

## Lecture 18

# HUM113 IDEOLOGY AND CONSTITUTION OF PAKISTAN



COMSATS University  
Islamabad

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### The Problems of Political Parties in Pakistan (Part B)

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# The problems of Political Parties (Cont.)



- *The Lack of Political Vision*
- The **emergence of political parties is related to material and cultural advancement of society** in which citizens are free to form groups and associations and to articulate their demands and problems.
- The **low level of such advancement and the lack of freedom in Pakistani society, particularly during the first decade**, constrained the development of parties; thus, the phenomenon led to their myopic vision.

# The Problems of Political Parties (Cont.)



- *The lost vision*
- In 1990s the course of political development changed. The political direction and vision to enter the 21st century was lost. Major political parties, particularly the **Pakistan People's Party** and the **Muslim League**, set their direction for power struggle, floor crossing and corruption throughout the **decade**. The lack of vision weakened them to the extent that the governments of Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif were struck by the dissolution syndrome, twice each.

# The Problems of Political Parties (Cont.)



- **The weakness of political parties in Pakistan is evident from their massive proliferation and high rate of mortality, their fragmentation into small and ineffective factions, their regionalization and ethnicization with appeal only to a limited number of citizens. This also reflects their indifference to formulate coherent programmes and policies for winning the support of the broad strata of society.**
- **With weak institutional roots in society, parties are amorphous groups tied together by their leaders; some charismatic, others not, some becoming party leaders because of their wealth and the others due to inheritance.**

# The Problems of Political Parties (Cont.)



- *Lack of citizen's participation*
- The political parties can hope to play a meaningful role only if they succeed in gathering the masses around them. **There are rarely any membership campaigns conducted by the parties.** Even those who joined them on one or the other pretext have been demoralized. **Part of the problem lies in the inner working of these parties, which does not provide a sense of participation to the members.**

# The Problems of Political Parties (Cont.)



- *Lack of mutual understanding*
- Pakistan's political parties lack mutual trust and understanding. **The culture of political dialogue has never taken roots in Pakistan.** Only the circumstances brought the Pakistan People's Party and the Muslim League together into the Alliance for the Restoration of Democracy to put pressure on president Musharraf.
- **Mainstream as well as the ethno-regional parties lack internal debate over policy alternatives.** Their priorities and preferences are not an outcome of household debates and discussion. Rather, they are identified with their leaders.

# Way Forward



- **Accountable democracy cannot function in Pakistan until drastic changes are made in the formation and functioning of political parties, which can faithfully represent and serve the people through a transparent political system.**
- **Educated professional and progressive minded middle class citizens do not have any chance to participate in the democratic process.**
- **Our failure to recognize the need to restructure the political party system on fundamental principles of democracy has destroyed our national institutions by corruption and nepotism.**