

ISSUE PAPER

Good Governance-An Elusive Dream in Pakistan



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PAKISTAN

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Issue Paper

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Introduction

Pakistan, a nation teeming with untapped potential, holds within its grasp the power to astonish its citizens with the bountiful harvest of true independence. Sadly, the realization of fundamental rights such as respect for religious beliefs, freedom of expression, safety, equality, and liberation from the shackles of feudal lords and elites remains an elusive dream. The echoes of untapped potential and unfulfilled promises reverberate through the hearts of its people, longing for a brighter future where justice and freedom prevail.

According to Rafi (2017), governance is the control of a nation's administrative, political, and economic issues. It aids in the efficient operation of the governmental apparatus. But at times, the sacrifices made by tens of thousands of migrants in 1947 often appear to have been in vain.

Remarkably, the other nations, which were liberated about the same time with virtually identical history, are making rapid advancements while Pakistan is staggering with an unclear course. Right after independence, Pakistan; conceived as an Islamic democratic state, has embarked on a tumultuous journey that has traversed twisting paths in the realm of governance.

The political landscape reflects a complex

arena of ever-evolving dynamics, marked by shifting tides, elusive stability, and the enduring influence of political leaders and establishment holds a profound impact on the course of events (Adnan & Fatima, 2018). Although there are several explanations, the agreement is that a leadership crisis is causing bad governance.

Key Elements of Good Governance

Independence, public participation, national consistency, national integration, constitutional supremacy, institutional supremacy, strong foundation, independent judiciary, media independence and socioeconomic development are key elements of Good Governance for a country to thrive.

The World Bank Economist, Kaufmann, defined governance as ...the traditions and institutions by which authority in a country is exercised Kaufmann 2003, (UNDP) describes the term governance as the “implementation of economic, political, and administrative authority to direct the affairs of a country at all levels.

It encompasses the mechanisms, procedures, and establishments, through which citizens and groups express their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations, and mediate their differences” (United Nation, 2015). It would be fair to conclude that it is good governance when a nation’s leadership successfully leads to citizens’ happiness and contentment, without necessarily focusing on material gain (Israr, 2006).

Governance Issues and Their Impact

However, there continues to be agreement on a few important metrics leading to bad

governance, including accountability, good financial management, transparency, rule of law, the staging of fair elections, census, openness and transparency, ethics, freedom of expression, religious tolerance, and maintaining merit.

Although there have been times when the nation made some progress, many important issues went unaddressed, such as land reforms, decentralization, corruption, fiscal management, law enforcement, taxation, and monetary policies. Pakistan has never been characterized as being, well-run.

Lack of short- and long-term sustainable planning, setting time-oriented goals and their vigilance have never been the priority at various governmental levels. The first constitution of Pakistan was drafted after seven years of its inception. Military interventions have caused economic and political crises multiple times throughout history (Tufail, 2018).

Economic and Social Consequences of Weak Governance

According to (OHCHR) good governance and human rights are to be established in the domain of democratic institutes, service distribution, rule of law and anti-corruption. Inopportunistly Pakistan’s recent economic, political, and social challenges have been caused by weak governance. Political and social instability resulting in a 47.5% spike in inflation, an increase in interest rates to 21%, devaluation of PK rupee against the US dollar, and banks refusing to provide letters of credit.

The stand-by agreement program approved by the IMF Executive Board after months of uncertainty is a make-shift arrangement to support immediate efforts to stabilize

Pakistan's economy and guard against shocks while creating space to spend on social and developmental initiatives.

Despite efforts to boost economic growth, Pakistan's GDP growth rate has always significantly remained below potential. Inadequate revenue collection, structural problems, and governance issues hindered the development of important sectors and investment prospects.

Unreasonably, the political and legal crisis of the recent period provided justification for human rights violations, grating on the nerves of ordinary residents, who appear to be aggrieved with how the country is managed throughout the instability.

Woefully, Pakistan does not provide favorable environment to inculcate suitable legitimate structures and institutions along with political administration and governmental processes responsible for responding to the rights and needs of its people.

International Models for Good Governance

In various regions, it is not uncommon to witness a leadership style that transcends self-interest and personal gains, one that prioritizes the welfare of citizens through a commitment to good governance. This form of leadership, characterized by its responsiveness, fairness, responsibility, and accountability, have played a pivotal role in driving the economic and governmental soundness of these nations:

- a) Lee Kaun Yew ruled Singapore with an iron grip from 1959 to 1990, eradicated corruption and inefficiencies. Built a country with common ideals and promoted racial, cultural, and religious harmony (Lau, 2015). A robust economy, luring international investment, and promoting labor peace were among his top priorities. By working together, maintaining order, and practicing good governance, Singapore's per capita income rose to being second only to Japan in East Asia, and it became a major financial hub in South Asia. Singapore under Lee Kuan Yew's leadership developed into a wealthy country renowned for its sound government and strong economy.
- b) Under Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum's direction, Dubai has developed into a world-renowned metropolis known for its superior educational system, robust rule of law, and alluring commercial possibilities. He changed the economy from being reliant on oil to being based on business and tourism, making it a popular travel destination for people all over the world (Bitar, 2020). Dubai's ascent to a major international center for trade, banking, and tourism has been fueled by Sheikh Mohammed's innovative leadership and dedication to excellence.
- c) In 1981, Malaysia's Prime Minister Mahathir bin Mohamad made the decision to place importance on the success of the country than on personal riches. Malaysia made great growth and development under his leadership, owing to his extraordinary insight and strong administration. Mahathir made Malaysia into an economically competitive nation with effective policies, physical infrastructure investments, with a stress on human capital development. His careful budgetary management, policy implementation, and anti-corruption initiatives also added to the development of

the nation (Atory, 1997). Mahathir's legacy continues to serve as an example of the transformational potential of leadership in spurring economic development.

- d) Arvind Kejriwal CM Delhi has achieved remarkable progress for the province by using his bureaucratic skills (Sharma, 2018). Under his leadership, the government implemented policies aimed at benefiting the "common man," as reflected in the party's name, 'Aam Admi'. The Chief Minister and his team embraced a disciplined and austere lifestyle. Significant investments were made in the healthcare and education sectors, resulting in improved access and quality of services. Free healthcare facilities were made available to all residents, prompting a shift from private to public schools due to the enhanced standards of government-run institutions. Likewise, every resident enjoys the privilege of receiving 20,000 liters of water per month, ensuring a continuous and uninterrupted water supply. Remarkably, Delhi/federation stands out as the sole province/city in India to achieve such exceptional levels of efficient administration.
- e) Notwithstanding its relatively recent formation, the current Finnish government has already demonstrated remarkable efficiency, as evidenced by public opinion surveys indicating a high level of satisfaction with its performance. Its global rankings are 0.89 out of 1.0. It has the fourth most limited government and has the fourth-highest efficiency rate in the world.

Achievements of Muslims in Good Governance

Good governance by Muslim rulers has also left an indelible mark:

- a) Umar bin Khattab, the second Rashidun Caliph (634-644 AD), commanded an extraordinary expansion of Muslim sovereignty, defeating the Sasanian and Byzantine Empires. Umar was revered as a righteous leader who exemplified the ideals of Islam and who had complete authority over his subjects. His choice to remove Khalid bin Waleed from command during a conflict was uncontested. As a result of his administrative skill and dedication to justice, Umar cemented his status as a model ruler and made a significant contribution to Muslim history (Ahmad, 2001).
- b) Despite having a brief rule, Omar bin Abdul Aziz, the eighth caliph of the Umayyad dynasty, oversaw a significant shift by adopting asceticism. He eliminated unfair taxes, encouraged equity, and saw a considerable rise in revenue (Sali, 2019). His citizens lived in peace and prosperity under his righteous reign, with rigorous responsibility and severe penalties for corruption. Omar's legacy serves as an example of excellent leadership and the beneficial effects that it may have on society.
- c) Jalal-ud-din Muhammad Akbar, one of the Mughal rulers, governed India from 1556 until 1605. Despite his lack of education, he wisely chose his advisors (The Nine Gems, Navratans). He reigned so well with their assistance that he is known in history as "Akbar the Great."

Some Glimpses of Governance in Pakistan

Pakistan, with its large population and technical achievements, has experienced periods of prosperity, showcasing its capacity for good governance and to lead among Muslim nations.

- a) Large dams like Tarbella and Mangla were built in the 1960s, which alleviated the lack of water and energy issues. The national airline, PIA, served as an example for other nations. In addition to allowing citizens to vote in local government elections, numerous nations examined and adopted Pakistan's five-year development program model (Gabol and Chandio, 2020).
- b) In 1974, the nation started its nuclear program, which eventually led to Pakistan becoming a nuclear power in 1998.
- a) The administrations of General Zia and General Musharraf sustain through their main source of economic stability from Washington's financial support. The preservation and advancement of US interests resulted in the nation's economic stability and advancement (Raza et al., 2021). Subsequently military governments also had financial difficulties because of the isolation imposed by the US and its allies, complicating the question of governance within the country.
- b) The tenure of Prime Minister Mohammed Khan Junejo (1985–1987) demonstrated a brief time of just government, characterized by progressive deeds. He played an important part in Pakistan's political scene during a pivotal era in its history--the withdrawal of Soviet troops--but was dismissed for not bowing to the dictator's desires.

Some Positive Institutional Measures Taken

Several governments in Pakistan have implemented diverse initiatives that have had a positive impact on the country's population. These ingenuities, representing a range of policies and actions, have collectively contributed to the betterment of the nation:

- a) The National Rural Support Program was established in 1991 and empowered rural communities via grassroots development activities.
- b) Motorway police were founded in 1997 and were given the extra responsibility of monitoring the national highway (N-5) for professional excellence.
- c) The creation of the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) in 2000 completely overhauled the nation's identity system, making it reliable, secure, and widely available.
- d) The Punjab Education Sector Reform Program (2003-2003) was successfully implemented with an emphasis on raising educational standards and expanding access to education for everyone.
- e) Benazir Income Support Program (BISP), established in 2008 improved social welfare by offering financial support to society's most disadvantaged groups.
- f) The 18th Amendment to the Constitution, which took effect in 2010, gave the provinces important new powers, boosting their autonomy and promoting local administration.
- g) The health Card was introduced in KP in 2015, and other provinces (except for Sindh) following suit, tremendously

benefiting the underprivileged.

Politics and Governance

- a) Politics has influenced the country's government from its inception. Pakistan joined SEATO and CENTO to identify itself with the US, which led in the USSR taking a hostile position towards Pakistan in the Kashmir issue (Mumtaz et al, 2018).
- b) Martial law was imposed in 1958, which further damaged democratic institutions and resulted in a protracted period of military control. The ensuing military operations and the ouster of the Prime Ministers harmed political structures and increased military control (Baloch and Gaho, 2013).
- c) The Awami League gained most seats in East Pakistan in the general elections of 1970. They were denied power, which sparked uproar and military intervention. India seized the opportunity, which led to a war and the division of East Pakistan into Bangladesh.
- d) Furthermore, the nationalization of the private sector by Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in 1972 had unfavorable effects and caused a sizable setback for the nation's industrial and educational sectors, which were exhibiting encouraging growth (Saeed, 1988).
- e) Pakistan's unqualified alliance with the United States, the West, and chosen Muslim nations to fight Soviet meddling in Afghanistan had serious ramifications for its people. This reckless support, which was given without adequate review and went beyond what was appropriate, involved Pakistan in a protracted battle

(Mumtaz et al., 2018).

- f) The unconstitutional General Zia's administration exploited the Afghan War, repressed democratic institutions, and hindered groups like the MRD (Movement for the Restoration of Democracy) from growing, which caused problems for the people. Supporting extremist groups during the 1980s and 1990s undermined the nation's security and stability by promoting militancy and extremism.
- g) General Musharraf's ten-year rule, characterized by its illegitimate nature, had significant repercussions for Pakistan's democratic institutions and overall development. His regime not only hindered the progress of democratic governance but also nurtured a militaristic ethos within the country. Furthermore, Pakistan's historical involvement in conflicts, such as the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 and the battle against the Taliban in 2001, exacted a considerable toll. By aligning with the United States and its allies during these conflicts, Pakistan faced severe consequences, including a rise in hostility from Afghan leadership and the Afghan populace towards Pakistan (Weinbaum and Harder, 2008).
- h) Pakistan's involvement in both the conflicts in Afghanistan has left it in a complex situation, where both Taliban supporters and opponents hold grievances against the country. The abrupt withdrawal of U.S. forces from Afghanistan has exacerbated border security concerns and emboldened the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), leading to an increase in terrorist attacks and instability in the region (Muzaffar,

2021).

- i) Quota system loop continuously time and after, being first implemented in 1948 for a brief time. Political parties have used this system to their advantage in large centers, causing turmoil and rioting.
- j) Under the PTI administration, the hybrid system in place yielded unconventional growth marked by inefficiency, economic downturn, and governance issues (Ali 2021). This environment contributed to the rise of the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) as an opposition force. However, when the PDM took control, their handling of the situation was marred by mismanagement, nearly pushing the country to the brink of default. Additionally, the events of May 9, 2023, were mishandled, resulting in forced abductions, human rights violations, heightened instability, and increased uncertainty.
- k) Political parties in Pakistan at times prioritize political affiliation above competence when filling critical positions, resulting in the selection of ineffective individuals. This practice disregards the expertise needed for these roles (Faisal and Jafri, 2017).
- l) Feudal dispensation and non-implementation of land reforms in the early years of establishment created a big gap in the development process.
- m) Religious fundamentalism and human rights violations building oppression are also one of the reasons for instability and lack of trust in the government.
- n) Lately, a concerning trend has emerged

where numerous court orders are being disregarded. Simultaneously, the uncertainty surrounding election dates, coupled with varying political interpretations of constitutional matters, is eroding the authority of the state.

Leadership and Governance

In the study by Khalid 2014, she identified that ethical standards of leaders have high impact on the public and private sector organizations. Pakistan is experiencing a serious leadership crisis, with a political landscape tainted by corruption and opportunism (Adnan and Fatima, 2018).

This pervasive climate has discouraged sincere and upright people from entering politics, resulting in the service being dominated by those with dubious objectives and unethical standards. Along with overt uprisings and military control, the establishment's covert meddling has hampered Pakistan's political leadership's development and the country's institutionalization of governance.

Beyond their assigned spheres of influence, the governing class exerts power and shapes outcomes in several areas. These elements impede the nation's ability to advance economically and politically.

Corruption and Governance

Corruption of all sizes, from mega to moderate to minor, infects all levels of government as well as all spheres of society, including the public, private, political, judicial, business, and even religious institutions (Javaid, 2010). Corruption influences every sector of the state from small business transactions to large business deals, and from governing the union council to governing the state.

The country is ranked 140th out of 180 in the world for the level of corruption, which permeates all branches of government. Corruption has spread across society, from small-scale bribes to massive kickbacks, which has resulted in bad governance throughout the nation (Faisal and Jafri, 2017).

When new enterprises or plans are given with the potential to provide employment opportunities and income to the region, higher authorities and politicians frequently want their portion, resulting in the project being diluted or neutralized before it ever begins.

Rich and corrupt feudal lords actively purge the general population of their money with the help of politicians (Tufail, 2018). Corrupt officials play their role in adding insult to injury. In addition, these elements have an impact on state governance. The corrupt class buys off politicians so they will make decisions that benefit elites and the corrupt rather than the general population.

Judiciary and Governance

Judiciary has consistently worked to uphold the rule of law, protect citizens' civil freedoms, and protect their fundamental rights. It is necessary to guarantee the judiciary's independence to carry out these duties successfully.

Unfortunately, due to legal framework instructions and temporary constitutional orders periodically issued by military leaders, Pakistan's court faced significant obstacles to its efficient operation (Bhatti and Shaheen, 2018). The clashes between executive and judiciary compromise constitutional supremacy and disturb the country economically and politically.

The legal system has flaws, including drawn-

out procedures and a reputation for favoring the affluent and powerful. On a scale of 1 to 140, the nation ranks 129th in terms of judicial effectiveness. The idea of necessity, which is frequently used to justify military rule, is one external pressure that is seen to have an impact on many court rulings (Fatima et al., 2022).

Pakistan is confronting serious threats from within, outside, and international powers which are further hampering the way towards good governance. Despite its war against terrorism, Pakistan is also combating, shortage of food, energy, and employment.

Successive governments discard policies of formal incumbencies, trying their new approaches resulting in delays in procedures, inciting justices, and mismanagement of resources (Ahmad 2012).

The Way Forward

As evidenced by worldwide best practices and Muslim history, developing good governance is not an insurmountable endeavor. The crucial component is the willingness, assiduity, team-selection, and leadership commitment to the nation, which lays the groundwork for successful outcomes that result from capacity building, grooming, and accountability.

Still, when a country finds itself at the edge of economic collapse, experiencing intense political unrest, and threatened by a persistent insurgency in at least two provinces—organized crime pervasiveness—there is an urgent need for decisive, unbiased, and fair actions.

Such conditions demand unwavering efforts that must be taken at all costs to restore calm, primarily address the underlying causes of discontent, and guarantee the wellbeing of individuals. Fair, leadership can shape a brighter future in following key domains:

a) Justice System

Reconsider the current legal system. Those who purposefully stall the process should pay a hefty charge. Every issue should have a deadline by which it must be resolved or decided. Judges need to take responsibility for their poor judgement.

b) Police Reforms

The Supreme Court Police Reforms Committee's recommendations must be carried out in full moving ahead. To bridge the gap between the police and the public, community policing ought to be put into practice.

c) Accountability

Unfortunately, a large portion of our government's agencies get away with crimes and are not held accountable. The application of the rule of law must not be selective and there should be an element of certainty.

d) Equity and Inclusivity

Everybody should be given the same chance to maintain and advance their welfare. Everybody should feel that they are being treated equally to everyone else in society.

e) Rule of Law

The nation's legal system must be upheld impartially, particularly when it comes to human rights law. By reducing unnecessary intervention, operations may be simplified, and each department is given the freedom to efficiently carry out its task.

f) Transparency

Policies must be executed in accordance

with the laws and regulations. The policy should be available to everyone, especially those it affects.

g) Unity of Command-Operational Autonomy

An effective governance model entails civil political leadership leading the country, with the military focused on safeguarding territorial borders. All government departments should function independently and efficiently, free from external interference.

h) Public Participation in Political Decision Making.

Political decision-making involving the public can have a good effect on Pakistani governance. The ability of policymakers to make decisions that are in the best interests of the public could be improved by public support and collaboration.

Conclusion

Pakistan's struggle with weak governance stems from corruption, inter-institutional rivalry, and a lack of accountability. To achieve good governance, we must prioritize competence over nepotism, focus on internal issues, and decentralize power to local bodies. Adherence to the constitution, rule of law, transparency, and public service should guide our actions.

It's imperative to understand that the soul of a nation thrives in good governance, and its core resides in the steadfast commitment to principles rather than the empowerment of individuals.

"True excellence is not about outperforming others, but about consistently outperforming yourself in service to the greater good." - Marcus Aurelius

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Dr. Syed Kaleem Imam is a former civil servant, known for his extensive contributions in law enforcement, academics, and organizational development. He has a PhD in Politics and

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He held the position of Inspector General of Police (IGP) in several regions such as Punjab, Islamabad, and Sindh, further serving twice on the National Highways and Motorways. As the Federal Secretary of the Narcotics Control Ministry, he played a key role in formulating national policies that harmonized with international strategies.

He has been the Chief of Operations in Mozambique, Planning Coordinator in Liberia, and UN Police Commissioner in Darfur, Sudan. His service was honored with three UN peace medals, the Quaid Azam Police Medal, the President's Police Medal, and the Sitara Imtiaz and Tamagha-i-Imtiaz.

Moreover, Imam has been instrumental in shaping academic discourse through his numerous national and international publications to his credit and frequently participating in public forums, training institutes, and media outlets. Besides being a security analyst, he is also a law and governance consultant, a strategist, and a policy practitioner.



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