

Essay for coming CSS exam

Dangers of Imperfect Democracy

Prof. Col (r) M. Zahur-ul-Haq
Pakistan Movement Gold Medalist

Abstract

In a 'perfect democracy' dictatorship is not possible. Dictatorship strikes under conditions of 'imperfect democracy' when political circumstances of the state worsen beyond repair. With feudalism at the helm of affairs the advent of real democracy is blocked. Feudalism is neither democratic nor Islamic. It is greedy, immoral, exploitative and inefficient. It is by itself a worst kind of unethical, cruel dictatorship. It has done immense harm to Pakistan ever since its inception. It was responsible for separation of East Pakistan. It has grabbed 90% of nation's wealth and turned majority of the population destitute. Perfect democracy can come only if people elect representatives out of their own class and not the feudals to form the government. Otherwise it is nothing more than a dictatorship of the feudals for the feudals which is an open invitation to a bloody Revolution. The prevailing system is unable to bring in such a change. An outside force such as a military General, as Officer on Special Duty, with his necessary supporting staff, is needed for a short period, with power and vision to bring about the desired change. Without involving the Army he will put the existing vast bureaucratic system to work. Its first task will be to achieve 100% education of the nation within five years. The Second task will be to revamp Judicial system to ensure prompt individual, social and economic justice and get its verdicts obeyed by all concerned. Task three will be to ensure equitable distribution of wealth in the society by introducing drastic economic reforms thus breaking the power of the feudals and the elitists. This will make them powerless to stage a comeback. Under the fourth task, a powerful institution will be set up to rid the Constitution of some of its un-Islamic provisions. The fifth task will be performed by a competent body on Islamic jurisprudence to reform the Islamic way of life by modernizing its outdated practices, without

interfering with the fundamental of Islam. These five measures will help Pakistan to become a modern Islamic Welfare State, which was the objective of the Pakistan Movement and the dream of the Quaide-Azam. Once these institutions have been set up and made functional, the said General and his team will revert back to the Army. The country will henceforth be run by a perfect democratic government, thus installed.

'A worst form of democracy is better than the best kind of dictatorship.' It is a mantra repeatedly chanted by the feudals or the members of a small elitist class. It is so because they are power seekers by birth and only a distorted version of democracy serves their vested interests. Imperfect democracy with its scores of shortcomings provides them numerous backdoors to enter the Assembly halls and the Parliament. Since perfect democracy is anti-feudal, they abhor it. The universally accepted definition of real democracy as given by Abraham Lincoln (1809-1863) is, "Government of the people, by the people, for the people." The word 'people' is central to the concept of democracy. The 'people' as a term means the masses. It does not include the feudal lord, the wadera, the sardar, the khan, the chaudhri, the industrialist, the religious potentate or an Army General. They all belong to elitist class which has nothing in common with the masses.

2. Taking advantage of the failings of the imperfect democracy the feudals have been forming their rickety governments ever since Independence. They have amassed enormous wealth, acquired huge assets and become fabulously rich. It permits them to loot and plunder their hapless nation at will. A factual report recently compiled reveals that during the last six years alone the so called public representatives have multiplied their wealth as much as three times while their voters have degenerated from 'poor' to 'destitute.' Hardly a days passes without the tragic news of poverty related suicides. But they are least concerned. They live in a world of their own and cannot possibly share the woes, difficulties and problems of the masses. They are unable to come down to the level of an ordinary person whom they consider rust of earth's crust and themselves the exalted creation of a special kind. In view of this the question is: can a government of the feudals ever be a government by the people and for the people? In a situation like this the system decidedly becomes undemocratic..

Perfect vs Imperfect Democracy

3. Democracy can yield its blessings only when it works in its truest form. A lame, deformed and hypocritical democracy serves as an instrument of instability for the system and the state. Genuine democracy whose kingpin is

"people" is a discipline which is a blend of principles of morality, ethics, rule of law and human rights. It is rational in its structure and transparent in operation. It commands the social, economic and political life of a nation. A fake democracy, on the other hand, is incoherent in form and structure. In the absence of a strong moral fiber it becomes a plaything in the hands of the corrupt politicians. Democracy in real form would not permit anyone to violate its essentials. Invalid democracy has a short life span. People soon get fed up with it, despise it and wish to get rid of it. A system of true democracy is hard to sabotage.

Revenge of Democracy

4. Those who come to power using democracy as a stepping stone and then fail to honour its dictates eventually fall victim to its revenge. Historical evidence is there to prove the point. In the general elections of 1979, President ZA Bhutto brutally rigged the elections to gain two third majority in the Parliament. Democratic forces instantly took to the streets and became uncontrollable. It provided a justification and an opportunity to the Army Chief General Zia to stage a coup. He sent Bhutto to jail and then on his way to the hangman. Bhutto himself was no less than a dictator by nature. He could not maintain the false façade of a democrat for long. However, his main handicap was the system which permitted him to rig elections. In a true democracy he would not have even thought of doing any such mischief. After him four such short spells of so called democratic rule followed but each failed to take roots due to the inherent contradictions of the system.

5. In fake democracies the leaders who get elected are also fake. As Presidents and Prime Ministers they assert themselves as branded dictators. The rest of the so called representatives of the people, mostly feudals, sitting in the Parliament and the Provincial Assemblies behave as mini-dictators of their constituencies.

Preconditions of Election in a genuine democracy

6. If a feudal lord or an affluent person of the elitist class wins an election with the help of his wealth, influence, pressure tactics and other crafty means he considers himself democratically elected. He is not justified to think so by any stretch of imagination. It is so because he has not risen from the masses. He has just managed to impose himself upon them from the above and engineered to grab their votes by hook or crook. Very soon he forgets all about them to serve his own vested interests or the interests of his class. As such they establish dynastic rule. Father is followed by his son, grand son and so on. It must, therefore, be firmly understood that election alone is not democracy. It demands the fulfillment of certain preconditions, which are.

One: Candidates to contest election should be from amongst the people to whom they are to represent and not elitists who invariably are of feudalistic mindset. Their aim is not to serve the electorate but to recover their election expenses three or four times more than what they actually spent and then to indulge in their favourite game of power politics. They are agents of sham democracy. For a perfect democracy, the persons to contest elections are identified by the people themselves who are educated, men of initiative blessed with qualities of leadership. They have the flare for social service and are known for coming to the aid of suffering humanity in times of crisis. Even in their day to day life they are in habit of helping the needy, the poor and the oppressed.

Two: The electorate should be able to cast votes as per their conscience free from of pressures and prejudices. Ethnicity, religious divide, loyalty to the clan, tribe or biradari, personality worship, blind loyalty to a political party, are some of the factors that militate against the spirit of democracy. Education is the panacea for all such ills of the human soul. Decades have gone by and half of Pakistan is still illiterate. The ruling feudals have purposely kept the nation uneducated and economically backward because they consider that enlightened minds and economically solvent people pose challenge to their absolute authority. Casting of vote is an act of decision making. The voter should be enabled to make the right decision. The vote is symbol of a person's conscience and nation's trust. At this crucial occasion only an educated mind and a well off person can distinguish between the right and wrong. He rises above all such prejudices and casts his vote in the supreme national interest.

Three: In an imperfect democracy behaviour of political parties and their members may at times run counter to the larger national interests. There is a 'party line' which every member is required to follow religiously. It is the demand of the Party discipline which is a good thing. But some times the Party is dominated by a corrupt leadership which expects its members to support its corrupt ways under all circumstances. Such leaders play with the emotions of the Party members by invoking the memories of the dead leadership. They project the cult of the dead as mini-gods to worship. This does not happen under conditions of perfect democracy. The Party, with a national outlook, itself takes appropriate measures to get rid of the corrupt element that might have found its way into its ranks. Its loyalty to the nation is shaped within the broader spectrum of patriotic fervour.

Four: In an imperfect democracy the political process begins and ends with the holding of elections. The government in power that holds elections is of the feudals who take advantage of the shortcomings of the system to rig the election to get the results of their choice. In a perfect democracy, however,

elections appear at the tail end when all the essential requirements of a democratic political process, as outlined above, have been adequately met. Perfect democracy ensures fair and transparent elections. No one dares to violate them.

An accident of History

7. Consider the case of the so called democratic government that followed the dictatorship of General Musharraf. Its coming to power was an accident of history. It claims to have been democratically elected. But the fact is that it was an illegitimate child of the infamous NRO (National Reconciliation Ordinance of 2007) the blackest law the world has ever known. It was an unholy arrangement under which President Musharraf was to perpetuate his rule in exchange for the return of Benazir Bhutto from exile to take over as Prime Minister. She was assured that all cases of corruption against her and her husband as well as other PPP stalwarts will be dropped. Since intentions were malafide, the intrigue hatched between the two came to a tragic end with the assassination of Benazir. This sudden development provided an opportunity to Mr Zardari to become President of Pakistan and make the country a laughing stock of the world. He was too short of stature for such a high position.

8. But questions is under what constitutional provision Mr Zardari as Benazir's husband assumed the office of the President? Zardari is said to have disclosed that Benazir had nominated her son Bilawal as her heir and Zardari as his caretaker until the son completed his education and came of age. What a fishy affair? Unbelievable. Was the Presidency of Pakistan her dynastic privilege and family's affair which she had the right to dispose it off as per her doubtful Will? Had she already known that she was going to be assassinated and therefore she should write down this kind of a will? PPP claims to be a democratic party. Did the Party elect Zardari on merit to assume the office of the President?

9. Answer to all these questions along with the capital question who killed Benazir will always remain shrouded in mystery. The sufferers is Pakistan and its people. It is just because of the corruption stories of its high command that no one in the world trusts Pakistan and its political biggies. This mistrust was shown in a big way in Pakistan's hour of distress when it was hit by devastating floods. No donor was prepared to give aid in cash. Saudis planned to give \$110 million mostly in donated goods and China pledged \$9 millions in supplies. Many friends either remained silent on the issue or pledged meager amounts. Leaders of other big political parties who too had not lagged behind in looting the country to their hearts content. There was hardly any leader to be seen around with clean hands. The unfortunate aspect of the imperfect democracy is that the lower ranks of the party in power, instead of making

Leaders accountable for their misdeeds, support even the most despicable acts committed by them. This was demonstrated by the PPP when the Supreme Court ordered to look in to the infamous Swiss Bank accounts, the Party workers were made to shout slogans in favour of corruption. The nation had to pay for the sins of its rulers.

10. In an imperfect democracy, the political parties and their leaders know only power and money. They are divested of all norms of ethics and morality. This insensitivity towards compassion and justice, the two sublime attributes of a human being, afflicts the civil society and then gruesome tragedies occur. The Sialkot barbarism in which two boys of younger age were lynched to death while the police stood by and the people looked on without moving a little finger to stop the gory spectacle. This was not the solitary event that a power drunk feudal may call exceptional. The Sialkot drama is being played and replayed these days throughout the country everywhere and everyday. In such cases some eye wash activities remain in full swing for some time and then the culprits are set free under political pressures. Moving in the footsteps of the rulers, the people too have become callous, stone hearted and thick skinned. Like their rulers they too have lost all self-respect and have become used to abuses, insults and indignities which would normally make a gentleman commit suicide.

Man behind the gun

11. While making comparison between democracy and dictatorship one should not forget that it is the quality of leadership that makes dictatorship good and democracy bad. Instances of efficient and productive dictatorship are not rare in the political history of the world. Firstly consider Gen Ayub's era. Although there was not much justification for Gen Ayub Khan to abrogate the constitution and impose martial law in 1958, yet one good thing that he did was that he set the country on the road to progress. The period of his stay in power is known for good and efficient governance and fast growing economic prosperity. The kind of peace and stability which the nation enjoyed during those days could not be emulated by any one later until this day. International respect for Pakistan had gone sky high. Those who have seen the blessings of his era wish those day were again here. A delegation from Korea came to find the secret of Pakistan's quick progress. Korea was far poorer then as compared to Pakistan. Had Ayub been a little wiser, he should have held fair and transparent elections at the height of his power to restore democracy and left his high office with honour and dignity. But perhaps disgrace was his destiny. Very few persons in history have ever forsaken power voluntarily.

12. Secondly take account of Gen Park's contribution who seized power in Korea in 1962 and dispatched the corrupt and inefficient government home. During his tenure of a decade or so he abolished feudalism and educated the whole nation under a plan. Consequently, Korea recorded such economic and industrial progress that it left not only Pakistan far behind but it became one of the worlds advanced industrial powers. Park himself fell victim to the conspiracies of the feudals and got assassinated but unlike Ayub he left behind a genuine democratic set up under which Korea made progress much more than ever before. Korea owes its today's greatness to a dictator.

13. The lesson of these two episodes is that a well meaning and patriotic dictator can record achievements which a sham democracy cannot. But the dictator should set the things in order, help the country to have a real democratic government and then leave.

Damage done by Feudalism to Pakistan

14. The ugliest feature of the imperfect feudalistic democracy is that it lacks the element of morality which serves as a stabilizing factor for a political system. A government formed without its moral base starts indulging in corruption fearlessly. Pakistan's successive corrupt governments lacked moral courage to enforce discipline of good governance which disabled them to handle the state affairs with confidence. They remained shaky all the time and kept occupied in saving themselves from falling apart. Corruption erupted from the top and contaminated every sector of the society. National discipline disintegrated. Permissiveness, waywardness, cruelty, oppression and exploitation took over to become life style of a few who mattered. They started victimizing the powerless millions. National wealth concentrated in fewer hands and the nation itself became destitute. Poverty bred all kinds of social evils. The print and electronic media reported gruesome incidences of suicides, assassinations, rapes, abductions, thefts, bank robberies, honour killings, parading naked women in the streets, giving a five year female child to an eighty years old devil, jirgas ordering gang rape of a poor girl, money changing hands in corruption, human trafficking, molesting an infant and killing him etc. All such events kept on occurring while the government responsible for the safety of the life, honour and welfare of the people looked the other way. Most of the high ups among the rulers were themselves involved in a variety of offences and easily get away with them. Since men holding the reins of power had lost all fear of God, the criminals dominating the society lost the both ie the fear God as well as fear of the Government. A culture developed in which crimes were frequently committed and punishments were rarely awarded.

15. Separation of East Pakistan: The unkindest cut, however, delivered by the imperfect democracy on Pakistani nation was that in December 1970 elections it politically divided the country into two distinct halves that eventually led to the separation of East Pakistan to become Bangla Desh. One major cause was the rampant feudalism in the western wing that always treated the eastern part as its colony and Bengalis as second rate citizens. The other was that none of the prerequisites for holding the elections were fulfilled. In point of fact in those hostile times it was not at all prudent to hold elections. Rigging was done by the anti-Pakistan element in the Eastern wing on a large scale. With the exception of one or two seats all other seats were won by Bengali..... India's military involvement in December 1971 completely alienated East Pakistan from the mother country. Under perfect democracy Eastern wing would have never lost to Pakistan.

Those three months of nation-wide Fear

16. What important role the element of fear plays in maintaining law and order and ensuring good governance in the country is demonstrated by the first Martial Law clamped by the then President Iskandar Mirza on 7 October 1958 with help of his Army Chief General Ayub Khan. However, within the next 20 days Ayub Khan staged a coup and himself grabbed power. This was not a good omen for the future of Pakistan. But that was the work of destiny. It was nation's first taste of the military rule. The radio blared strict penalties for violating the martial law orders and announced blood curdling punishments for crimes and offences likely to be committed by the anti-social element. People were so overawed by the fear of the military that they often overdid in obeying even its most irrational orders. However, the phenomenal change that the element of fear brought about was that during the first three months of the imposition of Martial Law not a single crime of any kind was there to report by the Press. It appeared as if the whole lot of Pakistanis had been chastened and purified to become saints. With the passage of time, fear gradually wore off and the administration too lowered its guard. The evil started making its presence felt but only to a limited extent. The problem with a government in an imperfect democracy, however, is that it neither commands the respect of the masses nor it is capable of striking terror in the hearts of the criminals for lack of moral courage due to its own misdeeds. In a perfect democracy the government in power has nothing to fear. It is strong enough to keep its prestige and as well as power to rule, intact.

A TEST CASE

17. The real worth of man and the system is revealed in times of crisis. The catastrophic floods that hit Pakistan in 2010 were assessed to be much more devastating than Indian Ocean's Tsunami of 2004 and US's Katrina Hurricane

of 2005, both put together. Pakistan's leadership and the so called democratic system in vogue was badly exposed for its incompetence in handling the situation. The crisis gave rise to many questions which must be answered honestly to sift the moral.

First: If the incumbent government in Pakistan was democratically elected why the international community did not come to its rescue on the scale as it did when a high intensity earthquake had hit the country in 2007. Those were times of dictatorship and not of democracy. What kind of democracy was it in which people of Pakistan had to suffer to the maximum because of the failing worldwide credibility of a corrupt and incompetent leadership of Pakistan.. Islamabad airbase received on an average over two dozen flights to support our relief efforts for the earthquake. For the floods, which were as catastrophic as the earthquake, there were only three to four such flights a day.

Second: Why there was such colossal mistrust of the government both at home and abroad? The world community committed no more than \$800 million and Prime Ministers Fund got just Rs 1.75 billion. Our own top multi-billionaires donated only a few millions. Those who had looted and plundered the nation's wealth, gobbled billions in bank loans, evaded taxes, skinned the masses in sugar and wheat scams and owned castles, estates, luxury penthouses and ranches the world over, did not show the heart to care for their distressed countrymen. Hollywood star Angelina Jolie grasped the enormity of the disaster more than our leaders and donated \$100,000 (Rs 8.5 million), outclassing President Zardari's reported contribution of five million rupees which was nothing as compared to his fabulous riches. She herself came to Pakistan to put her feminine healing hand on the wounds of the bleeding humanity. However, in Pakistan out of its 114 billionairs, the Chief of Behria Town was an exception who donated 70% of his wealth that came to \$2 billion. Had others of his class also shown half of this generosity Pakistan would have been spared of the indignity of passing its begging bowl from one nation to the other without getting much in charity.

Third: Why people trusted the Army, NGOs etc with their donations instead of government's relief fund? It was so because of the fear that their contribution will be misappropriated by the corrupt government functionaries from top to bottom. The powerful and the influential would transfer these funds abroad and buy properties there, while the poor at home would lack basic needs of subsistence.

Fourth: Why the selfish feudals, who had come to power with the vote of their tenants and haris, stabbed them in the back in these floods by breaching embankments to save their own lands that led to the destructions of the petty holdings of their electorate.

18. The answer to all these questions is that the system of imperfect democracy that has always helped the feudals to come to power has failed to deliver. Its days are numbered. A social, economic and political upheaval, more devastating than all the katrinas and tsunamis that the world has ever known so far, is gradually building up. A revolution is round the corner. The nation has yearned for change since long. A man with leadership qualities was needed to lead the revolution. To the good luck of the feudals that person has not as yet arrived to rescue the nation from their stranglehold. But their doomsday now is not far off. It may hit any time unless it is forestalled by taking sincere steps to establish a really perfect system of democratic government.

Inevitability of the appearance of a man of substance

19. The governments formed under imperfect conditions, however, are frequently derailed. There is no inbuilt corrective device present that may come in to action to put the government back on the track. At this crucial stage an outside force has to intervene to set the things right. The advent of a man of substance equipped with enough power to get things done becomes inevitable. He will be detailed by the Army high command with a mission and absolute powers. It is always man behind the gun who matters. During such hard times the advent of such a person becomes inevitable. When bad democracies have dug their nails deep into the vitals of the society, they need to be liberated. This task can be accomplished by a powerful but patriotic person. He should appear as saviour of a drowning society. If not then the masses themselves come into action and a bloody revolution sets in. Heads of the corrupt leaders roll. But the nation purged of political monsters then takes time to settle down. The safest course, therefore, is that once the patriotic man of substance has put the representatives of the people in the saddle and completed his task of restoring real democracy he should call it a day and leave in honour to report the completion of his mission to the high Command

Five tasks

To develop a Perfect democratic government

20.. Under the Constitutional provision 'Army in aid of civil power' a senior Officer of the rank of a General supported by a mixed team of civil and military specialists, duly empowered to implement decisions taken, will hammer out and install a democratic system of government.

21. The topmost task of this team will be to achieve 100% education of the nation as a whole. According to a UN Literacy Survey, Pakistan holds 164th place among 180 countries. Half the population is absolutely illiterate. This is a national crime committed by feudalism that has ruled the country during the last seven decades. This will have to be put right through the nationwide

network of Union Councils numbering 6127. The Councils will also be made responsible for the development of small scale and cottage industries. An educated and economically well off people will shed prejudices of ethnicity and provincialism and become part of an integrated nation. In times of elections they will cast votes as per their conscience.

22. The second task to accomplish by the team will be the revamping of the Judicial System. A society without justice soon falls apart. Judiciary is to ensure individual, social and economic justice. Delayed justice, violation of justice under pressure, corruption related justice, falsehood based justice, revengeful justice, dark justice is widely prevalent these days. Punishment is rarely awarded. Crime goes unpunished. The Executive is too snobbish to respect the verdict of the Apex court especially when it concerns the member of the political party in power. Judiciary will be purged of all the above stated shortcomings on the one hand and on the other it will be ensured that its verdicts are implemented by all concerned in letter and spirit.

23. Task three concerns the equitable distribution of wealth in the society to end poverty. It will also break the power of the feudals and the elitists to stage a come back. Bulk of their wealth is concentrated in assets like immoveable cultivatable acres in millions, industrial complexes, palatial buildings all over the country and abroad, bank balances at home and abroad etc. Land distribution should take place among tenants and haris, tribal lands should be handed over to the members of the tribe. Direct taxes on higher incomes should be levied. The middle and lower classes should be given tax holiday. Wealth stacked in foreign banks should be brought back. The industrial worker should hold majority of the shares of their industrial units to get dividends in addition to the wages. Every possible measure should be taken to increase the incomes of the fixed income groups. No price control system has ever succeeded. The only way out is that the supply of goods and services should always be enough to satisfy the demand for them. Enough stocks will remain built up to release supplies in times of shortages.

24. Under the fourth task, a powerful legal institution will be set up to rid the Constitution of some of its un-Islamic clauses. All persons are alike in the eyes of law. No one, including the head of state, enjoys immunity from appearing before a court of law when summoned. No authority, including the President, has the power to set aside the punishment awarded by a court of law to a person who commits an offence or crime that is liable for punitive action. Nothing will become part of the Constitution that may militate against the Islamic system of crime and punishment.

25. The fifth task will be performed by a competent body on Islamic Jurisprudence to reform the Islamic way of life by modernizing its outdated practices, without interfering with the fundamentals of Islam.

26. These five measures will help Pakistan to become a modern Islamic Welfare State, which was the objective of the Pakistan Movement and the dream of the Quaide-Azam. Once these institutions have been set up and made functional, the said General and his team will revert back to the Army. The country will henceforth be run by a perfect democratic government, thus installed.

27. Once the necessary spadework has been done, as mentioned above, and the feudals have been ousted from the political arena, it should be remembered that the project, as yet, is only half done. It would need the stamp of legislation which the Peoples' Parliament should take up and with the strength of the majority vote will inevitably be a man of substance.

28. Summary. A capsule summary of the discussion concludes to assert that real democracy is 'by the people' and not by the feudals' in which case it becomes some kind of a dictatorship. But the feudals keep on trumpeting a cliché that 'a worst form of democracy is better than the best kind of dictatorship.' It helps them to keep on strengthening their feudalistic dictatorship under the guise of democracy. By nature feudalism is neither democratic nor Islamic. It is greedy, corrupt and cruel to the extreme. It has made Pakistan a symbol of corruption in the world. Since it is also highly inefficient its failure to rule has repeatedly led to military takeovers. The military and the feudals have proved to be the two sides of the same coin. Under them Pakistan, once the largest Muslim state of the world, has been drastically reduced in size and status. The fabric of its national integration has been torn apart. Inflation has gone sky high. Economy has suffered absolute slump. Life, property and honour of the citizen stands exposed to a variety of grim risks. With its poor governance it has multiplied the difficulties of the nation. The country has suffered a serious trust deficit at home and abroad. No one is prepared to give aid to Pakistan in its hour of distress for fear of misappropriation of funds.

28. The fact is that elections alone are not democracy. Some important essential pre-requisites must be met before the elections are held. Firstly it should be ensured that all contestants are from amongst the people and none from the feudal class. Secondly, an appropriate environment has been provided in which voters can vote freely as per their conscience. Thirdly, Election Commission has made foolproof arrangements to ensure fair and transparent voting. The incumbent government is not permitted to interfere and rig the election. Voters lists have been correctly made to avoid possibility

of the casting of fake votes. Elections held, after taking all these precautions, elect genuine representatives of the people to meet the ends of perfect democracy.
