did not trust this process, and the election did not achieve a satisfactory resolution of political conflict.

Second, it fostered mistrust of the institutions. The Election Commission, courts, caretaker authorities, security institutions, and the media regulators were all criticized. As institutions lose their credibility, political conflicts become more difficult to settle peacefully.

Thirdly, it increased polarization. PTI supporters felt it was an exclusionary process, while the ruling government claimed it was constitutionally acceptable. This developed alternative versions of “legitimate” narratives.

Fourth, it restricted civic space. Communication blackouts, pressure on journalists, arrests, and protest restrictions dampened Democratic freedoms.

Fifth, it boosted hybrid governance. The election did not seem to weaken the power of unelected actors, but rather reinforced it and proved that informal power structures still dominate Pakistan’s political system.

Discussion

Pakistan’s 2024 election is an example of electoral continuity without democratic consolidation, a painful reality. Voters came out, candidates ran, and a government was elected, but democracy was still a fragile entity, for voters felt the rules of the game were unequal.

This does not imply that elections have no value in Pakistan. On the other hand, the good result at the hands of independent candidates, many of whom were backed by PTI, revealed that citizens are still important in the eyes of the voters and political society is still alive. It also revealed that while voter choice was the key to democracy, if institutions were not neutral and political competition was not managed, it was not a guarantee of democracy.

The fundamental issue is that in Pakistan, democracy is functioning in a hybrid form. Political power resides with both elected and non-elected officials. In theory, courts are independent, but in practice, there is a lot of debate about judicial politics. Media is officially free, but the pressure determines coverage. Parliament is present, but it is weak, dominated by the executive, under party control, and influenced by the establishment.

The 2024 elections also demonstrate that democratic backsliding can take place via legal means. The removal of a party symbol, restrictions on Internet access, delay in results, “coalition management” and judicial appointment regulations are all ways in which an

undertaking can be described in legal or administrative terms. However, when these actions diminish fairness, transparency, and rights, they compromise the very nature of democracy. Recovery of democracy in Pakistan is not an election cycle away. It demands a restoration of faith in the laws of politics. First, political parties should agree that there should be no administrative or legal exclusion of any political party. The establishment has to get off the political track. Courts have a duty to defend rights, but not as a partisan player. The media should have freedom of reporting. The Parliament should be the principal platform for settling national differences.

Policy Recommendations

First, Pakistan needs to have a credible electoral audit and dispute resolution mechanism. Complaints about elections should be dealt with in a transparent, speedy, and independent manner. Polling-station forms, consolidations, and decisions of the tribunals should be available for public inspection.

Secondly, the Election Commission needs to be empowered. The selection process, the independence of its operation, the information technology systems, the transmission of its results, and the communication process with the public need to be changed to regain trust.

Third, there should be a common Democratic charter agreed upon by all major political parties. This charter should oppose establishment interference, political victimisation, selective accountability, and political participation limitations.

The fourth is that civil power should be safeguarded in practice, not in the form of words, as it were. If the military stays in its constitutional duty, and political engineering is shunned by everybody.

Fifth, the autonomy of the judiciary should be maintained. Reforms of the judiciary should be based upon a wide consultation, clear and open debate, and safeguards against political entanglements.

Sixth, Media and digital freedoms should be respected during the elections. Journalists should not be subjected to pressure, platform restrictions, or internet shutdowns except in very limited, lawful, and proportionate circumstances, and subject to independent scrutiny.

Seventh, no arbitrary arrest or intimidation of political workers, journalists, or civil society activists should be tolerated. There is no reason to consider peaceful political activity as a security threat.

Eighth, Parliament should be strengthened as the main institution of democracy. Amendments to the Constitution must be debated openly, go through the committee process, and have widespread political support.

Ninth, allow political parties to be democratic within the party. More democratic parties and less reliance on unelected party support would result from more robust internal elections, transparent funding models, a policy-driven approach to politics, and greater party leadership accountability.

Last, but not least, Pakistan needs to invest in Civic Education. Citizens must be informed about electoral processes, constitutional rights, and the accountability of citizens in a democracy in order to better protect the democratic norms.

Conclusion

The 2024 general election was the most crucial for Pakistan's democracy. It demonstrated that the nation is still an elective nation with a competitive political scene and a constitution. It also revealed the strength of the rot of democracy. The election took place but was challenged as illegitimate. A government was established, but the people's faith was divided. Conflict within the institutions persisted, though Parliament operated. Judicial independence was shrouded in controversy, and courts acted. Reported news that is limited in scope or intimidated. Citizens voted, but there were concerns that their vote was not fully respected.

The paper has said that Pakistan has been facing some democratic fragilities, which are not due to only one contested election so far in the post-2024 era. It is a result of an extended period of a mixed governance model where democratic processes coexist with informal authoritarian ones. Elections are no guarantee of democracy in the face of unequal political competition, limited civil liberties, and the unchecked power of unelected entities.

The democratic future of Pakistan hinges on its political and institutional players' ability to transcend party politics and power politics. These values of civil supremacy, electoral credibility, judicial independence, press freedom, parliamentary autonomy, and constitutional rights are to be converted from partisan slogans into agreed-upon values. If these reforms are not implemented, then Pakistan may continue to elect without ever freeing itself from democratic Fragility. However, with them, the country can only take a step towards true democratic consolidation from the hybrid governance.

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