

CHAPTER 6

Policy Recommendations

The foregoing study of problems of governing Pakistan leads to four specific contextual problem areas. These are:

1. Persistence of Colonial Structure

The basic administrative, legal and state structure is a carry over from colonial times. It has not undergone any fundamental changes. The result is that such a structure, which was designed to meet colonial-era requirements, can no longer serve the needs of a country with complex problems. The overhaul of the structure should, therefore, be on the top of the agenda.

2. Need to have Greater Confidence in People

An offshoot of the colonial approach is the lack of confidence in the people. Hiding basic information about the country from the people is one manifestation of this mentality. It includes failure to involve the people in grassroots decision-making that affects their lives, to involvement of the people in issues such as law and order, construction and environment.

3. Erosion of State Institutions

Institutions of the state including police, bureaucracy, judiciary, and so forth have suffered in credibility, competence and integrity with the result that people are less willing to repose confidence in such state institutions.

4. Pakistan in the Hope of Geopolitical Change

Pakistan is today located in a region that is witnessing important qualitative changes. These changes reflect the unraveling of the post-World War II status quo, with the Revolution in Iran, the

civil war in A1 the political emergence of Central Asia, the insurgency in Kashmir and the Khalistan movement in East Punjab. Given this geopolitical context Pakistan, perhaps more than any other state in the region. is feeling the fallout of such change. Any discussion on governance in Pakistan has to take into account this factor directly or indirectly as it impinges upon the country.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The following policy package is recommended to meet the mini mum demands and needs of governing Pakistan as a multinational democratic society:

1. Decentralization of administrative power involving policy participation at the grassroots level. This basically entails a change in the role and responsibilities of the institution known as Deputy Commissioner/(DC) who is the pivot of the administrative structure in the country since he combines influence in his person as Head of the District administration, executive authority, financial powers of revenue collection and judiciary powers as district magistrate. That role now needs to be redefined with devolution and division of powers in a manner that after these powers are not concentrated in one office and they are also to be shared by the locally elected representatives of the people.
2. Poverty alleviation problem.
3. Building up an infrastructure in the social sector particularly health, education, environment and housing.
4. Economic reforms.
5. Revision of foreign policy outlook and assumptions, particularly reversal of the military option in Afghanistan so that the refugees can return and Pakistan does not have to face terrorism from across the border which, in turn, is a major source of internal destabilization. Additionally, there is the need to rearrange relations with United States so that the

American interference in Pakistan's internal affairs declines and a stable polity emerges, that is relatively immune from American efforts to destabilize it.

6. Reforms in the political system with the purpose of energizing what is currently a narrow based structure whose social base has led to an arrangement between urban and the rural regions. Better 'and stringent electoral laws, an in-house accountability process directed against both corruption and defection and ensuring periodical elections on party basis would be a step towards this direction.

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