

{ Outline }

(1) Introduction.

(2) Manifestations of the lack of civic sense

(A) Intolerance

(B) Vandalism

(C) Racism

(D) Corruption

(3) How a lack of civic sense is pushing the country backwards

(A) Economic woes

(B) Political Instability

(C) Braindrain

(4) Conclusion:

(A) Way forward.

The Essay

There is a famous saying that goes, "Democracy without civic sense is like a colourless rainbow." This is true because the success of a democracy depends upon the moral character of its people. If the people are morally strong and have a civic sense, then the state and society prospers. And if they are morally weak and lack civic sense, then the whole social, political and democratic fabric of the state is damaged. Unfortunately, the latter statement is true for Pakistan. Which, since its inception, has faced the problem of a lack of civic sense in its people. Which has manifested itself into

issues like vandalism, intolerance, corruption et cetera. And is pushing the country backwards economically and politically. In order to tackle these issues, we must foster civic sense in our nation with the help of education, so that we may embark on the path to progress.

The first manifestation of the lack of civic sense in our society is intolerance. This is a major issue. People are intolerant of other people having different beliefs, gender and religion. Every other day, there is news of violence which has been caused due to a lack of tolerance. For example, in 2019, a student killed Professor Khalid Hameed, head of English department at a Bahawalpur college, because he thought that a mixed

gathering of male and female students was un-Islamic. This is a classical example of intolerance. Moreover, two Ahmadi doctors were abducted and murdered.

Similarly, two minor Hindu girls belonging to the Hindu community in Sindh were abducted, forcefully converted to Islam and married off to Muslim men. These examples show a major lack of religious tolerance. Furthermore, every year, the campaign of vilification launched by pious men against women who join the Aurat March shows a lack of tolerance towards women. All these gruesome examples have showed us that fostering civic sense in our society is the most urgent need of the hour.

Another direct manifestation of a lack of civic sense is

vandalism. It is a crime that has a major effect on our lives and costs us all millions of rupees to repair.

Not only is it a serious issue, but it is unfortunately ubiquitous to our society. Everywhere we go, we find vandalised public property like park benches with people's names engraved on them, and ugly looking advertisements painted on the walls of government buildings. Furthermore, littering, spitting and urinating in public places is considered normal. This poses serious health concerns.

Moreover, instead of protesting peacefully, our protests end with burned tires, broken windows, and damaged property — be it public or private. Lastly, the last year's vandalism of multiple churches in the Jaranwala district in Faisalabad

is a wake up call for us to get together and teach ourselves ethics, civic sense and civic responsibilities so that such incidences may never happen again.

A lack of civic sense also leads to racism which is a phenomenon in which one group of people considers themselves as superior to other groups. Although the issue of racism is often overlooked, but that does not mean that it's not present in our society. The most common form of racism done in our society is in the forms of jokes. Most of the jokes we come across on the television, social media and WhatsApp groups are racist. They usually target Pashtuns or Punjabis. Although people don't take these jokes seriously, they can lead to bigger issues.

later on. Moreover, The words like 'gora chitta' and 'Surkh Sufaid' have positive connotations, while the word 'Kala bhuyang' is usually used negatively. Likewise, only women with a fair complexion are chosen as models, actresses, and news anchors. This shows our blatant lack of civic sense. More examples include: Afghan students who are studying in our universities, are called names like Terrorists, Fundamentalist, and drugdealer; Deprivation of Pakistanis of African origin (sheedis); and threatening of Hazara people in Balochistan. It is very unfortunate that in the 21st century, in which the whole world is against racism, our society does not even consider racism a problem at all. It is a clear indication that we lack civic sense.

Another manifestation of a lack of civic sense in our society is corruption. It has destroyed the whole social and political fabric of Pakistan.

Unfortunately, corruption is so ingrained in our society that an honest person cannot get their work done without resorting to some form of corruption.

On the government front, from ministers at the top of hierarchy to desk clerks at the bottom are ^{all} involved in embezzlement, bribery, fraud, extortion and nepotism. They are all either the representatives of people or civil servants. If they even had some semblance of civic sense, they would know their responsibilities towards the people, and keep away from such notorious and corrupt practices.

Moreover, if we knew that taxation is the back bone of any economy, and without proper taxation, a major chunk of revenues ~~are~~ never reach the government exchequer. But due to a lack of civic sense, majority of the people and businesses evade taxes. They do this by either not registering their businesses, or, by paying lower taxes. This is the reason why Pakistan's Tax-to-GDP ratio has never reached the minimum 15% mark. This puts a lot of pressure on the economy and the government has to resort to acquiring loans from foreign lenders. Another major type of corruption in our society is the selling of votes during elections. Corrupt politicians often try to buy votes from people by giving them

small sums of money. And people sell their notes due to a lack of civic sense. If only they knew the value of their notes, they would not sell them. This and all the other forms of corruption have destroyed our society and is obstructing our path to progress.

Up till now, we have seen the ills that have been manifested in our society due to a lack of civic sense. Now, we will discuss how it is impeding the progress of our country, and is pushing it backwards economically, politically and democratically.

The lack of civic sense and its manifestations — corruption, tax evasion, vandalism — is hampering our economic

progress. Corruption and tax evasion has put a major dent in our economy. Our GDP per capita is USD 1,464 compared to the global average of USD 10,589. Inflation has increased to an all time high at 29.5%. These are dire statistics. Moreover, Vandalism, racism and intolerance has created a bad image of our country internationally which has resulted into a decline in tourism, which used to be one of the major sources of bringing foreign currency. Likewise, the image of Pakistan as a corrupt state has lowered foreign investments in our country. Our economy cannot foster unless we get some civic sense into the heads of our people.

Secondly, intolerance, racism and corruption has caused

never ending political instability
Corruption in the form of
vote selling and buying has
directly affected the democratic
process in Pakistan. This selling
of votes leads to the creation
of corrupt governments, which
halt the economic progress of
our country due to their
embezzlements and repressive
policies. Furthermore, intolerance
has turned the whole political
process into a toxic mess. The
party in power, resort to
heavy handed tack tactics towards
their political opponents. And
the opposition, instead of
respectfully criticizing the
government policies, resort to
street protests and 'dharnas',
which always result in
vandalism and political polariza-
tion. All this back and forth
bickering between government

and opposition results in the general public becoming fed up with the whole political process.

Finally, all these issues lead to brain drain. All those people who have some civic sense get fed up with the country, and try to emigrate from it. These people usually include talented and skilled individuals, who could have been an asset for the country. If we are not careful, all the talented and skilled people will leave the country and leave it in the hands of corrupt politicians and business-owners, which will be the death of Pakistan.

It is pertinent to overcome the ills caused by a lack of civic sense. In order to achieve this, it has been recommended that civic education should be introduced as a separate subject in schools at all levels. Secondly, the government should devise institutional mechanisms for capacity building. It can initiate effective consultations with socio-political scientists, members of civil society, including national and international partners. Lastly, the provincial governments should legislate the bill for mandatory Civic Education in respective provinces. By following these recommendations and more, we can curb the contemporary ills caused by the lack of civic education and put our country back on the path to progress.
