

Crisis of governance in Pakistan: Reforms. outline

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- The Essay -

The problem of Pakistan is not absence of institutions but failure to allow institutions to function ~ Ishrat Hussain. Governance is a decisive factor between a functional state and a fragile one. Good governance is transparent, accountable, and rule based exercise of authority to serve public interest. Pakistan represents a striking paradox in this regard. Despite having Constitution, elected governments, and elaborate administrative structure, the state continues to experience governance failure. This governance crisis is not episodic rather structural. Pakistan's governance crisis originates from institutional erosion, personalisation of power, weak accountability. Therefore, administrative reforms must precede policy reforms along with transparency, accountability and rule of law.

At its core, governance failure in Pakistan is institutional rather than accidental. Shaped by colonial legacy, Pakistan's institutions serve individuals in power rather than public. As Political Scientist Hamza Alavi observed that Post colonial Pakistan has developed into a "overdeveloped state" where administrative institutions are powerful but socially unaccountable. Frequent political transitions disrupted parliamentary oversight on the institutions. This authorised discretionary rule

~~of authorities, making public subjects rather than stakeholders in governance.~~

The personalization of political power has further deepened the governance crisis. Political parties operate on person-centered politics rather than institutional. This led to survival based short term policy planning. Each populist policy being replaced by the succeeding one. This resulted in weak legislature which often fails to check executive. According to PLADF PILDAT Democracy Index 2023, Pakistan stands at 118th position reflecting its fragile democratic governance.

Absence of effective local governance further alienate people from the state. Despite Constitutional provision under Article 140-4, local governments remains rather weak or absent. Policy decisions are extremely centralised, depriving people of participatory governance. The most important political distinction among countries concerns not their form of government but degree of governance - Samuel P. Huntington. The result is poor service delivery in education, health and municipal services.

~~The crisis of governance is most evident in erosion of rule of law. Judicial delays,~~

elite privileges has weakened public trust in the institutions. Recent case where Judge's son killed two sisters was exempted even when case presented evident manslaughter. This ~~is~~ selective justice rooted in elite privileges encourages lawlessness undermines legitimacy of state. As Amritha Sen famously quoted "state exists to serve people not rule them". Pakistan's state institutions are to serve elite, rule of law is dysfunctional leading to ~~politi~~ failed governance.

Meaningful governance reforms in Pakistan must focus on Policy continuation through National framework. Frequent policy reversal discourage investment and long-term planning. In Pakistan, policy changes with change in government. Countries like Malaysia and South Korea institutionalized long-term planning beyond political cycle. Pakistan must adopt the same to overcome National challenge on economy and governance with 2/3 parliamentary approval on major long-term policies. This will lead to sustainable development plans.

Accountability institutions are perceived as weak, selective and politicised. To reform accountable bodies judicial oversight is necessary.

"when accountability becomes selective it ceases to be justice - Niaz Mulla" Thus to restore credibility and rule based governance accountability institutions must be protected against political misuse.

Centralized governance disconnects citizens. It also buds mistrust in Public leading to Anarchic tendencies. Constitutional protection for local bodies is foremost reform. Pakistan needs to improve service delivery. Local governments exist in Pakistan. However they are either suspended or symbolic. For good governance local bodies must be provided with full administrative autonomy under Constitution. Strengthened local governance will enhance foundation of state legitimacy.

this is not a substantive argument

Pakistan's governance model remains colonial in spirit, focusing on control rather than delivery. A seismic shift towards service oriented state ^{is needed.} where citizens are treated ~~with~~ as stakeholders not subjects. Since Pakistan inherited its system from colonial legacy, ~~the~~ Pakistan still operates on outdated land reforms and tenancy acts of 1867, with even Pakistan Penal code of 1860.

These laws are outdated need drastic reforms to uphold modern time problems. Reforms are needed that serve people; from coercive control to serving Public.

In conclusion, crisis of governance in Pakistan is deep-rooted and self-reinforcing. It stems not from absence of laws but ineffective implementation of policies. Institutional reforms must precede policy reforms. Sustainable improvements can only be attained through continued governance, transparent and accountable institutions. Pakistan's future prosper depends on its ability to change discretionary governance with effective one. As Nation fails not because they lack resources but because institutions fail to manage them effectively.

NOTE: I was unable to put reforms
effectively in paragraph.
kindly guide.