

Corruption, a Prelude to Problems of Governance in Pakistan

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Abstract : Pakistan's experience with nascent, yet to be evolved democratic institutions inherited from the British Empire, has not been a pleasant one when evaluated in terms of good governance, development, and success of anti-corruption mechanisms. The country has remained entangled in a vicious circle of accumulating large budget deficits, dwindling economy, low foreign direct investment, political instability, and rising terrorism. It is thus not surprising that no account of the state aimed at analyzing the six-decade journey since her inception is replete with negative connotations like dysfunctional, failed, fragile or weak state. The limited pool of experience of handling democratic institutions and lack of political will be on the part of country's political elite to transform the society on democratic footings have left Pakistan as a "limited access order" state. The widespread illiteracy becomes a double edge sword when a largely illiterate electorate elects representatives who mostly come from a semi-educated background with the limited understanding of democratic minutiae and little or no proclivity to resist monetary allures. The prevalence of culture of patronage with widespread poverty coupled with absence of a comprehensive system of investigating, prosecuting and adjudicating cases of corruption encourage the practice that has been eroding the state's foundations since her inception owing to the unwillingness of the traditional elites who have been strongly resistant towards any attempts aimed at disseminating powers. An analytical study of the historical, political, cultural, economic and administrative hurdles that have been at work in impeding Pakistan's transition to a democratic, accountable society would be instrumental in understanding the issue of widespread plague of corruption and state's inefficiency to cope with it effectively. The issue of corruption in Pakistan becomes more important when seen in the context of her vulnerability to terrorism and religious extremism. In this regard, Pakistan needs to learn a lot from developed countries in order to evolve a comprehensive strategy for combating and preventing this pressing issue.

Keywords : Pakistan, corruption, anti-corruption, limited access order

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