

# GOOD GOVERNANCE IN PAKISTAN: CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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**Accepted date:** 27 July 2018

**Published date:** 15 September 2018

## **To cite this document:**

Imran, M., & Nordin, R. (2018). Good Governance in Pakistan: Challenges and Recommendations. *International Journal of Law, Government and Communication*, 3(10), 01-11.

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**Abstract:** *Good governance is necessary for human development and poverty elimination as it forms a well-functioning public sector that follows the standards of transparency, participation, ownership and accountability to civilians. It forms the transparent and accountable administration of public resources that decrease corruption and ensure that public resources are utilised for the benefit of all citizens in recognition of their fundamental rights. Good governance facilitates an understanding of civil, cultural, economic, social and political rights while holding leaders to account. Hence, good governance and human development are interlinked. This paper defines the concept of good governance. It illustrates the elements necessary for good governance and identifies the problems of good governance in Pakistan. This paper demonstrates that bad governance in Pakistan has created lawlessness, social, economic and political failure. This paper concludes with suggestions to overcome the problems of bad governance in Pakistan.*

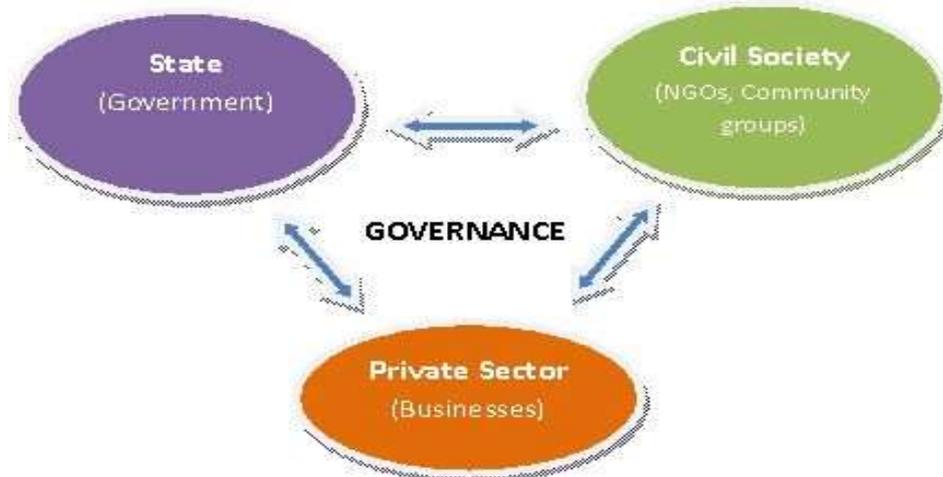
**Keywords:** *Accountability, Challenges, Corruption, Good Governance, Human Development*

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## **Introduction**

The concept of governance is as old as human civilisation. These days it is used commonly to describe the process of decision-making and implementing those decisions in several contexts such as corporate governance, international governance, national governance and local governance. As governance is the process of decision-making and implementation, an examination of governance emphasises the formal and informal actors who participate in decision-making and its implementation (Weiss, 2000).

Figure 1 shows the actors of governance.



**Figure: 1**

Governance and good governance are popular terms in development literature. Bad governance is a root cause of inequity in any society. According to the report of United Nations Task Team on the post-2015 UN Development Agenda, “governance refers to the exercise of political and administrative authority at all levels to manage a country’s affairs”. It includes the means, procedures, ways and institutions, through which people express their interests, exercise their legitimate rights, know their obligations and reconcile their differences (United Nation, 2015). Currently, Pakistan is encountering several governance issues which are hindering the sustainable growth of the state. The World Economic Forum (WEF) has placed Pakistan 122 out of 144 countries on the global index of competitiveness. According to the Global Competitiveness Report (2016-2017) of the World Economic Forum (WEF), Pakistan’s ranking in the health and primary education was 128, higher education and training (123), goods market efficiency (117), labour market efficiency (129), financial market sophistication (107), technological readiness (119), market size (29), business sophistication (95), and innovation (75) (Mubarak, 2016). Pakistan ranks last at 122 among neighbouring South Asian states. India leads at 39, followed by Sri Lanka (71), Bhutan (97), Nepal (98) and Bangladesh (106) (Mubarak, 2016).

These figures represent a dire image of governance at the domestic and international level. It is a recognised fact that bad governance tends to corruption. It also determines the standard of living of a society, makes arrangements to make and implement decisions, mediate or reconcile differences, and exercise legitimate rights and obligations. It includes the processes, systems, approaches and institutions that determine restrictions and give incentives. The term governance includes all approaches to governing a country (Ahmed, 2012).

The United Nations Development Programme (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, met their obligations and mediate their differences” (United Nation, 2015). The World Bank economist, Kaufmann, defined governance as “the traditions and institutions by which authority in a country is exercised” (Kaufmann, 2003).

Decentralisation, corruption and social and economic expenditures are three key components of governance in Pakistan requiring the immediate attention of the administration. The governance problem is not limited to these three parts. These three broad areas of governance include taxation and monetary policies, fiscal management, energy, law enforcement and decentralisation of power to the local administration which are challenges facing Pakistan. Despite significant legislative amendments, governance is still a significant challenge for the bureaucracy and politicians (Asghar, 2013).

Numerous studies have identified several shortcomings in tax policy and government as Pakistan's grave challenges. The 18<sup>th</sup> amendment in the Constitution of Pakistan has given independence to the provinces relating to education, health, water and sanitation, transportation and agriculture facilities. Provinces are independent in employing low ranked employees while Federal services are under the Central Superior Services (CSS). This functional decentralisation is supplemented by incredible political, economic and administrative changes at provincial and national levels. Despite efforts toward administrative decentralisation, in Pakistan, a few power-hungry politicians seek to secure their authority by not giving up control to local bodies (Asghar, 2013).

The present research adopts qualitative analysis that recognizes the importance of locating the research within particular social, cultural and historical contexts. During the course of this research, primary sources such as books, journal articles and other relevant research materials are referred. Secondary sources of information such as research papers, magazines and electronic media are also examined. The methodology adopted for this research work is interpretive, evaluative and analytical.

### **Symptoms of Bad Governance**

If decisions are not implemented effectively, and the public voice is unheard, it gives rise to several evils such as nepotism, fraud, corruption and the misuse of national resources. It decreases national resources and increases poverty. If left unchecked, it will mark the fall of the nation. Bad governance is the root cause of the downfall of nations including Pakistan (Rehman, 2011).

The major symptoms of bad governance include, among others:

1. Failure to separate between public and private resources thereby allowing public resources to be used for private gain.
2. Failure to create a probable structure of law and government behaviour encouraging uncertainty in the application of rules and laws.
3. Disproportionate laws, procedures and certifying requirements which impede markets and boost rent-seeking.
4. Priorities contradictory to development and causing the mismanagement of resources.
5. Hard, rigid and non-transparent decision-making (World Bank, 1992).

### **Actors of Governance**

As governance is the process of decision-making by which decisions are implemented, its analysis involves formal and informal actors taking part in decision-making and the formal and informal frameworks in which the decisions are implemented.

The government is the principal actor in governance. Other actors taking part in governance may differ depending on the type of government. For example, in rural parts of a state, other actors may comprise powerful landlords, organisations of farmers, co-ops, NGOs, religious leaders, investing or sponsoring institutions, political parties and the army. The condition in cities or urban areas is more complicated. At the national level, besides the above-mentioned actors, the media, international donors and multinational companies could influence the decision-making process (United Nations).

All actors besides government and the army form part of the civil society. In various countries, besides civil society, organised crime syndicates also influence the decision-making process especially in urban areas and at the national level. At the national level, informal decision-making actors for instance “kitchen cabinets”, informal guides or advice-givers may influence decision-making. In urban areas, organised crime syndicates for example “land mafia” could influence the decision-making process. In some rural areas, powerful local families carry significant influence. Such forms of informal decision-making result in corrupt practices (United Nations). Figure 2 illustrates the actors that influence decision-making.



**Figure: 2**

Source: <https://www.slideshare.net/manishdv8/good-governance-leads-to-a-flourishing-society>.

**Characteristics of Good Governance**

Good governance is accountable, consensus-oriented, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive, participatory, transparent, responsive to the needs of the people and follows the rule of law. It ensures that corruption is decreased, the opinions of minorities are considered, and the views of the helpless in society are addressed in decision-making. It is also receptive to the current and upcoming needs of the people (UNDP, 1997). Figure 3 illustrates the elements of good governance.



**Figure: 3**

*Source: UNDP (1997) Governance for Sustainable Human Development. United Nations Development Programme*

The concept of good governance was explained by former United Nations Commission on Human Rights in its Resolution 2000/64. The Commission recognised basic elements of good governance as follows: -

- i. Transparency
- ii. Responsibility
- iii. Accountability
- iv. Participation
- v. Responsiveness

By connecting good governance to sustainable human development, the underlying principles that guide it include accountability, participation and the enjoyment of civil rights and denying narrow or unbending approaches to development assistance. Resolution 2000/64 stands as an implied authorisation of the rights-based methodology to development. This resolution connects good governance to an environment facilitating the enjoyment of human rights and promoting growth and sustainable human development. It underscores the significance of development assistance for promoting good governance in states requiring foreign aid (OHCHR).

### **Relationship Among Good Governance, Human Rights and Development**

Good governance, human rights and development are interlinked. Human rights provide standards to guide the government's political and social actors. They also provide rules against these actors regarding their accountability. Moreover, human rights principles guide the development of law-making structures, strategies, budgetary distribution plans and several other practices (Hassan 2006).

On the other hand, human rights cannot be valued and guarded sustainably without good governance. The implementation of human rights depends on a favourable environment. This comprises suitable legitimate structures and institutions along with political administration and governmental processes responsible for responding to the rights and needs of the people. The

relationship between good governance and human rights can be set in the following spheres (OHCHR).

1. Democratic institutes
2. Service distribution
3. Rule of law
4. Anti-corruption

### ***Democratic Institutes***

If human rights rules precede democratic institutions, then they create opportunities for the public to contribute to decision and policy making via formal or informal means or discussions. They also develop means for the presence of several social groups in decision-making processes and motivate civil society and the public to express their views on matters of importance to them.

### ***Service Distribution***

In distributing state services to the people, good governance augments human rights. The improvement of the state's ability to perform its duty to deliver public goods is vital to the protection of human rights values such as the right to education, health and food. Improvement plans should consider accountability, transparency, and ways for public involvement in decision-making and technically delicate policy tools to make sure that services are approachable and appropriate to all.

### ***Rule of Law***

Concerning the rule of law, good governance decisions require penal systems, courts and parliaments for effective implementation of the legislation. Good governance decisions may also comprise legitimate reform, raising public knowledge about the national and international legitimate structures and enhancing the ability or reform of institutions.

### ***Anti-Corruption***

To combat corruption, good governance emphasises accountability, transparency and participation to form anti-corruption procedures. Decisions may require forming institutions such as an anti-corruption commission, systems of intelligence sharing, and monitoring of the use of public funds by government and the implementation of strategies.

The inter-link among good governance, human rights and sustainable development has been set by the international community in various declarations and international conferences. For instance, the Declaration on the Right to Development 1986 in Article 1 states that every human being is "entitled to participate in, contribute to, and enjoy economic, social, cultural and political development".

Almost all of the world leaders in the Millennium Declaration assured their devotion to supporting democracy and enhancing the rule of law complying with internationally accepted human rights values as well as the right to development. The Committee on Economic Social and Cultural Rights declares that "good governance is essential to the realisation of all human rights, including the elimination of poverty and ensuring a satisfactory livelihood for all".

## Governance Issues in Pakistan

Several policymakers, planners and economists consider good governance is essential for sustainable growth. The current condition of Pakistan is not good as it confronts serious threats from foreign and internal powers which are directly or indirectly disturbing the process of good governance inside the country. Despite its involvement in the war against terrorism, the state is also confronting a crisis in energy, food and unemployment. The condition has further destabilised by deteriorating almost all areas of the state including education, health and industry. The separation of Bangladesh was a massive loss for Pakistan as it brought a lot of political uncertainty. The beginning of the “quota” system in the aftermath of this separation is one of the major reasons for the failure of good governance in Pakistan. It gives rise to influential or forceful political appointments and favouritism at each level. Political instability has brought upsetting consequences to Pakistan’s growth and development. Pakistan has faced several changes in the democratic system due to martial law or breaking up of the assembly before its completion. The change of the system from democracy to military rule can create difficult situations that have drastic effects on the development of executive reforms in the state. After the success of the opposition party, executive reforms were unwound. This is a common practice in Pakistan because several governments rejected the policies of previous regimes and tried to set their favourite systems which resulted in delays in the procedures, incited injustice and created the mismanagement of resources (Ahmed, 2012).

If decisions are taken on time and efficiently implemented, then they constitute good governance. Nepotism, a rigid mindset and delays in processing constitute inadequate or bad governance and leads to corruption which is prevalent in every sector in Pakistan including executive government, the judiciary and legislature as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: Top Ten Corrupt Departments of Pakistan**

Sr. No.	Ranking 2009	Ranking 2006	Ranking 2002
1.	Police	Police	Police
2.	Power	Power	Power
3.	Health	Judiciary	Taxation
4.	Land	Land	Judiciary
5.	Education	Taxation	Custom
6.	Taxation	Custom	Health
7.	Judiciary	Health	Land
8.	Local Government	Education	Education
9.	Custom	Railway	Railway
10.	Tendering	Bank	Bank

Rank 1 being the most corrupt and 10 being the least corrupt

Source: [www.pakistanthinktank.tk](http://www.pakistanthinktank.tk)

Pakistan inherited this evil of corruption from the British colonial period that rewarded lands and awards to their stalwarts which led to nepotism and corruption. This bequest persisted even after independence because few feudal lords tried to keep the people ignorant of their basic rights for instance education, food and housing which lead to rural and urban division in the electoral system benefiting the few (Husain, 2015).

As a result of widespread corruption in Pakistan, it ranked 116 out of 176 countries on the Global Corruption Perception Index (2016) as shown in Figure 4.

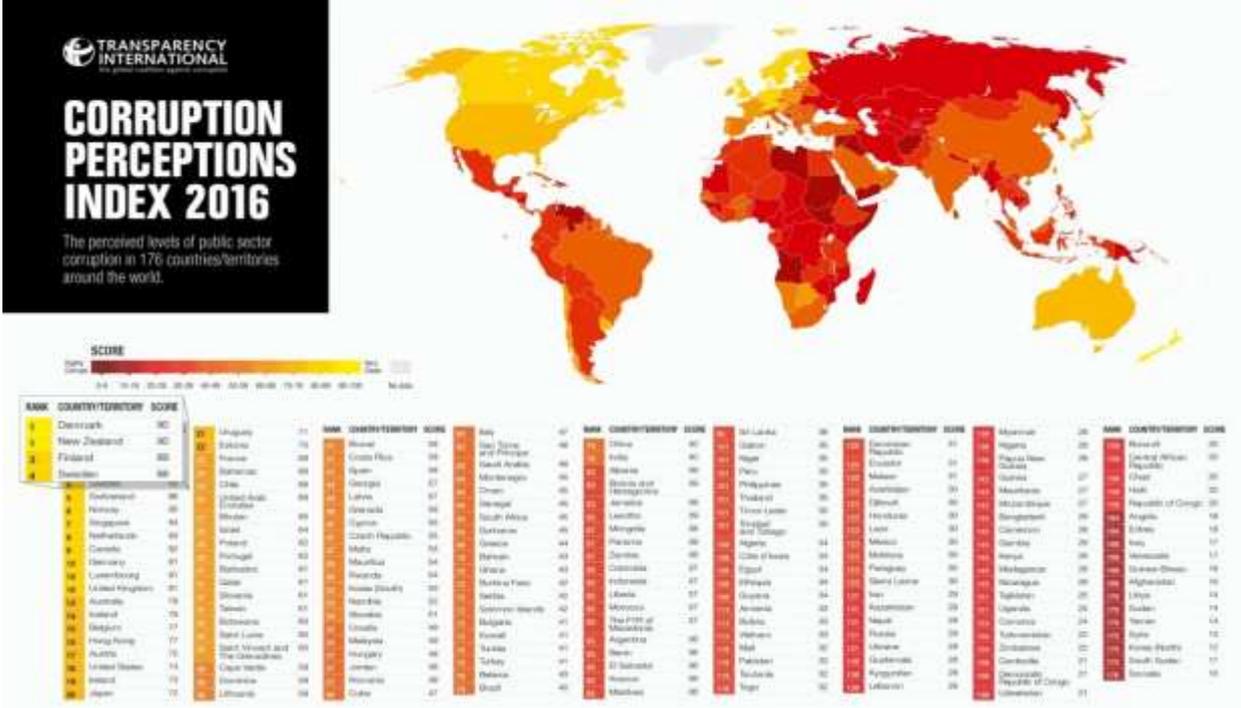


Figure: 4

Source: [www.transparency.org/cpi](http://www.transparency.org/cpi)

Pakistan’s scored 32 points on the Global Corruption Index (2016) which slightly improved from 2015 when it was given 30 points. It indicates slight improvements in the system (CPI, 2016). Table 2 shows Pakistan’s rank on the Global Corruption Perceptions Index among neighbouring South Asian countries.

Table 2: South Asian Countries Rank in Global Corruption Perception Index (2016)

South Asian Rank	Country Name	Score	Global Rank
1	Bhutan	65	27
2	India	40	79
3	Sri Lanka	36	95
3	Maldives	36	95
5	Pakistan	32	116
6	Nepal	29	131
7	Bangladesh	26	145
8	Afghanistan	15	169

Source: <[www. Transparency.org/cpi](http://www.Transparency.org/cpi)>

Bhutan is leading with 65 points while Afghanistan is at the bottom with 15 points. Although Pakistan has improved its rank compared to previous years, the situation is still alarming. It is losing over 200 billion rupees per year due to chronic government mismanagement. A survey by Transparency International lists several reasons for corruption as reflected in Table 3.

**Table 3: Transparency International Survey on Causes of Corruption - Mega & Petty**

Lack of Accountability	31.68%
Low salaries	16.54%
Monopoly of power	16.43%
Discretionary powers	12.61%
Lack of transparency	9.97%
Power of influential people	4.59%
Red –Tapism	4.28%
Others	4.9%

Source: <http://corruptioninpakistan.blogspot.com/2009/11/reasons-of-corruption.html>

The first attempt to counter corruption at the national level was made by President Farooq Ahmad Khan Laghari who established the Ehtsab Commission which was further intensified in 1997 by the Nawaz government through the establishment of the Ehtsab Bureau. General Pervez Musharraf during his military rule in 1999 established the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) having essential investigation and judicial frameworks. National anti-corruption strategy (NACS) was also established in this regime in February, 2002 for prevention, awareness and enforcement (Ayesha 2016).

## Recommendations

Pakistan is not the only state facing corruption. Other nations facing similar challenges could learn from the case of Pakistan to formulate better policies to combat corruption. Below are some suggestions that can improve good governance in Pakistan.

It is required to make the governmental institutions strong and not individuals but authorising individuals to take part in the development of sustainability. For good governance decentralisation of power from the feudal lords and elite-politicians to the local bodies is also critical need of the time. Right skills must be constituted to attract and retain the right staff.

There must be a clear separation between public and private resources so that public resources cannot be diverted for private benefit. It is necessary for sustainable growth that the government should continue the previous government's beneficial strategies for sustainability and the trend to put an end to the former government's valuable works should be stopped. Rural areas need to develop for maintaining good governance through decentralisation and awareness-raising of locals. Besides waiting for donors to assistance, the government should adopt a strategy to do it independently.

In order to reduce corruption, the national anti-corruption commission, anti-corruption courts and independent supervisory body must be established. Salaries of workers must be adequate,

and laws must be endorsed to enhance accountability and transparency to penalise the corrupt strictly. Integrated policymaking and its implementation is imperative which has been remained a major weakness.

## Conclusion

Good governance distributes the national services among the people effectively. It supports equal opportunities for economic and social development. This is supposed to be a primary obligation of any government. Unfortunately, good governance has become a nightmare for both the policymakers of Pakistan and its public. Weaknesses in the economic governance emerge from the failure of the government to plan an inclusive tax policy. The current tax policy burdens the public and favours business. There are several other things which are creating bad governance in Pakistan. The absences of comprehensive planning and budgetary policies have caused the evil of corruption and misuse of national resources. Pakistan needs to revise its strategies about the governance and management of civic matters to attain economic growth and development. The living standards of the public cannot be improved unless basic governance structures are reformed. In short, without public participation, the goal of good governance cannot be achieved. To this end, there is a need to improve their capabilities through awareness-raising and educational reforms.

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