

Crisis of Good Governance in Pakistan: Need for Reforms and Institution Building.

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'Katherine Adeney' in her book, 'Federalism and Ethnic conflict regulation in India and Pakistan', contends that both Pakistan and India opted for a federal system of government at the outset, so that the aspirations of the diverse population can be attended to, and good governance can be ensured. Unfortunately, the early death of Quaid left a leadership vacuum in the political sphere of Pakistan. It is so, because since the beginning of human civilization, man has looked upon leaders to guide him in statecrafts. In case of Pakistan, the absence of a visionary leader left space for the menaces that have destroyed the very foundation of state's governance system. There is rampant corruption, which is destroying the fabric of society. Coupled with this is obstruction in the devolution of power, which has prevented

the democratic norms to establish its roots in the governance system. Resultantly, the rule of law has never been established in the state. The massive poverty in the state makes the people vulnerable to the plots of terrorists and militants and they use the poor to create a security crisis in the state. To make the situation worse, there is energy shortfall which has stalled the economic sector of state and state has to rely to external debts. However, there is always a light at the end of a tunnel. Certain steps if taken can surely take Pakistan out of these crisis. For instance, checks and balances should be incorporated along with making sure that power is devolved to the grass root level. Moreover, the institutes should be depoliticized to ensure smooth functioning of the state. In a nutshell, no doubt there is a crisis of good governance in Pakistan, but few substantial steps can bring this crisis to an end.

The first factor which is impacting good governance in Pakistan is rampant corruption. The state

rely mostly on indirect taxes and foreign aid to run the day to day affairs of the state. However, massive corruption, mostly pecorinary embezzlement, has stalled the economics of the state. The money allocated for public spending goes into the pockets of corrupt officials and other middlemen. This menace has rather destroyed the very foundation of the state. For example, according to the corruption perception index 2024 by Transperancy International, Pakistan ranks 133 out of 180 countries in the world. This demonstrates that corruption not only makes people trust the government less, but also increases economic strains on the state. Hence, the crisis of good governance ensues from this rampant corruption that plagues the state.

Flawed devolution of power, or absence of it is another major factor as well as evidence of crisis of good governance in Pakistan. Actually, devolution of power is considered

an essence of democracy. It allows the people to stay in direct contact with their representatives. Moreover, the representatives also feel accountable in front of the people that elect them. Unfortunately, Pakistan has failed miserably in this as well. Only thrice has been the local government system established in Pakistan, and only one of them, the 2015 local government system, was formed under a democratic dispensation. Political, economic and elitist interests have never allowed the system to prevail in Pakistan. Hence, obstruction in devolution of power is a clear manifestation of governance crisis in Pakistan.

To make the situation worse, is the absence of rule of law. The fundamental and foremost responsibility of the state is to protect the life and property of its citizen. However, Pakistan's performance in this area is also same as in other areas, miserable. The rich people can

easily get through the legal system of system by using their money and influence. This is evident in the most recent case of accidental killing by a lady, in Karachi. To substantiate this is the report of the World Justice project, rule of law index 2024. The report states that Pakistan ranks 140 out of 142 countries in the world in terms of rule of law. This dismal picture of law shows the crisis of governance in Pakistan.

Another major manifestation of the crisis of good governance is the deplorable security situation in Pakistan. Pakistan has been in the grip of a wave of terrorism since 2007. This wave has destroyed the socio-economic sector of Pakistan.

Thousands of people have been killed and hundreds of schools have been destroyed. According to a report by National Counter Terrorism Authority 2024, an estimated

80,000 have been killed till 2024 in this wave of terrorism.

To add, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ministry of Education reports that some 732 schools have been destroyed in the province by terrorists. This security situation has placed the life of liberty of people at risk. In the eyes of United Nations, this is a governance crisis.

To add fuel to the fire, there is massive poverty. If a small number of people are living below the poverty line, it is a good indicator of the economic situation of the state.

On the contrary, Pakistan has almost 40% of its people below the line of poverty, according to World Bank report 2024. These poor people are vulnerable to the machinations of terrorists and other non-state actors. These organization use them to create security crisis in the state. This

creates a never ending cycle of terrorism poverty and security crisis - Unfortunately, the state has failed to eliminate poverty. This failure on the part of state, manifests the governance crisis the state is going through.

The next major factor illustrating the crisis of governance is the low literacy level in Pakistan. As it is said that, 'Democracy and illiteracy cannot move together'. The epitome of this saying is Pakistan. This is because the state allocates a meager amount of funds for education sector. For instance, according to the economic survey of Pakistan 2023-2024, Pakistan has allocated only 2% of its GDP for the educational sector. This meager allocation results in low level of literacy. So, the literacy level in Pakistan is only 53%, according to the UNDP - 2024 report. This

Low level of literacy shows the governance crisis the state is facing.

Moving forward, the next factor that illustrates the governance crisis in the state is its struggling energy sector. In this era of industrialization and economic growth, energy is the prerequisite for development. However, in Pakistan the severe energy shortfall has led to the closure of a number of businesses. Moreover, the untimely power outages, mostly in the summer, creates a lot of trouble for the population as well. To back up this is the report of the Ministry of Power, Pakistan. According to this report, Pakistan experienced a peak energy shortfall of 6200 MW in year 2023. This shortfall ^{can} destroys the production sector of any state. Thus, the struggling energy sector of Pakistan not only impacts the functioning of state but also manifests its governance crisis.

All these factors, when combined, ~~they~~ leave the state in a situation of economic instability. To counter this, the state has to rely on foreign aids and debts. Almost every state, that depends on external debt, to run day to day affairs of the state uses them to strengthen their industrial base. Sometimes, these loans can prove to be an impetus to drive the stalled economics of the state. However, Pakistan has never used these loans to rejuvenate its industrial base and economic capabilities. This is largely due to rampant corruption, as mentioned earlier. Resultantly, most of the finances of the state goes into debt financing, leaving little for public spending. According to the State Bank of Pakistan, Pakistan has an external debt servicing burden of \$ 2 Billion, as of January 2024, for next 12 months. This mounting debt is a clear picture of governance crisis.

of Pakistan.

A number of factors are responsible for the crisis of good governance in Pakistan. However, some steps in the form of substantial reforms and institutions building can prove to be beneficial in countering this ongoing governance crisis.

The very step that ought to be taken for reforms and institutions building is the incorporation of checks and balances. Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely, as goes the saying of Lord Acton. Therefore, it is essential that every echelon of government is subjected to strict accountability. The western states have integrated a mechanism of checks and balances in their governance system. The benefit of this mechanism is that people remain in their domain while performing their duties. Moreover, if they ever cross their boundary they are subjected to accountability. The impeachment of then President Donald Trump, for instance,

in 2021 is an evidence of checks and balances in the system of the US - Hence, strict accountability mechanisms in the form of checks and balances are necessary for reforms and institution building.

The next step that should be taken is to promote democratic norms in the state. Democracy is the form of a government in which people choose their representatives. These chosen people are under the direct accountability of the population. In western states, the people readily reject the leaders that fail to live up to their expectations. In this way, the leaders feels responsible towards the population. However, if democracy is to be an effective system, it must be extended to all levels. If it happens then surely power will devolve to the grass root levels. The absence of democratic norms

in Pakistan is the reason behind the flawed governance system of Pakistan.

The most important step that needs to be taken to ensure good governance in Pakistan, is the establishment of rule of law. Fair and free justice is prerequisite of a functioning society. If rule of law is established in the state every individual will work and act according to the rules and regulation.

This will result in the Supremacy of the constitution. And, when the constitution is the Supreme authority of the state then progress and prosperity comes as a by product.

This can be seen in the governance system of the US, UK and other western states.

Thus, to bring out reforms and institution buildings in Pakistan to counter the governance crisis, rule of law is mandatory.

Furthermore, the institutions of Pakistan need to be depoliticized! Because, when there excessive interference in the functioning of the institutes, they cannot fulfill the very mandate for which they were established in the first place. The institutions start working for the benefits of a particular class of the society. For example, the recent case of Pakistan Supreme court, in which the High Court Judges wrote a letter to Chief Justice of Pakistan regarding interference in judicial affairs.

This illustrates the politicization of institutes in the state. If this ~~perpetuates~~ perpetuates the state cannot function properly, and governance crisis is inevitable. So, to ensure that the governance crisis can be avoided institutes need to be depoliticized.

The next step to be taken is to increase spending on the

Public sector- A state is nothing with a group of people living together in a defined territory. If the people of the state are happy and satisfied, the state is stable.

Similarly, a stable state means an effective governance system.

~~So~~ To elaborate this, if the government is spending due amount in public services, the people will never fall a prey to the plot of non-state actors. Moreover, the literacy rate and the health status of the people will increase - This will provide the state with a skilled workforce to boost its economy. The example of Japan is worth mentioning here. Hence to bring about reforms to ensure good governance, public spending should be increased.

In this modern world, energy has become a basic commodity - The great powers of the world are maintaining

their hegemony solely on the basis of their production. This production depends on the energy available in the state. For example, India has become the fifth largest economy of the world, largely due to its production and servicing sector. It is true that the economy of state depends upon available energy. So, the state needs to look into the energy sector. If this demand is met, production can be enhanced. Resultantly, the economic situation will improve and hence the ongoing governance crisis.

Another major step that can be taken in this regard is to make long term plans and ensuring their implementation. Looking at the industrialized and western states policies, one can see that their planning is always long term. The most

recent example of this is, the 'Belt and Road Initiative' of China. This is a long term plan of China to cater the market of the world for its goods - Pakistan, being a part of this plan should also learn from this and make long terms plans. In this way, the state will not to rely on external debts. Thus, to end this governance crisis, long term plans are necessary.

In a nutshell, the factors that are causing governance crisis in Pakistan are not the ones that cannot be addressed. No doubt, they are hard to cater, as they are manifesting themselves in different domains to the society and the state. However, certain reforms can be done to end this governance crisis. Corruption, for instance, can be ended by incorporating checks and balances in the system.

Similarly, promotion of democratic norms can ensure devolution of power. Although these measures are destroying the socio-economic fabric of the state. But, the situation is not as deplorable as it appears to be - All that Pakistan needs is to implement the policies and establish a rule of law at the start to initiate its journey towards progress.