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Why is Achieving Good Governance so Difficult in Pakistan

Introduction

Governance issues in Pakistan are complex and multifaceted, and the nation has been struggling with these problems since its inception. These challenges are glaring and have impeded the progress of the country.

Why is it so Hard for Pakistan to Achieve Effective Governance

Reasons for not achieving Good Governance in Pakistan

i- Political unrest and instability

- Frequent regime change and military coups.
- No time for governance setup to stabilize

ii- Lack of Political will and strong leadership

- Case in point: "Governing the ungovernable" by Dr. Ishtat, depicts lack of political commitment.

iii- Economic challenges create hurdles for governance

- Foreign loans and their repercussions
- Mismanagement of funds

iv- Corruption hinders policy implementation

- Government offices are abode for bribery
- Pakistan ranked 133 out of 180 on corruption index.

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v- Lack of accountability and oversight

- a) It promotes culture of impunity
- b) Powerful are not held accountable for their acts

vi- State institutions are weak to provide services

- a) Understaffed, underfunded, and lacking training
- b) Lack capacity to enforce laws and work efficiently

vii- Deteriorating situation of rule of law

- a) Fragile situation to apply laws equally
- b) State struggled to implement policies

viii- Politicization of bureaucracy

- a) Bureaucrats aligned with political interests rather than adhering to professional standard

ix- ^{Neglect} Lack of inclusive development

- a) Progress in state must include all groups
- b) Difference of attitudes undermine social cohesion

x- Terrorism and Extremism disrupt governance

- a) Weakens government control and writ
- b) Challenges state's authority and legitimacy

Consequences of Lack of Good Governance in Pakistan

i- Erosion of Public trust in state institutions

- a) Creates sense of hopelessness
- b) No option left, expect to take streets

ii- Increase in violence and crimes

- a) Case in point: Arab Spring 2001
- b) Encourages criminal behaviour

iii- Wastage of public resources

- a) Funds misused and diverted away from ^{essential} services

iv- Stunted economic growth

- a) Major state-owned enterprises causing losses

Conclusion b) Reluctancy of investors

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Well organized and

relevant
Concerted Efforts and Viable
Measurements can Help Achieve
Good Governance in Pakistan

Conclusion

"The problem is that governance in Pakistan is just ineffective: in 75 years, our governments have not been able to deliver economic growth, security of life, property, education, health, or even clean drinking water"; says former Federal minister Miftah Ismail. Pakistan is a developing nation and the issue of governance is persistent from first day of its creation.

And the issues of governance has been
~~Although~~ Governance problems are glaring and affecting every aspect of country's development. The reasons of governance dilemma are mainly the political instability and lack of will. They give rise to bribery and corruption and promotes the culture of impunity hindering policy implementation. Pakistan has been facing economic challenges lately, which create hurdles for governance. Rule of law is very poor and institutions are weak to provide dedicated services. Ethnic and regional tensions further exacerbates the governance

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situation. Civil military tussle and social inequalities disrupt the smooth governance. Inability of government to effectively manage country's affairs can lead to political instability and other drastic consequences. It results in erosion of public trust in institutions and wastage of resources. Economic growth get stunted and eventually financial collapse. Violence and crimes are on rise in case of bad governance. Governance issues in Pakistan are complex and multifaceted. The country is struggling with these issues since its inception. These challenges are glaring and have impeded the progress of the country.

Governance is the relationship between those who rule and over whom they rule. In Pakistan, those who are destined to rule have been unable to provide services to whom over they rule. The governance dilemma has been consistent throughout the course of history of Pakistan. According to the reports, Pakistan ranked 161 among 192 countries that were evaluated. Pakistan does poorly; its performance is

poorest in the region. It was behind Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, India and all other neighbours is South Asia. Although, not impossible, but achieving good governance in Pakistan is a tough endeavour.

There are many reasons, that, good governance has not been achieved so far and is still hard to achieve. The main reason is political unrest and instability.

Over the course of history, political situation of Pakistan has been in turmoil. None of the elected head of government has been able to complete his term of in office. There has been an absence of stable and effective governance system.

Governance is a complex procedure, which needs quite a time to stabilize and prosper. Frequent changes disrupt its smooth and efficient working. Pakistan's political landscape has been the ground for experimenting. Every regime trying its own techniques and leaving governance structure with no time to get matured. Thus, the political agitation is the

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root cause of bad governance in Pakistan.

Along with that political anarchy, lack of political will and leadership adds up to deterioration in governance field. A strong political will and a dedicated leadership is essential for success of governance. Even the best-designed reforms will fail without strong political will. Political leaders must have the commitment to push for and enforce these reforms, regardless of resistance from entrenched interests. Dr. Ishtiaq Hussain in his book "Governing the Ungovernable", emphasize that, "political will and leadership are crucial for achieving effective governance, especially in countries where the state faces the significant challenges of social instability". State of Pakistan is facing numerous such challenges and thus need of political will and strong leadership is felt. Economic challenges have also detrimental and long-lasting impacts on the governance of Pakistan. Pakistan has been throughout a financially dependent country. Its dependence

on foreign loans from developed nations and monetary organisations have never let it enjoy financial freedom. Limited financial resources hinder the government's ability to deliver essential public services like education, healthcare and infrastructure. Financial issues influence both the capacity of the state to perform its basic functions and the quality of governance. Monetary constraints and mismanagement contribute to weak governance and subsequently hinder country's development. Pakistan has struggled with high levels of internal and external debts, which limits the government's fiscal space. Thus, financial constraints badly impact the governance.

Likewise, the widespread corruption in the country hinders policy implementation. Corruption has permeated every aspect of Pakistani society and has become a norm.

The government offices have become abode for bribery. It has not only affected the government offices, but also the private sector is entangled in this problem. Corruption in Pakistan

is systematic and deeply entrenched, with bribery being demanded and paid for services that should be provided by government. It is the reason, Pakistan is leading the region in corruption. According to Corruption Perception Index 2023, "Pakistan is ranked 133 of 180 evaluated countries - The country's overall score was 29 out of 100"

Hence, the corruption culture in Pakistan is fatal for good governance.

Similarly, the lack of accountability and oversight have resulted in the loopholes in governance. It prompts the culture of impunity, which allows the powerful to act without fear of consequences. Mechanisms for accountability, such as anti-corruption initiatives, transparent budgeting and public oversight are successfully neglected. This has resulted in a system, where those in power are not held accountable, and the rights and freedom of people are often disregarded. Bureaucratic and administrative structure of Pakistan lack an effective mechanism of accountability in its hierarchical framework. This

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absence of accountability has contaminated the governance setup of the country. Moreover, the state institutions are weak to provide their dedicated services. The country's institutions like police, army, judiciary, and bureaucracy, that have key role in governance are often understaffed, underfunded and lacking in training and resources. Strong institutions are the backbone of good governance. They are required to be strong, capable, independent and efficient. In case of Pakistan, the administrative institutions have always been weak and under the direct influence of political elite. Weak institutions promote corruption and results in inefficiency in the working of state offices. In such situations, executive institutions lack capacity and struggle to enforce laws, protect rights and provide essential public services. Thus, when institutions are weak, governance suffers.

When state institutions are weak, rule of law situation gets deteriorated in country, which is a direct setback to governance. Rule of law ensures smooth working of state machinery.

especially its administration. Former civil servant and economic expert, Dr. Ishrat Hussain provides a comprehensive analysis of governance challenges in Pakistan. He describes that; "Pakistan's governance crisis is primarily result of fragile rule of law situation, due to which state struggled to implement effective policies". Rule of law guarantees that laws are applied equally, fairly and consistently, providing a framework for order, accountability and justice. Therefore, weak rule of law condition is major contributor to its governance failure.

Along with that, politicization of bureaucracy significantly undermines good governance. It interferes with the principles of impartiality, efficiency and accountability that are essential for effective administration. When bureaucrats aligned with political interests rather than adhering to professional standards and public service objectives, adverse consequences occur to governance.

Pakistan's political culture has been very unstable with frequent regime changes and military coups. Every government tried to mold governance with its

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own style. They used the bureaucracy to serve their own interests instead of public welfare. This resulted in delays, suboptimal decision-making and a general decline in the quality of public services. Hence the politicization of bureaucracy poses a severe threat to good governance.

In addition, lack of inclusive development is another factor for decline in governance performance in Pakistan. Dr. Tshrat Hussain in his book also underscores the need for inclusive government. The progress in the country must be equitable and benefit all segments of society. In Pakistan, that equity is hard to be seen. Governance is good only to privileged and serves the interest of elites. It lays very little focus on marginalised segment of society. This difference of attitudes undermines the social cohesion and often results into widening disparities between rich and poor population. When large sections of society feel excluded from the benefits of development, it undermines the concept of justice and equality,

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which are core tenets of good governance.

Lastly, terrorism and extremism have also been hurdles in the way of good governance in Pakistan. Pakistan has been facing these challenges for so long. These issues have far-reaching consequences, destabilizing the political, economic, and social fabric of the country. They challenge the state's authority and legitimacy, and when they gain the ground, they create parallel structures that confront state's ability to enforce law and order. Directly they affect the working of law enforcement institutions, but their consequences can be felt in every sphere of governance of state. Militant groups weaken the government control over territory, creating zones where the state's writ is diminished. This lack of control hampers governance and prevents the state from implementing policies effectively across the nation. Such factors act as barriers to good governance in Pakistan. Lack of good governance has been evident and ubiquitous in Pakistan.

This issue is quite complex and multifaceted as discussed above. It has severe and long-lasting implications on the development of Pakistan. A few alarming impacts of not achieving good governance in Pakistan are discussed below.

Firstly, erosion of public trust in state institution is apparent. Institutions of governance, especially the law enforcement ones have been unable to adhere public grievances. This creates a sense of hopelessness and a loss of trust in governments among the masses. When governments are unable to meet the requirements of citizens, citizens may feel as though they have no other option but to take streets. This culture has been widely observed in Pakistan.

Secondly, increase in violence and crime results in aftermath of bad governance. Inability of government to effectively manage the country's affairs can lead to political instability, protests and violence as shown by the Arab springs in 2011. During Arab spring uprisings

widespread protests and demonstrations led to the overthrow of several governments in Middle East and North Africa. Weak rule of law and lack of accountability in Pakistan encourage criminal behaviour, as perpetrators feel they can act with impunity. In Pakistan, incidents have been witnessed, where bad governance involves the use of excessive force or militarisation to suppress opposition or maintain control, which escalates political violence. Armed groups, including organised crime syndicates, may flourish in areas, where government fail to control. Hence, the violence and crime exacerbate as a result of weak governance.

Thirdly, the bad governance setup in Pakistan causes the wastage of public resources. Public resources are the property of state, that have been established by tax money of public. Corruption, the major evil in governance setup is existential in Pakistan, results in public funds misused or diverted away from essential services and infrastructure projects. There is a little scrutiny over how public

Funds are spent. This allow for the misallocation of resources or the continuation of ineffective programs. Poorly managed projects, lack of proper planning, or failure to monitor and evaluate outcomes often results in projects that exceed their budget or fail to meet their intended goals. This, the bad governance framework of Pakistan results in disuse of state resources.

lastly, the fragile governance of Pakistan result in stunted economic growth. Governance failure is major setback to economy of the country, especially when it has changed its focus toward geoeconomic goals. Corruption in every state department put a barrier to development projects. Major state-owned enterprises, such as Pakistan Air International Airlines (PIA), and Pakistan Steel Mills, have led to mounting losses. Investors are reluctant to invest in Pakistan, where property rights are not secured. In such conditions, it's pretty hard to attract foreign direct investment. Bureaucratic hurdles and procedural bottle-neck are

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a blockade to gain confidence of business community. Hence, these bureaucratic challenges impede the desired economic progress of Pakistan.

Although, the problems with governance in Pakistan are glaring, and they have resulted in detrimental setbacks to the country. Achieving efficient and advanced governance is a tough task but not an impossible one. Taking concerted efforts and viable measurements are can be proved beneficial to elevate the standard of governance in Pakistan.

Pakistan is a populous country with diversified religious, regional, and ethnic groups. The first and foremost proposed suggestion for its bureaucracy is to adopt policy of inclusiveness. Governance should be same to all the groups of people, and all the regions of the country. Along with that, a method of accountability must be opted for whole governance setup without any difference to nip the evil of corruption in bud. All the political stakeholders must show cohesion

to help governance prosper in the country. A charter for governance must be signed to ensure free and fair working of governance setup and guarantee the stability of it to have policy continuity. State institutions must be strengthened and control over terrorism and extremist tendencies ensure the positive changes in governance.

In a nutshell, one may say that, good governance has been a dream in Pakistan. Political and social issues of the country have never let the governance to be matured. Political unrest and regime changes along with the lack of political leadership have added to the bad governance setup in the country. Weak situation of rule of law and fragile institutions have been unable to provide services to the masses. Lack of accountability and politicization of bureaucracy have give rise to the corruption culture. Terrorism and extremism equip the militant groups to establish a parallel structure against

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government and weaken the writ of the state. These challenges have deteriorated the essence of governance in Pakistan which have caused fatal results. Violence and crimes are on rise, and public have lost trust in state institutions. Corruption and mismanagement of funds have derived the wastage of public resources, and have stunted the economic growth of the country. Although issues of governance are many in Pakistan, and their consequences are drastic, but concerted efforts and suitable measurements can help country tackle the governance challenge.

Overall very good performance