

Journal of Indian Studies

Vol. 10, No. 1, January– June, 2024, pp. 141 – 152

Sustainable Democracy and Crisis of Governance in Pakistan

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Received:
May 20, 2024

Published:
Jun 28, 2024

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ABSTRACT

Democracy is considered the form of government which encourages the extensive participation of people and gives them equal opportunities of development. Democracy is a noble concept of governance and good governance is generally considered compatible for the sustainability of democracy. For the active and sustain performance of democracy, good and stable governance is required at all levels. The determination for sustainable democracy and good governance has been ingrained in the foundation of Pakistan. But unfortunately, since the outset of independence, Pakistan has been beset by crisis of democracy and governance. The epidemics of constitutional infringements, institutional clashes, corruption, lack of transparency and accountability, depreciated civil-military relations, the deteriorated situation of law and order, dysfunctional political party system, corrupt political leadership and political instability is the bounteous indication of the outrageous condition of democracy and governance in the state of Pakistan. The unstable democracy has created governing unrest which resultantly created, “black hole” in the country’s political, economic and national development of the country. This paper is a discourse for the state of Pakistan, in terms of the prevailing situation of democracy, governance and their impacts on national development. The inference of the study is categorical on the requisite for Pakistan to continue and sustain its democracy and to overcome the crisis of governance. The recommendations are suggested here on the ground, that in future socio-economic and political stability and national development could be achieved with the assurance of sustainable democracy and good governance.

Key Words: Democracy, Governance, Sustainability, Political instability, National development

Introduction

In contemporary political arena, democracy along with the governance has been adopted as a tool of development not only in developed rather in developing

world. It has become an established phenomenon that democracy without the existence of good governance cannot work successfully as it gains its support and stability from it and vice versa good governance is unable to sustain without the presence of the continuity and established democracy.

Good governance has long term and positive impacts on the overall socioeconomic and political life of the people. Good governance delivered by democratic regimes provided a sense of satisfaction and security which ultimately led towards the national development. Many scholars believe that, democracy which deployed such strategies which not only ensured sustainability rather put the nation on the road of success and development in progressive way.

Since the outset of independence, Pakistan has been confronted with numerous challenges in search of sustainable democracy, national development and good governance. Unfortunately, almost all the leaders remain thwarted to provide successful democracy and viable governance which resolutely created a crisis in search of political and national stability. Unlike the other democratic countries, the political culture in Pakistan has been marked by undemocratic, authoritarian and class based politics. Therefore, democracy and governance remain hobbled due to the self-aggrandizement and the bragging of the ruling class. Inconsistent democratic rules created various challenges and conflicts for governance due to tussles between civil and military establishment in order to exert extensive powers. Therefore, the country is marked by the repeated breakdown of the political process and failure in establishing a sustainable democratic system. As a result, the country has continued to undergo a series of crises. The research also insisted that Pakistan's endless search for democracy and good governance is reflective of the insincerity of the political elites who always endeavor for the perpetuation of their rule on the cost of unstable democracy and poor governance.

Objectives of the Study

The study extensively dwelt on the collaborative relationship between sustainable democracy and good governance using Pakistan's experience as the focus of analysis. The underlying objective of the current research is to conceptualize the challenges of democracy and governance in Pakistan with the milieu of socio-economic and political development and stability. This study also elaborates the collaboration of democracy and governance and its capability to bring stability and development in Pakistan. The study also emphasize that the fragile democracy and failure in the deliverance of good governance have not only endangered the survival and progress of the state.

Democracy: A Conceptual Discourse

Democracy has become a buzzword and is adhered to as the only viable and moral political system. Democracy is a form of government, commonly popular as a

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government by the people. The concept of democracy is as old as the human history itself, dating back to ancient Greece. Therefore, term democracy in its original form instigates from the renowned two Greek words: “Demos and Kratos”, meanings “the people and authority” respectively, amidst the fifth-fourth century BC to indicate the political structures at that point existing in some Greek primordial city-states, prominently the state of Athens following a prevalent uprising in 508 BC

Hence, the notion profoundly sprung in Europe (in Germany) in 1648 subsequently “The Treaty of West Phalia” (Collier, & Levitsky, 1997). Democracy has been defined in Longman Dictionary of English as, a system in which the individuals in any society can select their representative of their own choice or a system in which every person has been endorsed the equal right to elect members of government who will make decision of their behalf (Summers, & Gadsby, 1995).

Oxford Advanced Dictionary, has defined democracy in more a broader way as a system of government in which people can enjoy freedom of religion and can express their political opinion freely. The most popular and conventional classification of democracy has been described by famous Abraham Lincoln, “democracy as the government of the people, by the people and for the people”. Democracy in its essence is the system in which real authority and power has been rooted in people and practiced with the will of people. It gives an opportunity to the common man to run or at least choose the representatives of its own choice. It is considered a cognition through which harmony surface out of dissension, melody out of dissonance. It is a vehicle with two wheels, and without a sincere opposition, it cannot run on the road to success. However, the democratic system can be only constructive when it is sustained and nurtured. (Almond & Verba, 2015) Democracy also imposes certain legal limitations on the elected members of government to what they can do or cannot do.

The democracy cannot be sustained if it is merely resting on the electoral procedures and electing the representatives of government or even just provision of political stability. Sustainable democracy can be assured, when political power resides in the common people, when each person is able to afford an equal voice in the political process, when government takes the responsibility to assure equitable justice, warrantee social harmony, stimulate and provide provide the economic and political security and lastly endorse equal rights for all the persons.

Along with that, a sustainable democracy also needs viable political structures, reliable institutions and well-balanced power division, which will ultimately lead to good governance and the national development. However, there are some essentials which make the consolidation of democracy possible, sustainable and stronger.

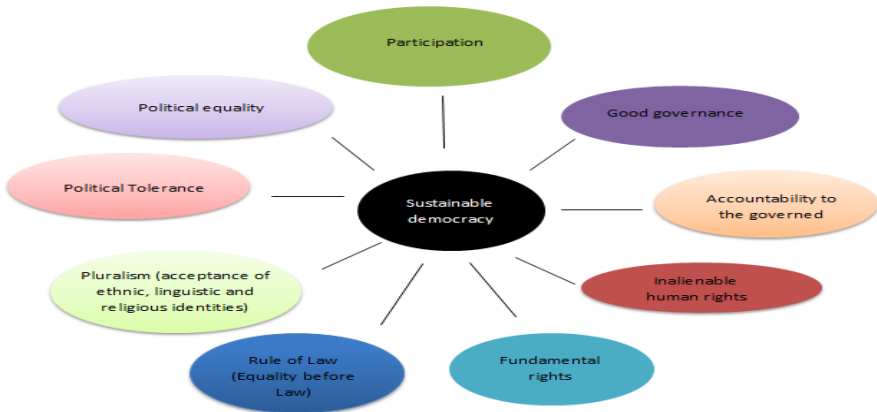


Figure: Elements of Sustainable democracy (Prepared by Authors)

Absence of any of these elements would be a major departure from the accepted concept of sustainable democracy and the absence of some of these elements would be a departure from the concept of good governance as well. (Lipset, 1959)

Governance and Good Governance Conceptualized

The concept of governance is considered to be as old as the human history. Governance simply denotes to the incessant process by which government performs its duties and responsibilities. It is also viewed as a combination of methods of leading the society to achieve the common objectives and through which the decisions or policies are formulated and implemented. However, governance is studied not only at a local or national level rather it is studied at international level by the political theorists. However, the term governance has been utilized in various terms having versatile meanings. Kaufmann defined governance as the customs and institutions through which political power is being exercised for the common good”. (Kaufmann, 2005). Francis Fukuyama has defined the term governance as the ability or the authority of any government of making and enforcing rules or policies and provide services to the common people irrespective to make and enforce rules, and to deliver services, irrespective of the type of government (democratic or authoritarian) (Fukuyama, 2013). According to these two similar definitions, governance seems to be convinced as the state’s capability to formulate and enforced the strategies designed for the welfare of society.

Governance and good governance are the acknowledged phenomenons in the contemporaneity development literature. Good governance being panoramic concept relatively, aims to provide the opportunities and resources for the betterment and collective. Following elements makes governance good and viable.

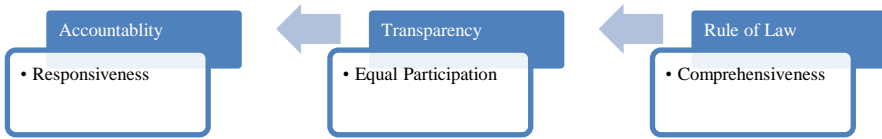


Figure: Elements of Good Governance (Prepared by Authors)

These elements are interconnected to each other and can ensure the functioning of good governance in any democracy. However, a number of definitions can be listed to define governance, but the true sense of governance cannot be completed without speaking about democracy which is an integral part of the concept (Adejumobi, 2003).

Democracy and Good Governance: The Synergy

In the contemporary modern era, good governance is considered not only an important indicator of national development, rather it is also regarded an established standard for the sustainable democracy. Globally, democracy is getting a rapid increase in its popularity, but democracy along with good governance also not losing the popular momentum. Various researchers consider democracy as most reliable and valuable system which is truly fortified to provide good governance which could be termed as the substance of sustainable democracy. Both concepts are interlinked, commonly known as twin concepts in their practical form and shared the common values and objective . Both have some shared and pronounced values and principles like freedom of express, fair elections, equal representation and popular politics. (Rhodes & Roderick 1996). Kaufmann and Kraay, identified six major characteristics of good governance: less Political violence and more stability, government efficiency, accountability and transparency, regulative quality, stable law and order and controlled corruption.

Democracy is the reliable device to provide a supporting environment for the proviso of good governance. Conversely, democratic rule can be only ensured with the precondition of good governance because the effectiveness of the democracy will only be possible when it will meet the needs of the people.

Both are directly linked to people, Government and policies are operative on the basis of public support.



Figure: (Prepared by Authors)

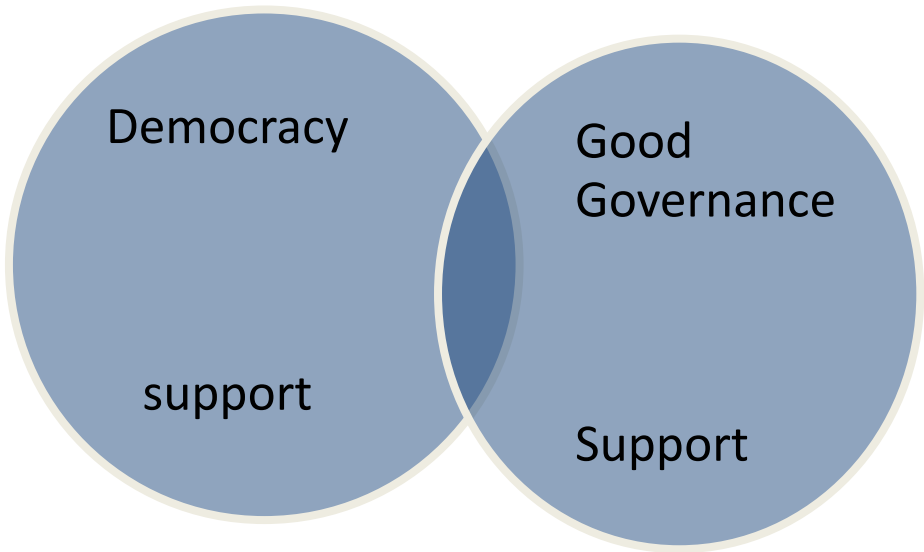


Figure: (Prepared by Authors)

Democracy promotes viable governance and that viability promotes sustainable democracy. According to Kaufmann, good governance flourished with the availability of democratic indicators and qualities. (Doeveren, 2011). On the other end, according to Morlino's framework of development, the common indicators of good governance can also be used as the determinants to strengthen the democracy. Therefore, it can be inevitably indicate that democracy and good governance are interrelated. (Morlino, 2011). These two imperative phenomena have the following common features which clearly display that there is strong bond between the significant components of the one and the fundamental components of the other. (Charlick, 1991)

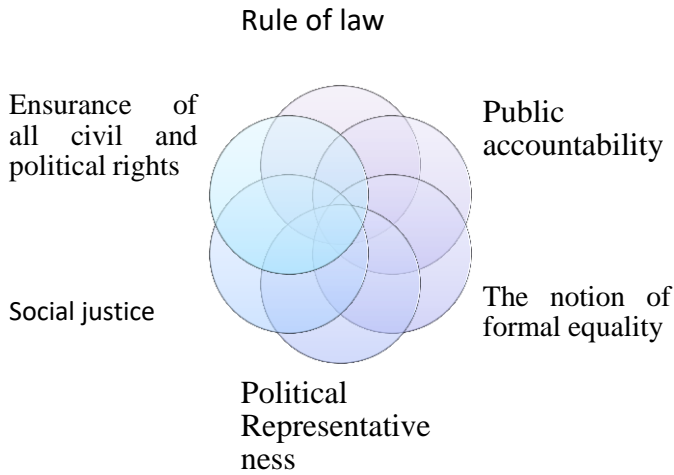


Figure: Common features and values of Democracy and Governance (Prepared by Authors)

However, even the governance can be assessed with the presence of democratic fundamentals of availability of basic human rights, eradication of socioeconomic and political prejudices. Democracies usually failed to be sustained, when they have meticulously failed to verbalize good governance to the respective people.

Democracy and Good Governance in Pakistan

History indicates that Pakistan adopted a parliamentary system with democratic structures and norms from the Westminster. As democracy has been conceived as *sin qua non* due to integrate its plural and heterogeneous society. Even democracy has been ingrained in the foundations of Pakistan. Quaid-i-Azam, the founding father of Pakistan, expressed on many occasions that Pakistan would be a democratic state. But despite this fact, Pakistan had/had been facing numerous issues in its search for true democracy and true sense of good governance, and both remained challenge. Since the inception, Pakistan could not introduce strong democratic traditions and institutions and had accomplish dissatisfied performance in the journey of its integrity and solidarity (Shafqat,1995). As a result, the country has continued to undergo a series of crises. Some of these have extracted a toll of massive proportions-like the one which resulted in the break-up of the country in 1971 (Waseem, 1989).

The history of Pakistan is marked by the repeated breakdown and continuous crises of governance and the country's failure in establishing a sustainable democratic system. Throughout the history, the political traditions which have been considered the key to success for democracy remain abridged and political institutions, which provide the foundation for good governance remain destabilized and abbreviated due to which non-political actors have gained more

space and strengthen ultimately making the democracy frequently flawed. (Waseem, 2004).

Pakistan, as a post-colonial and sovereign state, has a discreditable and reprehensible history with some diminutive intervals of democratic rule during the seven decades of its inception. Hence, Parliamentary democracy distorted more than five times, primarily and the democratic system was collapsed and overthrown by various centripetal forces which asserted their role to destabilize the political system. Weak democratic institutions, continued hegemony of bureaucracy, unhinged development, mismanagement of institutional matrix and increasing political motivations of some Army Generals with their repeated intervention have further hampered the democracy to be sustained and stronger. This is so, because the civil-military disequilibrium and the military supremacy over civil society have impacted not only periods of direct military rule, but also indirectly during the phases when civilian governments were allowed to function. Successive martial law regimes abrogated the constitution, banned political activity, circumscribed the fundamental rights, suppressed dissent and opposition, dispersed the political forces, victimized the political leadership and pared no effort in depoliticizing the society. On the other hand, the civilians also derailed the democratic structure due to their lust for power, nepotism, corruption, confrontational politics and unconstitutional decisions. As a result, the institutions of the civil society could not develop in the absence of conducive environment. The democracy Index of 2018 has declared Pakistan as hybrid regime due to Military rule of General Pervaiz Musharraf and ranked it just one point above the Myanmar's authoritarian rule. Currently, Pakistan's ranked also declined and its status fell down by 11 places in the world democracy index 2023 due to its "hybrid regime".

On the other side, Pakistan was ranked on 112 on global development level and its regional rank was 21. Pakistan has also been ranked as the 13th least prosperous country out of 149 states per the Legatum Prosperity Index. More bitterly, in the region of Asia Pacific, Pakistan stands on 23 which is the 2nd last position (out of 24 countries). There can be number of reasons Pakistan's for poor development but fragile democracy and poor governance will counted as the key determinants.

Instead of striking at the roots of crisis, it has always been the habit (of the people at the helm of affairs) to bring undemocratic and unrepresentative people hold the reins of the Nation. In spite borrowing all the accoutrements of democracy from Britain, the system proved incapable and unsuccessful to simulate them. As opined by Ian Talbot that Pakistan's democratic and political proved as a futile struggle for stability along with regular changes of Governments and regimes.

Talbot also elaborates that since the independence the civil military leaders made numbers of changes in democratic institutions and altered the nature of constitutions and constitutional assemblies. (Talbot, 2005) Therefore, the

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continuous struggle for sustainable democracy seemed to be unachievable dream for Pakistan.

Throughout, the history of Pakistan, none of any democratic government honored their basic obligation with the spirit that the democratic philosophy required good governance for its accomplishment. The main reason is that most of the ruling elites belong to elite class who use the democratic procedures just to perpetuate their traditional and hegemonic power. They also have certain apprehensions about the expansion of democratic tradition as this would ultimately demand to perform the duties of good governance.

Due to frequent changes in civilian government and continuous transformation into military rule have not only disturbed the political stability rather have affected the development of governing reforms. The successive government have used undue the previously introduced policies and tried to set their own formulated policies which ultimately delayed the process of implementation which encouraged injustice and incited the unfair management of the resources. The formation of good governance is committed with the efficient and rapid implementation of the policies. A outdated policy formulation, delay in the execution or bad governance led towards uncertainty and disharmony.

Some speculative attributes of good governance: like the equal participation of all stakeholders, census-oriented and transparent decision making, equality before the law and accountability, in order to stabilize the democracy and advance the national development can hardly be found in the weak and fractured democratic character of Pakistan. It is the absence of these values in Pakistan, due to which the state has to face the crisis in its passage to sustainable democracy and good governance. And because of these continuous crises, Pakistan has been remain entangled in number of challenges, such as

- Social-cultural and religious fragmentation
- Political and economic instability
- Regionalism and factionalism
- Corruption

Due to these challenges, Pakistan represented a dark image of democracy and governance not only at national rather at international level. The long lasting bad governance. Moreover, the staunch and severe pattern of dissension among the political stake holders, contradictory civil-military relations have ultimately led towards the constant cycles of disequilibrium and disability of political system. Even the scenario for the last four decades has revealed the deeper democratic and governance crisis, even today it seems elusive. (Kamran, 2008).

Conclusion

Democracy and good governance both are elementary components for the sustenance and growth of national development because the concepts (democracy,

good governance and national development) can be comprehended as key features that are interrelated and incline to reinvigorate and support each other. Functional democracy with all its fundamental attributes and structures can ensure the abundant growth of good governance. In the same way, a real democratic rule that integrates the characteristics of good governance will unconditionally moves towards the path of national development.

It has become an established phenomenon that democracy, good governance and national development are sine qua non and interlinked to each other. The major developed countries Australia, Britain, Italy, U.S.A etc along with their effective democratic traditions are displaying the true pictures of good governance and contributing to the national development. These countries have affirmed conviction that no democracy can flourish without delivering the attributes governance.

Pakistan's search for practical democracy is comparatively an complicated task without the productive efforts of good governance. Unfortunately, the country remained hijacked by the elite classes including the ambitious bureaucrats and military officers, feudalists and incompetent politicians who turned the whole system in to elitist system.

Democracy can be suggested as rectification to all the ill practices of bad governance, which are plaguing the development of the beleaguered state of Pakistan. It is also believed, that good governance is achievable in Pakistan and democracy should prevail in Pakistan irrespective of who and how governance by applying all its good attributes that are definitely integrated in the functioning of good governance. However, democracy as a system can sustain and governing crisis can be managed by ensuring the effective, proactive and responsible political system which could meet the desires of the people. On the parallel basis the yardstick of sustainable democracy along with the attributes of good governance can ensure the free, safe, fearless and secured life.

Recommendations

Making Pakistan a true and sustainable democracy and ensuring the good governance is not an easy task. It requires long standing and sustainable reforms to develop socio-economic and political system and structures.

Following are some of the remedial measures which can ensure the sustainable democracy and good governance in Pakistan.

- Issues of governance should be understood and resolved under the framework and lineage of democracy in the country. Disgruntled democracy will lead towards the disturbed governance.
- All politics should confine to the four walls of the parliament because taking it to the streets always creates chaos. Parliament must remain the main forum and platform.
- There must be a genuine search for ideas that would pull down the wall between rulers and the masses.

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- Constructive policies and reforms should be initiated to build an effective parliament and other strong political structures. Along with that political culture should be encouraged that could make the democratic institutions more strong.
- Advanced technology should be introduced which could ensure the economic development.
- The Policies of the government are should not only people oriented rather these policies should fixed the issues of common man.
- The capacity of civil society and media must be enhanced through appropriate reform measures that match performance and accountability. They could initiate the mass participation campaign. A rightful media can decrease the political alienation.
- A true democratic culture should also be the essential element to develop the good governance. Along with that, literacy rate should be increased which would decrease the ignorance of the masses.
- Independent, responsible and accountable mechanism must be strong enough which could deal with the corrupt and illegal elements of the society.
- Equality and transparency should not only adopted rather strictly implemented from bottom to top to ensure the good governance.
- Constitutional checks and balance are also prerequisites for sustainably of democracy and good governance. Constitution of Pakistan should be considered as sacred and strong just like the constitution of United States.
- Institutional balance should be build on strong basis that institutions could not overlap and their relationships could rum smoothly.
- Reforms should be introduce in educational system which could inculcate socio-political ethics and values, discourage corruption, illegal deeds and awareness about rights and responsibilities.

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