**What went wrong with Imran Khan?**

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March 26, 2021

Before he entered in practical politics, Imran Khan had too many amazing feats to his credit as cricketing sportsman, educationist, philanthropist, social worker, traveller, charismatic personality, and a world-renowned figure. In personal attributes, he is extremely honest, very resolute and determined to achieve his object for which he zealously works hard. After founding a political party he zestfully worked hard for over 20 years and suffered many electoral reverses but did not lose his heart. At last in the aftermath of Elections of 2018, he gained sufficient strength to get majority in the Parliament and form his government.

Now came the time to set into motion his dreams to eliminate corruption, to ameliorate the lot of the poor man, and to put an end to decades old system of political exploitation. When he took oath of his office on 18th August 2018 his immediate challenges included flawed energy policies, spiraling fiscal deficit, all-pervasive corruption, grossly inadequate tax to GDP ratio, under investment in education and health sectors etc. PTI economic reform program also envisaged increase of 9 percent of GDP with a 5 percent increase in tax collections, 2 percent reduction in wasteful expenditure and 2 percent reduction in losses of PSE’s. This economic agenda projected a growth rate of 6 percent, inflation to be brought down to 7 percent, fiscal deficit to be brought down to 4.5 percent, tax revenues to be raised by 15 percent. These were his ambitious plans and big challenges ahead.

The trouble with Imran Khan is that he is a very good sportsman, but is unfortunately not a good politician. For a good politician, one should have a generous heart and mind, should proceed with a spirit of accommodating his political rivals, and give them due weight as long as they do not run counter to his own programme, and try to take them along through the thick and thin of their political journey for the common good of their people.

There are some cogent explanations for these failures which one cannot deny. Imran Khan indeed inherited a bad economy with enormously heavy debts, which no government in the past tried to minimize

Being a democratically elected leader, Imran Khan must pause for a moment to think why the popular mood across Pakistan has increasingly turned against him. It is also clear to him that if this mood persists, the time is not very far when people will stand up against the existing order, and will not go away until it is substituted by a more benevolent ruler. Several at-site surveys conducted randomly by the media in markets and streets have already shown faces of masses full of deep anguish and dismay with his governance which is because of the unprecedented price hike of consumer goods, which have sky-rocketed and have become out of their reach. Just as charity begins at home, in the same manner perdition causes cracks at the lowest level. Riding on the crest of victory soon after the Elections, Imran Khan announced that all the sprawling buildings of P.M House, Governor’s House, and the official residences of Chief Ministers, will be taken away and put to public use, by converting them as universities , hospitals, and public welfare projects. More than two years have passed, nothing has been heard about the outcome of his first declaration. That appeared to be a vacuous slogan in celebration of victory.

Later Imran Khan promised with his Nation that he would create 10 million jobs, and make five million homes, but even after the lapse of over two years i.e., more than half of his tenure, he has failed to give them a single job or home . Instead he has created more instability and many millions of people have been laid off due to the economic instability.

He declared with a flourish that he would rather commit suicide than go asking other nations for aid; but later he went to every single country with the same begging bowl in his hand and yet could not muster the requisite funding as had been expected by him.

The present state of economy under his rule presents a dismal picture. Inflation is at an all-time high; similarly, unemployment is at the highest level. The cost of living has gone so high that even people of moderate means cannot afford the essential commodities of daily use. The prices of oil, gas and electricity have registered an increase which is difficult for an average consumer to meet. The increase in the prices of consumer goods is even more alarming because it badly affects the common man, who is the backbone of the society. The leaders of PTI have no answer for this lackluster performance except that they had inherited a bad economy. The present economic indicators, compared to Pre-PTI rule even belie this claim. A few days ago, Imran Khan had to confess his slow progress, but added that his government will now attend to the more fundamental issues, which too, due to the paucity of time at his disposal, appears to be a tall claim. Many structural reforms like energy sector, revenue collection and human capital development are hard to achieve in the remaining time of his tenure.

Politically, Imran Khan in all his speeches and interviews has lambasted the opposition leaders as ‘dacoits’ and ‘thieves’ who looted the wealth of this country and stacked their assets in foreign countries. This allegation may be true, but its too much repetition by the P.M. (especially when dealing with the corrupt is exclusively the responsibility of the NAB, an independent forum, with which P.M has got nothing to do) is likely to cast aspersion on the integrity and impartiality of the P.M., vis-a-vis NAB. Moreover the assertion of Imran Khan that he will force them to disgorge their hidden wealth, and by so doing put Pakistan on the road to progress, is another example of his political naivety. So far no remarkable recovery has been effected from any politician which has even a remote chance of making Pakistan economically better off. As a Prime Minister, he must know that calling someone ‘Corrupt’ in public without a judicial decree by a court of law is itself reprehensible and also criminally liable to action.

There are some cogent explanations for these failures which one cannot deny. Imran Khan indeed inherited a bad economy with enormously heavy debts, which no government in the past tried to minimize. Amongst factors which have influenced price hike is rapid growth of population, rising non-development expenditure of the government, inadequacy of agricultural and industrial outputs and mounting imports. To give some relief to the very poor sections, he launched “Ehsas” programme which disbursed cash help to 12 million families on the lines of Benazir Income Support Programme. Imran Khan initially vowed not to get any foreign loan, but failed to get help of friendly countries and was thus led to seek help of The IMF to secure a loan of $6 billion, to help resuscitate the country’s ailing economy. But most of the demolition work was done by COVID-19.

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