

YOUTH
MANIFESTO
2007



YOUTH
PARLIAMENT
PAKISTAN



Youth Manifesto 2007



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PILDAT is an independent, non-partisan and not-for-profit indigenous research and training institution with the mission to strengthen democracy and democratic institutions in Pakistan.

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About the Manifesto of Youth Parliament Pakistan

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The first ever Youth Parliament Pakistan, a project conceived and initiated by the Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development And Transparency PILDAT came into being in January 2007. During its one year life the Youth Parliament Pakistan a mock 60-member assembly of 18 to 29 years old met for over 30 days in 6 sessions deliberating on issues of concern to youth including a number of policies of the Government of Pakistan and formulated and forwarded its alternative policies/recommendations to the Government and other entities.

Given the significance of the first-ever Youth Parliament to leave a legacy for the coming parliaments, a need was felt for the Youth Parliament to make a positive contribution by compiling its position on various issues facing the youth of Pakistan into a structured document. The Youth Manifesto 2007 prepared through mutual consultation and democratic process by the Members of Youth Parliament Pakistan - MYPs wrapping the work done by the YPP through 2007, seeks to translate the aspirations of Pakistani youth for a more tolerant, democratic and peaceful society. Reflecting the thoughts and views of young Pakistanis in general, the Youth Manifesto 2007 spells out the stand of the Youth Parliament on various key issues facing Pakistani youth today. The final document bearing the names of all the contributing MYPs was launched at a press conference organised by the MYPs at Islamabad at the concluding session in December 2007. The Youth Manifesto is to be circulated among and lobbied with various political parties in Pakistan for including in their Election Manifestoes and ultimately in their policy frameworks. It is hoped that the proposals put forth by the youth of today will be seriously considered by the political parties and lead to adoption of more youth friendly policies and practices.

Whereas Youth Parliament Secretariat facilitated the preparation of the Youth Manifesto by initiating the process and provided guidance and assistance to the MYPs in developing the broad topics covered by the Manifesto, the entire contents of this Manifesto including the language, style and emphasis has been authored, deliberated, voted on and adopted by the members of Youth Parliament Pakistan and reflect only their views and perspectives.

We at PILDAT, as the Secretariat of Youth Parliament Pakistan look forward to members of future Youth Parliament terms to build upon the legacy of the first ever Youth Manifesto and make revisions each year incorporating youth's vision for a better future for all.

Secretariat of the Youth Parliament Pakistan
Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development And Transparency PILDAT

Islamabad
December 2007

PILDAT wishes to thank the Patron of Youth Parliament Pakistan, Mr. Muhammedmian Soomro, Chairman Senate of Pakistan, the panel of Speakers presiding over Youth Parliament Pakistan, Youth Parliament Pakistan Steering Committee and Party Advisors for their support in initiating and sustaining this project. We would also like to thank the members of Youth Parliament Pakistan for their time and contribution to the discourse at the parliamentary sittings and in preparing the first ever Youth Manifesto 2007. We especially would like to acknowledge the zeal, commitment and untiring efforts of the members of the Manifesto Committee - Ms. Hina Anwar Ali, Ms. Khadija Malik Hasan, Ms. Saira Soomro, and Mr. Zaka Zahid Shafiq - who worked endlessly to revise, edit and give final shape to the Youth Manifesto at the sixth session in December 2007. We also wish to recognise the vital and defining role played by the Youth Prime Minister, Mr. Hamad Khan Marri and the Leader of the Opposition Ms. Mariam Raza Zaidi who were forthcoming in helping, motivating and mobilising the MYPs in the entire exercise of developing and preparing the Youth Manifesto 2007.

PILDAT wishes to acknowledge the support extended by the Ministry of Youth Affairs, the British High Commission, Islamabad and the Pakistan Office of the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung for the Youth Parliament project. It would especially like to acknowledge the support provided by the **British High Commission** in the printing of this Youth Manifesto.

Disclaimer

The views expressed in this Youth Manifesto reflect the views of the Members of Youth Parliament and do not necessarily reflect the views of PILDAT, British High Commission or the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung.

We, the members of the Youth Parliament Pakistan ("YPP"), in our capacity as representatives of the youth of this nation, hereby unite to proclaim our commitment to the principles enshrined in this manifesto.

We demand respect for each and every citizen of Pakistan.

We believe that the key to a prosperous Pakistan lies primarily in the rule of law, strengthening of democratic institutions, good governance, judicial independence and accountability. Quality healthcare and education must be provided to each citizen of Pakistan as a matter of right.



Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development And Transparency (PILDAT) launched the project of the first ever Youth Parliament Pakistan as a way to inculcate democratic culture in Pakistani youth and to facilitate free expression of their views. Establishment and facilitation of the YPP is part of PILDAT's focus on the youth of Pakistan and youth's awareness education and training in the norms of politics and democracy. PILDAT strongly feels that sustainable democracy and the sustainability of sound democratic institutions in Pakistan is not possible without youth's involvement in the democratic and political process even if this involvement is simply as a citizen or voter.

PILDAT felt it important to engage Pakistani youth in healthy discourse and expose them to democratic traditions and culture so that they may be groomed as civilized, tolerant and peaceful citizens. It is in this backdrop that the YPP came into being in January 2007. The concept of Youth Parliament emerged as a way for young people to "learn by doing" through taking part in Youth Parliament. It was felt that practice on the benches of a mock Parliament can be useful in deciding how to become a more active citizen, either inside or outside formal politics. YPP intends to provide participants with an opportunity to acquire or improve upon many skills such as public speaking, debate, presentation, research and organizational skills and thereby aiding their personal development.

The specific objectives of YPP are to educate Pakistani youth about politics and democracy and to demonstrate to them how parliaments are able to do the following:

- Make legislation;
- Debate matters of national and international concern;
- Demand accountability from those in government;
- Discuss legislation in committee;
- Change government without recourse to civil disorder; and
- Make and enforce their own rules of conduct.

Chairman Senate of Pakistan, Mr. Muhammedmian Soomro as Patron of YPP inaugurated the Youth Parliament Pakistan, a 60-member assembly of 18 to 29 year old persons hailing from the four provinces, Islamabad Capital Territory, FATA, FANA and Azad Kashmir. YPP met for 30 days at regular intervals in its one year term. The YPP in its 6 sessions this year has debated on numerous policies of the Government, formulated alternative policies and forwarded their recommendations to the Government.

YPP works on the pattern of the National Assembly of Pakistan and has a youth Prime Minister, a youth Cabinet, a Leader of the Opposition, a Shadow Cabinet and a Deputy Speaker. YPP has 6 standing committees, 2 political parties namely the Green Party and the Blue Party, whereas its selection process and effective functioning is overseen by a Steering Committee. In line with parliamentary practices and traditions, the YPP has a visitors' gallery and a media gallery to observe the proceedings.

Eminent persons are invited to address the YPP. This year, notable personalities who addressed the YPP include Rt. Honourable Mr. David Miliband, MP & Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, UK; former Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mr. Shaukat Aziz; former Chief Justice of Pakistan Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry; Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed, Chairman Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs; and Mr. Nasir Khan, former Federal Minister for Health, Senator Mian Raza Rabbani, Leader of the Opposition in the Senate of Pakistan, among others.

PILDAT conceived the idea, facilitated the formation and now acts as the Secretariat of Youth Parliament. The Youth Parliament project received cooperation from the Ministry of Youth Affairs, Pakistan and is supported by the Global Opportunities Fund of the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Germany in recognition of the importance of young people's involvement in democracy and democratic practices.



The Youth Parliament Pakistan ("YPP") believes that urgent change is required in Pakistan. To that end, political, economic and social reform can only be achieved when civil society is united, active and committed. Over 70% of Pakistan's population consists of the Youth- without active participation by the former, civil society simply cannot hope to achieve its potential.

The YPP has therefore decided to issue the first ever Youth Manifesto of Pakistan. In this Manifesto, we have outlined the issues we believe are crucial to the future of this nation. We hope they will serve as both a guide to the democratic aspirations of Pakistan's youth, and as an example to any future youth assemblies.

First and foremost, the Manifesto calls for an end to military dictatorship and a return to democratic rule through free and fair elections. It urgently calls for the immediate restoration of the superior judiciary, to the state that existed before the illegal Emergency imposed on 3rd November, 2007, and severely condemns the martial law imposed through the guise of a Provisional Constitutional Order-PCO on that day.

The Youth Manifesto demands that the rule of law be made sacrosanct. It calls for full constitutional rights to be granted to the people of the Federally Administered Northern and Tribal Areas, as well as the people of Azad Jammu and Kashmir. It realizes that reforms have to be made to Parliament for it to be an open and transparent institution. It calls for increased provincial autonomy and an end to federal domination, especially of the smaller provinces.

One of the most pressing issues in any modern society is the literacy rate- Pakistan has always lagged behind when it comes to education. The YPP realizes that an active civil society requires education, so that people are aware of their rights. A modern economy also requires a diverse and complicated set of skills that are simply unachievable without graduate and undergraduate degrees. To this end, the Manifesto calls for compulsory, free education for all youth up to at least the secondary level, and calls for the gradual increase of education spending, up to 4% of GDP.

The Manifesto also covers many other topics such as international affairs, the concerns of rural youth and women's rights. It includes sections on Pakistan's culture, local and political bodies, and the desperate need for reform in the healthcare sector, where basic minimum standards are not being met.

With this first ever Youth Manifesto, representing the concerns of tens of millions of young Pakistanis, the YPP hopes to set the national agenda, by insisting that our political parties and other representative institutions stop ignoring the very people who are the future of this nation. It is the young people of Pakistan who will inherit the society and the country- they have the biggest stake in this country's future.

It is only just that they be given a chance to shape Pakistan's future. This Manifesto is merely the first step in that long, arduous journey. We believe that implementing it will ensure that Pakistan has a bright future.

We, the youth of Pakistan, believe that the need of the day is for a sound political system in which the rights and liberties of each citizen are accounted for. We are the future of this state and we firmly believe that we have a responsibility towards building our nation. Historically, democracy as a system of governance has been unable to take root within Pakistan. However, we gravely require a democratic system of government and believe that dynamic leadership can only emerge from within such a system.

The Elements of Democracy

Democracy includes the following essential elements:

- Majority Rule, which is the cornerstone of democracy
- Political pluralism
- Equality before the law
- Due process
- Civil liberties
- Human rights

These are the elements which need to be inculcated into the fundamental make up of our society so that people may make informed choices and steer our country into prosperity.

Role of the Military

The military is to have no role in the domain of civilian rule. The youth of Pakistan are not prepared to tolerate military interference in the running of the state.

Political Awareness

It is essential to generate awareness of the political process so that the citizens of Pakistan may be actively involved in the transparent running of the said democratic system. This must be done through the system of education, whereby a basic political education must be made compulsory as well as through state sponsored media campaigns.

Elections

The electoral process is a fundamental feature of democracy. For elections to be free and fair and to engender a sense of healthy competition between candidates so that competent leadership emerges, freedom of speech, freedom of the press and rule of law must be established.

Politicians

Due competence and impartiality is required of our political leaders. Personal interests and motives, as well as party politics should be de-prioritized by politicians to serve the nation to the best of their capabilities.

Role of the Masses

The masses need to play their part in ensuring the accountability and transparency of the government. We as a nation need to take responsibility of our duties and we must begin these by taking seriously our right to vote. Votes must be viewed not just as a citizen's right but also as a citizen's social burden to put Pakistan on the path of democracy.

Challenges to Provincial Autonomy

Provincial Autonomy is one of the main challenges faced by the federation of Pakistan. All provinces claim that the federal government does not allow them to fully exercise the powers assigned to them by the Constitution. The inter-provincial institutions established by the Constitution like the Council of Common Interest do not function on regular basis and federal government meddles in the affairs of provinces.

Proposed Solutions

The contentious issues of provincial autonomy may be solved by judicial adjudication, settlement through dialogue and mutual accommodation or by appointment of special committees to address specific issues. The constitution should be reformed to provide for some institutional arrangement for dealing with these issues. The federal government should step back from its authoritarian disposition towards the provinces and enable them to function in a more autonomous manner.

True Provincial Autonomy

The provinces should be allowed to exercise all the powers assigned to them by the Constitution so that the federation functions in its true spirit of the 1973 Constitution. The federal government should reduce its responsibilities in education, healthcare, local government and other domains mentioned in the concurrent list. The Constitution shall be amended for enhancement of the scope of provincial autonomy; in particular the federal and concurrent lists should be revised to create a balance between the federal government and provinces. Moreover, the provinces should be given more fiscal autonomy. The role of Council of Common Interest should also be strengthened. Some of the taxation powers must be transferred to the provinces. The political and administrative roles of the provincial Governors should be limited and the elected Chief Ministers should be given more authority to work for his/her people according to their aspirations.

National Finance Commission (NFC) Award

The National Finance Commission NFC award should be announced without any delay and with the mutual agreement of all the federating units. In the sixth NFC award, the provincial share in the Federal Divisible Pool was raised to 45.33% and population was kept as the basis for division of resources among the provinces. The provincial share should be increased to 50% and the criterion for determining the share shall not be based on population alone but also on the basis of scarcity of resources, vastness of area and the level of development of the province.

The Balochistan Issue

Unrest in Balochistan has drawn the attention of political pundits who are comparing this strife with that of former East Pakistan. The government of Pakistan should learn from its history and should resolve this crisis in a peaceful manner.

As a first step, the local leadership should be involved in a meaningful manner in all the key issues, especially in development work. This can be done by assigning an active role to the provincial government and the provincial assembly in the development matters of the province. The mega projects in Balochistan should be reviewed in consultation with the local leadership to accommodate local concerns and sensitivities.

The province should be given more administrative and fiscal autonomy by reviewing the federal and concurrent lists. The provincial share in the subsequent NFC awards should be increased and the distribution of shares of Federal Divisible Pool should be based on a multi-factor criterion rather than population only criterion. Quota for the province should be increased in government services as the province is under-represented in most federal services. The present low rates of Gas Development Surcharge (gas royalty and excise duty on the gas produced in the province) should be increased.

The military operation in Balochistan should immediately cease.

Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA)

FATA has been plagued by a culture of violence, marked by intolerance and fanaticism that took root as a result of its political marginalization. The government may pacify the region only by providing proper redress to the people of FATA through the following steps:

- A framework for FATA should evolve and the region should be recognized as a separate province (or at least integrated with the province of NWFP)
- The people of FATA should be guaranteed freedom of life, freedom of speech and expression, freedom of association and equal opportunities in education, information, transparent judicial process, proper healthcare and adequate employment.
- To guarantee fundamental rights the Frontier Crimes Regulation- FCR of 1901 must be replaced with the Pakistan Penal Code and supported by a system of good governance.
- To combat extremist religious elements the government must extend the Political Parties' Act of 1962 to FATA.
- Police, judicial system and system of Local Governments should also be introduced in FATA as it is present in other districts of Pakistan. Moreover, the government should immediately halt the ongoing extra-judicial operations in various areas of FATA as the use of military might resulted in the escalation of crisis and spread of terrorism.

Benefits of Political Reforms

Unrestricted participation in the political process is the fundamental right of every citizen. Reforms will have these immediate effects:

- Political parties will actively engage the local population thus keeping the people away from the influence of extremist clerics.
- People can make an informed decision only if the political parties are allowed to campaign openly.
- World views of the tribal society will widen with exposure to competing manifestoes and mindsets.
- This reform will result in a win-win situation and will help restore peace to the region.
- When given the status of a province the currently alienated people of FATA will develop a sense of responsibility towards their homeland and will work for its prosperity.

Federally Administered Northern Areas (FANA)

Since independence in 1947, the 1.5 million people of Northern Areas have been denied their fundamental political rights of democratic participation, even while democracy has prevailed in the rest of the country. The people of FANA have no self-elected government and no representation in the federal legislature or in the autonomous local government in Azad Jammu Kashmir.



The region has been ruled by the Ministry of Kashmir Affairs and Northern Areas (KANA) through the Legal Framework Order (LFO). It is a travesty that all the state institutions including the judiciary and legislature owe their existence to administrative instruments promulgated by KANA without the involvement of the local people.

Proposals for the Political Mobilization of FANA

- The Northern Areas should be accorded provincial status and constitutional recognition. Any connection with Kashmir is strongly opposed by the people of the Northern Areas.
- The LFO must be repealed and in its place the Interim Constitution of 2003 must be enacted, as it enjoys the democratic mandate of the Northern Areas Legislative Council.
- Appropriate steps must be taken to ensure that the people of FANA are governed through their elected representatives and guaranteed access to an independent judiciary as per the judgment of the Supreme Court of Pakistan in the Al-Jehad Trust Case (1999 SCMR 1379)
- Adequate infrastructure must be provided and extensive development projects be launched in the region.

Local Government

The United Nations defines local government as a political subdivision of a state which is constituted by law and has substantial control over local affairs including imposition of taxes and extracting labour for particular purposes. Local government in reality is the economic, social and political expression of the people, which is retained and utilized for the well-being of the people.

Current State of Local Governance in Pakistan

In most developing states devolution of power to the grass roots level has resulted in socio-political development. In Pakistan, the system of local bodies was instituted in the past but yielded no positive results. The Government introduced a modified system of local bodies in August 2001 through the local government ordinance to devolve powers to the grass root levels. A three tier system of elected local governments was created i.e. District, Tehsil and Union Councils. There is one *Nazim* (Mayor) and a *Naib Nazim* (Deputy Nazim) for each tier of Local Government. Thus for the first time in Pakistan's history elected officials have been placed at the apex of the district administration.

Problems

The newly created District Governments are facing many complex problems like a lack of financial control, an inability to exert authority as provinces retain the right to disciplinary action against staff and unpredictable budgetary transfer. Most of the powers continue to rest with the federal or provincial representatives and officials. Thus the District governments do not have the opportunity to allocate resources according to local priorities.

Though this system of local government is apparently grounded on the principle of devolution in reality local governments have become serious rivals of provincial governments. The new system rather than creating the desired effect of decentralization has instead in effect created a second center. The system draws strength from the nexus of presidency and district Nazim; this results in the lack of ownership by the federal and provincial governments.

Proposed Solutions

Improvement of functioning of the Local Bodies System depends on political commitment from the federal and provincial governments. Both the federal and provincial governments should work to induce a feeling of ownership of the new system among the provincial ministers and the Civil Servants.

The conflict between the provincial minister and district government on recruitment, posting and transfer should be solved by provincial government for healthy working environment. Funding should be increased and impartially distributed among all the *Nazims* regardless of their party affiliations.

The local government system is in its nascent form; it will evolve gradually. If the government introduces proper reforms in this system, it will make governance participatory and representative.

Electoral Process

For any state to have a thriving democratic system, the most important thing is the electoral process. The pressing questions are:

- How is the electoral process based?
- Who is accountable?
- Who are the stakeholders?
- What are the loopholes?
- How transparent is the system?

These questions enable us to weigh the proficiency of the entire electoral process and its impact on society.

Elections in Pakistan

Elections in Pakistan have always faced challenges. These have been due to the lack of checks and balances on the electoral process and the interference of the state and various political parties in the working of the election commission.

Electoral Reforms and the Election Commission

The entire system of registering voters should be transparent. Individuals above the age of 18 should show civic responsibility and register their votes to aid the electoral process. Voter lists should be kept confidential and free from corruption till the voting dates are scheduled.

There is a dire need to have electoral reforms in which the election commission is kept as an autonomous body having no influence from either the government or the political parties. The Chief Election Commissioner should be the sole caretaker of the entire process. He/she should not be subject to anyone in or outside the government system. He/she should ensure that the entire process runs in a just and smooth manner.

The Youth Vote

The electoral process can only flourish with maximum participation from the youth of Pakistan. As the youth holds no bias and are not fearful of choosing the right and declining the wrong, it is pivotal for them to come out and vote. Another important aspect which needs to be taken into account is to educate the youth about the benefits of free and fair elections in particular and about the democratic system of governance at large.

Political Parties

Political parties along with the State Institutions need to take responsibility of ensuring that democratic system is revitalized in Pakistan. It may not be an identical one which is present in first world states and may have its own curves

and corners according to the political and social setup of the state, but yet it should at large cater to the needs and expectations of the masses. Parties should not indulge in forced balloting or forged ballot papers and similarly the state institutions should ensure that the entire process runs in a free and fair manner. Furthermore, they should stand accountable to the people of Pakistan.

Access to Parliamentary Proceedings

The public, particularly the media, must be permitted to attend parliamentary proceedings and where possible, to interact with parliamentarians. Due regard must be paid to the security of parliamentarians whilst facilitating public access to parliamentary proceedings. Further, the YPP promotes increased virtual interaction of the public with parliamentarians through the establishment of an interactive website.

Access to Parliamentary Records

Books and records reflecting work done by Parliament should be made public to ensure greater accountability and increased public awareness.

Restrictions on Media Reporting

The current rights and restrictions with regard to media reporting of proceedings, including the workings of parliamentary committees, should be liberalised.

Public Involvement in Budget Process

Participation of the public in the budget making process should be facilitated through establishment of public forums. The views and recommendations of all the stakeholders should be invited during the budget preparation process as well as after the announcement of the budget. Further, budget documents should be simplified in form and substance to enhance public understanding.

Order

The YPP promotes the existence of an “order” where the executive, the legislature and the judiciary are functioning in strict accordance with the original Constitution of Pakistan, 1973 (“Constitution”). The YPP condemns the exercise of extra judicial powers by any one institution. Each institution is recognized as equal for maintenance of the rule of law and the balance of power.

Respect for the Constitution

Each institution must respect the limits of its jurisdiction, as stated in the Constitution. Individuals within the respective institutions who attempt to concentrate power within any one institution or office must be held strictly accountable by the courts of law.

Repeal of the Doctrine of Necessity

To prevent the active role of the armed forces in politics and to restore the public’s confidence in the armed forces, the doctrine of necessity must be repealed.

Protection of Fundamental Rights

The citizens of Pakistan must be educated about their fundamental rights and freedoms through a State funded media campaign. Abuse of fundamental rights and freedoms shall be dealt with strictly and expeditiously by the courts.

The fundamental rights laid down in the Constitution should not be held in abeyance under any circumstances without the prior approval of the legislature through a two-thirds majority and further provided that the judiciary validates the circumstances under which the fundamental rights are proposed to be held in abeyance.

Protection of State Sovereignty

Any attacks by a foreign country on its soil will not be tolerated under any circumstances.

Accountability

National Accountability Bureau, which has been used as a tool for political victimization by successive governments, should be dissolved. The cases pending with NAB should be transferred to the courts of law and proceeds from the dissolution of NAB should be redirected towards improving the capacity of the judiciary for handling the additional cases.

Promote Equality and Respect for the Rule of Law

Each citizen's fundamental right to equality must be respected by the law enforcing agencies. The perks and privileges afforded to elected representatives must be minimized to the fullest extent practicable. A system of checks and balances should be introduced to curtail abuse of power and misuse of perks and privileges.

VIP Culture

Stoppage of traffic, the provision of security protocol particularly motorcades and provision of perks and privileges to government officials and representatives should be minimized.

Independence of the Judiciary

The YPP condemns the Executive's interference in the Judiciary. All the lawyers, judges, political activists and human rights activists arrested or detained without a warrant must be released and compensated by the State. Individuals responsible for any assault on the Judiciary or for contempt of court must be held strictly accountable under the prevailing laws.

Judges who have taken an oath under the PCO after 3.11.2007 should be dismissed from service. Judges who have declined to take oath under the PCO after 3.11.2007 should be reinstated and honored with prestigious awards by the State for their heroic stance. Any individual or institution which removes a judge from office in contravention of the Constitution must be held accountable by the courts as well as members of the concerned institution through establishment of a system of checks and balances within the concerned institution.

Repeal of Amendments in the Army Act, 1952

Recent amendments in the Army Act, 1952 should be repealed.

Access to Justice Program

The State must play an active role in terms of providing substantial funding and resources in achieving the objectives laid down in the Access to Justice Program. In particular, legislation must be introduced to regulate *panchayats* and the *jirga* system and monitor *jirgas* and *panchayats* to ensure that they do not deal with criminal cases. The State must focus on introducing alternative forms of dispute resolution and punishment, including community service.

Control Extremism

To control religious extremism, substantial funds must be invested, particularly in the northern and tribal areas, for providing subsidized or free religious education to the citizens through well-qualified scholars from

recognized institutions. The State should provide scholarships to students at *madrassahs* seeking higher education.

To reduce access to arms and ammunition, there must be stricter policing along the borders to effectively control smuggling from Afghanistan. Manufacturers and distributors of weapons of any kind must be strictly regulated and monitored by the State.

Extra judicial killings and unlawful arrests of suspected terrorists are strongly condemned. The term “terrorism” must be clearly defined by the Legislature and suspected terrorists must be dealt with by the courts in strict accordance with law to prevent miscarriage of justice. The Legislature and civil society should coordinate efforts to address the root causes of extremism.

Inter-Cultural Dialogue

It is necessary to promote a better understanding of different faiths and cultures and to remove misunderstandings. Extremist organizations and hate literature should be banned. Basic education facilities should be provided to prevent misinterpretation of ideologies and faiths.

We should adopt appropriate reforms in educational curricula to promote the correct interpretation of various faiths and cultures and adopt policies for the protection of religious minorities.

Economic Growth

There is a need for future planning to boost the industrialization process. To achieve this, the gap between government and industrial and trade bodies should be narrowed. Entrepreneurism must also be promoted.

Investment

Local and foreign direct investment in different sectors should be promoted to increase job opportunities and improve the standard of living. Growth in the telecommunications and banking sectors should be maintained.

Promotion of Small and Medium Enterprises

Incentives should be provided to enable small industrial units in the textile, leather, sports and surgical sector to expand to increase production. Small and medium size industries must be supported on the same pattern as SIRI (Small Industries Research Institute) of India. This identifies opportunities, develops project costs and marketing feasibility studies for SMEs, and also provides technical advice and help when required.

Reform of Taxes and Duties

The duty and sales tax on raw materials converted into value added products for export should be totally removed. To reduce capital cost, no duty and sales tax may be charged on plant and machinery. Similarly, tariff on raw materials which can be converted into value added products may be reduced.

Energy

Industrialization is not possible without parallel development in energy sector. Pakistan needs to improve its fiscal terms for oil and gas and energy sector to help boost this necessary and important sector. Making fiscal regime back-end loaded and progressive can solve this problem. The import of natural gas from Iran, as well as the construction of the India-Iran gas pipeline, can help alleviate Pakistan's growing shortages.

Poverty

Poverty is a big issue of the world, particularly in third world countries such as Pakistan, where the majority of the people are living below the poverty line, defined as an income of less than two dollars per day. Education and employment opportunities must be provided, as well as a minimum wage. Family planning is also required to curtail population growth.

Agriculture and Rural Development

We believe that agriculture extension should be modernized, as per the challenges of 21st century, and propose several measures. Subsidies on tube wells should be reinstated. Training institutes for agricultural produce, grading, packing and marketing should be established. Village directories that cover all village data must be updated, printed and circulated. Union Council development plans with computerized data should be prepared and the information disseminated.

Rural Finance and Education

Small growers should be given access to agricultural lending and finance. Housing loans should be extended to villagers in order for them to gain equity and own their own properties. More funds must be allocated for strengthening of agriculture universities, institutions and related colleges, with focused transfer of technology, expertise and skills.

Rural Infrastructure

Strategic roads, farm to market, should be constructed and proper maintenance of roads be done. Electrification program for villages must be extended as rapidly as possible. Village infrastructure and land are destroyed due to water logging and salinity. Research should be conducted to assess the intensity of the problem.

Democracy and Foreign Policy

The members of the Youth Parliament feel that the best way to achieve Pakistan's potential in the foreign arena is to focus on the development of a democratic system at home. Pakistan's foreign policy has always been subject to domestic political turmoil. Military rulers have regularly made enormous concessions to the United States in order to secure the legitimacy they lacked internationally.

Role of Democratic Government

Many of Pakistan's long term policies, whatever their respective merits, have been subordinate to this need- the complete reversal of regional policies after the cataclysm of 9/11 is a prime example. The only policy that has survived in the long term through both civilian and military governments is Pakistan's close alliance with China. A democratic government would be better placed to pursue policies that are relevant to the Pakistani people, such as better ties with India, the increase of regional trade, and lesser ties to the United States. This is because the Pakistan Army's interests in promoting the longevity of its rule, and maintaining its share of the budget, are not conducive to Pakistan's long term political and social progress. The resulting domestic instability therefore weakens Islamabad's leverage abroad.

War on Terror

The most crucial policy debate faced by Pakistan right now is the War on Terror. The current military dictatorship fell in line with the American government's demands on this issue after 9/11, abandoning regional policies that stretched back for a generation. As a result, while Pakistan has benefited from American aid to the tune of up to US \$20 billion, as well as the removal of crippling sanctions, most of this largesse has been directed towards the military. In contrast, spending on social and educational services has been largely stagnant or ineffectively employed. As a result, the economic boom caused by the inflow of foreign funds has failed to trickle down in large part to the masses, leading to increased social inequality. When coupled to the tremendous political tensions unleashed by allying with the US, particularly in the northwestern areas, the war on terror has transformed Pakistan's tribal areas into a ruthless low intensity conflict zone that has claimed the lives of thousands of soldiers and militants. It has also led to increased violence throughout the country, as extremists resort to tactics such as suicide bombings and the Lal Masjid siege in order to push their political agenda.

India- Kashmir and Visa Liberalization

The present government has undertaken many initiatives with regard to issues for the normalization of relations with India, especially proposing four schemes/alternatives to the solution of Kashmir issue. Sadly, the Indian government has remained intransigent on the issue so far. The Youth Parliament believes that no further progress can be made on Kashmir without

significant flexibility shown by the Indian side. In the meantime, it is hoped that more progress be made on trade and social links with India. The Youth Parliament supports immediate and full visa liberalization with India, and increased transport links. With regular visits across the border, the people of India and Pakistan will renew ancient ties and develop their own stake in the peace process, as well as benefit from access to cheaper goods. This will deter future demagogues or military strongmen from aggression and bring peace to a nuclear flashpoint.

Afghan Policy

Pakistan's Afghan policy was left in disarray after 9/11, and India has aggressively pushed to fulfill the vacuum by opening several consulates in Afghanistan, as well as funding construction of the port of Chah Bahar in Iran, with a highway linking this port to Kandahar. This will effectively remove the only leverage Islamabad has in the area.

China

Pakistan's relation with China have remained cordial and friendly along with strong defense and trade links. China is one of Pakistan's largest trading partners. China's co-operation in the construction of Gwadar Port and increased investment, particularly in telecommunications, light manufacturing and steel, bode well for Pak-Chinese relations.

Conclusion

By undertaking the steps outlined above: breaking off support for the War on Terror, developing closer ties with India, improving regional relations through trade and visa liberalization, and maintaining a close relationship with China, the YPP feels that Pakistan will be able to effectively increase its international influence. These measures would not be possible under a military government. Pakistan will never have an independent foreign policy until it has a truly democratic government.

The present Education structure in the country consists of discriminating parallel education systems and remains plagued with corruption, inefficiency and widespread political interference.

With a view to completely overhaul the system and effectively implement the existing policies of the Government of Pakistan, the YP has put forth suggestions in the following areas,

Educational Quality and Access

The YPP supports free and compulsory education at primary level with an aim to gradually extend the same at secondary school level. It is imperative that a larger portion of the Education budget be spent on the neglected areas of Primary Education in order to make early education more interactive.

Corporal punishment in any form or under any guise must be banned from public and private educational institutions.

Inclusive education should be a fundamental part of the education system and every effort must be made to provide students with special needs with the necessary facilities at the mainstream schools.

The YPP supports the Government in further exploring and forging partnerships with the private sector in order to maximize the utilization of public facilities and private expertise in the area of education.

In promoting public-private partnership in the Education sector, particularly in the case of disadvantaged children, the YP proposes grant of a certain percentage from the education budget to philanthropic, non-profit educational institutions.

In order to introduce healthy competition between schools and encourage investment in schools, the YP proposes development of a federally administered ranking system of primary and secondary educational institutions across the country based on result outcomes, extra-curricular activities and facilities provided to the students.

In order to fully utilize the allocated educational budget each year and increase the absorption capacity of the system, the YP proposes that finances allocated/already approved for educational projects and other schemes not lapse at the end of each fiscal year, instead a quarterly reporting system may be introduced. This will serve to gradually increase the education budget to 4% of the GDP.

Curriculum

The medium of instruction should be the mother tongue of the child during the early years of education (left to the discretion of provinces) with English taught as a compulsory at primary level. Urdu may also be introduced as a subject in

case it differs from the adopted medium of instruction.

The YPP recommends inculcation of democratic norms in the curriculum from the very basic level is necessary to build a truly democratic value-system amongst the students and future policymakers of this country.

The YPP believes the religious institutions across the country must satisfy minimum criteria for curriculum that incorporates science subjects on a par with the courses being taught in the mainstream schools.

In present context of a worsening environmental balance and the high vulnerability of developing countries to the same, the YPP believes *Environmental education* must be made an integral part of early education and beyond.

The YPP supports inclusion of reproductive health as a subject at secondary school level which will serve to provide students with informed views on this issue of extreme importance instead of prevalent use of dubious information sources such as the internet. The course may be designed for separate female and male classes, keeping in mind the religious and cultural sensibilities of the people.

Student Unions

Student Unions (non-political) should be encouraged in universities and colleges to encourage youth activism on a *non-partisan* basis i.e. activism free from political affiliations or lineage.

Private Education

To maintain a proper system of checks and balances on the affairs of private schools, the YPP proposes formulation of local level committees with representation from parents of students and other stakeholders in order to monitor issues of performance, fee hikes and discipline etc. In case of a conflict, the recommendations of these committees will be given due weight by the relevant regulatory authorities.

Recognizing the right of individuals including teachers to engage in part-time income-generating activities such as provision of tuition, the YP recommends that teachers would not be allowed to offer tuition to students from the same school.

Media

The YPP promotes a more productive role of print and electronic media in creating awareness by combining entertainment with education/information through preparation of scientific and historical documentaries, media campaigns on specific issues like gender gaps in educational attainment and debating increased brain-drain in recent years etc.

Access to Affordable Healthcare

Government funding should be increased to develop a public healthcare system with increased accessibility, effectiveness, efficiency and affordability. Incentives should be introduced to attract well-qualified health specialists to the rural areas for provision of medical facilities.

Preventive Measures to Control Diseases

Pre and postnatal care should be improved to reduce the infant mortality rate. Further, a special "Health Watch Team" should be set up to monitor any health program initiated by government to ensure its smooth implementation.

Sexual Health Education

Sexual and reproductive health education must be introduced in secondary school to increase awareness about personal and social issues and to prevent misguidance about puberty, personal hygiene and sexually transmitted diseases.

Mental Health Care Facilities

The existing mental healthcare services should be upgraded and further facilities should be developed to enable youth to seek psychological assistance. Further, mental health education should be introduced at high school level.

Public Awareness of Health Hazards

Public awareness about hazards to health as well as a healthy lifestyle should be increased through the media.

Drug Addiction

An aggressive media campaign should be introduced to inform the public about the dire consequences of drug use and abuse. To cure drug addiction, rehabilitation and reformatory centres should be established in all government hospitals for the physically and mentally challenged

Effective Measures to Curb Adultery in Medicines

YPP calls for legislative, administrative and informative measures to prevent adultery in medicines including interalia appointment of food and drug inspectors, establishment of health boards to monitor services and supply of medicines.

Health Insurance Scheme

A health insurance scheme should be introduced e.g. the Devi Shetty model in Bangalore, India.

Facilities for Disabled Persons

Education and training facilities for Disabled/Special children all over the country, in proportion to the density of these individuals in each province should be established. Further, facilities for physically disabled persons should be provided in all public buildings and public transport.

Policies on Environmental Concerns

Policies on vital environmental issues should be formulated and implemented. Such policies should focus on concerns such as air pollution; marine environment; sustainable use of resources; waste prevention and recycling; sustainable use of pesticides; soil protection; urban environment; human-biodiversity interaction and human impact on both organic and inorganic environment and all the other modern kind of pollutions such as medical pollution; civic pollution; pollution due to hospital wastes, etc.

Pollution

Legislation should be introduced to reduce industrial pollution. A survey of toxic gases/chemicals should be carried out to assess the extent of environmental degradation.

Plantation of Trees

Tree plantation should be increased.

Biodiversity

Biodiversity, ecological resources, should be maintained by taking steps to conserve the natural habitats of various species indigenous to the country.

Awareness of Environmental Issues

The Government must promote awareness of environmental issues in collaboration with the private sector. Awareness must be provided at all academic institutions through an environmental literacy programme. Special efforts should be made in building up of environmental excellence centres and transfer of technology and knowledge to populace.

Environmental Impact Assessment and Environmental Risk Management

This should be mandatory before any development project is approved.

Safe Drinking Water

Comprehensive plans should be made and implemented to meet the human needs of safe drinking water and to prevent the occurrence of all water bourn diseases.

Low cost kits and reliable simple methods of water quality testing systems which can be handled by lay household individuals be developed and encouraged in the country.

The water supply and management agencies should feel the responsibility to maintain water quality in the water distribution system up to the consumer's level for which booster chlorination be ensured at different pumping stations.

Water theft and wastage through leakages should be properly monitored by concerned authorities and remedial action be taken timely.

Appropriate measures should be adopted to ensure zero water contamination.

Unsafe Pesticides and Fertilizers

Use of organophosphate pesticides should be stopped immediately. A general survey of their deleterious effect on the biota and biome should be conducted and in the wake of their results some remedies steps should be taken. Extensive research should be undertaken to sort alternative ways to control pest such as use of biological control and cultivation of genetically improved crops.

International Cooperation

Working with our international partners bilaterally and through multilateral action is essential to preserve our common resources and life support systems.

The YPP demands an end to the injustice, male domination, oppression, violence, gender bias, discriminatory laws and harmful customs and practices denying women their fundamental human rights in Pakistan.

Equal Participation

The Government should provide more opportunities to the women to increase their participation in all the fields, as it is a prerequisite for the eradication of all the injustices.

Education

It makes people aware of who & what they are. The educational status of Pakistani women is among the lowest in the world. The literacy rate for urban women is more than five times the rate for rural women.

Poverty

It deprives women of their basic rights and needs for a minimum standard of well-being and life. The economic deprivation and poverty which leads to lack of access to health care facilities, information, education etc. should be addressed from the grassroots level.

Role of Ministry of Women Development

Pakistan acceded to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (**CEDAW**) on February 29, 1996. The Ministry of Women Development (MWD) is the designated national focal machinery for its implementation & YP demands that it should highlight & educate the masses of its cause.

Legal Rights

Issues such as the subjugation of women and violence against women should be addressed through effective implementation of laws guaranteeing the protection of women. Proposals for enhancing the status of women should be formulated and effected in collaboration with civil society organisations. Government should provide widespread educational facilities to women. Media and civil society organisations must be encouraged to educate women about their rights.

Recognition of their work

The YPP demands women's economic autonomy through creation of employment opportunities and fair remuneration.

Representation of Women in Politics

Representation of women in the assemblies should be maintained.

Repeal of Discriminatory Laws

A thorough review of existing laws, policies and practices should be conducted and new legislation should be passed to remove discriminatory laws and practices against women.

Respect for Different Cultures

YPP promotes respect and tolerance for the culture, rituals and traditions of minorities, condemns stereotyping and encourages the diversity of opinion, lifestyles and ideas.

Development of Recreation Facilities

Increased funding should be provided for the development of a variety of recreational facilities for all sections of society across Pakistan. In particular, parks, cinemas, playgrounds and sports complexes should be established and the beaches in the coastal areas should be developed.

Appointments to Governing Bodies/Boards on Merit

All appointments to the governing bodies of national level sports, particularly the boards of cricket and hockey, should be made on merit and from members of the civil society.

Grant of Subsidies for Underprivileged Youth

To enable youth from lower income tiers of society to participate in sports and recreational activities, access to certain recreational facilities shall be subsidized and further, sports scholarships shall be provided to underprivileged youth on merit.

Implementation of Juvenile Justice System Ordinance (JUSO) 2000

Juvenile justice is criminal law applicable to persons not old enough to be held responsible for criminal acts, usually, the age for criminal culpability is 18 and juvenile justice system is responsible for keeping citizens safe and rehabilitating delinquent youth. Meeting these two responsibilities should be the goal of the system.

The JUSO should be implemented in letter and in spirit.

Implementation Indicators

A practical policy should be developed by the Government in collaboration with civil society. Such policy should take into account indicators such as the number of children in detention, as well as the proportion held pre-sentence; existence of a specialized juvenile justice system; existence of complaint mechanisms for children; the proportion of children in detention who are separated from adults; existence of a national programme for prevention of juvenile delinquency and the proportion of children released from detention that benefit from an aftercare programme.

Adult Literacy

Adult illiteracy is very common among rural youth. In order to eradicate this, special curriculums should be designed for adult education. Local government school teacher and volunteers should be hired with extra monetary benefits to educate illiterate youth in the evening.

Sports and Recreation

Presently there is little infrastructure available for sports and entertainment activities at the village level. Infrastructure like grounds, stadiums, training centres should be established in rural areas, and special tournaments, coaching clinics and talent hunt programs should be organized.

Rural youth are almost unaware of different art forms like paintings, calligraphy, theatre and, to some extent, music as well. Coaching and talent hunt programs should be conducted in these fields at tehsil level.. Youth participation should be encouraged in local festivals by local governments to provide good entertainment.

Career Counselling

The YPP believes that experts should be sent to rural areas several times a year to conduct seminars and counselling sessions for youth.

Motivation and Guidance for Higher Education

Preparatory courses should be conducted at tehsil level to give them a better chance to compete with urban youth. Special scholarships must be made available to female candidates from rural areas to increase the current low rate of female graduates from these areas.

Libraries

In order to create a knowledge-based society in rural areas, mobile libraries should be provided to every union council. These can circulate in all villages of the union council.

Entrepreneurship and Microfinance

By promoting entrepreneurial spirit among the youth, Pakistan can lessen unemployment to a large extent in rural areas. All government agencies which promote SMEs should be asked to conduct at least half their operations in rural areas. New ventures can be started with small investments in the live stock sector.

Obtaining finance from the conventional banking system is almost impossible for rural youth. In order to over-come this problem, microfinance institutions should be developed by public and private sectors to provide finance, with or

without collateral, to new entrepreneurs.

We also urge the government to provide training and assistance at the planning and implementation stages of any new ventures.

Skill Development

In today's present knowledge-based economy, whether one wants to do clerical or factory work or start one's own business, one must be equipped with more than one skill. Therefore vocational and technical education should be made easily available in rural areas in a variety of disciplines like information technology, agriculture, electrician, mechanics, tailoring, accounts, entrepreneurship, machine supervisor etc. With these institutes, the skills of rural youth can swiftly be harnessed into an effective workforce.

Integration among Rural and Urban Youth

Visits should be arranged between the urban and rural youth in order to give both groups a chance to observe different conditions. This will remove misconceptions and create strong links between rural and urban youth.



Youth Manifesto 2007



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