2024

Q6. Since by definition corruption undermines good governance. One way to fight corruption is by advancing the government's responsiveness, accountability and transparency. Discuss.

Definition

1. Introduction

Corruption is exploitation of public resources in the public offices. It involves bribery, injustice, usurping the rights of others and nepotism. These practices undermine good governance. To control corruption, government needs to enhance transparency in its public affairs, increase accountability for all and no one should remain immune from accountability. Also, responsiveness of government institutions should be advanced. However, Pakistani government institutions face certain challenges like political instability, lack of policy continuity, increased political interference in bureaucracy, and influence of elitism across various institutions that provide huge space for corrupt practices and undermine good governance. To curb corruption in Pakistan, some concrete steps and radical reforms are required to ensure prosperity.

2. How Corruption Undermines Good Governance?

Corruption refers to abuse of public rights for personal gains and self-aggrandization. It undermines public trust and confidence in the institutions. In Pakistan, elitism and feudalism widens inequality between the poor and the rich. These practices increase poverty, unemployement and economic fragility. However, good governance is actually a efficient management of public resources for benefit of citizens through transparency, rule of law, participation and accountability. Hence, widespread corruption compromises the good governance of the institutions.

3. Government's responsiveness restores public trust and legitimacy of goveronment leaders

Responsiveness is the swift, adequate and timely response of government institutions for public service delivery. ~~Responsi~~ It brings back public confidence in the institutions and reduces chances of corruption. A pertinent example is **Pakistan's citizens portal** that enables real-time complaint redressal and reduces opportunities for corruption. Another example is **Estonias**

E-governance system that fascilitates swift response and reduces chances of corruption.

4. Stringent accountability stifles corruption opportunities

Accountability is one of the important principles of good governance. It requires accountability for all — including state's monarch leaders and judicial officials. Accountability through independent institutions such as National Accountability Bureau and Federal Investigation Authority (FIA) reduces opportunities for corruption and keeps them away from political influence. Accountability discourages abuse of power due to fear of legal and institutional actions.

5. Enhancing transparency improves mechanism of governance

Transparency is openness of government operations such as decision-making, budgeting, government spending and policy-making. It ensures insight of public and other independent institutions over government's policies and financial spending, reducing chances of corruption. Right to information Act (2017) allowed public and to access government operations. It makes it

difficult for the institutions to hide corruption.
Blockchain technology is a digital technology used by UAE, UK, Estonia and Sweden that ensures transparency through digital insight and open data portals.

6. Pakistan face challenges to implement these principles of good governance

Despite huge benefits, Pakistan face challenges to implement these principles and effectively use these tools to fight corruption. There is increased political interference in anti-corruption bodies that continue to influence their independent functioning. Some of the powers are decentralized from federal units to the provinces but financial powers are still concentrated in higher authorities that undermine their responsiveness. Additionally, limited digital literacy and cultural tolerance to the corruption are challenges against prevalence of good governance.

7. Way Forward

Pakistan should adopt zero-tolerance policy against corruption. Independent anti-corruption bodies should be devoid of political influence so that they curb corrupt practices effectively.

Digital transparency models like blockchain technology should be adopted in Pakistan. Digital literacy and skill development should be focused and prioritized to ensure transparency and accountability of the institutions. Additionally, comprehensive land reforms and urban reforms should be introduced to reduce ~~~~ism and feudalism in Pakistan. ~~~~ these reforms, ~~public~~ citizen participation and local ~~~~ will help reducing corruption and ensure good governance.

8. Conclusion

Corruption is abuse of legitimate power by the public officials for their personal gains. To fight against corruption, responsiveness of government institutions through easy access between citizens and the authority reduces opportunities of corruption. Alongside responsiveness, Transparency of government spending and policies restores confidence of public in the political leaders and legitimizes government power. Openness of government operations reduces chances of corruption as well. Transparency will enhance accountability. Public officials and stakeholders will avoid corruption due to fear of legal and institutional oversight. Hence, these principles curb corruption and ensure good governance that ultimately ~~bring~~ bring stability and prosperity

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