

The Case of Pakistan

(UNDP Programme for Accountability and Transparency and the OECD Development Centre on
Comparative Country Case Studies in Anti-Corruption)

1986: end of the military rule

Since then:

- no single government has finished its mandate
- each of them has been dismissed on corruption grounds

Context

Economic

- Role of the State in the economy
 - Use of State's regulatory power to grant favors
 - Large bureaucracy, hierarchical and secretive
- Impact of the amounts of aid in the 80s

Political

- Consequences of long periods of military rules: strong Executive and weak counter-powers/army perceived as the only strong and clean institution
- Political instability and erratic election process
- Regional and ethnic fragmentation and no strong sense of community

Anti-corruption Initiatives in Pakistan

The experience of the 1997 caretaker government:

- Asymmetry of information: Freedom of Information Act
- Discretionary power in the public administration
 - suppression of discretion
 - in cases where it is necessary, decision has to be transparent
- Independent agency to sanction corruption (Ehtesab)
- Issue of political corruption
 - corruption in elections
 - corruption in the granting of loans

However:

- Follow-up: none, or distorted
- Context: non-elected government in office for 3 months (not affected by constraints of the political economy)

Control and Sanctions Institutions

- Legal basis not always sufficient to guarantee full independence and efficiency
Example: shortcomings in the current reform of the **Auditor-General**
 - No functional independence from the Executive

- No elimination of the problem of clash of interest (accounting and audit functions)

Current Anti-corruption Institutions

- “Rule--of-thumb”: institutions often practically dependent on the Executive and cautious in their attitude towards corruption
Example: Ombudsman
 - legally entitled to process corruption cases, which he declines to do in order to be able to pursue cases of maladministration without undue pressure.
- Most vocal institution: the **Ehtesab commission** (accountability commission)
 - Independent agency created in 1997 by caretaker government
 - Early 1998 amendment: adjunction of an ‘Ehtesab Bureau’, solely responsible to launch investigations, and dependent from Government

Structural Reforms

- Reforms towards less involvement of the State in the economy (privatization)
- Reforms towards better fiscal balance

However:

- Uneven record
- Opposition from vested interests
- No reforms of the civil service.

Weakness and Scarcity of Non Governmental Initiatives on Anti-corruption

- Public cynicism
- Inability of CS to mobilize
 - High illiteracy
 - Governmental constraints on NGO registration/activities and on press freedom
- Social apathy

Conclusion:

- Economic difficulties may trigger reforms
- Need to structure demand for anti-corruption by the new urban middle-class
- Bottom-up?