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Governance Crisis in Pakistan is
a Twin Governance Crisis :
Policy Formulation and Policy
Implementation Paralysis

Outline

A. Introduction :

1. Attention Grabber :- According to Transparency International 2024 report, Pakistan ranks among bottom third of countries in governance indicators.

2. Thesis Statement :- Governance crisis has its roots in malfunctioning of two major domains of governance that is, Policy Formulation and Policy Implementation collectively.

B. Understanding Governance and Public Policy :

1. Governance and Public Policy as complimenting ideas

2. Policy Formulation and Policy Implementation as key stages of Public Policy

3. Interconnectedness of Policy Formulation and Policy Implementation

c. Manifestation of Governance Crisis in Policy Formulation :

(i) Centralized Decision Making, Top-Down Approach in Formulating Policies :

1. One size fit for all policies, ignoring local realities.

2. National Flood Protection Plan drafted centrally, with district involvement.

(ii) Lack of Inclusivity of Experts in Policy Formulation:

1. Educational Reforms are usually political decisions, rather than academic experts' advice.
2. Single National Curriculum (SNC) launched without adequate consultation.

(iii) Elite Captured and Bureaucratic Bias in Policy Making:

1. Favoritism and fear of transfers impede effective policy making.
2. Policy making dominated by power groups, politicians, selective bureaucrats, feudal landlords, and big businessmen.

(iv) Politicizing Policy Formulation

1. Politicizing tax reforms :
Examine Exception of few privileged sectors, Prejudiced tax policy.
2. Draining 1.4 bn annually for potential revenues, encompassing 4.1 % GDP -

(v) Less Educated and lack of vision in policy Makers :

1. 90% of parliamentarian not well educated

(vi) Scarcity of Resources affecting Policy Formulation of development projects

1. Chronic fiscal scarcity leads to compromise in development sectors
2. Rank 168th out of 193, in HDI

D. Governance Crisis Revealing in Policy Implementation :

(i). Over complicated policies, making Implementation process difficult :

- 1). 227 separate provision of tax laws, FBR's huge spending on administrative resources, collecting small scattered amount instead of focusing real taxpayers
- 2). Despite hundreds of tax rules, Pakistan tax to ratio GDP remains below 10%.

(ii) Lack of Digitalization impedes effective Policy Implementation

- 1). no line tracking of teachers attendance, school ghost continue to exist
- 2). Paper work or document

system increases chances
of corruption and
lack of transparency

3). poor coordination between
departments

(iii). Structural Flaws and Poor
Coordination Among government
Agencies leading to delayed
or flawed Implementation of
policies.

1). Multiple Ministries and
department overlap, create
conflict.

2). Data sharing among
inter-agency cooperation is
lacking, delaying the
procedure and implementation.

(iv). Discontinuity in Politics leading
Discontinuity of development

projects :

- 1) Ehsas program rebranded under Benazir income Support program, causing administrative confusion and delay in welfare delivery.

(iv) Resource Crisis Impeding efficient and effective Policy Implementation:

- 1) poor management of resource allocation
- 2) International funds for vaccinations or flood relief lost to corruption.

E- Way Forward to Improve Policy Formulation and Implementation

- 1) Decentralization of power
- 2) Case Study: Thailand, Local

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Tambon Administrative Organization.

- 3). Digitalization of system to reduce corruption, data record keeping and making procedures efficient, reducing red tape.

E Conclusion :

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According to Transparency International 2024 Report, Pakistan ranks among bottom third of countries in governance indicators. Since its creation, Pakistan has produced over a hundred commissions, committees, and policy frameworks. Yet governance remains its Achilles heel. The failure does not lie in policy shortage, but in policy ownership, expertise, genuineness, continuity and implementation.

Governance is an essential pillar for a state to run effectively. It is the process of implementation of Public Policy. Crisis in governance originates from crisis and malfunctioning of its policies. An effective policy must be formulated to later implemented it within a system. A flawed policy and ineffective implementation

collectively creates bad governance and anarchism. In Pakistan there are number of issues in policy formulation and policy implementation. It's very centralized system of decision making and top down approach ignores the real issues on the ground level. Often the policy formulation lacks inclusivity of required expert opinion leading to the formation of dysfunctional policy. Another major fault in policy formulation is power politics of elite captured groups, which also causes bureaucratic biases in policy formulation and implementation. Both a major part or role of governance also lies in policy implementation and ensuring the service delivery to the citizens. In country like Pakistan, it is still a matter of struggle

to ensure the Implementation effectively. The problem of Implementation arises due to mismanagement of resources, Over complicated policies and Structural Flaws in overall system. In its very essence it can be said that governance crisis has its roots in malfunctioning of two major domains of governance, that is Policy Formulation and Policy Implementation collectively.

Governance is a broader term, that includes number of factors and domain in which power is exercised and decisions are made and implemented to manage country's economic and social resources. It is the institutional capacity to provide goods and services to its citizens. The implementation of public policy is

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is called governance. Public Policy is said to be a concrete expression of that governance, in which a deliberate course of action is designed in the form of policy formulation step, which addresses public issues. Good governance ensures that policy formulation and implementation are transparent, inclusive, accountable and based on evidence rather than political expediency. In contrast, poor governance breeds inefficiency, corruption, and policy paralysis. In Pakistan, this connection between governance and public policy remains fragile. Considering the fact that policies are often made in isolation from ground realities and implemented without coordinated efforts among institutions, leading to a compromised outcomes.

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Historically the practice of public policy making in Pakistan has exposed the flawed system of policy making. Unfortunately, policies related to the benefits of people or the public always have been introduced without public consent and essential information on the ground.

The policies coming from the center, are rarely informed about the ground level issues.

Before the independence, in the subcontinent in 1900's Britishers used to send one of their Secretary

State of India, to spend some time there and to understand their ground reality concerns such as political issues of Indians.

For that, Secretary State of India visited India and stayed there

for around 9 months before passing Indian Act 1919. In Pakistan

policies are made based on political pressure or motives rather than data or research - For example National Education policy was drafted centrally and didn't reflect provincial differences in resources or language, resulted in poor implementation -

The policies are usually formulated by legislatures, politicians or bureaucrats without having any in depth knowledge about the actual problem. As said by Harold Lasswell, (father of public policy), "Democracy is a continuous process, one main challenge of it is to make sure that policy making stays connected to an ongoing exchange between people who produce knowledge and those who use it." In simple words he argues that in policy formulation

government need to ensure the participation of a research specialist, expert with the policy makers and politicians. In Pakistan, usually the educational reforms are political decision solely rather any advice from any academic expert, for example, Single National Curriculum (SNC) was launched without adequate consultation of academic experts.

Another major issue in policy formulation is that it is elite captured, influenced by powerful group of politicians feudals, landlords and big businessman, controlling the whole governance system. It also influence the Bureaucratic system often by threat of transfers or any other means of punishing the loyal ones. This political influence, either demoralize the

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the loyal officers, as a result of which they stop putting efforts for change, or either get driven by the incentives given by politicians. In many cases, political favoritism replaces merit-based hirings and influence decision making directly. Senior civil servants often align with ruling parties for personal promotion or postings, compromising their neutrality and integrity of policy process.

Since the decision making process and policy formulation is mostly done by politicians and elite groups in power, the decisions or policies

formulated are quite politicized. One of the major example is the tax reforms. Tax reforms are continued to be undermined by weak policies from the

very beginning - The excessive exemption of few privileged sectors, disproportionately benefiting them at the cost of few tax payers. This exempted group drains Rs 1.4 trillion annually from potential revenues equivalent to 4.1% of GDP. The disproportionate taxing policy exempt few and over burden the rest creates a disbalance in society, leading to unrest and unsatisfaction between the state and tax payers. As Ibn-e Khaldon once said, The injustice of taxation brings ruins of civilization.

Policy formulation should be well informed with adequate knowledge of the given subject and the vision of longterm implication. In Pakistan policies being made by politicians in power is totally deprived of real educated population - According

to reports from Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency (PILDAT) many legislators have no formal policy background, and parliamentary debates often lack technical depth. This lack of knowledge and policy experts in the process of decision making results in symbolic rather than substantive policies and laws. Furthermore, with lack of knowledge, politicians usually are also void of vision for longterm developments. All they care is how to make best out of their tenure for themselves and their families. They prioritize individual interest over national interests, lacking policy vision.

Since its inception, Pakistan is facing scarcity of resources. It directly and indirectly affects the policy formulation. With the fiscal deficit and huge amount of debt on country, the only way out

government prefer is to compromise the developmental sector. Cutting the budget for any policy making of developmental sector is the most feasible option left to the politicians - No wonder why Pakistan persists to be at the lowest in Human Developmental Index, that is 168th out of 193.

4 countries major revenue is generated through tax collection, Pakistan lack an efficient policy formulation to collect and generate enough revenue.

It completely ignores the digital economy, that is conspicuously absent from tax net. Approximately 5 million freelancers generating \$3 billion annually operate in vacuum. Clearly reflecting state's failure to make policy for taxation that can include the growing digital economy -

Even if the policy makers attempt to make genuine, required

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policies, then comes the challenge of its implementation. The over complicated decade old system of bureaucracy and unnecessary documentation and departmentalization of the system erodes the effectiveness of the system. Imagine 207 separate provisions for tax collection law, a very huge spending on administrative resources is required, collecting small scattered amount of taxes from multiple sources, instead of focusing on real tax payers. All that tedious tasks without any digitalized system, making it impossible to manage. This can be seen as a result of this malfunctioning system that despite hundreds of tax rules, Pakistan tax to ratio GDP remains below 10%.

The prior example of our complicated policies and system showed the importance of digitalization in this modern

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AI driven world. But, unfortunately Pakistan has a long way to go to digitalize its governance - Even though it has started the efforts to digitalize some of its sectors but the rural urban divide such as in case of NADRA registration remains an issue to be resolved.

Lack of digitalization affects the implementation of policy in many ways, for example, there is no live tracking of teacher attendance in schools, leading to empty buildings of school ghost that still continues to exist. Lack of digitalization increases the chances of corruption. The corruption perception index seconds the statement of corruption of issues in Pakistan, as it ranked 135 out of 180 countries in 2024.

3 The structural flaws of governance system also impede the implementation process. The haphazard

and complicated departments and units delays the task. Often such system cause trouble in emergency and Disaster management scenarios where an essential or required thing has to be asked for permission for usage or implementation of any required order. In recent flood incident in KP, the victims waited for rescue and helicopter for so long, which was not available at that specific region and didnot fall under that specific administrations domain - Multiple ministries and department overlap, create conflict. With such complicated and poor coordinated system data sharing also remains a time consuming task in implementation process -

4 In Pakistan, discontinued Political tenures played a major role in effecting the whole policy implementation process. Every new party postpones and abandons the previous government

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initiatives, wasting public resources and disrupting policy continuity. Although democracy gives political leaders the responsibility to make public serving policies, but in Pakistan politicians prioritize the personal interests, their parties interests and are more focused on re-election motives while making policies. They make policies that are more visible such as Orange line, Metro Bus, rather bringing any structural reforms that is actually required. Another example is the Ehsas program, rebranded under Benazir income support program causing administrative confusion and delay in welfare delivery.

Resource availability are another essential component of policy implementation. Be it monetary or Human resource. Lack of these resources lead to inefficient and ineffective policy implementation.

It comes with poor resource management and resources allocation. In Pakistan it is very evident in provincial level due to political motives, power parties put maximum resources on development of major cities like Lahore, Karachi etc where they expect good number of voters that helps them achieve influential seats in further elections. But they will not put any effective resource in Balochistan, where they least expect to have any effective number of seats. Moreover, International funds for vaccines and Flood Relief programs are usually lost in corruption, that not even reach to its actual deserving or rightful claimant.

6 Understanding the fact that State cannot run without good governance, which requires effective public policy. Within procedure and 5 steps of policy making, two are more essential steps to be taken; one is

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through effective policy formulation and secondly, through proper policy implementation. To make policies sustainable, Pakistan must institutionalize public consultation town halls, online platforms and stakeholder forums. It should strengthen policy research units in ministries and ensure their participation in policy making. Ensure continuity across government. Instead of 'Top to Bottom' approach it should go from 'Bottom to up', such as in case of Thailand, their policies are build through 'bottom up' consultation with local administrative organizations. It created, Tambon Administrative Organization and Municipal councils, gave them independent budget, and authority to manage local health, education, waste and infrastructure issues.

7. In a nutshell, the crisis of governance is a twin crisis, where its roots stems from malfunctioning of two major governance domains, policy formulation, and policy implementation, collectively. The issue with policy

4th in emission globally.

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Formulation is its Centralized nature of "top to Bottom" approach. Such approach undermines actual ground level issues. Their policies are usually one size fits for all policy, ignoring the unique needs of different areas. Often the policy makers are not very well educated and well informed about the issues and real time concerns, again skipping the real issues of public that should be addressed. Policies are made by politicians, whom are driven by their party motives and narratives thus, politicizing the policy formulation. Political pressure at lower level also undermines the real time issues to be addressed, with the selection of favoritist by politicians undermines the merit based bureaucratic placements, demotivating officers for any efforts to be placed. After the policy formulation, Policy Implementation is one of the crucial step of good governance. Mismanagement of resources and the habit of corruption within our system make it difficult to implement the

policies to relief citizens. Lack of digitalization makes it convenient to do corruption and doesnot face any accountability question. Furthermore, this digital-less system also make the implementation process cumbersome, time and money costly. Hence, it can be conclude that, focusing on policy formulation and Implementation are essential milestones to be achieved to have a good governance in the state. Working through the flaws, and changing unhelpful patterns will make governance in a better position.