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RESEARCH PAPER

Advancing Good Governance: Leveraging Transparency, Accountability, and Anti-Corruption Measures

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ABSTRACT

This research examines the interplay between corruption and good governance in the context of developing nations, focusing on Pakistan. Corruption's elusive nature complicates its measurement, but its adverse effects on governance are undeniable, hindering transparency and accountability, which are essential for good governance. Combining qualitative research and data from sources like the World Governance Indicators, the study explores corruption's impact. A small-scale regional comparative analysis and five interviews with public officials from various Pakistani ministries and departments provide additional insights. The findings highlight how corruption impedes governance, affecting transparency and accountability. The study also outlines initiatives by the Pakistani government to combat corruption, positioning Pakistan in the World Governance Indicators and the Transparency Perception Index. Addressing corruption is crucial for fostering effective governance and sustainable development. Proactive measures and public involvement are recommended to curb corruption and enhance governance in Pakistan.

Keywords: Accountability, Anti-Corruption, Corruption, Good Governance, Transparency Introduction

It is crucial to comprehend the dynamics of corruption to create efficient strategies to combat it, particularly in developing nations. Also, governance in any community strives for transparency through the use of economic, political, and administrative power. It essentially seeks to develop high-quality relationships between rulers and ruled. Transparency, accountability, and social inclusion serve as a foundation for a just distribution of development outcomes and sustainable resource management.

Literature Review

Governance is not a new concept; it has existed since the beginning of human society. Governance has been an integral component of human civilization since people first discovered how to live in one community or society by making decisions and adhering to certain laws, regulations, and policies to maintain law & order and peace in a shared space (Muzaffar, et. al., 2024). To ensure inclusive democracy, human development, and the accomplishment of globalization goals, the phrase "good governance" has acquired prominence in the context of the rebirth of democratic institutions (also known as the "third wave of democracy").

The World Bank holds two distinct but correlated ideas on governance. The majority of the emphasis is on "how political power is exercised to manage a nation's affairs" (Muzaffar, et. al., 2023). In the second stance, the World Bank provides a comprehensive definition of the term. Governance is defined as the "application of power in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development." The United Nations Human Development Report 2002, referring to it as democratic governance, has presented a new viewpoint on governance, which is required for greater human development (Muzaffar, & Choudhary, 2017). Good governance, in the words of Michael Johnston, is "a competent management of a country's resources and affairs in a manner that is open, transparent, accountable, equitable, and responsive to people's needs."

Governance is itself a good concept, as it says, Governance is participatory useful decision-making for the welfare of people. It is a positive concept in itself. In addition to it, a broader and wider concept emerged as 'Good Governance' in 1992 by the world bank (Malik et. al., 2023).

Later on, it started to estimate the quality of good governance in 1996 in 200 countries by worldwide governance indicators.

Clean Governance

In addition to good governance, a new concept called clean governance is being started to prioritize to reduce corruption. A bottom-up approach where cleaning of governance starts from the local level. It means not engaging in any unlawful behavior, especially corruption. As it was mentioned by Hasan & Udit (2020) that,

"Clean governance is governance free from corruption also requires certain prerequisites so that it can increase regional government accountability and prevent corruption."

Additionally, certain conditions must be met, such as the existence of a sufficient mechanism for public participation, to increase regional government accountability and combat corruption. This is closely related to how different arrangements and laws already in place governing local government have given the community a place to participate. The nature of local government will be determined by this regulation, along with the level of public participation in government operations.

The prevalence of corruption is a challenging issue to measure accurately due to societal norms that enable its existence to flourish. Consequently, corruption research often involves speculation. (Stulhofer et al., 2008). The measurement of corruption levels is frequently based on perception, although this approach has been subject to criticism. (Lambsdorff, 1999).

In order to measure good governance two major indicators, contribute to this factor as follows.

World Wide Governance Indicators

The World Bank identifies six main aspects of good governance:

Voice and Accountability: It assesses citizens' ability to participate in civic and societal political life without fear of discrimination or persecution, as well as the independence of the media.

Political Stability and the Absence of Violence/Terrorism: It assesses the likelihood of political turmoil, such as the overthrow of the government and political violence and terrorism.

Government Effectiveness: It assesses the effectiveness of governmental and administrative services, as well as the authority to design and implement policies efficiently.

The Rule of Law: It assesses the level of public trust and compliance with social rules, particularly contract fulfillment, as well as the quality of police services, human rights, courts, and the propensity for crime and violence.

Regulatory Quality: It assesses the authority's ability to promote and nurture the private sector via the development and implementation of effective policies and regulations.

Corruption control: It assesses the prevalence of corruption in society in all of its manifestations. It also tracks the privatization of state property by corporate interests and elites.

UN Principles of Good Governance

UN declared 8 principles for good governance. Political systems are identified as good governance if the following mentioned attributes are attached to it in its true essence;

- 1. Participatory;
- 2. Consistent with the rule of law;
- 3. Transparent;
- 4. Responsive;
- 5. Consensus-oriented;
- 6. Equitable and inclusive;
- 7. Effective and efficient; and
- 8. Accountable

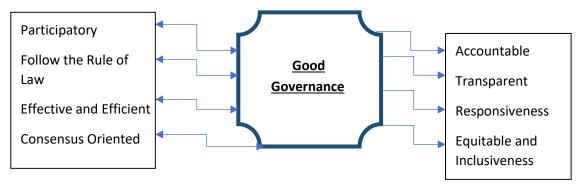


Figure 1: Principles of Good Governance (Rothstein and Teorell, 2008; UN, 2009)

Corruption

Corruption is defined as activities in which a public official's control is used for individual improvement in a mode that goes against the guidelines of the game. Since they don't need the use of governmental power, various illicit cases like deception, drug

trafficking, money laundering, and smuggled operations don't comprise corruption. However, if these actions are to prosper, then they must often involve communal officials and legislators, so these actions rarely prosper without extensive corruption.

According to the World Bank (2005), corruption can take many forms, occur at all levels of institutes, and have more scope. Grand corruption, biased corruption, mutual corruption, organizational corruption, insignificant corruption, and general corruption are all examples of corruption.

Types of Corruption

There are mainly two types of corruption. Many of the interview respondents also mentioned that corruption is not subjected to money only.

Non-financial Corruption

Most people will use multiple non-financial immoral actions to gain an advantage; hence it is harder to eliminate. With proper organizational management, corporate governance, and culture transformation, one should reduce the frequency of non-financial Corruption. If corruption is not taken care of, in the long term, unethical activities become a norm and an integral part of the corporate culture.

Financial Corruption

Financial Corruption is different and is usually straightforward and more manageable to eliminate if you follow the money trail. With a more robust auditing system and substantial control over the transaction, it is possible to avoid it.

The United Nations (2004) identifies numerous types of corruption as follows;

Bribery is providing or receiving valuable things to officials to gain a contract. Bribes are usually given to procurement officials to get orders for purchase orders and paid in cash up front.

Kickback is similar to bribery, but these are given incrementally to officials for an ongoing project. You may find them in the construction and erection aspects of your business. You can also find them in places where multiple approvals are needed.

You will find **commission and fees** in continuous business interactions on revenue or orders placed. The salesperson usually offers these to the procurement officers.

Financial frauds are criminal deception and manipulation of people and systems for financial gain. Fraud can be an umbrella for many other corrupt activities.

Embezzlement is the intentional mismanagement of funds to transfer the asset from the company to an unauthorized person. You will find such activities in sales, finance, and procurement, or anyone who has some control over finance.

Theft is the action of stealing. Theft removes the company's inventory, funds, machinery, and equipment. These are usually done via collaboration between multiple departments.

Pilferage is similar to theft, but this is on a smaller scale like stakeholders stealing company stationaries or misusing small funds. You will find them in transportation, commercial department, and office premises.

Competitive scenarios are dampened by **gifts and hospitality** to decision-makers to take advantage. You will find this everywhere.

More comprehensively, according to The International Financial Institutions Task Force (2006), a corrupt activity involves offering or receiving something of value as a whole to improperly influence another party's conduct.

Institutional corruption and military corruption also come under this umbrella.

Linkage between two conceptions

The battle against corruption has an unbreakable connection to good governance. As a result, many of the key concepts of good governance are also anti-corruption principles. It is understood that WGIs are the actual corruption-reducing prerequisites. Without having these attributes of good governance, corruption can never be curtailed in any state.

Unfortunately, corruption tends to take hold in societies where public officials have a lot of power but not enough oversight or transparency. It can be especially difficult in places where civil society and private organizations don't have much influence. (Khan, 2004). Inequalities and weak states can pave the way for the emergence of systemic corruption, which thrives on chaos and lack of a recognized authority.

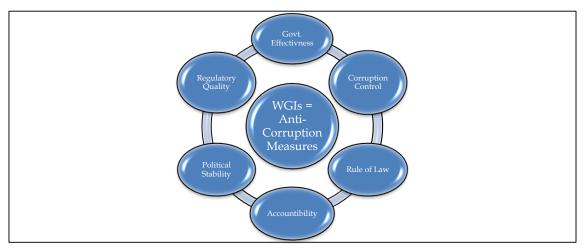


Figure 2: WGIs in context of Good Governance (Andreski, 1970; Huntington, 1968).

The Context Of Good Governance And Corruption In Pakistan

Discussing either good administration or its lack in Pakistan has always been a very important and contentious topic. To fulfill its duty to provide sound governance to the general populace, the state must operate efficiently at all levels of government. Sadly, but unquestionably, the country has poor governance as shown by corruption, institutional failures, constitutional mishaps, a lack of accountability, a weak system of checks and balances, and deteriorating peace and order. Since the country's

independence, Pakistan has experienced political instability brought on by both civilian and military regimes.

Minor corruption remains a major obstacle in Pakistan, affecting law enforcement, procurement, and public services. NAB has been given broad authority to investigate and prosecute cases, addressing the issue through a national anti-corruption strategy developed in 2002.

The aim of the administration during the second martial law was centralization. Elections in the 1970s brought hegemonic socialism and ethnicity into the political mainstream. Optimism was inspired by Pakistan's 1973 first unanimous constitution. However, General Zia-ul-Haq suspended the constitution in 1977 and declared political parties to be forbidden.

By Article 58(2) (b) of the Constitution, President Zia dissolved the National Assembly and dismissed the Prime Minister on May 29, 1988. Conflicts between the military and civilian populations and political wrangling prevented democracy and civil supremacy from emerging after Zia's era.

In Pakistani history, the 1990s are regarded as a waste of time. Politicians have abused the bureaucracy to further their agendas. Their adherence to the party was more important than their aptitude when choosing them for important positions. The performance of the institution was harmed by this trend.

Pakistan's social and economic development lags behind other nations due to mismanagement and inefficiency. Lack of political will, judicial co-optation, and anti-corruption procedures that are biased against junior civil servants and opposition members are among the challenges facing the fight against corruption.

Corruption in Pakistan

Since 1947, when Pakistan took control of the British legal system and the administrative elite, it has struggled with corruption. Anti-corruption laws were created to safeguard the political establishment, but they were distinct from those of the general public. The effectiveness of anticorruption organizations has been weakened with the passage of time by changes in military and civilian regimes.

There are a few numbers of studies that have put light on these two variables together. There is a lack of prior studies done specifically in the context of developing countries. This study is more focused on good governance and corruption in developing countries especially in Pakistan.

Material and Methods

Although there are numerous ways for conducting various studies, it is crucial to decide on appropriate and relevant techniques in order to preserve study quality.

Research Design

When it is necessary to describe the views, attitudes, perceptions, feelings, meanings, and interpretations of events and things, qualitative research is considered the most appropriate. These things' behaviours are coherently and consciously combined

into an arrangement that makes them comprehend their observations by connecting, disconnecting, or in contradiction to them.

This Qualitative research is based on both primary and secondary sources. The primary purpose of this paper is to analyze secondary sources. According to Webster and Watson (2002), literature reviews play a big role in the growth of a field. They provide a solid foundation for the expansion of knowledge by providing the chance to synthesize and consider earlier research (Saeb, Rose, & Flak, 2008). This paper emphasizes a review of the literature as a result. Following extensive research and analysis, this research paper has conclusively identified and carefully examined three distinct sources. First, the analysis of numerous information sources, such as academic journals, books, and newspaper articles, has thoroughly examined the exploration of good governance and corruption. Second, the publications that have been released on promoting good governance and combating corruption by both the Pakistani government and international organizations are the subject of this examination with having a main focus on:

- 1. Transparency Index Report
- 2. Worldwide Governance Indicators

Thirdly, on-field information was gathered through five semi-structured interviews with civil officers from various ministries of the Pakistani government. Interviews were recorded with the consent of respondents. The same interview questions were asked to every respondent. Interviews were conducted in a peaceful and comfortable environment. This paper examines the analysis of primary and secondary data from literature, interviews, and policy reviews using a case oriented methodology.

Results and Discussion

Corruption and Pioneering Good Governance

Corruption can be simply defined as the "misuse of power for personal gain," as stated by a respondent from the Department of Mines and Minerals, Government of Punjab.

Good governance, on the other hand, represents an ideal state of governance where public officials and institutions work diligently to ensure the welfare of citizens. According to other interviewer form a Public Office, emphasizes the necessity of "effective government resources to address public issues" is good governace. It is characterized by the impartial safeguarding of citizens' rights and the consistent adherence to core principles such as transparency, accountability, and the effective delivery of public services. Good governance fosters an environment where public resources are used for the benefit of all, rather than for the enrichment of a select few. It promotes the rule of law, upholds human rights, and encourages citizen participation in decision-making processes.

Government Initiatives For Advancing Good Governance Through Fighting Corruption

Pakistan has taken many initiatives and made a few institutes to hold public officials accountable. The National Accountability Bureau (NAB), established by the Military administration in 1999, is the primary anti-corruption institution dealing with corruption charges. However, the NAB is severely hampered by a lack of finances and

employees. Other institutes include the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), the Anti-Corruption Agency, and so on.

LAWS

Since independence, the county has implemented anti-corruption laws and developed various entities to combat corruption. These include

- The Prevention Of Corruption Act 1947 (POCA),
- The Sindh Prevention Of Bribery And Corruption Act 1950,
- The West Pakistan Anti-Corruption Establishment Ordinance 1961.
- FIA Act, 1974 the government shifted the anti-corruption wing of the FIA to the NAB on August 16, 2004, but it was restored by notification on October 24, 2008.
- Ehtesab Ordinance 1996
- Ehtesab Act 1997.
- National Accountability Ordinance (NAO) 1999, promulgated on November 16, 1999.

The Legislation Listed Below Strengthen The Anti-Corruption Laws Mentioned Above.

- The Anti-Money Laundering Act (AMLA) (2010)
- Pakistan Penal Code (PPC), Act XLV Of 1860.
- The Extradition Act (1972)
- Benami Transactions Act 2017.

Pakistan has two federal ACAs (the NAB and FIA) and four provincial ACEs. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ehtesab Commission (KPEC) was dissolved by the provincial Assembly in December 2018 (Ali, 2018)

NAB

The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) of Pakistan is the country's most knowledgeable and powerful ACA, and the National Accountability Law defends it (Ali, 2020). While the NAB first pursued probes into corruption against Pakistan's ruling political elite members, these cases quickly stagnated due to a lack of consistent political will at the highest echelons of Pakistan's government. As long as Pakistan's political leaders benefit from corruption, no anti-corruption measure would ever be effective. Some Pakistani chief executives have repeatedly attempted to appoint close allies as chairman of the NAB to guarantee that the organization's inquiries do not imperil them and are directed in the "right" direction. (Imraan,2023.)

A recent research proposed a new organizational structure for NAB as follows in order to help reduce corruption.

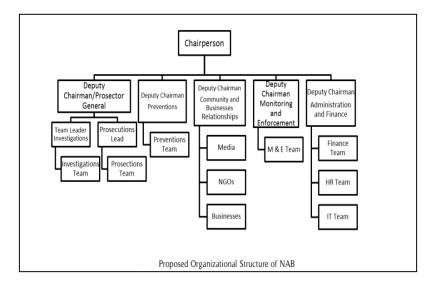


Figure 3: Organizational Structure of NAB

Pakistan's Standing Based On The Indicators

Corruption Perceptions Index 2022

Transparency International, a non-governmental organization, publishes CPI rankings every year. On a scale of 100 (extremely clean) to 0 (very corrupt), the Corruption Perceptions Index rates countries based on their perceived levels of public sector corruption. The Corruption Perceptions Index rates nations and territories based on the perceived corruption of their public sector. The rank of a country denotes its position among the other countries and territories in the index.

From 1995 to 2022, Pakistan's Corruption Rank averaged 112.30, with a peak of 144.00 in 2005 and a low of 39.00 in 1995. According to Transparency International's 2022 Corruption Perceptions Index, Pakistan is the 140th least corrupt country out of 180.



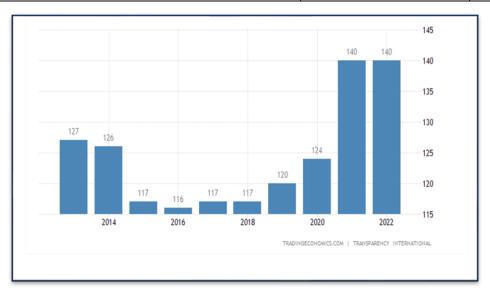
Figure 4: Governance Indicators

World Bank Governance Indicators 2022

Pakistan ranks below 50 percent in each of the worldwide governance indicators as shown in the figure.

Figure

5:



Graphical representation of the indicators

The last four years' performance

The last four years' performance and ranking of Pakistan are also shown in the WGI rank report 2022. Pakistan ranks below 40 percent in each indicator with having the worst performance in political instability which is the main hurdle in promoting good governance in Pakistan.

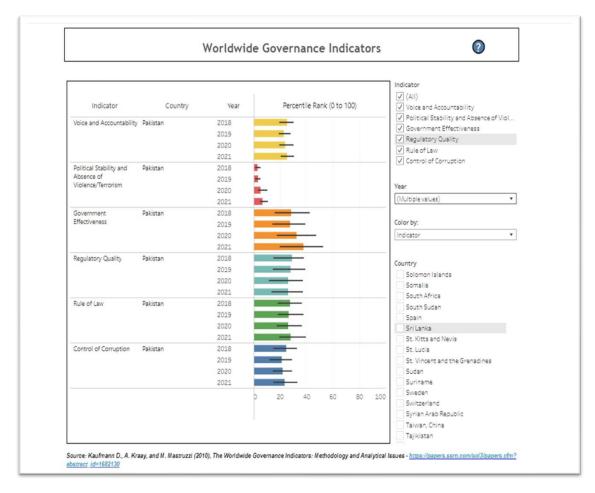


Figure 6: Comparison of the WGIs

Comparison among all these states on WGIs

Here a comparison of each WGI is shown for these states. Pakistan is lagging far behind in political instability, rule of law and voice and accountability. On the other hand, India and Sri Lanka is progressing year by year to achieve good governance's ultimate goal.

Afghanistan had a political turmoil recently which affects its overall performance. Bangladesh is struggling hard to achieve the WGI goal.

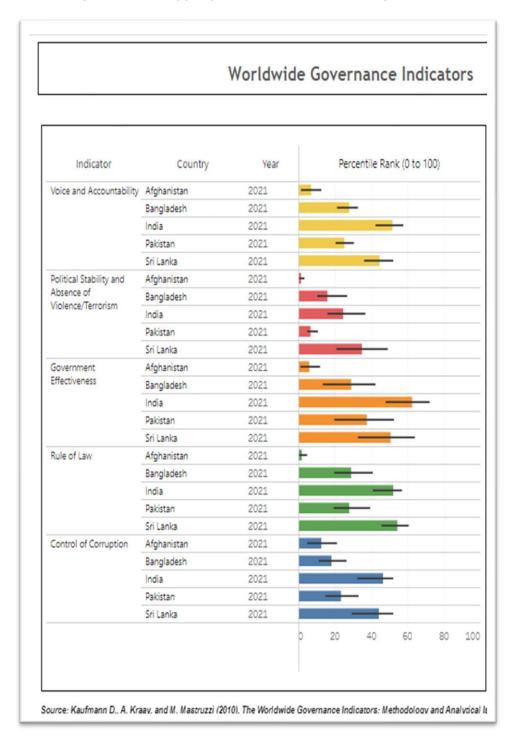


Figure 7: The worldwide indicators of Governance

Problems and Challenges

Low Public Awareness and Engagement

A limited understanding of the detrimental effects of corruption on society can lead to apathy and complacency among citizens. Building awareness campaigns that highlight the connection between corruption, poverty, and lack of development can empower the public to demand accountability from their leaders. Low levels of literacy, lack of informational access for the general public, and lack of well-established civil society are causes of this.

In between the interview session, one of the respondents from the Punjab Education Department said,

"Comprehensive anticorruption initiatives can also be hampered by lack of public knowledge" (Source: Interview#02)

The Decline of Political Cohesion

Political instability is considered the primary issue leading to poor governance in Pakistan's social, political, and economic spheres. Opposition political parties often resort to unethical tactics to overthrow the government and take power themselves. Political parties must come to a consensus on major political issues in the country. These practices severely disrupt the continuity of state policies and their timely implementation. Frequent changes in government and political instability can disrupt anti-corruption efforts. Continuity in policy implementation and institutional reforms is essential to prevent the interruption of ongoing initiatives due to leadership changes. The respondent further added:

"Comprehensive anticorruption initiatives can also be hampered by lack of political intervention." (Source: Interview#02) Another respondent said,

"Political interference can undermine efforts to prosecute corrupt individuals." (Source: Interview#03)

Another official from Punjab Education Department mentioned political instability as a main challenge in order to reduce corruption. (Source: Interview#04).

Another Official from Department of Mines and Minerals added:

"Pakistan would reside in the shackles debt trap and political instability until the menace of corruption is eradicated." (Source: Interview#05)

The Dubious Nature of Accountability

The lack of accountability is a major cause of poor governance in Pakistan. Despite the existence of many committees and agencies, true across-the-board accountability is not implemented. Governments often have political objectives that they seek to accomplish, which can sometimes involve discrediting opposition members or preventing censorship against them. Secondly, numerous accountability agencies exist The Federal Investigation Agency, The National Accountability Bureau, the Auditor General of Pakistan, and provincial AntiCorruption Agencies in each province to hold accountable the corrupt persons in the society. Moreover, it has been observed that there

is a tendency for the National Assembly and Provincial Assemblies' Public Accounts Committees to hold infrequent meetings and engage in limited discussion regarding complaints lodged against officials, with little to no substantial measures being taken in response. The absence of responsibility can hurt good governance, causing it to deteriorate rather than advance.

As in the interview session, it was told by an official from the Department of Mines and Minerals:

"The difference is we do have all these departments but there is no accountability or transparency. It is compromised." (Source: Interview#01) Another respondent said:

"Unfortunately, in Pakistan, you know the accountability is selected. Some institutions are in support of me, some are, you know, won't." (Source: Interview#04)

Deep-seated Disregard of the Rule of Law

Pakistan is having a very tough time upholding the rule of law in its society due to the court's inability to provide prompt and efficient justice to the populace. The local bar, the police, and the prosecution don't comply with the court system. It is impossible to protect people's rights in such an unbalanced setting. In reality, the absence of a legal system deters investors from making investments in Pakistan because they are aware that they will not be heard in court and will therefore lose their money. Additionally, the proverb "Right is Might" governs society.

As in the interview session, it was told by an official from the Department of Mines and Minerals:

"The only issue we are faced with is the implication of rules. There are laws or SOPs present but we do not apply them. We are unable to implicate the rules." (Source: Interview#01) Another respondent added:

"Weak legal framework, inadequate laws and regulations can make enforcement difficult." He further added:

"Inconsistent Application of Laws: Selective prosecution or political interference can undermine the system."

(Source: Interview#03) A respondent from the Punjab Education Department quotes the example of NAB laws as:

"In framing the NAB law, they are amending it and then reamending it and then lowering its scale, and then scaling up, this shows what our political people want. This how they respect law."

The scarcity of Transparency and Responsiveness of Anti-Corruption Institutions

While institutions like the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) have been established to tackle corruption, concerns regarding their impartiality and transparency remain. The perception that they are used to target political opponents rather than genuinely combating corruption hampers their credibility and effectiveness. Ensuring their autonomy, professionalism, and transparent functioning is crucial.

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Lack of Political Patronage and Nepotism

The practice of giving and receiving "gifts" in exchange for favors is deeply ingrained in some segments of Pakistani society. Shifting societal attitudes and promoting ethical behavior through education and awareness campaigns are vital components of tackling this challenge

Deliberate Disregard of Human Rights

Whistleblowers play a crucial role in exposing corruption, but without adequate protection, they are vulnerable to retaliation. And as we already noted, Pakistan's government has failed to uphold the law there. This demonstrates how little the state cares for the lives of its people. Because of this, those in charge of the country since independence have never given excellent governance that makes life for the populace a high priority.

A respondent from Punjab Education Department sheds light on the significance of whistleblowers rights as follows:

"Whistle-blowers advance transparency and accountability, promote inquiries, and frequently act as impetuses for systemic reforms, increasing the potency of anti-corruption measures and fostering an integrity-oriented culture within institutions." (Source: Interview#02)

Weak Legal and Judicial Framework

Pakistan's legal and judicial systems face multiple issues that impede the effective prosecution of corruption cases. Lengthy court proceedings, lack of specialized anti-corruption courts, and the manipulation of legal loopholes can undermine the pursuit of justice.

Lack of Political Will

A few respondents enlightened the importance of political will as:

"Political will is the foremost step in the map to eradicate corruption." (Source: Interview#05)

Conclusion

This study examines how corruption and good governance interact in developing countries, with a particular emphasis on Pakistan. Although corruption is difficult to quantify, its negative impacts on government are undeniable, as they compromise accountability, transparency, and ultimately good governance. This study demonstrates how corruption impedes accountability and transparency, two essential components of good governance. Alongside good governance, the idea of clean governance—which emphasizes legality and public involvement—becomes increasingly important. It

discourages foreign investment, as investors are hesitant to invest in a country where corruption is widespread. Moreover, corruption also results in diverting public funds, which should be used for development projects, to the pockets of corrupt officials. The interdependence of corruption, governance, and societal well-being is evident, underscoring the importance of ongoing research, policy development, and collaboration to combat corruption's corrosive effects

Recommendations

- ➤ The only thing that can significantly eclipse corruption is the equality of citizens as provided by the constitution. Adhering strictly to it would force someone to reconsider their actions at least a few times before breaking the law.
- ➤ Then, it is imperative that the current anti-corruption legislation be amended to reflect the discretionary powers that are available to higher authorities, particularly with regard to whether or not to move forward with an inquiry or probe. Because corruption originates from discretionary powers.
- The clauses requiring the Investigating Officers to obtain upper management consent before beginning any procedures in response to complaints ought to be removed. When he receives a complaint, he should have the authority to move forward. His first responsibility should be to determine the substance of the complaint, and he should then gather all relevant evidence before bringing the case before the court rather than his superior. (Gul,2022.)
- ➤ The top executive of the agency must be appointed solely on the basis of qualifications, not on the whims of politicians. The government ought to offer all the genuine assistance it can, limiting any chance of favoritism, influence, or compulsion.
- ➤ Senior jurists should form a committee to examine the anti-corruption legislative framework and recommend any necessary actions that must be implemented. (Gul, 2022)
- We need an anti-corruption watchdog that will be entirely autonomous, as well as a stringent, transparent, and impartial mechanism made up of only one piece of legislation.

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