

## Examining Citizen's Confidence in Institutions of Pakistan: An Analysis of Citizen's Trust

Naila Yosuf

Lecturer, Management Sciences Department COMSATS Institute of information technology,  
M.A Jinnah Campus Lahore, Pakistan  
Email: naila@ciitlahore.edu.pk

Binish Nauman

Lecturer, Management Sciences Department COMSATS Institute of information technology,  
M.A Jinnah Campus Lahore, Pakistan  
Email: binishnauman@ciitlahore.edu.pk

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### Abstract

Citizens always look to Governments and their institutions to lead the way and solve their issues. Citizen's trust in government and its institutions is considered to be an effective way to measure progress and prosperity of any society and effectiveness of its governance mechanism. This current study is conducted to investigate (I) citizen's trust in various institutions in Pakistan like Federal Government, Provincial Government, political parties, Army, Judiciary, Police, and Media. (II) And to check the most crucial issue faced these institutions. Data is collected from Lahore from the sample size of 166 through convenience sampling. Results show that the Army is the only institution on which citizens has trust but overall respondents show distrust from the performance of all major institutions of Pakistan. Fighting terrorism, lack of coordination between Federal & Provincial Government, awareness among people, unstable political environment in country, Political pressure, race for best ratings among channels and Lack of public confidence are the most crucial issues faced by these institutions.

**Keywords:** Pakistani Government, political parties, Institutions, Citizens, Trust.

### 1. Introduction

Worldwide public trust in governments and its institutions has been deceased. According to (Blind 2007) Since the mid-1960s public trust in government and political institutions has been decreasing in all of the advanced industrialized democracies. Although the pattern and the pace of the decrease are dissimilar across countries, the downward trend is ubiquitous. Except for the Netherlands, which actually shows increased trust in the government from the 1970s until the mid-1990s, all of the other advanced industrialized democracies recorded a decline in the level of trust their respective governments have enjoyed. Fluctuations in

political trust are affected by Satisfaction with government and these fluctuations dampen the effect of economic performance (Kestilä-Kekkonen and Söderlund). (Misztal 1996) says besides the low trust evidences on public Institutions worldwide still trust in various countries is considered to be necessary to measure for progress and prosperity of any society.

This study examines the citizens' confidence in institutions of Pakistan. Pakistan is a developing country. It is the seventh most populous country in the world with nearly 145 million people and land area of over 800,000 square kilometers. Pakistan is a federation of four provinces and a parliamentary democracy with multi-party system. The mainstream politics of the country as evident from the manifestoes and agenda of its major political parties is moderate and focused on economic and social development. The principles imbibed in the state constitution emphasized social justice, welfare, equality and equal opportunity, democracy, freedom and progress (Anonymous). This is for the first time in history of Pakistan that smooth transition of power took place between two democratic forces. Citizens of this country came out in huge numbers to vote in elections 2013 creating a perception of their awareness and involvement in political set up (Desk 2013). In Pakistan various surveys are conducted to know citizen's trust in government but their scope is limited. In addition to trust in institutions this study examined respondents current issues and problems faced by these institutions. In some survey's citizen's show overall low level of trust but express their satisfactions when asked about individual services from various departments like police, health care, education etc. Investigating citizen's trust, identifying various issues can be helpful for Government to improve its functioning and rectify any discrepancies and flaws in current system.

This current study is taking into consideration not only Federal Government and Provincial Government but various other state institutions like Army, Judiciary, Political parties, Media and police. During the survey respondents were asked questions about both federal and provincial government as after 18<sup>th</sup> amendment most of the powers are delegated to provinces so it was crucial to know citizen's level of trust on provincial governments as well. In Punjab it's the second continuous tenure of same political party in power so people at large are in better position to comment on its functioning. Army has a strong history of ruling this country. In tenure of last retiring Chief of Army Staff, there was least involvement of Army in government affairs unlike previous tenures. Army is considered to be most the organized, disciplined institution which has fought on all fronts in Pakistan e.g., fighting wars with India, fighting terrorism within internal forces and facing political instability resulting in running the governments as well. Judiciary is main medium of providing justice to society at large. Movement of restoration of judiciary has also brought this pillar into main stream resulting in increased expectation level of general public from role of judiciary. Judiciary after restoration of Chief Justice retired Iftikhar Chaudhry movement gained a momentum and hype. Afterwards the series of Suomoto actions and punishments & penalizing of sitting prime ministers by the judiciary also changed the scenario (Qazi 2013).

Police importance is always crucial for managing crimes but its role increased with the increase in number of terrorist activities. So it's pertinent to know the level of trust of general public in police. *The role of the media is crucial and ranges from promoting national identity and cohesion to galvanizing the resolve of peoples in achieving progress and development as well as meeting contemporary challenges. The downside is that the media can become the instrument of state propaganda. The media in Pakistan, in the sixty years of the country's existence as a sovereign and independent state, rendered service in the varied aspects of national endeavor* (AFP 2013). According to (Qazi 2013) the media entice people to change.

In Pakistan trust in institutions fall due to various factors including economic, social conditions such as crime and poverty and various other political factors. Pakistan a developing nation is trying to cope with various challenges to serve its population of 200 million. There is political instability in Pakistan, tension with India, terrorism/security issues, inflation, poverty, lack of education, is making the lives difficult. This study is helpful in examining citizen's confidence in institutions of Pakistan. Objectives of the study are to analyze;

- Citizens' trust in different Government Institutions of Pakistan like Federal government, Provincial government, political parties, Army, Judiciary, Media and Police.
- The most crucial issue faced by Federal government, Provincial government, Political parties, Army, Judiciary, Media and Police.

## **2. Literature Review**

Trust in government meaning the peoples' trust on parliament, cabinet, civil service, local councils, politicians and on political parties. Trust in government have two aspects one is institutional and other is personal. Institutional aspects include the reliability on the government institutions, on the other side personal aspect include the trust on individuals like political leaders, and the persons working in administration and government sectors.

Scholars' emphasis on the importance of public trust in government in different ways. Like (Desk 2013) stress that "It is increasingly important to research citizens' trust in government so that we can understand how citizen expectations change and manage government responses to those expectations". Trust in government is a central indicator of the publics' underlying feeling about its polity (Newton and Norris 2000). Existence of trust between citizens and political party depicts the trustworthy and healthy relation between the two. Trust is an economic lubricant reducing the cost of transactions, enabling new forms of cooperation and generally furthering business activities, employment and prosperity (Porta, Lopez-De-Silane et al. 1996). A trustworthy relation is one of the most essential elements for the progress of the country. It is not only socially important rather legally and economically it is also necessary. Strong bond of trust flourish the economy due to fostering and supportive action of the government and inconsequence cooperative behavior of the citizens. The performance of government is the act of political party in sense of economic, social and legal condition o the country. As stated by (Keele 2007) that Trust is a reflection of government performance". Furthermore, it is also argued by (Carrera 2012) that trust in government represents an evaluation of government performance, indicating whether performance accords with normative, expectations held by the public. If citizens' are satisfied with the government performance, trust created between citizens' & government and prosperity abound. On the other hand when government unable to satisfy citizens' then distrust arise that leads to political & economic instability, social unrest and corruption etc. Public evaluate the good or bad governance due to its performance and the work done for the goodwill of the nation or for the betterment of the country. Furthermore, if government reaches the expectations of the citizens' it leads towards trust between government and citizens.

Scholars acknowledge that the causes and effects of public trust in government are complex. Several scholars in developed countries emphasize the impact that citizens' perceptions of economic and political performance exert on trust in government (Kim 2010). Institutional context, political culture, and citizen-state relationship may also be important factors that determine the level of trust in government (Bouckaert, Lægreid et al. 2005). A country's institutional performance, political stability and the government's relation with its public,

depicts the success of the governance. A successful government empowers its institutions, control political instability by applying different policies and build a trust culture. (Newton and Norris 2000) argues that the relationship between individual social trust and political trust is mediated by the effectiveness of social and political institutions.

(Anonymous) proved by research that the quality of institutions impact on levels of social trust, this impact is mediated through peoples’ perception of institutions as more or less ‘good’ in the sense of trustworthy, reliable and even-handed. It also been proved by (Anonymous) that ‘good’ institutions matter for social trust because they reduce the risk from trusting. Furthermore it is concluded by (Anonymous) that there could be a way to increase social trust in society and to eventually reap the economic and political benefits accruing to trusting societies. The way is (i) to improve the quality of institutions and (ii) to prove educational levels and the material well-being of the population to (Desk 2013) suggested that in order to conduct and implement policies government need to develop effective and trustful relationships between citizens and government institutions and to support and understand citizens and businesses. Hence it proved from the literature that citizens’ trust in government and institutions is very important for good governance.

**3. Methodology**

This is a cross sectional study conducted in a non- contrived setting (natural environment) having minimal researchers interference. Population selected is total population of Lahore. Convenience sampling technique was used as questionnaire was in English so respondents who were able to understand and interpret questions in English were approached. The unit of analysis for this research is general public having Pakistan’s citizenship and residing in Lahore.

The data for this current study is collected in December 2013-February 2014 when almost 6-8 months were past for this current government. The data is collected from Lahore, one of the major cities of Pakistan and capital of one of the biggest province (Punjab) of Pakistan. The instruments used for collecting data are survey questionnaire adopted from two different research articles (Kestilä-Kekkonen and Söderlund) and (Crête, Couture et al. 2007). Certain modifications have done according to Pakistan’s setting. Almost 30 questions are included in the questionnaire related to basic demographics about respondents, citizen’s awareness and participation in political system, citizen’s level of trust on various institutions like Federal and Provincial government, political parties, Army, Judiciary, Police, Media. And problems encountered by these institutions in Pakistan. Frequency analysis is used for data analysis in current study to know the percentage of population showing trust on various Government institutions. The researcher distributed 200 questionnaires among university faculty, students, administrative staff and professionals out of which 166 questionnaires were returned making it approximately 83% response rate. Cronbach Alpha value is 0.826 showing high reliability of the instrument used.

**4. Results and Interpretation**

Table 1.

Level of trust of general public in various institutions of Pakistan

Institutions	%age of people saying “No confidence at all”	%age of people saying “Not very much confidence”	%age of people saying “quite a lot of confidence”	%age of people saying “Great Deal of confidence”
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<b>Federal Government</b>	31.3%	<b>53.0</b>	10.8	4.8
<b>Provincial Government</b>	30.1	<b>39.8</b>	27.7	2.4
<b>Political Parties</b>	<b>53.0</b>	31.3	10.8	4.8
<b>Judiciary</b>	26.5	<b>36.1</b>	28.9	8.4
<b>Army</b>	15.7	16.9	31.3	<b>36.1</b>
<b>Media</b>	<b>47.0</b>	28.9	19.3	4.8
<b>Police</b>	<b>65.1</b>	22.9	10.8	1.2

The above Table 1 shows level of trust of general public in various institutions of Pakistan. Results indicate that 53% of respondents are not very much satisfied with the performance of Federal Government within 6-8 months of their formation. Most of the respondents (31.3%) show no confidence at all in Federal Government. If this non confidence result is seen collectively it shows that approximately 84.3% respondents expressed their dissatisfaction with the performance of Federal Government which is quite alarming.

Table 1 shows that majority of the respondents also expressed their dissatisfaction with provincial governments (39.8%) resulting in low level of trust with these governments. The behavior of political leaders, corruption charges on them, manipulated role played by these political parties has also resulted in low level of trust on political parties i.e., 53% respondents are not satisfied at all from this institution whereas 31.3% show not much confidence response resulting in total dissatisfaction from 84.3% respondents. There is negative perception about judiciary as well. 36.1% respondents expressed not very much confidence in this institution. Media is very vibrant and dynamic in Pakistan now days. Many private channels are operating and people now have lot of choice as far as print and electronic media is concerned. Expansion of media still has not helped this institution to get increased trust level from respondents. Approximately 47.0% respondents have expressed no confidence at all on institution of media.

Police is considered to be a less reliable institution in Pakistan. According to our analysis 65.1% citizens have no confidence at all. 22.9% people having not very much confidence, and just 1.2% responded about a great deal of confidence on police. The most trustworthy institution in eyes of respondents is Army. Approximately 36.1% respondents have shown great deal of confidence on this institution.

## **2. The most crucial issue /problem faced by institutions in Pakistan**

### **Federal Government**

Table 2.1 shows the results that fighting terrorism is the most crucial issue/problem for federal government in Pakistan. According to 32.5%, its most crucial issue whereas improving environment and improving social welfare programs are the least bothered issues by the Federal Government with response rate of 0.00% and 1.2%.

Table 2.1

(Federal Government)

Reducing Debt	Improving Social Welfare Programs	Improving health care	Creating jobs	Cutting taxes	Fighting crimes	Preserving national unity	Improving environment	Fighting terrorism
24.1%	1.2%	2.4%	10.8%	3.6%	12.0%	13.3%	0.00%	<b>32.5%</b>

**Provincial Government**

The most crucial problem faced by Provincial Government is lack of co ordination between Federal and Provincial i.e., 34.9% whereas least issue is lack of funds from Federal Government.

Table 2.2  
(Provincial Government)

Lack of coordination between Federal & Provincial Government	Lack of funds from Federal Government	Lack of clarity of Provincial Government’s role after 18 <sup>th</sup> amendment	Competition between the performance of different provinces
34.9%	16.9%	20.5%	27.7%

**Political parties**

The most crucial problem faced by political parties in today’s scenario is awareness among people which is creating problems for status co, conventional and traditional leadership to attract and retain their voters. Approximately, 48.2% respondents think that this is the major problem and least issue which is bothering political parties is vibrant media in Pakistan.

Table 2.3 (Political parties)

Awareness among people	Vibrant media	Emergence of new political parties in scene
48.2%	25.3%	26.5%

**Judiciary**

Judiciary one of the important pillar of any country’s democratic system is facing the crucial issue of corruption within judicial system. Approximately 45.8% respondents believe that corruption is harming this institution whereas least bothered issue is vibrant media.

Table 2.4 (Judiciary)

Political pressure	Less number of judges as compared to cases	Corruption within judiciary	Vibrant media
39.8%	13.3%	45.8%	1.2%

**Army**

As Army is most structured and organized institution within Pakistan and in every crisis people look at this Institution. Through media it was a common perception that terrorism may be the most crucial issue for Army but the results of this survey indicates that 49.4% respondents believe that unstable political environment in country is bothering Army most and least bothered issue is tension with India approximately 9.6%.

Table 2.5 (Army)

Unstable political environment in country	Afghanistan War	Drone attacks in Pakistan	Tension with India
49.4%	14.5%	26.5%	9.6%

**Media**

For the institution of media the prominent and crucial issue is race for best ratings among various channels. Approximately 34.9% respondents think it to be the most crucial issue which our media is facing in current scenario. For gaining high ratings media institution is ready to cross any boundaries or ethics of journalism.

Table 2.6 (Media)

Lack of code of conduct	Race for best ratings among channels	Lack of qualified people in media	Involvement of Mafia's within media promoting yellow journalism
21.7%	34.9%	14.5%	28.9%

**Police**

Police a most controversial Institution (AFP 2013) in Pakistan corrupted through political involvement (Khalid 2009) is an important pillar of Pakistan's governance system. Political appointments are considered to be the most crucial issue for this institution making the functioning and working of it more questionable. Approximately 30.1% respondents think that these political appointments are a critical factor for Police department which is harming its repute badly.

Table 2.7 (Police)

Low salaries	Target of Terrorist activities	Tough working hours	Lack of appropriate infrastructure	Lack of public confidence	Political appointments	Police-population ratio low
10.8%	16.9%	6.0%	14.5%	19.3%	30.1%	2.4%

**5. Conclusion**

This study is beneficial for government, various institutions and policy makers as they get the basic idea what general public is thinking about their role and performance. It is an alarming finding that we are advocating democracy within our country but the citizen's level of trust is just supporting the institution of Army and has no confidence at all on other democratic institutions. This current study has highlighted various problem areas for various institutions in the eyes of general public so it is recommended that all institutions including Federal Government, Provincial Government, Army, Judiciary, Media, Police should reform their institutions and do corrective actions to combat with all their problem areas so that public at large could develop their level of trust with them.

The confidence or non confidence of public in institutions is probably a result of the performance of the institutions; the results revealed that the Army is the only institution on which citizen has trust but overall respondents show distrust from the performance some important institutions of Pakistan. Fighting terrorism, lack of coordination between Federal & Provincial Government, awareness among people, unstable political environment in country, Political pressure, race for best ratings among channels and Lack of public confidence are the most crucial issues faced by Federal Government, Provincial Government, Political parties, Army, Judiciary, Media and Police respectively.

As this is a cross sectional study, the results of this study is just limited to the time frame on which data is collected. There is possibility that if data is collected from same respondents in

different time settings, the results could vary and may give a different picture. It is recommended that future researchers may conduct this research in a longitudinal time frame. In current research study, the survey questionnaire is in English so data was collected from those people who are educated and can understand this language. There are chances that such sample is not true representative of Pakistan's overall population as most of general public in Pakistan is uneducated and live in rural areas. Hence it is recommended that future researchers may develop a questionnaire in Urdu and expand the domain of data collection to get more holistic view of citizen's level of trust. After elections 2013, there are different political parties ruling in different provinces like in Sindh Pakistan's Peoples party is in power, in Punjab Pakistan Muslim League (N) is ruling, in KPK Pakistan Tehreek e Insaf is ruling and in Balochistan a coalition government is in power so to get more in depth view of citizen's level of trust future researchers may collect data from all four provinces and could do comparative analysis as well.

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