# Role of Military as the Guardian of Democracy in Pakistan

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## Abstract

This article investigates the role of military in the politics of Pakistan. The researcher highlights how our politicians have always been unable to develop a political culture on democratic parameters in the country. Side by side the masses start lacking trust in the politicians and political setup for their authoritarian attitude and inheritor leadership. Our political parties, no doubt, have good shows in the case of local leaders but unluckily they have been lethargic in giving birth to the leaders of national and international caliber. This factor creates gaps for military to enter politics and stay there under the very doctrine of 'necessity'. Since the very early days of our emergence on the globe of the world, there has been a misconception that military may align all the disorders and civil institutions are not allowed to promote but in fact military did some better than these politicians. The research is based on the analysis of the authentic material in the form of literature in comparative politics, institutional theory, as well as civil military relations and political sector reforms. Through the conceptualization of the data, the researchers have developed thier stance that if our politicians learn to make decisions wisely like those of India, the results would be far better and healthier as both states got independence on the same turn of the history.

**Key words**: political culture, military, elections, democracy, military intervention

#### Introduction

The general elections held in 1937 in the Sub-continent remained unable to meet the objectives of the Muslim League from majority of the Muslim Provinces. Landlord system was prevalent in the major areas of Punjab, Sindh, Baluchistan and Khyber Pakhtoon Khwa (KPK). The landlords there did not support the Muslim League when Pakistan was going to be established. They stood by Mohammad Ali Jinnah in order to have their vested interests in the form of securing the rule and culture of their areas. Particularly in the general elections of 1946, Nawab Mamdoot and Mumtaz Doltana foresaw the situation which was going on the fair way to the establishment of Pakistan. The situation in Sindh and Baluchistan was similar to that of Punjab. The other landowner families especially those of Makhdoom, Khosas, Bhutto, Talpur, Jatoi, took the pragmatic step and joined the Muslim League. The fourth province Baluchistan sat aloof from this trend of opportunism. Congress was

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in rule in KPK at the time of our independence. These landlord families had joined the freedom movement under the doctrine of 'self-interests' and took the leading positions in constructing the future of Pakistan. They took more interests in their own monetary benefits than the public welfare. Politics, by them, was redefined solely as the source of family business. Mohammad Ali Jinnah, in his life, had uttered rightly that he had been unfortunate for not having good coins in his pocket. It is the matter of importance that the 60% area of Pakistan went under the rule of such land owners and tribal leaders. There the people still have neither the voice of their own nor the right of their own to cast their votes independently. Now every sensible person can understand what sort of turn out will be there in the elections......the same leaders, the same plight of the public. That is an ideal absurd scenario as Samuel Beckett in his Play 'The Waiting for Godot' writes, "Nobody comes, nobody goes, it is awful." Similarly here with us, no Godot or savior has ever come or seems to be coming in the robes of true democracy.

During the last 67 years, Pakistan underwent the experiences of democracy but through prolonged military regimes. Every military dictator came with the craving of the masses and congratulations were exchanged on the intervention of the military because the politicians could not be successful to pull out the people from crisis. The people welcomed the military's controlled political system. Political elites co-operated with these military men and offered their services to strengthen their rule and consequently gained economic benefits. The puppet politicians paralyzed the political culture of this state. These so called political intellectuals defended the military with appointing the military dictators as presidents in uniform. Pro-military Politicians launched operations against their opponents with the support of military. The conflicts between the ruling parties and the opponents, opposition made alliances to derail the governments in its honey moon period. While the government often led the use of state apparatus against its opposition parties as a result exile and execution trend emerged for the politicians. In this context a series of cases of Pakistan People's Party (PPP) against Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) and PML-N against PPP also operations of both the parties against Muttihida Qomi Movement (MQM) are before us. During these operations military was called for the restoration of political vendetta. The story of Baluchistan was not different from Karachi throughout the history of Pakistan. The above mentioned trend negated the fertilization of political process; as the image of democratic institutions faded. Moreover, the causes of political backwardness are being addressed under, that did not allow the political culture of Pakistan to grow up and military was blamed for nothing.

# **Blemished legislation**

Legislation is like blood in the body. After independence, legislation process was delayed due to various reasons. The basic purpose of the democratic institutions is making laws and legislation but unfortunately this distance was covered with the presidential ordinances and inherited colonial rules. Later these rules and ordinances were converted into acts of parliament with minor changes. The tradition of private members bills was discouraged in Pakistan from very first day, history proved that all the amendments were passed through personal wills, majority consent was ignored(Munir,1980). Amendments were made on personal benefits debates were made to realize the amendments. Politicians supported the dictators to amend the constitution and allowed them to work for gaining their personal benefits.

# Trembling election procedure

One of the basic features of democratic state is to conduct free and fair elections but unfortunately the progress of Pakistan in conducting free and fair elections is unsatisfactory throughout the history of Pakistan. It has become a common practice of the defeated parties and the politicians to blame the winning party of rigging. Military is called to conduct the elections, civil institutions are not relied upon, and election results are not accepted. Majority mandated parties are not allowed to work independently; alliances are made to keep out the government to achieve its objectives. Politicians always prefer personal benefits over national. Intelligence agencies are called to collect the report before the elections about the behavior of the people. Such manipulations create doubts, flaws and instability about the democratic process (Naveed, 2012).

Whenever, in the history of Pakistan people are allowed to elect their leaders, the results of their votes are against their wishes. People have made their minds that agencies make and break the governments in Pakistan. People feel that their opinion have no worth in Pakistan and vote casting ratio remain very poor 20 to 30 percent.

# Progress of the political parties

People dreamed about the pure democratic system of Pakistan where the voice of the common people could be heard. In the current system of Pakistan as analyzed above can a true democracy on the wishes of the common people of Pakistan, which will provide a freedom to common people to choose their preferred people to run the country.

Political parties are the spirit of democracy. In Pakistan the role of political parties is too much poor to strengthen the democratic culture of Pakistan. Every politician has its own political party. Total seats of national assembly are 270 on open merit while register political parties in Pakistan are 216. Constitution is unable to mention the minimum condition over the registration of political parties. These political parties with one or two legislators (seats) blackmail the government and take monetary benefits, this trend never allowed the political culture to promote & disturb the political setup of the state. These outfit works motivate the non-political actors to intervene. After intervention these forces utilize the small political parties to gain their objectives. Bad impressions of these political parties go to the masses. These small political leaders sale themselves on very low prices, they introduce the trend of corruption in political parties and a signal of fail democracy goes to the masses of the state. These politicians establish the culture of horse trading. Personality oriented outlook is found in the political parties still, parties are known on personality basis, traditional mood of the politicians damage the political setup of Pakistan. Whenever, these politicians are given chance to rule, they always prefer to appoint their relatives and forget all the merits but when they are in opposition they claim merit. These are the drawbacks of our politicians and political parties which is anti-democratic (Zain, 2010).

It is as clear as crystal that the tradition of political accommodation and the selection of the rulers as well as their accountability through the electoral process can't be established without ensuring the continuity of political process. Political leaders must keep it in mind that if they are not doing well in the next term they would be excluded from political chess. This also enables the competing interests and the ordinary people to internalize the settlement of political differences through the democratic, especially the electoral process.

It is said that the abuse of power can't be stopped unless the abusers are made to pay the cost for their transgressions. It is always mandatory to make the authority accountable to the people and empower the people politically. So, as to punish the abuse of power, it would be possible even to express the institutionalizations. Our political parties are too poor organized due to cultural and historical reasons. Democracy to them is merely an exercise to bring them into power. Political parties always demand free and fair elections but they never conduct party elections which are so compulsory for the progress and the betterment of the political parties. After coming in power these hereditary leaders adopt the dictatorial ways and forget the elected principles. Elected prime ministers of Pakistan denounced as authoritarian and fascist's manners for their opponents. Opposition also had a single agenda to get rid of the government.

It is half truth to say that establishment did not allow the political parties to function normally. Reality is that our political parties never attempted to civilize themselves but only to blame that establishment never allowed them to work properly. If the political parties transform themselves into viable organizations with proper homework, the establishment will automatically be managed in their own directions but first we should change our attitudes. Most of the Pakistan Muslim league's leaders belonged to the landed aristocracy. From very start a bad impression of these aristocrats put on democracy. Consequently neither free & fair elections were held nor constitution framed and promulgated in perfect manners. Unbridled powers were vested to the bureaucracy in elections and it always favored of its favorite politicians.

# Communication gap between the masses & the political parties

Political parties are not able to rehabilitate the trust of the people on political parties. The infrastructure of the political parties is not built well, it has lost the ability to educate the masses at grass root level, parties are low interactive to motivate the people. Political leaders and workers believe more on color and creed than conveying the real message of the political parties. Party leadership prefers to convey the message to the people via electronic or print media than direct communication with the voters. This trend increases the communication gap between the politicians and the masses. Trust of the people decrease on the political parties through this attitude and this attitude is an impediment in the progress of democratic culture. Text books taught in schools and colleges do not contain the contents that discuss the role of the politicians, political parties and institutions. Overall sense of the text books does not come out to define the importance of democratic procedure and structure. Elected members after elections of the parliament don't remain in touch with the people of their constituencies; it proves big phenomena for political culture. This mechanism of political leaders is out of the thinking of common man. It is as clear as crystal that politicians are landlords and they do not like interaction with lay man, constituencies of these landlords are consist on their own lands and the people of their constituencies have no second option & dare cast their votes against the interest of their lords. In such ambiguity which kind of democratic culture would be established? Apparently, it is the way to motivate the people to adopt alternate option which is obviously a military in third world states (Leslie, 2009).

# Inconsistent policies of the governments

The political governments, in the past, remained helpless in having consistent policies for management. They kept on framing short term policies which

defamed the status of democratic setup of the country. The Political parties, in power, could not introduce the long term policies throughout the history of Pakistan, Here the Poor masses always hoped for a well framed system of government which they ever found only with military. If the consistency had been there in the policies of the government, the situation might be different (Siddique, 2013). Another important thing is that in all the other areas of the world brilliant military commanders were removed when their decisions were found incompatible with the civilian leaders. In Pakistan this basic principle had been quite contrary since the very early days. In 1952 General Ayub Khan, commander in chief (c-in-c), was given free hand to tackle the Ahmadis riots in Lahore rather than giving aid to civil power. It was due to trembling political leadership not only in provinces but also in the centre. It was the last nail in the coffin of the democracy of Pakistan when Avub Khan the c-in-c of Pakistan army was handed over the portfolio of defense minister of Pakistan. In this way Politicians always relied on military to save the country. They always saw towards the military to save the country from social evils like corruption, economic crisis, mismanagement, law and order situation, external as well as internal threats. Military always accepted these challenges to bring out the country from such challenges owing to the incompetent politicians. Local government, no doubt, ensures democracy but unfortunately it did not find any strong support by the civil governments of Pakistan and military conducted local elections regularly, we only blame the military that it is anti democratic.

Table No.1-A: Local Elections conducted in Pakistan

S. #	Names of the Leaders	Local Elections	
1	Liaqat Ali Khan to Feroz Khan Noon	No	
2	General M. Ayub Khan	Yes	
3	General Yahya Khan	No	
4	Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto	No	
5	General Zia-ul-Haq	Yes	
6	Benazir Bhutto	No	
7	Nawaz Sharif	No	
8	Benazir Bhutto	No	
9	Nawaz Sharif	No	
10	General Pervez Musharraf	Yes	

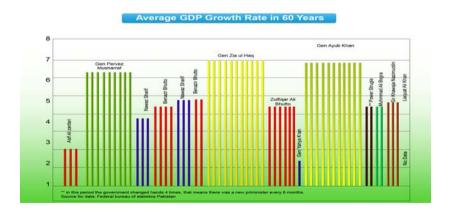
**Source:** writers explored this data on the basis of newspapers

#### **Economic issues**

The interesting thing is there that in 1993, an alien to Pakistan, a US citizen and a World Bank financial advisor Mr. Moeen Qureshi was brought to Pakistan and appointed as the care taker prime minister of Pakistan. His job was to bring Pakistan out from falling economy and rising debts of IMF. He was recommended by IMF, it is the level and standard of our political system. Economic imbalance is the mother of all the issues. From very start, class system was established. First is of landowners and business men second of blue collars and workers. Every government remained fail to break the strong hold of feudal lords. These feudal exempted themselves from taxes and this economic burden was shifted to the federal government consequently money laundering cases of feudal and businessmen were seen. These hi-classes are not sincere to solve the issues of this state. This class come in power to enjoy after enjoying go back to abroad. This hi-gentry class has dual nationality.

Deteriorating the situation of law and order and corruption did not convey a message of national prosperity and national integration. What would be the thinking of common man about his state where every government institution is busy in corruption and a scene of race is found in these institutions? No one is sincere to solve the problems of this state instead they are increasing day to day with foreign debt (Iqbal,2013). GDP growth rate remained stable only in military period not in civil as graph is showing us. It is not clear yet why military is blamed about anti democratic although results of elections and GDP growth rate is before us?

Table: 1-B



## Behavior of the establishment

The direct and personalized rule as referred by the bureaucratic dispensation which provided the centralized administrative structure of Pakistan. Pakistani political elites also shirked from undertaking a radical reorganization of the administrative structure of the colonial days to establish the supremacy of elected bodies.

Table: 1-C : A Study of the Composition of Federal Cabinets in Pakistan

Social Group	1947-54 Single Party Cabinets	1954-55 Cabinet of All Talents	1955-58 Coalition Cabinets	1947-58 Total
Professionals	16	6	21	43
Landowners	5	2	6	13
Civil Bureaucrats	2	1	2	5
Industrialists and businessmen	0	2	3	5
Military Bureaucrats	0	3	1	4
Professions unknown	0	0	4	4
Total Ministers	23	14	37	74

**Source:** The above table is prepared by the researcher on the basis of information collected through different sources including reports of the British High Commissioner to Commonwealth Relations Office London, Cabinet Files available at National Documentation Centre Islamabad, Newspapers and various books including autobiographies, biographies and others

Regular attitude of the establishment, which is transferred from the British in this sub-continent, It is not ready to change its attitude, in 2001 administrative units were changed from deputy commissioner to District Nazim with the devolution power, the enforcement of local government administration, elected representatives supremacy was introduced first time in the history of Pakistan. This system handed over the powers of the deputy commissioner to the District Nazim for the settlement of the issue on local basis. Political leadership ran the administration but unfortunately the next government discouraged this setup and reinstalled the previous status. Not only reinstalled the previous status of bureaucracy but also postponed the schedule of local government (Shafqat,1949). Political leadership never introduced reforms to keep the bureaucracy in its limitations and under the supervision of the elected members. Politicians always used the bureaucracy to gain their

personal benefits, which remained a major issue throughout the history of Pakistan.

Pakistan was overtaken by centripetal forces generally known as the establishment comprising civil bureaucracy and army. The establishment asserted its role to ensure strong power in center at the detriment to the provincial and regional actors, who were consigned to the margins of Pakistani polity. This trend led to the friction between Punjab and the smaller provinces because of establishment had usually been perceived to be the centrist orientation. It had led to the problems of integration particularly East Pakistan. These problems did not end here; Sindh and Baluchistan also could not adopt the centrist approach. A trend of Punjabization, Baluchi and Sindhi promoted, some scholars were also involved in such activities. Some political analysts argued that the democratization of the state and the society did not initiate together. The political culture that triggered peculiar changes in the society enabling it as a consequence to take control over the society and representatives of the society could not act as the supervisory body over the arbitrary functioning of the state.

There are various reasons of advancing the bureaucracy powers.

- Lack of political leadership.
- Poor political party structure.
- Unawareness of the masses of the state.

Having a colonial status Pakistan's history is full of chequered democracy since its existence. Parliamentary democracy collapsed various times due to mismanagement, disproportionate development of institutions atmosphere. Pakistan's quest for political stability and the lasting democratic setup remained a distant dream. Pakistan's experience regarding democracy one cannot do without looking the colonial perspective, which was systemized by the steel frame of bureaucracy. Controlling mechanism was established by the British civil servants and still running in Pakistan it must be changed.

# Dreary attitude of the people

Vast majority of the populace is not much aware with the real spirit of democracy or representative form of government. From very start they considered Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah a powerful king or shehnshah like the earlier Mughals, they considered him to reinstall the past glory of the Muslims. A trend of handpicked prime minister and a truncated parliamentary system developed there.

It is said that law is for man and man is not for law in the same way this state is of the people and people are not for the state. People should elect those representatives who will serve the nation not to become the masters of the masses. But unfortunately our politicians are always elected on racial and caste basis. It is the fault of the people they prefer to elect their representatives on caste basis they have no idea or thinking that who will serve the state, who will solve the problems of the people (Asim,2012).

Provincialism is also an abuse in our national democratic culture, people of every province consider themselves superior and civilized than others, and this attitude spread disintegration, disunity, disharmony among the people. A survey was conducted with the support of USAID by IFES about the interest of the people in national affairs and national leadership 50 percent people showed interest in local issues and local representatives, only 10 per cent showed their interest in national affairs(survey,2007). People have no idea about the worth of national leadership. When the interest of the people is too much poor in electing their representatives then what should be the response of public representatives?

Pakistani society is patriarchal social and cultural patterns coupled with strong Islamic values orchestrated by the state and the religious political parties (right wing) and pressure groups. The puritanical religious disparities between *Deobandi* and *Ahle-hadees* carry on creating extremism in country. It hinders the social movement not only on national but also on international level. *Biraderi* and kinship groups hold a lot of importance as a social institution and locus of political authority in central Punjab and certain extent in Sindh. Beradri solidarity is the strongest among the peasants of Punjab although tribal and landed elites preferred their personal objectives, unequal relationships are found among the people in these areas. Impact of power politics is more there than religion. Feudalism is principal cause of the yawning social and economic gap between the landed aristocracy and the rural masses in general.

Language has been a source of political mobilization as well as an important identity maker in this region. Muslim separatism in the 19<sup>th</sup> century took start from Urdu-Hindi controversy in 1867 in Banaras. In Pakistan these languages promoted the provincialism there they ignored the ideology as in past and provinces delivered provincial leaders not national. The riots of lingual controversy leaded the murderous riots and this trend also derailed the democracy, it is only due to the dreary attitude of the people to adopt a national thinking.

# **Function of the Judiciary**

Judiciary is the third pillar of the government. The progress of the judiciary is no more than the progress of the political parties and the politicians to democrat the country. It always legitimized the military with the help of 'doctrine of necessity' and after going back of these dictators it declares the functions of these dictators' ultra virus. This trend is present throughout the history of Pakistan. Every military dictator secures himself with the help of judiciary and judiciary accepts the dictators in the shape of PCO and never make a single hesitation to welcome them (Khalid, 2012).

# Religious parties

With the existence of Pakistan a large number of Ulemas from united India migrated to Pakistan and these Ulemas shifted to the major cities of Pakistan. Ulema like Syed Abu-ul-Ala Madudi, Molana Shabeer Ahmad Usmani, Mufti Mohammad Shafee, Adrees Kandhalvi migrated to newly established state. Madrassa Banori Town Karachi, Jamia Salfia Fasilabad conducted processions about the pure Islamic system of Pakistan. Many of them subscribed the Deobandi school of thought. Anti Qadiani movement, Blashphemy laws of Zia-ul-Haq were the astronomical rise in secteranism and militancy exemplifying in dividing the people and target killings.

Pakistan a multi cultural, multi lingual and multi sects, equitable distribution of education, prosperity, economics as well as basic necessities is necessary to change the mind of the people about national integration and pure democracy. When provinces will cooperate with each other and environment of mutual understanding will develop. Pakistan is conceived as a parliamentary democracy with federal structure on the pattern of west. But throughout the history of Pakistan it could not be developed. Pakistani people could not make decision throughout the history either they want Islamic democracy or western democracy. While on other hand Muslims of India accepted it without resolving the issue of nationalism and projection of Islamic political thoughts and buried the sectarianism permanently.

Throughout the history of man religion played a vital role in forming the politics of the state. Pakistan came into existence on the name of Islam while it adopted the western form of government, the amalgamation of modernity. Clerics considered themselves the guardians of Islam and guardians of the future of Pakistan. Objective resolution put a firm foundation where fundamentalists (clerics) could proliferate their own objectives. Deoband Ulemas were against the creation of Pakistan and some were divided on the

future of Pakistan. In these circumstances democracy could not take strike roots in Pakistan.

The second moot issue is the nexus of Islam with the state of Pakistan and the zestful projection of it. Parliamentary democracy was framed in ideological framework. Some clerics considered it (democracy) insufficient for the sustenance of Pakistani state. Mercifully, however these views could not muster the popular support. The democratic experiences predicating on Islamic ideology had lead the cultural and social fissure in society which is essentially plural.

Democracy is a form of government where people govern themselves or elect representatives to govern. After the French revolution in 1789 supremacy of church was displaced and denounced, a spirit of nationalism started a trend of secularism will of the people prevailed after it. But we could not adopt the pure Islamic or secular ideas and these ways mislead us from our goal.

# **Role of print and Electronic Media**

Media is considered the oxygen of democracy. Media is lynch-pin between government and the masses. People demands and wishes are sent to government through media and government exposes its projects to the people via media. Government removed sanctions from media and now it is free and fair but it uses its powers to blackmail the government. It divided the people in various groups. People are divided on local and provincial basis. Leg pulling is started in talk shows. Blackmailing and personal benefits are preferred. Not a single channel is sincere to promote the national integration, harmony, and mutual understanding. Only hunger, starvation, disastrous, and insurgency is watched everywhere on these channels which is becoming a major cause of brain drain. In print and electronic media anchors write and speak according to the situation, these people change their loyalties according to their rates. A common man is not satisfied from media. Situation can be changed if these media channels adopt positive approach to strengthen the co-operation among the provinces and motivate the people for their democratic representatives and programs should be start for the worth of political leaders (Khokhar, 2011).

## Lack of consensus over the national resources

Pakistan is a federation of four units. Under the article 160 of the constitution of Pakistan 1973 that there would be a National Finance Commission (NFC) for distributing the revenue among the center and the provinces according to their share after every five years. Throughout the history of Pakistan only

seven NFC awards are declared. What would be the mutual understanding and co-operation of the provinces, how these provinces will develop national approach? When federal government will care the provinces a national thinking will develop, and democratic culture can be established. When provinces would disagree with each other national democratic culture cannot be promoted only provincialism would flourish (Sabir,2010).

The same problems are about the initiatives of mega projects in Pakistan. Kala Bagh dam issue is one of them. Provinces are facing a lot of problems like the short fall of electricity but politicians are not ready to come on the same page for negotiation and consensus. If provinces adopt the positive approach to sort out the issues then a pure thinking can be developed. Otherwise non-political actors are waiting for such situations.

## Conclusion

Democracy can only be the panacea of all the problems of Pakistan butt it must be implemented in real form according to the wishes of the masses. Pakistan has seen a lot of experiments, in the end it is decided that democracy is suitable. When it is implemented no required results are gained. The basic reason is that we are not aware of the worth of democracy. Its results would be fruitful when there would be genuine political leadership. Capable leadership will come through regular free and fair elections in the country and party elections for top politicians of the state. Reforms in education are also compulsory, education on political system should be included in the syllabus of text books then people can change their mind. There is a dire need to introduce reforms on grass root level. When people are aware of their rights and duties, no institution will cross its limits, politicians will work for government and guardians will save the boundaries. Fool proof democratic culture is based on real democracy in essence a repeat of military intervention will present and Generals will decide who gets which seat. It is a profile picture if we look towards the second side data showing us that military conducted local elections regularly, which is the myth of democracy and GDP growth rate is also better in military periods than civil government, ball is in the coat of politicians.

Pakistan and India became independent at the same time, India enjoyed the regular democratic political process continuously and peacefully transfer of power became part of it. Why India succeeded in maintaining democratic system of government while Pakistan failed there are few reasons as under.

a. Pakistan could not frame the constitution as soon as possible which would be the blue print for parliamentary democracy.

- b. Democratic traditions were not developed in the Muslims of subcontinent; they were not trained for this purpose.
- c. Founding father of Pakistan could not live long after the independence like pundit Jawahar Lal Nehru of India.
- d. Pakistan could not abolish the large feudal estates and could not carry out comprehensive land reforms (except half hearted). True democracy could not take root in feudal environment.
- e Pakistani leadership could not grant full autonomy and wisdom to its provinces in their internal affairs to ensure a workable federal structure.

Pakistani politicians are not sincere in establishing the democratic culture of the government. We should keep it in mind more aid will not produce more democracy. Charter of democracy is good for the democratic future of Pakistan. Landlords proved like the wall of China in changing the concept of their hereditary system in past but now they must change their attitude because it is the need of the hour. Too frequent changes in the constitution and altering the powers and authority vested in the persons, rule the country by whims, gag the opposition must be ignored not only for the survival of the state but also for the poor masses of the state.

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