



## GOOD GOVERNANCE: PROSPEROUS PAKISTAN

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States must have an independent effective governance structure to exercise power in the management of social and economic resources. The political and economic stability is highly dependent on administration. Unfortunately, Pakistan could not ensure good governance due to a lack of accountability, transparency, low economic performance and non-performance of bureaucracy.

Governance has been well-defined to refer to processes and structures that are designed to ensure transparency, accountability, responsiveness, stability, the rule of law, inclusiveness, equity, empowerment and broad-based participation. "Governance is the relationship between the state and civil society that caters to the issues concerning national interest."<sup>1</sup> As indicated by Dr. Ishrat Hussain: "The better the governance, the higher the economic growth rate."<sup>2</sup>

Good governance expands economic profits and speeds up economic evolutions in a globalized society. Gradually, economists and relevant policymakers are familiar with the importance of governance and institutions for economic progress and development.<sup>3</sup> Pakistan was amongst the top economic performers among the underdeveloped countries in the world in the first forty years of its existence. However, the problem of governance accelerated in the 1990s. Pakistan's economic performance has significantly lagged behind those of its immediate neighbours.<sup>4</sup> Some of the major issues related to governance are as follows:

- Little to no accountability for state institutions is present in Pakistan; particularly, instability in the political system of Pakistan has reduced accountability. Decision-making is undemocratic and highly centralized.<sup>5</sup>
- A conducive environment in governance is one in which citizens have access to the information complemented with mechanisms essential to hold political leaders liable to accountability and where these political leaders also have access to the tools and privileges to manage service delivery efficiently. In Pakistan, there is a lack of political will to increase openness and transparency of the decision-making process. Citizens have a right to information, but the government has consistently infringed on these rights. Furthermore, citizens of Pakistan have only restricted access to information on general public financial management.
- From the past few years, it has been observed that in some institutes, bureaucracy is politicized, which hinders their transparent performance, impacts the functioning of bureaucracy as a whole, and results in system disruption.



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Pakistan's governance structure is weak and witnessing numerous ups and downs. Moreover, Pakistan also performs below its regional competitors on various institutional and governance indicators. In order to improve governance, there is a need to take stock of the present situation. Accountability and transparency should be taken into account, and the provision of speedy justice to citizens must be ensured. There are institutes, such as NADRA (passport and National identity card system), Motorway Police, etc., that improved accountability and transparency by introducing e-governance in their departments. The maximum use of technology helped increase performance and form a good governance structure.

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There are the following key points that can help improve governance:

- Maximum use of technology and a shift from traditional governance into e-governance in public service delivery along with improving economy, the governance concerns can be reduced.
- There is a need for acceptance of digitalization and digital literacy in government departments to ensure maximum transparency and accountability in the process of moving a file among ministries and other matters.
- As discussed earlier, a state's policies must be based on the idea that effective government must be transparent, inclusive, accessible, and focused on the needs of its citizens. These parameters can contribute to the reduction of problems like governance. Otherwise, the governance concerns will remain stagnant, resulting in a negative impact on the growth and development of Pakistan, as a country's success is majorly based on economic growth.<sup>6</sup>

Good governance is a difficult area to achieve in totality; however, to ensure it, efforts must be made to make it better. Good governance will lead Pakistan to a better economic state, thus affording job opportunities and improving and uplifting the life of a common citizen.

## References

<sup>1</sup> "Concept of Governance," International Bureau of Education, UNESCO, February 24, 2016.

<sup>2</sup> Mario Lungo (ed.), *Gobernabilidad urbana en Centroamerica*, San Jose: FLACSO GURI, 1998.

<sup>3</sup> Ishrat Husain, *Governing the Ungovernable: Institutional Reforms for Democratic Governance*, Pakistan: Oxford University Press, 2019.

<sup>4</sup> Rashida Haq and Uzma Zia, "Governance and Pro-poor growth: Evidence from Pakistan," *The Pakistan Development Review*, 45:4, 2006.

<sup>5</sup> G. T. Abed and S. Gupta (eds), "Governance, Corruption, and Economic Performance," IMF, September 23, 2002. Available at <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/nft/2002/govern/> (Accessed December 2022).

<sup>6</sup> S. Shafiqat, "Pakistani Bureaucracy: Crisis of Governance and Prospects of Reform," *The Pakistan Development Review*, 38:4, 1999.