

**RESEARCH PAPER****Governance Challenges in Urban Settings: A Case of Pakistan**<sup>1</sup>Ahmed Ali Naqvi and <sup>2</sup>Dr. Iqra Jalal

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**ABSTRACT**

The study is aimed at highlighting the governance challenges faced by Pakistan. since her independence This study is also aimed at identifying those challenges and compare them with challenges in general governance. Urban governance is a major challenge faced by policy makers in states across the world owing to growing urbanisation process with diverse communities. In Pakistan rapid urbanisation has caused similar challenges. This study primarily relies on qualitative research method based on literature available as well semi structure interviews. The study has highlighted that urban governance challenges are fundamentally different from general governance mainly due to complex social structure, physical infrastructure as well economic gaps within the urban life. The study also finds that absence of local self-government complicates governance in urban settings. The study recommends that Urban governance requires careful planning, fiscal autonomy and better coordination for efficient governance. Study also recommends inclusive governing models for diverse cities of Pakistan.

**Keywords:** Urban, Governance, Local Self Government, Pakistan, administration.**Introduction**

In the entire human history, the most intelligent have always been curious about ways to improve the living standards of the masses. They also were exploring the ways in which peoples' problems could be solved in an effective way. This resulted in the idea of governance. Governance models are in fact preceding the establishment of states, according to some counts.

The curiosity of "how", "What" and "Why" has shed crystal rectifier mankind to urge, develop, invent and build nice concepts and systems to satisfy the requirements or his wishes. The requirement to explore the solutions for the problems is that the only 1 issue that mankind possesses despite uncountable failures and defeats. The pliability to work out new beliefs, systems and behaviors has been the essence of the academic technique.

To exist, people ought to have food, clothing, housing and various needs of life. Nature doesn't supply these needs and to urge those, people ought to work towards establishing mean that to amass and fulfil its wishes.

The presence of fantastic governance clarifies the authority and simplifies the upper knowledge. It conjointly ensures the quality not solely of people however also of the organizations that are in-charge of their actions and decisions and unengaged to do so. Governance could be a very important issue for the success of any activity performed among the general public sector or non-governmental sector. Many studies in literature suggest a strong co-relation between better and prudent governance, stable government and improved socio-economic results through a well-established principle.

The concept of governance is getting importance in the contemporary world due to rising issues of governance. Governance is defined by different scholars' according to their views. Governance means a setup with full and limited authorities. It is a setup to achieve certain goals, like a commercial institution is a setup where the goal is to achieve maximum profit or maximum output. In modern democratic states it is a setup where the goal is to give maximum communal, financial and political freedoms to its citizens. In corporate organization the governance is known as corporate governance but the term governance is used for the administrative affairs of states. In this we focused on the governance in this perspective i-e governance of state. World Bank define governance in 1992 as "The manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development". Daniel Kaufmann, Aart Kray and Pablo Zoido Labaton, give the definition of governance as, "The traditions and institutions by which the authority in a country is exercised. This includes the process by which governments are selected monitored and replaced; the capacity of the government to effectively formulate and implement sound policies and the respect of citizens and the state for institution that govern economic and social interaction among them" (Worldwide Governance Indicator Project, 2010). World Bank in 1994 stated that "The manner in which power are exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources." Jon Pierre and B. Guy Peters defined governance as "Governance is the method to steer economy and society, and to reach collective goals." (Pierre & Peters, 2000; Muzaffar & Choudhary, 2017).

"Governance is more than mere management. It is not only about decision-making, priorities-settings and policies formulation but also about implementation and result." (Khan, 2006, p. 356) Governance means "The process of decision making and the process by which decision are implemented (or not implemented)." (UNESCAP, 2007)

### **Good Governance**

Many political and economic scholars defined Good governance as: UNDP defined good governance: "Ensure the establishment of right policies and strategies to support the activities of people to enable them to earn a decent livelihood, ensure access for all too state resources and opportunities, and help people achieve a minimum set of capabilities to lead a long and productive life." UNESCAP said that in good governance: "The voices of the most vulnerable in society are heard in decision-making and it is responsive to the present and future needs of society." (UNESCAP, 2007) Dr. Sultan Khan states: "Good governance is associated with the capacity building and exercise of political power for efficient and effective administration for the welfare of the people and is also about economizing effort and careful use of normal resources." (Khan, 2006; Malik, et al., 2023; Muzaffar, et al., 2023). The above definitions show that how much the good governance is resourceful and efficient in the state functions. The strength of a system that ensures the liability, justice, effectiveness, competence and transparency is due to good governance.

### **Poor Governance**

It is the anti-term of good governance. The contrary term used for good governance is poor or bad governance. We can understand poor governance by the following description of Dr. Sultan Khan: He gave the concept of poor governance as the abuse of power to create hurdles in rule of law, accountability, and economic prosperity and in the effective and efficient policy making (Khan, 2006; Muzaffar, et al., 2024; Batool, et. al., 2023).

As it is a negative term and it is not properly defined but it shows the weakness of state system to give the results in the accordance with the principles of efficiency, effectiveness, rule of law, transparency, reliability, accountability and justice to get the trust of people.

## **Governance crisis**

When a system fails to figure out the serious problems occurring in it then crisis occur. It a serious problem that happens suddenly and it becomes difficult to handle it out. A state should avoid this situation because the situation leads towards the failure of a state or failure of a system. When a system starts to work in an uncommon way then crisis occur. This happens due to lack of necessary parts required for the governance. When any organization meddles among the different foundations lose regard for a sacred intensity of foundations the working of all establishments is influenced in partner amazingly perilous methodology and emergency begins to develop. Great government requests the management of law or charter. When the constitution isn't obeyed and furthermore the standard of law is discovered far off keen government is renewed into the emergency of organization. Debasement is at partner enormous scale and furthermore, the nonattendance of a legit method of deceitfulness adds to jumping up with an emergency of management. Establishments in partner amazingly shrewd condition of administration have a concordance of interests with one another for the correct working of the state of administration. Where establishments get a clash on one reason or totally extraordinary the emergency begins to make its place between organizations. Foundations get a conflict on account of the logical inconsistency to their greatest advantage. This examination is focused on the clash of organizations that are producing an emergency of administration inside the Muslim republic of the Asian country. Conflict of establishment's influences administration related reason the emission of the emergency in an outperforming state.

## **Literature Review**

Nanda (2006) has focused on the concept of governance in his article "Good Governance: Concept revisited" and emphasized over the term "good governance". Through the 1980's and 1990's, donor countries and establishments trended to form aid reforms within the recipient countries. Recently lot of donors, like the International Monetary Fund, International Development Bank, and the US, is progressively looking for excellent performance and good governance as a necessity for aid. This can be a method of requiring a recipient state to demonstrate the seriousness of its commitment to economic and social reforms. There are not any objective standards for determinative sensible governance: some aspects embody political stability, the rule of law, management of corruption, and accountability. High levels of economic condition and weak governance are joined, creating property tough to implement. For reforms to succeed, domestic support, ownership, and commitment are crucial, as is the recipient's cultural context and history.

In his article "Good Governance at Grassroots, Palanithurai (2005) is focusing on the importance of Good Governance at Grass root level. Furthermore, he complimented that many myths have broken at the world by empowering the individuals and making them participatory within the development method. The method is slow because it is donor driven and there is absence of political will. It's been reiterated by the speaker of the Lok Sabha during a recent memorial lecture. But, at the grassroots, it happens to the active participation of the individuals in governance and with committed leadership. With the arrival of council establishments, smart governance is being perceived from the individual's perspective and practiced at the native level with the active support and participation of the people. To form it happens at the grassroots level with the participation of the individuals' leadership matters abundant. With the restricted powers devolved to Panchayats, council leaders are able to succeed in getting tremendous results. at the same time, two vital transformations are occurring in society taciturnly. One, struggle has started at the native and basic level to demand the power for the individuals to come to a decision regarding their destiny and alter the paradigm of governance. Secondly, Devolution is being evolved and democracy is being gathered and smart governance rising at the grassroots.

Gisselquist (2012) in his has discussed all relevant issues of governance. For the author, good governance has become an elusive objective because it means different to different organizations in different settings. Future work would have best to disaggregate the thought of fine governance and refocus attention and analysis on its numerous dismiss parts, as outlined here (e.g., democracy, the rule of law, economical public management). The problem of girls and their rights to contest and hold political workplace was confined to some critics from among the priesthood, associated it didn't elicit an emotional response among Pakistan's extremely politically aware voters.

Probably the one most significant expression of the absence of the "rules of the game" in Pakistan's polity result was the return of military intervention in Pakistan's political life. A complete of three Martial law regimes has dominated West Pakistan for 32 out of its 72 years as a sovereign state. Civil-military relations became such a key index of a civil government's stability that two of Pakistan's last three prime ministers lost their jobs as a result of they were unable to perform effectively within the absence of associated operational balance between the army and civil society.

Ismail and Rizvi (2010) focused in their examination "Some issues with Governance in Pakistan" that the administration is delineated in light of the fact that the way all through that control is practiced at interims the administration of a nation's monetary and social assets for advancement. "Great Governance" is then simply like sound advancement rehearses. essential changes for open use might be formed into create one if the cash strategies can be actualized or might be checked; in the event that poor securing frameworks support debasement and misshape open speculation needs, at that point there'll be no extra advancement and in the long run it'll lead toward the decrease of this technique together with the different sub-framework structures. This just delineates a more extensive point; great administration is focal key to relate supporting a setting that encourages durable and fair advancement. Governments assume a key job at interims the accessibility of open item. They set up the rules that make markets work effectively which they set market inside the correct bearing and gives them sponsorships. Along these lines on assuming this job, they need incomes, and 'operators' to gather these incomes. This thusly wants frameworks of duties, satisfactory and dependable data, and that's only the tip of the iceberg, effectiveness in asset the executives and conveyance of open administrations.

## **Material and Methods**

The study involves a qualitative method for governance problems in urban settings. The research is then conducted in two way phases. In the first phase, structured interviews are conducted from Urban Population and officials. The sample size is decided based on saturation level of the respondents. However, random sampling is used to choose respondents from both society and governmental officials. In the second phase, this data is linked with the available literature on the subject matter for integrating primary data (Interviews) with secondary data (literature). The results are then put into findings and analysis.

## **Results and Discussion**

There are multiple factors like very high population density, population patterns, socio-economic conditions and complex administrative structures that make urban governance different from the general governance. Therefore, urban governance requires a completely different specialized institutional Responses. In urban governance, multitude of institutions have to interact and interject each other like municipal bodies, developmental authorities, utility bodies, private services, law and order bodies etc. On the other hand, the general governance is related to a functions of the state i-e legislations, ensuring law and order and implementations of the laws. The world bank report in 2022 also clearly mentions

that the urban centers require “multi-scalar governance” mechanisms because of disastrous consequences of potential failures of routine governance.

Second important difference between Urban and general governance is demographic patterns and socio economic diversity. The urban governing structures have to deal with and engage population with diverse characteristics like economic class, ethnicity, mobility, and even religious identity. These characteristics require a robust, inclusive, democratic and particularly governance models. Migrants, business groups and companies and international linkages are a few distinctive challenges faced by Urban governing authorities. (Castells, 1996). In states like Pakistan, where informal migrations and settlements, weak institutional structures, limited coordination among governing institutions, problems of vertical coordination are added challenges. (Hasan & Raza, 2015). Therefore, the cities have different set of requirements when it comes to governance owing to its distinctive features as compared to the general governance models.

### **Challenges to Urban Governance: Diversity, divisions and social Stratification**

Diversity in Urban centers of Pakistan, divisions and fault lines in the urban society and social stratifications cause a great deal of challenges for urban governance by creating divergent demands, disparity in service delivery and polarized political behavior and patterns. Pakistan’s major urban centers like Karachi, Lahore, Peshawar, Faisalabad, Quetta etc. have been divided on ethnic, economic, political and linguistic lines where interests of these groups often collide with each other. This complexity and sensitivity then require meticulous planning for urban governance for a stable social and political order. Karachi, for example, has historically been divided on ethnic lines having significant impact on political mobilization causing a competition over resource controls. This situation has caused immense pressure on local governing bodies and institutions that provide service delivery. Different pressure groups and interest groups have exerted great pressures over policing, land distribution and even electoral politics. (Gayer, 2014). There is generally a consensus among scholars that the best model of urban governance is thus the Pluralist model and not a centralized, hierarchical model followed in Pakistan’s administrative structure. As a result, our major urban centers are ripe for political and social unrest.

In addition to above, social stratification adds to the challenges of Urban Governance in Pakistan. Growing economic inequality in states like Pakistan is more visible in Urban settings. As a result, there are different expectations about governance needs and unequal interest articulation and demand patterns between those who govern and the governed. This is particularly true about the informal settlements commonly known as *Kachi Abadis* in major urban centers like Karachi and Lahore. (Hasan, 2019) These areas in such metropolitan cities are largely ignored in planning, and policy executions. Consequently, their access to social and basic amenities have been limited and restricted compared to the other parts of the city. Adding to the problem is limited resources and fiscal constraints as well as absence of local self-government, most of the times. The World bank Report of 2023 clearly cautions about the problems arising out of divided urban spaces and structural inequalities.

### **Weak Local Government Systems in Urban Centers and impacts on Urban Governance**

Pakistan has mixed record of local government systems over the past 78 years of history. At times, it was developed and functioned with real powers but most of the times, there were no elections at all. Ironically, most of the military led governments were involved in establishing the local government and their empowerment while most of the civilian governments had taken least interest in holding elections or giving meaningful powers to these institutions. It is, however, beyond the scope of this study to explore the factors responsible for the delay in local government elections or weak local government systems.

None the less, local government system has universal recognition of being the most effective of service delivery, accountability and democratisation of local level governance. Under Article 140-A of the Constitution of Pakistan, it is mandatory to establish elected local governments, however, in reality, this particular provision is violated by most of the governments in Pakistan.

The governance challenges witnessed in some of the major urban centres in Pakistan like Karachi, Peshawar, Quetta, Rawalpindi etc are primarily caused by either absence of or weak local self-governments. Absence of local self-government makes these cities governed by bureaucracy structured hierarchically, red tapism and disconnect between local needs and policy making. The primary factor responsible for weak local self-governments is lack of fiscal autonomy that makes them dependent on provincial governments. This absence of local self-government is often reflected in weak basic services to the citizens like health care, sanitation, waste management, water supplies as well as public transport as these services are managed by different provincial departments often lacking coordination and coherence. (Cheema, Khwaja, & Qadir, 2006).

Another impact of weak local government system is the creation of and persistence of informal settlements also known as kachi abadis in urban environment, disparities in service deliveries, and elite capture. Karachi, for example, have witnessed the jurisdictional issues between Karachi Metropolitan Corporation, developmental authorities and provincial departments due to their overlapping authorities and role. This situation has created the political actors to interfere with decisions over lands that is dominated by elite and the marginalised communities are largely excluded from it (Hasan & Mohib, 2003). Besides, the World Bank's Pakistan Urbanisation Review of 2015 noted the limited to no fiscal autonomy, lack of political certainty and continuity, and lack of continuity of policies as core factors limiting the ability of urban centres to manage the sustainable growth, planning and enforcements of regulations and most importantly, building the trust of citizens. As a result, Pakistan's institutional decay is intensifying impacting the governance at even local levels.

As study explores the governance challenges in urban settings, the entire focus of this research is on urban centres of Pakistan. Fundamental assumption of this project is that Urban centres have distinctive features that require a difference approach of governance. One of the key feature is significantly higher population density, poor infrastructure, poor civic sense among population, bureaucratic and political interests, corruption due to presence of middle and affluent class, weak social fabric and most importantly absence of a robust local government system. All of the above factors have contributed towards the governance crisis in Pakistan Urban centres. To overcome these challenges, two fundamental aspects are immediately needed: election of a democratic and powerful local government that could help provincial bureaucracy in service delivery at the gross root and improve the local governance. Secondly, changing social attitude about their civic duties and social integration that could help change the way people look up to the state and their behaviour towards state and its institutions. Governing the urban areas of Pakistan poses a major challenge to Public administration in Pakistan. Growing urbanisation, demographic pressures, ethnic diversity, socio economic variations pose major challenges in addition to other problems like bureaucratic hurdles, lack of transparency and corruption. These challenges are radically different from Rural governance challenges where the socio political and economic dynamics are relatively simpler and therefore warrant simpler solutions.

One of the challenges to Urban governance is the paradox that major cities house the headquarters and major offices of administrative institutions, relevant authorities and decisions making institutions, yet their surroundings present and portray grave governance and management challenges. Here are few factors responsible for it:

Firstly, one of the major problem is limited to no coordination among governmental departments. In major cities like Karachi, Lahore, Faisalabad, Peshawar etc there is lack of coordination among different governing bodies like Development authorities, cantonment boards, municipal corporations, local body institutions and provincial departments to name a few.

Secondly, there is problem of vertical coordination between federal, provincial and local governmental institutions/bodies. Since the 18<sup>th</sup> amendment it was generally believed that there shall be clear boundary demarcation among these three tiers of governance, however, at the gross root level, we have seen major challenges. For example, role of electricity distribution companies, federal installations like cantonments, airports etc are closely linked to provincially and locally managed departments.

Lastly, there are major issues regarding jurisdiction of all the institutions. Different departments are often seen having conflict with each other over issues of jurisdictions. On some occasions, the issue of overlapping jurisdiction arises while in some cases, bodies refuse to accept the area under their jurisdiction. All of the above issues cause major challenge to effective governance in Pakistan.

One of the major challenge in governance is the social structure and its complexity in urban settings. Urban centres in Pakistan consist of heterogeneous population of all ages and gender. Many people belonging to other geographical regions and belonging to different ethnic communities migrate to urban areas for economic and sometimes environmental factors. Thousands of students also move to urban areas for better education and stay here for years. Each of these groups have cultural variety and their lifestyle affects the governing mechanisms. Though diversity enriches the urban life, competing interests and demands pose a major challenge to governing bodies.

## Conclusion

Urban Governance is a global challenge in twenty first century where globalisation and more population have made the cities diverse and complex. Pakistan is no exception to this challenge. Owing to Pakistan's heterogenous social structures and increase fault lines have added to the sensitivity and complexity of the problem of governance. However, real problem is not the diversity of urban settings in Pakistan, rather failure of state to effectively manage the urban life. State institutions are primarily based on Urban centres and therefore any governance problem should be more visible to them, however, certain 'bubbles' in cities where elite dwell have much better governance practises, thereby, creating a wall between those who govern and those who are being governed. Besides, democratic deficit in Pakistan is reflected in absence of local self-government and even when it exists, its weakness and subordination to provincial governments or selected bureaucracy. All these factors clearly reflect lack of political will to effectively govern the cities in Pakistan more efficiently as well as absence of planning on scientific lines.

## Recommendations

- **Institutional Integration:** Establish unified metropolitan governance structures to reduce fragmentation among overlapping agencies and improve efficiency with regard to service delivery.
- **Decentralization and Empowerment:** Strengthen local governments by devolving fiscal and administrative authority to elected city councils. This autonomy should be constitutionally protected in accordance with the spirit of federalism in Pakistan.
- **Urban Planning Reform:** Integrate informal settlements or *Kachi Abadis* into urban plans through inclusive zoning and regularization of policies. Besides, planning based on reality on ground is more effective and should be customized in each urban setting.

- **Citizen Engagement:** Create participatory governance forums for residents to influence budgeting and service delivery. The involvement of youth, women, professional bodies and academic institutions is likely to improve the governance models in urban cities besides ensuring transparency and accountability, thereby, creating more trust of the citizens.
- **Data-Driven Governance:** Develop digital urban management systems for real-time monitoring of infrastructure, waste, and transport. Planning of all kinds must be based on data driven rather than subjective pick and choose on ethnic, linguistic or political grounds.
- **Capacity Building:** Train municipal officials and elected members of local government in urban management, participatory planning, and inter-agency coordination. This training, on regular basis, should be focused on local governance and based on local needs.



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