**Charter of governance and justice**

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In the modern world, it is the fundamental responsibility of every state and government to provide the best, trustworthy and credible system of governance and justice to its citizens, through which the allocation of state resources is to be distributed efficiently among citizens and their rights are protected through an efficient judicial and administrative justice system.

Good governance and an efficient civil, criminal and administrative justice system has been a dream for citizens and a great challenge for law-and-policy-makers of Pakistan. Pakistan now needs to immediately start working on reforms, based on a ‘charter of good governance’ and a ‘charter of instant justice’ by taking into board all the relevant stakeholders and to legislate at earliest.

One should accept the reality that our systems of governance and justice have not been able to gain citizens' trust and confidence. In the absence of good governance and timely justice, Pakistan lags far behind in planning which results in mal-practices like corruption and exploitation of resources. International and local reports have continuously revealed different aspects of poor governance in Pakistan but due attention at the top level has not been given both on the legislative and institution-building sides, and the situation has continued to deteriorate. Lack of human resource and outdated legislation along with poor infrastructure are also responsible for bad governance and an inefficient justice system, for which the country has been paying a heavy price for decades.

Pakistan has a poor standing in various development rankings. The consistent demands by the country’s citizens for better governance and justice are genuine and legitimate, and the state and government of Pakistan need to be responsive to these demands.

The economic and governance conditions and quality of life of citizens in Pakistan cannot be improved without good and credible governance and an efficient justice system. There are certain gaps of asymmetries at various levels of government (federal, provincial and local) while designing, implementing and delivering public policy, which hinder its performance and in service delivery, which should be identified and addressed immediately. This should also be a concern for the legislatures and policymakers in areas of macro and micro-economic management, political stability, improvement of public policy, public administration and institutional capacity.

Due to social media, citizens have access to more information, which makes it easier for them to judge their government’s performance on governance, policymaking and justice delivery. There is a need to understand public sentiments, and the demands and needs of those who will be directly affected by the policies of the government.

There is no option for the state and government of Pakistan except to immediately take serious capacity-building measures to enhance the efficiency of governance, justice delivery and human capital to meet the requirements of citizens and to face modern world challenges. There is also a need to re-evaluate and redesign the role of federal, provincial and local governments and their capacities to govern and for effectiveness in public governance and administrative justice systems in future. In the absence of legislation and without working on sufficient capacity of both human and capital, it will not be possible to deliver good governance.

The desired results of a good governance and justice system cannot be achieved without reforming the basic structure with time-bound legislation and through a better monitoring system of external public bodies like happens in other successful countries. If the issues of bad governance, gaps in public service delivery and obstacles in timely justice are not removed seriously by the decision-makers, it will keep damaging the country in future.

The government needs to immediately start reforms in areas of governance and to legislate on administrative, civil and criminal justice sides. It is also essential to foster collaborations and to take competent people with the right skills in the government and justice system while ensuring that high-quality information is available and to be used in decision-making.

Governance is analyzed as a continuum; it does not automatically improve over time. The requirements and expectations of modern good governance should be addressed as a top priority: ensuring good service, handling matters in an interactive/respectable way, openness, digitization, structured discretion, time-bound decisions, the realization of legal rights and obligations and the flexible procedures with strong internal and external oversight mechanisms.

It is also important to learn and apply the best practices of the world in areas of governance and justice. With this background, there is an urgent need to establish mainstream governance and justice discipline with better solutions to deliver to the public, and achieve a respectable place among the global community.

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