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Good Governance in Pakistan: Need for reforms and institution Building

1) Introduction :-

- (i) Defining the term governance.
- (ii) Thesis Statement

2) An overview of good governance :-

3) Existing Crises of Governance in Pakistan :-

(a) Absence of rule of law

- (i) 98th rank of Pakistan out of 142 countries — world justice reports.

(b) Corruption across institutions

- (i) 133rd rank — transparency international index

(c) Political instability — root cause of governance crisis

- (i) Political problems have deepened in Pakistan — Human rights watch 2023

(d) Over-dependency on foreign loans

- (i) Policy adjustments on loan conditions
- (ii) 24.3% inflation in 2024 — PBS (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics)

(e) Security concerns - terrorism

- (i) Bisham attack on Chinese individuals by TTP.

(f) Crumbling education system

- (i) 88 million out of school children - UNICEF

1) Necessary reforms and institutional building to restore good governance:-

(a) Strong and independent parliament

- (i) Empowering parliamentary committees to conduct an oversight of legislation.

(b) Undertaking reforms in judicial institutions

- (i) Ensuring judicial independence

(c) Crafting reforms to provide autonomy to provinces

- (i) Full implementation of 18th amendment provisions

(d) Strengthening performance incentives in civil services

- (i) Key performance indicators (KPI) in all departments

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(i) Streamlining government finances

(f) Ensuring meritocracy in public institutions

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5) Conclusion :-

"The care of human life and happiness, and not their destruction; is the first and only object of a good government?"

- Thomas Jefferson

These words by Thomas Jefferson, ^{emphasize} implicate how the foremost responsibility of any government, should be the well-being and happiness of its citizens. Moreover, they elucidate the concept of governance. Governance refers to regulating institutions, managing resources and implementing laws to create desirable circumstances for the good of a nation's development. It is a prerequisite of a country's development and success. Unfortunately, Pakistan falls on a completely different angle, if viewed in the context of good governance. It stands in the midst of governance crisis. Factors such as; ^{use colon here} absence of rule of law, corruption throughout institutions, political instability, economic dependency on foreign bodies and omnipresent security concerns are moving Pakistan towards ^{write appropriate word please} an uncertain future. It is a pressing need to acknowledge this situation and act accordingly. In order to, prevent the deleterious impacts of this chaos, it is an urgency to act upon meticulous strategies. Certain approaches like, strengthening the parliament, reforms in

legal and administrative areas, civil services reforms and privatisation of state-owned enterprises can prove to be a remedy for the governance crisis. Therefore, it can be noted that in Pakistan, achieving good governance requires comprehensive reforms and robust institutional building to enhance transparency, accountability and responsiveness.

Good governance is basically the efficient conduct of administration. However, there are some parameters on which it can be measured. According to United Nations there are some attributes of good governance: rule of law, transparency, accountability, inclusiveness, governmental efficiency and deliverance of services to people. Hence, these indicators provide countries all over the world an oversight to management. Good governance is practiced in many countries prime examples include, Finland and Denmark. The satisfaction of people in these nations indicates the success of government conduct. Hence, good governance is the by-product of streamlined conduct of affairs.

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~~Having discussed the attributes and manner of conduct of good governance, it is vivid that Pakistan is a country that lack efficient management and has a widespread governance crisis.~~

To begin with, absence of rule of law is a key indicator of bad governance in a country.

This absence of rule of law is not only limited to legal right but gives birth to other issues as well. It is worrisome that, Pakistan has ranked 98th amongst 140 countries in the latest World Justice report. This depicts harsh realities and fraudulence in all aspect of Pakistani citizen's life. Thus, absence of rule of law show the face of bad governance in Pakistan.

In the same manner, corruption across institutions is exacerbating the governance crisis. The pervasive corruption erodes trust in government and impedes good governance. According to transparency index Pakistan has 133rd rank among 180 countries in corruption activities. This is a testament of how all institutions in Pakistan from government officials to local governments are eating away the country via privileges and greed. The void in economy that is constructed through corruption is extremely hard to fill. Therefore, corruption across institutions erodes the state-machinery amplifying governance crisis in Pakistan.

Similarly, political instability serves as a root cause to the governance crisis in Pakistan. Lack of civil discourse in politics has made it arduous to reach a common ground and consensus. As noted by Human rights watch 2023, that the political crisis in

Pakistan has severely deepened. Moreover, international indicators on democracy are viewing Pakistan as a less transparent state. Politics based on self-interests has left the country in a continuous chaos. Hence, political instability can be considered as a primary cause for bad governance in Pakistan.

Moreover, Pakistan is over-dependent on foreign loans, which leave very little governance choices to the government. Pakistan is mostly reliant on foreign bodies especially IMF for bailout programs. Due to this, the country has to constantly adjust its policies such as, taxes, finances etc according to IMF conditions. Not only, does this make the debt trap intense but also, heightens inflation. Inflation in Pakistan has been recorded at 14.3% by the Pakistan bureau of statistics. This has led many people to live under the poverty line. Therefore, Pakistan's over-dependency on foreign loans creates a compromise situation for the government.

Likewise, security concerns mainly terrorism make good governance in Pakistan hard to achieve. Militant groups have existed in Pakistan over decades and the presence poses a constant threat to the security of the nation. Recently, resurgence of TTP (Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan)

has created a vulnerable situation. On March 26, 2024, a suicide attack was carried out by TTP on Chinese officials in Bisham. This act has drawn the attention of China and other countries, that, now fear to come to work to Pakistan. Moreover, such acts affect the foreign policy as well. Hence, security concerns like terrorism create more hurdles in the pathway of good governance.

Furthermore, the crumbling education system in Pakistan depicts the sad picture of governance. Primary education is a weak structure that offers very little to the people. According to UNICEF, 28 million children are out of school in Pakistan. Due to increasing poverty, many children cannot afford to go to school, whereas, no moves are made by the government to include the extremely poor children in the structure of primary education. Moreover, no efforts can be seen to change the culture that opposes girls' education. Consequently, a crumbling education system showcases the dark realities of governance crisis.

Though, there is an existential governance crisis in Pakistan, it is pertinent to work on devisable strategies to overcome it. A good governance in Pakistan can be achieved if reforms and institutional building are carefully crafted and implemented.

Firstly, a strong and independent parliament is a necessary step towards good governance. A resilient parliament would serve as a cornerstone for democracy and a consensus based approach towards problems would be developed. This can be achieved if empowered committees have a continuous oversight over proposed resolutions and passed legislation. This would inculcate a serious attitude of conduct amongst the parliamentarians. Moreover, legislations can be acquired in a short period of time. Other than this, it will generate a sense of accountability amongst the participants of legislations. Therefore, a strong and independent parliament is a vital step towards good governance in Pakistan.

Secondly, judicial reforms can put Pakistan back on the track to good governance. Without an independent judiciary a state is likely to fail in every aspect. Hence, it is a need to introduce judicial impartiality and responsiveness. One way through which it can be achieved is appointment of judges. Appointment of judges should be made on the aspects: merit, specialisation of constitution and zero political influence. Furthermore, autonomy on the bases of finance, decision-making and rule of conduct must be given to the judges. With much autonomy and independence only can the judiciary practise justice. Thus, judicial reforms can put Pakistan in a place of good governance.

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Thirdly, provincial autonomy can help the provinces to run themselves efficiently and all together give rise to good governance in Pakistan. This autonomy can be given in full form if all the provisions of 18th amendment are implemented. To efficiently apply the NFC award it is permissible to build administrative capacity in provinces so that, allocation and management of funds is made efficiently. Other than this, regular assessments of NFC on socio-development indicators must be applied. Hence, provincial autonomy and administration can be a pivotal point in Pakistan's trajectory to good governance.

Fourthly, strengthening performance incentives in civil services can be fruitful in providing good governance in Pakistan. Activities of the departments of civil services must be measured by key performance indicators (KPI). Firstly, objectives of civil services should be cleared. Secondly, regular monitoring and feedback of employees must be gathered. Lastly, promotion and bonuses must be awarded based on KPI results. The strengthening of civil services via various means can help an efficient governance in Pakistan.

Fifthly, privatisation of state-owned enterprises would relieve the state burden and consequently result in good governance.

Many enterprises are owned largely by the state making their administration a challenging task. To curb this issue the government must privatise these (SOEs) because private enterprises specifically working in markets can produce larger amount of profits. This would increase the quality of service, attract investment, foster innovation and change the market dynamics for Pakistan. Moreover, it would increase job opportunities and decrease unemployment. For these reasons, privatisation of state-owned enterprises can help Pakistan develop good governance.

Lastly, it is greatly important to develop meritocracy in public institutes. To establish validation and better services in public institutes it is a must that jobs are given to only worthy individuals. To inculcate this, a transparent process of recruitment must be adopted. Standardized evaluation methods such as competitive exams must be held regularly. Moreover, involving multiple stakeholders in selection process can further enhance the process. Hence, meritocracy in public institutions is an imminent step to good governance in Pakistan.

To conclude, good governance in Pakistan can only be achieved, if all the problems in state machinery are acknowledged and improved by reforms and meaningful institutional building. The crisis of governance is widespread and affecting all the institutions in Pakistan. Public service is not optimal and law situation erodes day by day. Moreover, economy is fractured now more than ever leading Pakistan into a vicious cycle of debt trap. Other than this, the ills of corruption and vulnerability of state due to security concerns have impacted Pakistan in two ways. First, Pakistan has become a mayhem of chaos for the local populace and second, externally Pakistan is always viewed as a weak and fragile state by international world. Unless, reforms and institutional building is properly implemented Pakistan will dwell in the abyss of plight. Hence, it is the duty of every component of state-machinery to perform its vital function. Only then can Pakistan be freed from the ghost of bad governance and otherwise, the agenda of good governance will always remain an ideology.